4-15-2007

Three Theories of Individualism

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of the Arts
Department of Philosophy
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:
April 15, 2007

Keywords: Liberalism, John Dewey, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Justice, Human Nature, Social Conditions

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ABSTRACT

This thesis traces versions of the theory of individualism by three major theorists, John Locke, John Stuart Mill and John Dewey, as they criticize existing social, cultural, economic, legal and military conditions of their times. I argue that each theorist modifies the theory of individualism to best suit their understanding of human nature, adapting it where they can and outright removing aspects where they cannot. Based upon each thinker's conception of human nature, their corresponding theory of individualism does justice to that nature. With their view of individualism, each thinker criticizes the activities of their day for its lack of justice to human nature for the bulk of humanity.

I examine each thinker's concrete conditions, their theory of human nature, theory of justice and their corresponding theory of individualism. In the first three chapters, I examine first Locke's, then Mill's then Dewey's theory of human nature, justice and individualism. In my final chapter, I critically examine each thinker's theory of

individualism and find that John Dewey's is most adequate for our current social conditions.

Locke's individualism was a criticism of the absolute rule of aristocratic Land-owners and was an attempt to undermine the conceptual basis for their continued power. John Stuart Mill's individualism was a criticism of John Locke's individualism insofar as majoritarianism had taken root in England and resulted in the "Tyranny of the Majority." Therefore Mill gave high value to the sanctity of the individual even in disagreement with the overwhelming majority. Dewey's theory of individualism largely was a criticism of widespread poverty and abuse of political power in America during the Great Depression. *laissez faire* economics, combined with cut-throat competitiveness and atomistic individualism had resulted in pervasive injustice and Dewey recommended recognition of our inter-connectedness and continuity rather than our separateness. While I believe Dewey's theory of individualism to be most fit for our current social setting, even his theory suffers from problems yet to be worked out. I lay out these problems in the final chapter and conclude with remarks on what needs yet to be done.

Foreword

My thesis will trace the origins and consequences of individualism from John Locke through John Stuart Mill and up to John Dewey. I explore the reasons Dewey gave for thinking that the old concept of individualism was not fit to solve the problems of his times. Further, I explore how Dewey recommended for the theory of individualism to be modified accordingly and why I believe it was more adequate for our times than the previous two theories offered by Locke and Mill.

My thesis will consist of four chapters. Within each of the first three chapters, there will be four major sections: first will be a description of the social conditions in which the thinker lived, next will be a section detailing the thinker's concept of human nature, following that is a section dealing with doing justice to one's nature and finally how this culminates in a theory of individualism. Chapter one will be an investigation into the feudal conditions and the rise of old individualism by examining John Locke's theory of individualism. In the second chapter I explore the rise of the Industrial Revolution and Mill's criticism of its effects in his theory of individualism. In the third chapter I discuss Dewey's examination of the changing conditions during the Great Depression following World War I, his theory of individualism and also how his recommendations are appropriate to his time. Finally, in the fourth chapter I synthesize my findings, provide critical comments on each thinker's theories and provide concluding remarks.

In the 17th Century, those select few individuals who had privilege and power were kept in their advantaged position because of a widely accepted belief about human nature.

This belief was adopted from Judeo-Christian doctrines and buttressed the claims of the landed gentry during that time. The claims made were regarding their divine right to rule and their innate wisdom granted by God. John Locke professed an alternate origin for human knowledge: the *tabula rasa* combined with empiricism, whereby humans start out as empty sheets, devoid of any innate knowledge and come to know only through sense experience. This theoretical move allowed Locke to undermine the dominant political status quo by questioning the innateness of divine rule by the aristocracy.

Locke further had a belief about the state of nature whereby all individuals are born equal and entirely free. The formation of government should be a consensual process in order to better procure the goods of health, life and, most importantly for Locke, possessions. This is done only by sacrificing some small bit of freedom and liberty so that the government may procure authority. Justice, for Locke, is the rightful ownership of property, unhindered liberty and, generally speaking, as close of an approximation to the "State of Nature" as possible. Justice is, for Locke, the theory whereby private ownership provides a basis for peaceful cooperation of individuals. It is the role of good government to preserve as perfectly as possible this state of balance between individual rights and smooth operation of civil society.

Nearly a century and a half after the publication of Locke's *Two Treaties on Government*, John Stuart Mill wrote *On Liberty* partially in criticism of the political conditions brought about by widespread acceptance of Locke's theories of human nature and justice. Locke's theory of governing by majority rule had been taken to its extreme: the "tyranny of the majority" had emerged. Mill criticizes this by positing a theory of

human nature defending the sovereignty of the individual against the majority except in instances of harm. Mill was concerned first and foremost with interference by governmental institutions upon individual interests. Humans, in Mill's view, are inherently rational and capable of acting as independent agents; they are able to decide what the good life is. Therefore, social justice will come about from an aggregate of individuals pursing the good life.

In the early 20th century, John Dewey diagnosed the impact of the Great Depression upon the people of his time. The calculating quantification of Utilitarianism had become engrained in the consciousness of his time. Quantification of happiness was transformed into a business mentality whereby pleasure and pain had to tally up neatly, just as the bottom line of an annual audit did. The pecuniary culture that was dominant in his day had led to an imbalance of privilege and power in the hands of the few. This imbalance led to a new injustice whereby access and availability to the means of acquiring goods and services required for personal growth, and in some cases survival, was denied to those outside of the wealthy. Dewey posited a theory of individualism that held independent agents are always socially situated and composed largely of social intelligence. Further, he believed that individuals were inseparable from his or her role as citizens[1]; therefore, to think of individuals outside of their contextual relevancy (regarding political status for instance) was to somehow miss the point. Failure to recognize this false dichotomy of person/citizen would be to fall into a sort of dualism; something Dewey very much wished to avoid.

[1] Citizen, for Dewey, was not merely a legal term. It meant a member of a community and no one was ever entirely outside of a community unless they lived alone, and completely cut-off from human contact.

The theory of human nature that dominated Dewey's work was recognition of the plasticity of our innate powers. Our nature is such that we are born with innate capabilities and it is our cultivation that brings these potentialities to fruition or spoil. Dewey felt justice was done when individuals were cultivated to expand their capacities and injustice was performed when the development of habits needed to thrive was denied or when habits of strict routine were ingrained in individuals, committing them to a life of robot-like existence.

In the final chapter I summarize the thoughts of all three philosophers and provide critical evaluation. I examine the tensions to be found between Locke's theory of *tabula rasa* and his concept of reason, between his state of nature and state of war; I question the innateness of war in human nature, as well as apply his theory of ownership to current corporate practice. I scrutinize the business-like nature of Utilitarianism, Mill's consequentialist inclination and I show that current pecuniary practices would result in a violation Mill's harm principle. Then I critique Dewey's optimism regarding Democracy and its short-comings outside of his specific recommendations and assess his support of America's entrance in WWI. Finally I provide my recommendations for what must come in order to harmonize our concepts with our existing circumstances.

Chapter One: John Locke

I. Introduction

In this chapter, I examine John Locke's theories of human nature, social justice as well as how he laid out these theories in an attempt to criticize the politico-economic foundations of the dominant class of his time. I discuss the social and political conditions of 17th century Britain, paying special attention to the feudal system and the role of labor in ownership. Then I examine Locke's theory of human nature and his epistemological *tabula rasa*. I show that Locke's theory was a criticism of the existing social conditions of his time. Following that, I discuss the relationship between human nature and his theory of social justice, particularly as it relates to equality, freedom and property ownership. This section will primarily focus on how Locke's theory of human nature, in relation to the existent social conditions, was a criticism of social justice during his time. Finally, I discuss how Locke believed these theories criticized the theoretical foundation of the landed gentry with his response: a theory of individualism.

II. Social conditions of the 17th and 18th Century Britain

In the 17th Century, there was a small class of people who controlled political and economic forces so entirely as to almost exclude anyone outside of their ranks. This class was called the Aristocracy[2] but was the owner of the vast majority of land, resources, military power and wealth.[3] These landed gentry held far more than mere political and

[2] Aristocracy is a Greek term for rule by the excellent. While the aristocracy of Locke's time claimed to be excellent, insofar as they were direct descendents from Adam, a far better designation for this class would be the leisure class, the landed gentry or the plutocracy.

[3] While land ownership was originally concentrated in the hands of the nobility and the King, during

economic clout; they were the beneficiaries of the best education, the highest privileges that possession of wealth could bring, and were the select few capable of playing a part in guiding the directions of their lives. While it was technically true that a peasant could have guided the direction of his life by having refused to work for their liege lord. This would occur by packing up their few meager possessions and going elsewhere; they would have merely been committing themselves (and their families) to at best destitution (under a different lord) or at worst starvation.[4]

Locke recognized this social condition for what it was: an act of social injustice on a grand scale. It was injustice precisely because peasants were no longer in control of their own lives, but rather lived, toiled and died at the whims of others.[5] Locke set out to examine the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings cited by those who would propagate the continuation of this practice of exclusion.[6] Since the conceptual underpinnings of the Aristocracy were entirely drawn from scriptural origins, Locke first studied the then-dominant religio-epistemological basis appealed to by the leisure class. Christianity and its

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Locke's time there was a rise in lump-sum purchasing of land from the aristocracy. This was done for many reasons, not the least of which was the effects of the bubonic plague on reducing the number of working peasants and the corresponding drop in productivity. Since nobles "rented" the land from the King, they in turn had to acquire wealth from their peasants. If the peasants weren't producing, the nobles were not making their rent and as such, could no longer afford to sustain larger estates. This combined with an influx of wealth from Asia and America in the hands of the traders resulted in a tipping of the scales of land ownership away from the nobility towards the bourgeois.

[4] Since the feudal lords owned most land, and land was the sole means of production in an agrarian economy, peasants found themselves at the whim of the feudal lords. There were instances of peasants moving from one lord to another, however, they were merely choosing a new master.

[5] Peasants of Locke's time were, in a word, slaves to their feudal lords. Locke says as much in his section of the *Second Treatise on Government* titled *On Slavery* where he discusses a slave as someone forced to labor for another against their will. However, this ideology did nothing to stop Locke himself from financially supporting African slave trade.

[6] It should be noted that this was done at no small amount of personal danger on Locke's part; he published the *Two Treaties on Government* anonymously as well as fleeing to Holland in order to avoid persecution.

scripture were the primary theory behind the practice of total land ownership and absolute rule of a monarch; the Aristocracy claimed to have unbroken direct lineage from Adam[7] to their day. Therefore Locke directed his criticism at these foundations.

This criticism was primarily leveled at a now-obscure thinker named Robert Filmer. Filmer was an advocate for absolute rule of a monarch as ordained by scriptural lineage. Locke criticized this view in his *First Treatise* and summarized this criticism in the opening paragraphs of his *Second Treatise*. I do not take this criticism to be of much importance to the document in contemporary times; however Locke clearly felt it was of enough importance to write the entire *First Treatise* on this topic. The gist of his criticism is that there is no feasible way for us to trace the lineage from Adam to present day. Further still, it would not matter were we able to because the world was bequeathed to mankind as a whole and not just the eldest of Adam's line. Further, his epistemological empiricism is used to undermine the then-prevalent concept of knowledge via divine revelation.[8] Since divine revelation was the primary "source" of the Aristocracies' claims to supremacy, this criticism was one of considerable weight.

The theoretical support for the Aristocracy allowed them to operate without political check or balance. There was a vast disparity of wealth and power and it was this unequal distribution of possessions and ownership that struck Locke as being the central inequality of the feudal system. If people other than the feudal lords were capable of owning the land they worked, the Aristocracy would lose its means of control. Concerning

[7] The Adam of Christianity's *Genesis*.
[8] His empiricism is primarily laid out in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. I take this to be a continuation of the tradition of Hobbes and Bacon.

criteria to use for determining ownership, Locke explicitly stated that "whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *labour* with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *property*."[9] The land the peasant worked became his precisely because he labored. Working a field is what made the field owned, not some vague scriptural citation. The Aristocracy claimed to own it based upon scriptural lineage, but this defense was shown inadequate in the *First Treatise*.

If the Aristocracy lost sole right to land ownership, Locke believed that they would likewise lose their accumulated political and social clout. But one should always be aware that Locke's attempt to break the strangle-hold of the Aristocracy is so that members of his class, the wealthy merchants, bankers and doctors, could obtain control. One also should not fail to keep in mind that Locke made most of his riches on the lucrative slave trade to the Americas; evidently his concepts of freedom, private property and labor extended only skin deep, or perhaps even only as deep as one's pockets.[10]

III. Locke's Theory of Human Nature

Before Locke could begin criticizing the social conditions of his day, he put forth a natural rights theory to explain what existed prior to the existence of civil governments; he called this the state of nature. These theories had come into common usage with Hobbes' *Leviathan*, but Locke's theory differed from that of Hobbes. To begin with, he posited

[9] Locke, John *Second Treatise on Government* p. 19.
[10] Glausser, Wayne Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1990), pp. 199-216

certain natural rights that existed in the state of nature and also called it "a state of perfect freedom."[11] One of these rights was freedom, but even though he saw this state of nature as one of absolute liberty, he did not feel it was

> one of license: though man in that state have an uncountable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it.[12]

Freedom does *not* equate to the ability for a person to hurt themselves. Curiously, Locke gives no argument for this position aside from an appeal to the will of the creator and out innate reason which he believed would compel one to realize that:

> being all *equal* and *independent,* no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions; for men being all the workmanship of our omnipotent and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of our sovereign master … they are his property.[13]

Because of Locke's premise that one can not harm oneself, he extrapolates this protection to other people as well. His is often quoted saying that mankind ought to "preserve the rest of mankind and may not, unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to be the preservation of life, the liberty, health, limb or goods of another."[14] This mutual rational protection built into the state of nature makes it a time of peace and prosperity. Locke described this state of nature as "men living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth, with authority to judge between them."[15]

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[11] Ibid p. 8.
[12] Ibid p. 9.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid p. 15.

It is important at this point to recognize what Locke meant by reason. Locke believed that reason

> so orders the immediate ideas as to discover what connection there is in each link of the chain, whereby the extremes are held together; and thereby, as it were, to draw into view the truth sought for, which is that which we call illation or inference, and consists in nothing but the perception of the connection there is between the ideas, in each step of the deduction; whereby the mind comes to see, either the certain agreement or disagreement of any two ideas, as in demonstration, in which it arrives at knowledge; or there probable connection, on which it gives or withholds its assent, as in opinion."[16]

For Locke, reason is the bridge between ideas; it fills in the gap that exists between separate ideas. In effect, reason is the glue which holds concepts together. Also, reason can lead to new knowledge, as is the case of demonstration, or lead us away from mere opinion. This relates to the previous discussion on the state of nature because men are naturally reasonable creatures and utilize it to determine how to live together in the state of nature. The knowledge of how to live together peaceably is garnered, presumably, via demonstration. This can only mean that the mind sees agreement amongst two or more different ideas and fuses them together through the use of reason.[17]

For Locke, (1) humans are naturally rational. Further, (2) we are born free; without an authority above us *on this earth*. Also, (3) we are born equal. Equality is not one of capacity, but rather of interest; we all have the same needs and the same rights to meet those needs. But most importantly, we find that (4) humans also *naturally* must respect others. If in the state of nature, a criminal has taken from another, the offended

[16] Locke, John *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Chap. XVII, pp. 575-6.
[17] It should not be assumed that Locke believed all men and women were born with full use of reason; he did not. In fact he details the steps to be taken in order to cultivate reason fully in his work *On Education*, and throughout the *Second Treatise on Government*.

party then has the right and the responsibility to enact reparation. Thus, men have the right to retribution but only "so far as calm reason and conscience dictate." In fact, this is the extent to which individuals may have power over another in the state of nature. This power is not arbitrary or absolute; it is only ever retributive. Aside from retribution, Locke believed humans should live in peaceful coexistence by the laws of reason.

However, the state of nature is only part of Locke's depiction of human nature. There is a darker half: the state of war. The state of war comes about when an individual's property, health or freedom is impinged upon by another. It also comes about when one person attempts to enslave another; taking freedom is the same as taking life for Locke. Therefore, when any person attempts to take property, health or freedom, Locke believed that person had declared war upon another and therefore could be struck down just as a tiger or lion is struck down; namely, they could be destroyed as violent and dangerous animals, for that is what they would be.

It is interesting to note at this point that the state of war comes about when the natural gift of reason is not obeyed. It is only when the peace and tolerance of the state of nature are not observed that the state of war comes about. However, rationality is inherent; it is one of the faculties of human nature. A tension arises in Locke's conception of rationality as natural when there are people who either choose to ignore it or abuse it. Positing just the state of nature would not adequately describe the multifaceted actions of humans; the state of war alone would also be inadequate.[18]

[18] Contrary to Hobbes' view in *Leviathan*, chapter XIII, of life as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," there have been extended periods of peaceful coexistence. While war has been prevalent in human history, it has not been *omni*present. It is very much the case the Europe has seen little in the way of peace, but Europe should not be considered the only case of human existence.

This tension points to the another facet of Locke's conception of human nature: the *tabula rasa*.[19] Locke believed that the human mind was not furnished with innate knowledge or morality. We start life, as it were, like blank slates of paper, ready to receive inscription. The process of inscription was sensory experience, and our minds received the information passively. This conception is the core tenet to Locke's theory of empiricism and is important for purposes of this investigation because this theory undermined the prevalent epistemological theory of his time: divine revelation. Divine revelation, combined with a supposed direct lineage to Adam had constituted the entrenched aristocracy's basis for continued power and land ownership. Locke, by appealing to sensory information as the primary basis for understanding, had put into question the statements and justifications of the ruling class.

While Locke's concept of the *tabula rasa* means that we are not furnished with moral knowledge at birth, he also believed humans had innate reason which compelled them to seek harmony with each other. Yet clearly also, this innate reason is not always utilized for the purpose of harmony else there would be no state of war. One primary reason Locke believed that the state of war was possible at all was incomplete development of reason in most humans, especially those responsible for leading armies to war.

Human reason, when followed and developed properly, provides rules to live by; the "law of reason."[20] These rules are not restrictions, in Locke's conception; they are instead the very means by which freedom is possible. The law provided by reason

[19] See Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* especially Book I, section 1.
[20] Locke, John *Second Treatise of Government* p. 32

> in its true notion, is not so much the limitation as the direction of a free and intelligent agent to his proper interest, and prescribes no farther than is for the general good of those under that law could they be happier without it, the *law*, as an useless thing, would of itself vanish; and that ill deserves the name confinement which hedges us in only from bogs and precipes.[21]

Insofar as the law of reason assists an agent in accomplishing happiness, it is a good thing. When it ceases to do so, it ceases to be a law. Without laws to guide action, Locke believed no one would be free because while reason supplies the means to accomplishing ends, for Locke it also provides ends. Locke states that "the end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to *preserve and enlarge freedom*: for in all the states of created beings capable of laws, *where there is no law, there is no freedom*: for liberty is, to be free from restraint and violence from others."[22]

The innateness of reason needs cultivation; humans are not born with a fully developed capability for reason. Because of the innateness of reason, Locke maintains that individuals are not considered responsible until they can understand the law. Some people are incapable of knowing the law, such as the insane, mentally handicapped and children. The primary need for governance over those lacking reason is their inability to know the laws of reason; because of their ignorance, they require guidance by one who does know the laws of reason. Each is considered to be under a guardian; one who is capable of understanding the law of reason. If a person gains the capability of understanding the law of reason, as in the case of a child maturing or if insanity is cured, they are free from the need for governance by another. The appeal to the laws of reason forms yet another basis

[21] Ibid/
[22] Ibid.

for Locke to question the absolute rule of a monarch; unless the subjects are to be viewed as children, incapable of reason, people should be capable of self-rule through knowledge of the laws of reason. Rule by a single monarch would constitute placing those subservient to the monarch into a state of nature (or worse a state of war) since the whim of the monarch controls their lives rather than the laws of reason.[23]

In the state of nature, people are inherently free; they live entirely by the laws of reason and are ruled by no other power. It is only when interests conflict, when people fail to follow the laws of reason, where the state of war comes about. Since reason is cultivated (or not) and born incomplete, then in a sense it is a failure of education, a failure to cultivate reason, which leads to conflict. For Locke, if individuals all have cultivated reason, interests would not conflict and the state of war would not come about.

Locke did not believe that the educational systems of his time cultivated reason and instead he believed they largely taught unnecessary knowledge. He was opposed to teaching impractical knowledge and went so far as to suggest that Greek and Latin should not be taught to children since it was of so little use. Were educational systems to better assist people in the cultivation of their reason rather than indoctrination or passing on "useless" knowledge then Locke believed more conflicts could be avoided.

Because Locke believed so strongly in the power of reason and its ability to discern ways of co-existing, he also believed that people could largely be relied upon to take into account the affairs and doings of others. Locke believed that this ability to consider the lives of others made people capable of regulating themselves, which in turn

[23] Locke leaves unconsidered the case of a monarch that rules by the laws of reason.

meant they did not require the added "assistance" of a monarch. His confidence in the power of reason meant that he trusted in the ability for people to have self-rule.

Self-rule, with the assistance of officials chosen by those who would be ruled, meant that Locke had provided support for democracy by appealing to human nature. It is within human's nature to be capable of reasonable self-rule and co-existence with others, and in those instances which exceed the ability of any one person to decide, it should be the aggregate of persons who decide.

IV. Justice and Its Relation to Human Nature

Justice, for Locke, is for humans to live freely, equally, rationally and to own property by laboring. This final part is of utmost importance because during Locke's time, the primary economic means of production was land-ownership. In an agrarian economy, the primary way to produce is to cultivate land. Those who could not own land were incapable of ever controlling their own destiny; they would only ever toil for another because they could never own the *means* of production. This was so important to Locke that he believed land-ownership was central to justice. Those who could own land had justice and those who could not were being done injustice.

As mentioned earlier, Locke felt it was labor alone that separated nature's products from man's ownership. For Locke, when someone else owns the means of production by which one toils, and takes the fruits of one's labor in payment for use of these means they are in effect doing an injustice to one's nature. Put differently, this situation would be one where the person laboring would be within the power of another

(i.e. the land-owner) and therefore would be in what Locke called the state of war. In Locke's chapter on the state of war, he said that "no body can desire to *have me in his absolute power* unless it be to compel me by force to that which is against the right of my freedom, i.e. to make me a slave."[24] Were it not the case that feudal lords owned virtually all lands, people would have had the option of working elsewhere. But the near complete-ownership of land made this a situation of absolute power over those who worked the land. The peasants were therefore no better than slaves of their feudal lords by Locke's theory.

Having the power over others that the feudal lords possessed was equivalent, in Locke's terms, to waging war on their servants. They had demanded their servants to relinquish their freedom; something Locke felt even their servants were not at liberty to do.[25] Because the Aristocracy promulgated this state of fief-slavery (whereby they acquired the labor of others, involuntarily, because they owned the land the peasants toiled) they had committed to a state of war against their servants. Use of force is the very definition of the state of war for Locke, and this is precisely how the Aristocracy maintained its strangle-hold: by owning the military resources of the day and utilizing them to enforce their land-ownership.

Lacking land-ownership meant the peasants of Locke's time were not free. The place of a fief is viewed as inferior to that of the lord and as such, the equality of the state of nature does not exist. According to Locke, the state of war can be resolved by killing

[24] Locke, John *Second Treatise on Government* p. 14. It should be noted that this injustice did not extend to actual slaves such as the ones he traded.
[25] Because the servants were owned by God, not by themselves, as mentioned previously.

the offender, or if the offending party admits defeat and requests a cease-fire.[26]

In the section titled "The State of Nature" from Locke's *Second Treatise*, he describes a situation whereby a thief has attempted to steal from another. The offended party has within their rights the ability to "execute the laws of nature"[27] that preserve the state of nature. In this situation, executing the laws of nature meant ensuring the continuation of the state of nature; something that can only be done as long as everyone lives rationally and in harmony. Since stealing from another is disrupting this harmony, Locke felt the offended party was within their rights to doll out punishment according to the crime. Fitting punishment was to be decided by "calm reason and conscience."[28] What specific punishment would fit the crime is left unstated; also left unstated is a means to determine punishments outside of appeal to universalizable reason.

Since anyone willing to utilize force to the extreme of killing another was violating the laws of nature and the harmony of reason, the feudal lords were acting against their peasant serfs. The use of military force in the enforcement of unjust land-ownership was breaking what Locke called the laws of nature. Violating the laws of nature undermined the peace and unity experienced in the state of nature and therefore Locke concluded that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."[29] By this reasoning, peasants had it within their rights to kill their lords for the injustice done to them by their hands. This argument was considered a powerful incentive during the Bloodless Revolution and the American Revolution to break from what they saw as unjust

[26] Ibid p. 16.
[27] Ibid p. 9.
[28] Ibid p. 10.
[29] Ibid p. 12.

governmental practices.

V. Locke's Theory of Individualism

Locke's conception of an individual appears, on its face, to be one of theological justification. For Locke, an independent entity is an individual because the creator grants life. All individuals are created equal in the eyes of the creator, so no one individual has the right to take it from another. These rights are granted by the ownership of the creator and unless one wishes to go against the wishes of this creator, one must recognize the rights of other individuals as well. Human freedom likewise is drawn from a religious premise that God punishes; because God punishes, we must deserve it, and therefore, we must be free in order to deserve punishment. Therefore, human freedom is founded on religious doctrines in Locke's conception of it.[30]

While the State of Nature is Locke's concept of ideal human interaction, the reality of individuals willing to enter into the state of war necessitates the creation of governments. Because governments are a necessary evil, individuals sacrifice the absolute freedom of the state of nature in return for the security of government. In turn, individualism is tied to the state since the relinquishment of rights to the state effectively endows the state with the capability to enforce infractions upon those rights by others. The state, and not the individual, now has the right of redress for wrongs. An individual, by this light, is not the absolutely free entity of the state of nature and the state of war; the individual has compromised freedom for rights. This compromise is what we call a

[30] Locke, John *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Constitutional State. This is what Locke views as the logical conclusion of his theory of individualism, a person who operates within the confines of a social contract, but is free within those confines. Best of all would be an individual who operates according to the laws of reason and therefore coexists with his or her fellow humans without the need of government, but that would also require the other person to operate under the laws of reason. Since humans are born only potentially reasonable and not actually reasonable, the continued state of nature is not an option.[31]

[31] Locke's argument for this rests on the fact that Adam was created with reason, but Cain and Abel were born only capable of reason and had to learn reason (or not as the case may be).

Chapter Two: John Stuart Mill

I. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the writings and thoughts of John Stuart Mill, especially his theory of human nature derived from Bentham's utilitarianism, the theory of justice entailed by this theory and his resulting theory of individualism. To begin, I examine how this theory of human nature relates to the existent social settings of his time, especially regarding the rise of the middle class in British political life and the transformation of Britain's economy away from an agrarian one and towards an industrial one. Also, one of the largest political problems of Mill's time was a result of the subsequent rise in power of the middle class and the antecedent exertion of their will upon minority groups and under represented groups.

Mill used D'Toqueville's phrase "the Tyranny of the Majority" to portray this practice for what it was: a new brand of injustice. For Mill, this was injustice because of his belief that autonomy of the individual was based on rationality and freedom; any movement or law that impinged upon this rationality by forcing the opinions of one group upon another was doing injustice to the nature of the individual. The use of wage-slavery during the industrial revolution struck Mill as an injustice on par with the servitude of the peasant, if not worse. Long work days in dangerous conditions, for little to no compensation, appeared to Mill as a practice that did not do justice to human freedom or reason. It was to the end of bringing about widespread freedom, reason and justice that Mill presented his theory of individualism that will be covered at the conclusion of this chapter.

II. Social Conditions of 19th century Britain

Mill lived from 1806 to 1873, the height of the Industrial Revolution and a period of drastic social change in Great Britain. Britain's society was beginning to feel the strain of industrialization and, more than anywhere in the world, was becoming urbanized. Populations began concentrating in urban centers in order to reap the benefit of plentiful and well-paying labor to be found in the burgeoning steam-powered factories of London; lack of urban planning quickly became evident. Indoor plumbing was a rarity and disease was common in the London slums. Cheap housing combined with shoddy living conditions and child labor, at the expense of childhood education, made for wide-spread suffering during this period.

Trends toward centralization of money in the hands of the middle class were continued, following the fall of the Aristocracy, as wealthy merchants bought and operated industrial factories. The power associated with ownership of land began to dwindle as agrarian economies shifted more toward industrial economies; ownership of the machines of production was quickly becoming the arbiter of social power. Even cultivated land could not generate the same amount of product as cultivated land using the machines of industry. Therefore while land ownership was still pivotal regarding political and economic power, it was waning in its potency due to the rising influence of industrial machine ownership.

British politics recognized this shift in power and began allowing more voter influence in the parliamentary system. This was especially apparent with the House of

Commons 1832 Reform Act, whereby nearly thirty percent of the British populous were given the right to vote.[32] This began a slow trajectory away from power in the House of Lords and towards empowering the House of Commons, but even here it was only the wealthiest of the "commoners" that became empowered. These wealthy few were those fortunate enough to own the factories and mills that began pooling wealth in their hands.

While the middle class fought for their own suffrage, they enacted extreme physical suffering on women, children and workers in their factories.[33] Even though wealth continued to centralize in the hands of the few factory owners, living standards for the average worker were virtually stagnant if not worse than during the feudal period. As Voth indicates, during the Industrial Revolution "[h]ousehold budget surveys and alternative indexes of living standards such as the human development index (HDI) strongly suggest that gains in living standards, broadly defined, were very small."[34]

Sixteen hour work days were not uncommon and crippling injuries were far from abnormal. The working conditions of the poor in England during the Industrial Revolution were nothing short of a new form of slavery. The feudal system had been replaced for one of wage-serfdom. Like the peasants of Locke's time, factory workers needed their job in order to live. But workers also needed their children to work in order to put food on the

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[32] A Brief Chronology of the House of Commons. http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/g03.pdf

[33] This is best demonstrated in the testimonies of children workers and overseers of British factories during this time. Sixteen hour work days were common as were beatings for slack workers or workers found dozing off at the job.

[34] Voth, Hans-Joachim Living Standards during the Industrial Revolution: An Economist's Guide, *American Economic Review*, Vol. 93, No. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the One Hundred Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association, Washington, DC, January 3-5, 2003 (May, 2003), pp. 221-226.

http://www.econ.upf.edu/crei/people/voth/pdf_files/living_standards.pdf#search=%22Living%20Standards%20during%20the%20Industrial%20Revolution%3A%20An%20Economist's%20Guide%22

table and pay rent for the shoddy home they most likely shared with as many as four other families. While it is true that children had worked in the fields of their parents during feudal times, fieldwork was a far cry from factory work.[35]

Further, because children were working as much as sixteen hours a day, formal education was all but non-existent among the working class. As Moykr stated, "[i]f England led the rest of the world in the Industrial Revolution, it was despite, not because of, her formal education system."[36] Because of this educational void, English children were not capable of intellectual development until after Child Labor laws were passed.

III. Mill's Theory of Human Nature

The unique education that John Stuart Mill received from James Mill, his father, in conjunction with Jeremy Bentham, the founder of Utilitarianism, deeply colored John Stuart Mill's thinking and writings. It is not difficult to track the influence of Bentham on Mill, he openly admits it; but while Mill believed that Bentham possessed "remarkable endowments for philosophy" and amazing abilities at drawing correct conclusions from premises, he also believed that Bentham was one "whose general conception of human nature and life, furnished him with an unusually slender stock of premises."[37] Mill hoped to "enlarge the number of premises while retaining Bentham's method and basic principle."[38]

Therefore the common scholarly mistake of equating the views on human nature held by Bentham with those held by J. S. Mill appears odd; however this mistake is

[35] It is primarily different in terms of daily length of labor and proneness to injury.
[36] Mokyr, Joel *The Lever of Riches*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 240.
[37] Citation quoted from *Bentham* as found in Anderson, Susan Leigh *On Mill* p. 43.
[38] Anderson, Susan Leigh *On Mill* p. 43.

factually inaccurate and intellectually misleading. Mill dedicated himself to "expanding" on Bentham's "slender stock of premises" about human nature and while Bentham believed that humans were primarily (if not entirely) motivated by pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, Mill believed in a more nuanced view. Utilizing the "method of Bentham," Mill carefully outlined the principles upon which his ethical system is based, starting with the principle of utility and expanding upon it until he arrives at his political conclusions.

But Mill was meticulous enough to include the arguments for why he held each principle in the hierarchy that he held them in. To begin, he felt that "[a]ll action is for the sake of some end, and rules of action, it seems natural to suppose, must take their whole character and colour from the end to which they are subservient."[39] This consequentialist bent belies unstated preference for teleological explanations; an inclination that is understandable but nonetheless left unstated.

Mill demonstrated why he shied away from the deontological theories for explaining human action, then popular, by criticizing Kant's *Metaphysics of Morality.* Mill felt bald intentionality was inadequate, even for a deontologist, at describing the range of moral behavior. Instead he stated that a goal is not what prevents us from acting immorally, but rather the fact that "the *consequences* of [the goal's] universal adoption would be such as no one would choose to incur."[40] The motivating force is avoidance of a certain set of consequences, so actions are taken in such a way as to steer clear of those outcomes. The motivating force is the concrete consequence to be avoided, not merely

[39] Mill, John *Utilitarianism* p. 138. A very Aristotelian position due to its teleological leaning.
[40] Ibid p. 140.

our distaste of selecting such a goal.

Like Kant before him, Mill also believed there was an ultimate principle in the actions of humans. For Kant, it was the Categorical Imperative, while for Mill it was the Greatest Happiness Principle. According to Mill, this principle states that

> actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain, by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.[41]

Mill further posits that

> pleasure and freedom from pain are the only things desirable as ends; and all the desirable things … are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.[42]

These two aspects of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain simultaneously form Mill's *Greatest Happiness Principle*. While this formulation sounds deceptively similar to Bentham's own, it is nevertheless different to the degree that Mill believed in qualitative and ethical hedonism rather than psychological hedonism.

A common and loud criticism of Utilitarianism is that seeking pleasure and avoiding pain is a philosophy appropriate only for lower beasts, but Mill did not believe this made Utilitarianism into a doctrine "worthy only of swine" for its obvious hedonistic slant. Rather Mill believed those who view it this way are too narrowly interpreting hedonism. Mill felt the comparison of hedonism with lower beasts was disingenuous because

[41] Ibid p. 144.
[42] Ibid p. 145.

> if the sources of pleasure were precisely the same to human beings and to swine, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other. The comparison of the Epicurean life to that of beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness.[43]

Mill felt human Reason elevated us above the wants and desires of mere brutish beasts because "[h]uman beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification."[44] Mill added that he was unaware of any thoroughly hedonistic philosophy that did not "assign to the pleasures of the intellect, or the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensations."[45] Mill's most well-known remark given in defense of this *ethical* hedonism is that "[i]t is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."[46] Said differently, the appreciation of art, theater, poetry and philosophy, the desire to experience events that no "beast" would be capable of experiencing does not undermine the fact that desire for those pleasures and avoidance of pain primarily motivates humans according to Mill.

It is important at this juncture to note Mill's adherence to a further clarification of the Greatest Happiness Principle. Mill felt it was not merely the happiness of the individual agent, but the Greatest Happiness for the greatest number that mattered most. Some object that without this clarification, Mill's system yields a narrowly selfish system whereby people go about seeking their own pleasure at the expense of others. In response

[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid p. 146.
[46] Ibid.

to this possible objection, Mill goes on to state that "there can be no doubt that the world in general is immensely a gainer by it [nobleness]."[47] It was to this end that Mill said to "always act from the inducement of promoting the general interests of society."[48] There is recent neurological data that supports Mill's belief that other's pleasure is as important as one's own pleasure, leading credence to his distrust of egoistic reductions of his theories of human nature.[49]

But in order to act toward the betterment of society, one must be the captain of one's destiny. Mill believed that "none but a person of confirmed virtue is completely free."[50] [51] But freedom here is not meant in the metaphysical sense

> A person feels morally free who feels that his habits or his temptations are not his masters, but he theirs: who even in yielding to them knows that he could resist; that were he desirous of altogether throwing them off, there would not be required for that purpose a stronger desire than he knows himself to be capable of feeling.[52]

Freedom, for Mill, is the ability to direct formation of one's own character and not some metaphysical quality of mind that is distinct and separate. Mill believed that freedom is the feeling of directing one's own life.

Because Mill believed freedom was practical freedom, also known as political

[47] Ibid p.149.
[48] Ibid p. 156.
[49] Moll, Jorge and Krueger, Frank and Zahn, Roland and Pardini, Matteo and de Oliveira-Souza, Ricardo and Grafman, Jordan. Human fronto–mesolimbic networks guide decisions about charitable donation *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science in the United States of America*, 2006;103;15623-15628
[50] Book 6, chap 4.
[51] I would agree if a qualification of this statement were adding: only someone with a quality education can have "confirmed virtue;" syllogistically only someone of quality education can truly be free. By quality education I mean more than a mere collection of ideas passed on by the "method of authority" described by Charles Sanders Peirce in his famous essay Fixation of Belief. A quality education is where an individual becomes capable of self-education; where an individual has learned the "habit of learning" as Dewey later put it. To use Mill's concepts, a quality education is one which allows an individual to direct his or her own life and not be a slave to either their habits or authoritatively acquired knowledge.
[52] Mill, John Stuart *A System of Logic*, Book 6, chap 2.

freedom, he further believed that freedom had its limitations. He stated that

> the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.[53]

This concept has come to be known as Mill's harm principle and it denotes his primary and most meaningful check on human freedom: whether or not one's actions bring harm to another. If the action does not harm another, it is acceptable. If it does bring harm, it limits the freedom of others and therefore is self-contradictory. One's own freedom, for Mill, can not come at the price of another's. The harm principle follows logically from Mill's Greatest Happiness Principle because if the right thing to do is to promote happiness and reduce pain, any action that produces happiness in one individual but also produces pain in another could not be sought unless the happiness of the one far outweighed the pain caused to the other. When pushed, Mill also stresses the need to hold a principle similar to the Golden Rule.[54]

Political opponents of Mill's cited the unchanging nature of humans as their basis for viewing humans as by and large evil creatures, but Mill believed that much of what went by the name of human nature in his day was what Aristotle called "second nature." Culture, not instincts, was what Mill believed shaped much of human action. If Mill's belief is true, then much of what was viewed as "bad" about human nature was acquired and not innate. Therefore the primary means to solving the overwhelming bulk of humanity's problems, according to Mill, was to change the circumstances by which the

[53] Mill, John Stuart *On Liberty* p. 9.
[54] More on the topic of the Golden Rule in Chapter Four

problems arise. He briefly summarizes this view by saying that

> I have long felt that the prevailing tendency to regard all the marked distinctions of human character as innate, and in the main indelible, and to ignore the irresistible proofs that by far the greater part of those differences, whether between individuals, races, or sexes, are such as not only might but naturally would be produced by differences in circumstances, is one of the chief hindrances to the rational treatment of great social questions, and one of the greatest stumbling blocks to human improvement.[55]

Mill went on to act upon this belief by attempting to enact the first Women's suffrage laws in Britain, successfully enacting child labor laws, animal welfare and many other social reforms.

Human nature, for Mill, was also largely determined. In his *System of Logic*, he gives one of the strongest defenses of determinism in the canon of Western philosophy. There he describes Necessity as

> simply this: that, given the motives which are present to an individual's mind, and given likewise the character and disposition of the individual, the manner in which he will act might be unerringly inferred; that if we knew the person thoroughly, and knew all the inducements which are acting upon him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event.[56]

He further shows his support for this doctrine in the next chapter where he states that

> depending in the main on those circumstances and qualities which are common to all mankind, or at least to large bodies of them, and only on a small degree on the idiosyncrasies of organisation or the peculiar history of individuals; it is evidently possible, with regard to all such effects, to make predictions which will *almost* always be verified, and general propositions which are almost always true.[57]

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[55] Mill, John Stuart. *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Gen. Ed. John M. Robson. 33 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-91., pp. 269-70.
[56] Mill, John Stuart *A System of Logic*, Book 6, Chapter 2, Section 2.
[57] Mill, John Stuart *A System of Logic*, Book 6, Chapter 3, Section 2.

A common criticism of Mill's view of human nature focuses on his attention to human freedom opposed to our nature as determined by forces outside of human control.[58] He revised his views as he grew older without ever completely abandoning the position of determinism. But perhaps this tension is only superficial. Mill could very well have believed that while human behavior and action was almost (or entirely) determined by forces outside of our control, still the *feeling* of freedom was valuable to humans, therefore people should adopt practices such that they support human freedom. According to Mill, even though people can not choose to accept or deny the argument (being determined), the knowledge of the argument acts as one more factor in their future judgments.

IV. Justice and its Relation to Human Nature

Mill dealt with Justice directly in the last section of his work titled *Utilitarianism*. There he utilized the Greatest Happiness Principle as the arbiter of Justice. Because happiness is not just one's own pleasure, but also pleasure of others, sympathetically experienced, we can conceive of Justice. Mill states that the

> idea of justice supposes two things; a rule of conduct, and a sentiment which sanctions the rule. The first must be supposed common to all mankind, and intended for their good. The other (the sentiment) is a desire that punishment may be suffered by those who infringe the rule.[59]

I take the rule of conduct to be his Greatest Happiness principle. Alternately, I take the sentiment for Justice to be a natural feeling to Mill as the

[58] Wilson, Fred John Stuart Mill *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
[59] Mill, *Utilitarianism* p. 198, clearly an adoption and evolution of Hume's ethics.

> animal desire to repel or retaliate a hurt or damage to oneself, or to those whom one sympathizes, widened so as to include all persons, by the human capacity of enlarged sympathy, and the human conception of intelligent self-interest."[60]

This desire itself stems from the idea of rights. For Mill, a right "reside[s] in the injured person, and [is] violated by the injury"[61] A right is something owed to a person by a community; something expected and agreed upon. Mill states that a right is violated when one of five things occurs: 1) when liberty is deprived, 2) when a law that *ought* to be a law is disobeyed, 3) when someone is deprived that which they deserve, 4) when faith in an obligation is broken and 5) when judgment is partial and preference is shown where favor and preference are not due.[62]

This conception of injustice falls perfectly in line with Mill's view of human nature. Because we desire freedom and value it, when this is removed we take harm. The desire to receive what we deserve comes from a psychological state of pleasure. This pleasure extends to doling out punishment, as well and Mill remarks that

> It would always give pleasure, and chime in with our feelings of fitness, that acts which we deem unjust should be punished though we do not always think it expedient that this should be done by the tribunals.[63]

Since the Greatest Happiness Principle applies beyond our own pleasure, we should also take pleasure when *others* receive benefits from social interaction. Even were we to adopt a selfish attitude there is one thing that no "human being could possibly do without": security. Mill believed that security is important to rational self-interested humans because

[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid pp. 187-8.
[63] Ibid p. 192.

> on it we depend for all our immunity from evil, and for the whole value of all and every good, beyond the passing moment; since nothing but the gratification of the instant could be of any worth to us, if we could be deprived of everything the next instant by whoever was momentarily stronger than ourselves.[64]

The need to protect ourselves involves cooperation with others. Because we depend on others, if for nothing else other than for them not to harm us, we should seek the common good.

Mill's conceptions of freedom as essential to happiness, being the arbiter of good and bad, combined with his conception of reason, being the expander of our natural sentiments so as to include the multiplicity of humanity in our own happiness, results in his theory of justice.

V. Mill's Theory of Individualism

Before Mill's conception of the individual, Kant had reconstructed Locke's views. He rejected theological grounds for individuals and instead posited metaphysical grounds in their place. Kant wished to make the theory of individualism more inclusive than Christians alone by removing the need for theological foundations. Kant grounded the theory instead upon assumptions about the ontology of persons, especially related to their free will. Mill wished to make individualism even more widely acceptable by removing the need for metaphysical agreement. Instead Mill based his theory upon psychological concepts regarding pleasure and pain.

This basis of pleasure and pain placed the theory of individualism within the realm

[64] Ibid p. 199.

of empirical verification (or falsification). If persons were such that Mill's ethical hedonism motivated their actions, his conception of justice logically followed. Mill likewise rejected the need for a *social contract* when he stated that

> A favorite contrivance has been the fiction of a contract, whereby at some unknown period all the members of society engaged to obey the laws, and consented to be punished for any disobedience to them; thereby giving to their legislators the right, which it is assumed they would not otherwise have had, of punishing them, either for their own good or for that of society … I need hardly remark, that even if the consent were not a mere fiction, this maxim is not superior in authority to the others which it is brought in to supersede.[65]

Mill felt the "fiction" of a social contract did nothing to solve the problems it had been created for. Mill's belief that we can only interfere in the affairs of another when they do harm to others means that the social contract would be null and void least harm were done. Further, Mill clearly rejects the concept of having some contract be binding which was signed ages ago, if at all. Therefore, rather than base his conception of individualism on theological, metaphysics or contractual foundations, he instead girds it with psychology. The result is his theory of individualism. Mill believed that individuals were the arbiters of their own actions and so he is considered to be one of the strongest proponents for liberalism, checked only by his harm principle.

[65] Mill, John *Utilitarianism* pp. 201-2.

Chapter Three: John Dewey

I. Introduction

I examine various writings of John Dewey's related to individualism and place them within the context of late 19th century and early 20th century America's concrete social conditions. Next I examine his theory of human nature with its three components of habit, impulse and intelligence. Because Dewey valued the ability of intelligence to free us from the shackles of routine, it stands as a vitally important aspect of his theory of human nature. Therefore I show how his theory of individualism was a criticism of pressing and concrete social injustices of his day, especially widespread unemployment and continued wealth inequality. I examine Dewey's desire for social equality and what he called *growth*, particularly as it relates to a *democratic way of life*. Living democratically, for Dewey, was growing and utilizing social intelligence to reshape habits and direct impulses and therefore doing justice to one's nature. A democratic culture and way of life, cultivating the growth of independent people is Dewey's theory of individualism.

II. Social Conditions of 20th Century America

Dewey was born just before the final shots of the American Civil War were fired. While he did not directly experience the war, he was intimately familiar with its consequences. He did not grow up in the South, and while he was not faced directly with the economic depression that followed the conflict, neither were the Northern states entirely isolated from its effects. Even though Dewey was raised in a mostly rural area of Vermont, and later attended the University of Vermont, he was acutely aware of poverty

in America.[66]

One of the more influential events in Dewey's life was the formation of his Laboratory School at Chicago. It was during his time with the Laboratory School that Dewey came to realize the plasticity of human nature combined with the developmental aspect of human culture. His experience with the education and psychological development of children contributed to his movement away from Hegelian idealism and toward experimentalism. Here he saw firsthand how it was that individual children came to acquire knowledge. Rather than rationalizing about the necessary conditions for the possibility of knowledge, Dewey could see children acquiring knowledge of the world and applying it. The experience deeply affected his concept of philosophy and was a contributing factor in his turning away from idealism and toward a naturalistic world-view.

The build-up of the United States' entrance into World War I likewise effected a change in Dewey's thinking, especially in light of his own involvement supporting the armed entrance of the United States into World War I.[67] While Dewey "regarded no event as completely inevitable,"[68] he had come to accept that America's hand was being forced and that, by and large, would have no alternative except to escalate and enter the war as more than a financier and munitions dealer.. Dewey believed that a failure on America's

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[66] Dewey had witnessed the Pullman's workers revolt of 1894 in Chicago, as he entered the city to begin a teaching position, and this had a lasting effect on his views regarding the dominant economic forces at play in the United States at that time. Decreased worker pay combined with stagnant rent led to an economic crisis among the Pullman workers. With less money coming in, combined with constant or rising costs, the workers were finding it hard to afford the basic necessities of life. Meanwhile, continued dividend payments of 8% were dolled out to shareholders as workers starved to meet rent payments.

Huffman, Nicole. Pullman Strikes Out.

[67] Cywar, Alan John Dewey in World War I: Patriotism and International Progressivism, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn, 1969), pp. 578-594.

[68] Ibid p. 579.

behalf to enter the war as a fighting force would very likely result in German triumph; something he also believed would eventually spell disaster for America.[69]

Following the war and because of the rise of monopolistic corporatism, information propaganda and global recessions, *laissez faire* economics had failed to fulfill its promissory note of equality and public good. Rather than ushering in a golden era of human relations, Dewey believed *laissez faire* economics of "hands off" governance had wrought devastating consequences upon those least capable of overcoming hardship. Factors combined after the 1920's to bring about the single largest economic depression the United States has ever experienced: the Great Depression.

During the Great Depression, massive unemployment, unchecked inflation and widespread poverty arose with increased crime and rampant hunger. In effect, new injustices had emerged from changing economic situations. The 1932 Presidential election centered on the cause of the Great Depression, with Hoover claiming it was the global depression largely caused by the war while Roosevelt blamed the Republican policies during the 1920's and underlying flaws in the American economy.[70]

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[69] It is important to note that Dewey preferred peace to violence and his optimism about the outcomes of the war was largely due to atypical situations. His criticisms of war as seen in Human Nature and Conduct, published just one year after his initial support of the war, show that Dewey cared little for armed conflict. But he did not foresee the influence of propaganda on public opinion, and his optimistic view of democracy was eventually slightly tempered when progressive peace did not come about from the treaty process. Dewey also could not have seen the rise of the standing army and therefore likewise the military-industrial complex with its corresponding influence on the political process.

[70] While it is could possibly be true that *Laissez Faire* was less to blame than a global depression following the War, *Laissez Faire* economics did little to nothing to mitigate the impact of existing conditions. Governmental intervention to stop run-away decrease in pay, increases in rent, continued inflation and loss of faith in the public of the banking system all contributed to economic decline. Interventionist policies could easily have meliorated any or all of these conditions, but ardent faith in a "hands off" policy prevented any such involvement. Therefore, even were *Laissez Faire* not the "cause" of the Great Depression, it was a contributing factor to widespread unemployment and continued injustice.

Nelson, Cary *The Depression in the United States--An Overview*

Dewey witnessed the Great Depression and declared continued faith in *laissez faire* to be nothing more than a shadow of a dream. Allowing unchecked freedom of business had resulted not in ever more just distributions of opportunity but rather in brutal disruption of competition through "legal" albeit unjust channels and the subjugation of workers to bring about sweat-shop conditions in order to maximize profits.

The living conditions of workers were never so obvious to Dewey until his experience with Jane Adams and her Hull House from 1892 to Addam's death in 1935. There he worked with, what today goes under the moniker of "charity," to meliorate the lives of people who were economically downtrodden by providing adult education. Rather than critiquing theories of poverty and labor in abstraction, Dewey was able to directly see the effects of poverty and what specific conditions led to its continuation and cessation.

Despite the efforts of the Hull house, widespread poverty continued while massive concentration of wealth brought about an era of decadence for the minority, side-by-side with crushing poverty for the majority. This crushing poverty, combined with the inability for the average citizen to direct their future and live democratically, is what Dewey viewed as widespread injustice.

III. Dewey's Theory of Human Nature

Dewey's theory of human nature aimed, as elsewhere, to remove dualisms and he specifically focused on the popular distinction of his time: nature versus nurture.[71] Locke's theory of human nature was implicitly a discussion of an innate, inborn human freedom.

[71] Said differently, the "dualism" of human nature and acquired culture.

This belief in an innate human freedom continues to this day as the basis for universal human rights, but it also is the bedrock for the older theories of individualism still dominant today. Dewey overcame this distinction of innateness against environmental factors by discussing the primacy of habit in human conduct, the role of impulse and the function of intelligence.

Rather than stating a dualistic opposition between environmental conditions and innateness, Dewey discussed how it would be possible for biological impulses to be shaped by cultural acquisition, and each in turn directed by the use of intelligence. While all humans share a common biological heritage, the cultural differences between time and place are often overlooked when philosophers discuss human nature. Rather than seeking what is true across time and from place to place, most philosophers take the unspoken assumptions of their specific culture as immutable aspects of human nature. All too often "philosophical premises taken to be absolute truths of human nature and the good are instead only the consequential reflections, in intellectual life, of the historical and cultural circumstances that gave them birth."[72]

Dewey turned this static view of human nature "on its head" by positing that even though accumulated cultural practices were "dominant" in the directing of human action, habit was inert without biological impulse. He saw impulse as resulting in one of three possibilities: either it is 1) "surging, explosive discharge –blind, unintelligent," or it could be 2) "sublimated – that is, become a factor coordinated intelligently with others in a continuing course of action" otherwise it was 3) "neither immediately expressed in isolated

[72] Radin, Margaret Jane A Deweyan Perspective on the Economic Theory of Democracy, *Constitutional Commentary* 11.n3 (Winter 1994) p. 546.

spasmodic action, nor indirectly employed in an enduring interest. It may be 'suppressed.'"[73] Impulse is capable of blindly groping explosively, re-shaping habits or suppressing habits.

While accumulated habit may act as a channel for the energies of impulse, they are never so thoroughly ingrained as to completely contain it. Our habits could become so "second-nature" (to borrow an Aristotelian term) as to appear as a native stock of powers and abilities, and even sometimes to confuse philosophers into thinking of them as native apparatus; but habits can be undone, inborn nature can not. At best, inborn nature can be suppressed.

Direction of energies may be largely determined by learned response, but impetus to action is always impulsive. Anger, sexual desire, hunger and fear may be readily understandable, but they are only expressible and meaningful in light of acquired habits. The impulse motivates while the habit enacts. Taken individually, fear may appear self-contained or even instinctual. But Dewey claims this is not so. The sensation of dread is never twice the same. It also encapsulates different subjects. Fear of birds is a different thing than fear of public speaking. Each fear has its own actions, separate and different and each learned.

However, Dewey also saw a role for intelligence in human nature. Intelligence is not equivalent with acquired habits or native impulses, but rather is shaped by and in-turn shapes each. Habits "restrict [intelligence's] reach, they fix its boundaries,"[74] and "the routineer's road is a ditch out of which he cannot get, whose sides enclose him, directing

[73] Dewey, John *Human Nature and Conduct* p 156.
[74] Ibid p. 172.

his course so thoroughly that he no longer thinks of his path or his destination."[75] But habits can also play a liberating role for "the more numerous our habits the wider the field of possible observation and foretelling. The more flexible they are, the more refined is perception in its discrimination and the more delicate the presentation evoked by imagination."[76]

Habits may restrict the field of view, but they also make room for the possibility of expanding it. "Rigid" habits are difficult to escape while "flexible" and "refined" ones make for the possibility of expansion and growth. It should be noted that

> habit does not, of itself, know, for it does not of itself stop to think, observe or remember. Neither does impulse of itself engage in reflection or contemplation. It just lets go. Habits by themselves are too organized, to insistent and determinate to need to indulge in inquiry or imagination. And impulses are too chaotic, tumultuous and confused to be able to know even if they wanted to.[77]

Dewey stated that the function of intelligence is to act as the arbiter between impulse and habit; it is the knowing aspect of human nature. Since neither habit nor impulse is capable of bringing to terms "old habit and new impulse," Dewey concluded there must also be an intelligence aspect of human nature.

Intelligence directs impulses that would otherwise randomly grope and applies the steadying influence of old habits to new situations. Fear of the unknown or hatred toward unspecified objects is the spasm of muscles and wasted effort. Without concrete, discreet and specific acquired reactions, fear is just recoil and anger is just explosion of thought. Each of the three facets of human nature work in tandem and "without habit there is only

[75] Ibid p. 173.
[76] Ibid p. 176.
[77] Ibid p. 177.

irritation and confused hesitation. With habit alone there is a machine-like repetition, a duplicating recurrence of old acts. With conflict of habits and release of impulse there is conscious search."[78]

This "conscious search" Dewey terms *inquiry,* following in Peirce's intellectual footsteps. Inquiry, for Dewey, is the ordered investigation into problematic situations, the use of intelligently modified habits to guide impulsive inquisitiveness about otherwise frustrating obstacles. Those who lack the properly "flexible" and "refined" habits required to engage in thorough inquiry are largely incapable of overcoming novel and unforeseen impediments. The inability to overcome problems faced results in discomfort, frustration, confusion and tends to bring about indifference, lethargy and laziness. It isn't that human nature is inherently lazy but rather the concrete social conditions are such that laziness naturally follows. To blame a poor person who works a routine job for their desire to get the most done with the least effort is not to blame an unchanging aspect of human nature but rather a specific cultural response to industrial work.

Continued inability to overcome repeated obstacles may result in random, perturbed groping impulses at best or resigned apathy at worst. Neither apathy nor blind fumbling is likely to bring about concrete change and so those individuals lacking the "habit of learning"[79] must resign themselves to forces beyond their control; forces that perhaps act largely outside of their comprehension. This resignation is acceptance of the individual's incapability of changing their situation. Being incapable of changing one's situation is what Dewey viewed as the absence of freedom. Unless these shackled

[78] Ibid p. 180.
[79] Dewey, John *Experience and Education.p. 36*

individuals happen upon fortune or inheritance, they will continue to be trapped in circumstances beyond their control; they will live at the whim of others.

Because Dewey viewed culture as one of the strongest platforms for human freedom, due to the liberating ability of "flexible" habits such as the habit of learning, he saw maintaining the democratic institutions which brought about liberating culture as one of the primary roles for philosophy. Among the democratic institutions, Dewey believed education was of the utmost importance due to its directing influence upon acquired culture. Education, for Dewey, had the possibility of encapsulating and directing the habits of those being educated far more effectively and directly than any other institution. However, this is not to say that Dewey believed education operated in a vacuum. Economic, political and religious influences also held sway in his view of cultural transmission, but yet he had faith in the transformative power of experimental education.

Critics of Dewey often point to the existing public education system as being the result of his push for universal education. However, such appeals are half-hearted at best. Little of what Dewey believed was important in acquiring the habit of learning goes on in contemporary schools (much less the schools of his time). Experimentation, practice and social intelligence were the factors Dewey stressed, not regimentation, standardization and objectification of knowledge. Such practices fly in the face of Dewey's efforts to expand a democratic culture through universal education and supplant it with yet one more influence that retards human freedom rather than expanding it.

So tightly interwoven is "innate" human nature and acquired culture that in no uncertain terms, the acquired habits of humans *are* their freedom. Lacking free and flexible

habits, a human is consigned to a life of routine. But habits do not come into existence ex-nihilo; they are acquired from the culture where a human being is situated and the culture is a complex of factors largely beyond the control of any one human. In a democratic culture, the people that are raised with it have the capability to direct their own lives, intellectually grow and change their concrete conditions. In a culture largely dominated and made static and unchanging, people are consigned to their fates as determined by chance of birth, class, station and other "accidental" properties rather than those "essential" properties shared by all.

Dewey's recognition that even culture was influenced by and in turn influenced other factors that shape the growth of individuals meant he did not believe in a single "underlying cause" that brought about the existent conditions. Rather, the complex of institutions work in tandem to act as the conditions under which individuals find themselves situated. Changing one may or may not bring about a change in consequence because these factors overlap and co-determine outcomes. Merely insuring political freedom is not enough to bring about lasting freedom, since the democratic institutions do not maintain themselves.

IV. Justice and its Relation to Human Nature

Dewey spent most of his time "lobbying" for a theory of justice that can be roughly stated as equality. By equality he did not mean an equality of capability, but rather one of need.[80] When discussing standards of living, he described one canon of social justice as

[80] In this way, Dewey's conception of justice is similar to both Locke's and Mill's.

that "which demands for all equal industrial opportunities."[81] Elsewhere he describes justice as "mutual benefit."[82] One historian of thought described Dewey's efforts as

> one long sustained endeavor to break down such dualisms as that between subject and object, experience and nature, mind and body, duty and desire, the individual and society, the school and society, the child and curriculum, means and ends, moral values and science, the religion and the secular, the spiritual and the material, God and the world. In these divisions, Dewey found the heart of what he viewed as the pressing social and intellectual problems of the age. Overcoming these separations became for him both the way of individual freedom and growth and the road to social justice.[83]

Equality of industrial opportunity, mutual benefit, individual freedom and attainment of personal growth make up the core of justice for Dewey. As he has said of other thinkers, however, it should be noted that this is of course a matter of his concrete social conditions. Had industrial opportunity not been an issue, because of abundance, it would very likely have never appeared as an issue of injustice for Dewey. But in his time, the inability for nearly twenty-five percent of the working population to find paying occupation so contributed to the social ills of his day as to eclipse other pressing matters.

Dewey believed that the ideology of a previous era, the creed of the pioneer and frontiersman, continued in verbal assent but not in practice. The "rugged" individualism of the explorers or the Settlers was a concept of a bygone era[84], yet still it held persuasive influence. The "mostly settled" and "mostly stable" America of the early 20th century had

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[81] Dewey, John *Ethics*, Part III The World of Action, Measures to Elevate Standards of Living, MW 5.509.

[82] Dewey, John *Ethics*, Part III The World of Action, Unsettled Problems in the Economic Order, Criticisms Upon Individualism, mw.5.474.

[83] Rockefeller, Steven C. *John_Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism,* Columbia University Press, 1991 p. 2.

[84] The influence of John Locke on even the founding fathers of the United States Constitution has been largely documented, but it also remains as a dominant thought pattern and cultural milieu until the present day.

given rise to a far more inter-connected and "corporate" life than that of the survivalist or woodsman. He saw the concept of competition combined with outdated individualism no longer relevant to concrete conditions as the primary culprits for social ills of his day. Even though self-sufficiency had become merely nominal assent of a by-gone era, without recognition of the inter-subjective cooperative environment of contemporary business practices and social situations, people would be a "house divided"[85] within themselves.

Dewey's first criticism of competition conjoined with individualism is that "competition cuts both ways."[86] When multiple employers seek labor, and compete among themselves to pay for it, the laborer is given the ability to select and choose the best price and working conditions; the reverse is true for the employer: situations where the employer is pitting laborers against one another leads to sweat-shop conditions.

> The second and seemingly fatal objection to competition as a means to justice, is that *free competition under an individualistic system tends to destroy itself*. For the enormous powers which the new forms of economic agency and technique give to the individual who can wield them, enable him to crush competitors.[87]

Individualism as a means to overthrow entrenched class interests, or friendly competition alone may not necessarily be self-defeating, but the confluence of an outdated concept with fierce competitive practice is inwardly destructive. Individual gain combined with competitive practice may benefit a select few economically, but on the whole it damages many (perhaps even those who "benefit" from it due to the ingrained habits they must acquire to continue its practice). This taken with an obsession for material advance rather

[85] A chapter title from Dewey's *Individualism Old and New.*
[86] Dewey, John *Ethics* Mw 5.475.
[87] Dewey, John *Ethics* Mw.5.476.

than social welfare lead to "[l]aissez-faire individualism hinder[ing] progress toward the democratic ideal by mistaking progress in technological control over the physical environment for progress in freedom."[88]

It is important at this point to remember Dewey's view of human nature; the role of intelligence in expanding habits and redirecting impulse is an inherent part of our psychological make-up. When it is stifled by rigidly acquired habits we are, in effect, doing injustice to our nature. The condition of the sweat-shop promotes blind routine; it promotes the acquisition of excessively inflexible habits. These habits commit the sweat-shop workers to a life of the "routineer" whereby they are largely ruled by their habits, moving from one situation to another with little conscious oversight. This dull, monotonous lifestyle is the antithesis of what Dewey felt was the "only meaningful ethic" of growth.

Growth is the central facet of Dewey's philosophy because it stems from overcoming problematic situations through inquiry, through the use of intelligence. Dewey defines inquiry as "the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole."[89] The use of inquiry according to this definition results in ordering, directing, overcoming the indeterminate and becoming determinable.

When telescoped to the largest and most general problems facing a society, inquiry

[88] Radin p. 544.

[89] Dewey, John *Logic: A Theory of Inquiry* lw 12.108.

does not result in regulation of other humans (totalitarianism) but a harmonizing of individuals to their society. Inquiry on the largest scale is when people interact in a democratic fashion, when people use intelligence as a "community of inquirers"[90] to overcome systemic problems facing them, as a collective. But inquiry is not the use of authority to dictate final or ultimate solutions. Rather, it is

> [w]hen an expert tells a farmer he *should* do thus and so, he is not setting up for a bad farmer an ideal drawn from the blue. He is instructing him in methods that have been tried and that have proved successful in procuring results. In a similar way we are able to contrast various kinds of inquiry that are in use or that have been used in respect to their economy and efficiency in reaching warranted conclusions.[91]

In this way, the role for education in bringing about justice becomes clear. Schools and curricula should be designed to assist students in developing the habit of learning, the habit of inquiry. By cultivating the scientific method and applying it in ever wider aspects of human experience, Dewey believed intelligence could be used to further human freedom. We would be doing justice to our nature as the growth of our habits allowed us to overcome indeterminate situations faced rather than being at the whim of forces beyond our comprehension or control.

V. Dewey's Theory of Individualism

Rather than dwelling on the concepts and ideologies from previous times and places to explain and buttress his concept of human nature and justice, Dewey turned instead to existent situations. America had become corporate, inter-dependent and

[90] The community of observers is a Peircian phrase appropriate to Dewey's theory of democracy as a way of life.
[91] Ibid.

collectively oriented. Therefore Dewey believed a collective mentality should be adopted to better interact with the existing environment. Only as our outward actions and thoughts harmonized with concrete reality would individuals cease to be lost and inwardly divided. This does not end with a meek acquiescence of the status-quo, but rather a re-organization to overcome a problematic disconnect. Even were this divide to be overcome tomorrow, the harmonized ideology and concrete conditions would form the basis for new and different obstacles not currently considered, but a method and a means for overcoming those problems would be in place.

Dewey believed the way to overcome problematic situations is already available and known. Previous philosophers laid the foundation and

> started not from science, not from ascertained knowledge, but from moral convictions, and then resorted to the best knowledge and the best intellectual methods available in their day to give the form of demonstration to what was essentially an attitude of will, or a moral resolution to prize one mode of life more highly than another, and the wish to persuade other men that this was the wise way of living.[92]

By utilizing the "best knowledge and best intellectual methods" we can utilize social intelligence and share knowledge acquired by past experts, modify it to fit current situations using intelligence and collectively tackle the problems we face. This is the basis upon which Dewey formulated his theory of individualism.

The knowledge of individuals, when seen as parts of a whole rather than atomistic points, can come together in democratic activities to investigate, inquire and seek out solutions. Dewey stated that:

Science and invention, which are themselves a fine illustration of the

[92] Dewey, John *Philosophy and Democracy* MW 11.43.

> balance and interaction between individual and social intelligence, individual effort and social cooperation, are making possible in many ways a state of society in which men have at once greater freedom and greater power through association, greater individual development and greater socialization of interests, less private property but greater private use and enjoyment of what is common.[93]

This use of science, invention, past inquiries and social intelligence results in community oriented individuals, who realizes their interdependent nature, and who are capable of overcoming obstacles they face. He is not advocating a "nanny state" but rather a culture of cooperation over and above one of cut-throat competition. He would not have supported a government that promoted dependency, because dependent citizens are not free to choose their own fates.

Dewey's theory of individualism was not an attempt to introduce herd-mentality. In fact, he would be chagrined at the prospect of blind obedience to his suggestions, or dogmatic adherence to his findings. His student, John Herman Randall Jr., said it best when he stated that

> Dewey did not want his experimental and tentative conclusions parroted, or reduced to a creed. He wanted men to go on working on his problems - that is, on the kind of intellectual problems that seemed important to him.[94]

Dewey's investigation was but one step in a long inquiry. The individualism left to us by Dewey can best be regarded as a step toward the Great Community. It was Dewey's hope that this movement would occur within his lifetime, because beliefs transmitted from the past had come to him in such a way that he saw a way to transform the problems facing

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[93] Dewey, John *Ethics*, Part III The World of Action, 24. Unsettled Problems in the Economic Order § 8. Present Tendencies mw.5.498.

[94] Randall, John Herman Jr.. The Future of John Dewey's Philosophy*, The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 56, No. 26. (Dec. 17, 1959), p. 1010.

him, clearing up the confusions passed down to him and proceeding in aiding others in the process of growth. Sidney Hook, another student of Dewey's, characterized him as

> the philosopher of human growth in the age of modern science and technology, as the philosopher who saw man not as a creature with a fixed nature, whether conceived as a fallen soul or a soulless configuration of atoms, but as a developing mind-body with an historical career, who because he does something in and to the world, enjoys some degree of freedom, produces consequences never witnessed before, and leaves the world different from the world into which he was born[95]

I share Hook's conception of Dewey and I believe that his humanism, combined with his faith in human intelligence and his optimism concerning human freedom paint him not as the technocrat his critics sometimes describe him as, nor as a extremist as political detractors often labeled him, but rather as a philosopher of growth.

Etched upon Dewey's tombstone is the final paragraph from his book A Common Faith, a work he undertook in an attempt to make way for a naturalist faith: a faith in science, reason and humanity. In that paragraph, Dewey strove to show that

> the ideal ends to which we attach our faith are not shadowy and wavering. They assume concrete form in our understanding of our relations to one another and the values contained in these relations. We who now live are parts of a humanity that extends into the remote past, a humanity that has interacted with nature. The things in civilization we most prize are not of ourselves. They exist by grace of the doings and sufferings of the continuous human community in which we are a link. Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it. Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class or race. Such a faith has always been implicitely the common faith of mankind. It remains to

[95] Hook, Sidney John Dewey--Philosopher of Growth, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 56, No. 26. (Dec. 17, 1959), p. 1013.

make it explicit and militant.[96]

It is my contention that Dewey's faith in the "continuous human community" characterizes most fully his theory of individualism.

[96] Dewey, John *A Common Faith* p. 87.

Chapter Four: Critical Evaluations

I. Introduction

Having grown up in a culture largely dominated, in name at least, by the belief in individual effort, hard work and just rewards, I was aware of a general theory of the rugged individual. But like most, I was unaware of its origin and evolution. I knew it was an important belief that was central to economic theory, political parties and to some extent the business mind and American culture writ large, but I had only a superficial understanding of it. I remember hearing once, as an undergraduate, the Greeks had no idea of individualism; the concept utterly baffled me. Did they not recognize their separateness? Did they not recognize that they each had thoughts, beliefs and desires different from their fellow citizens? It was only later, when I began the investigation into individualism, when I realized those aspects were merely superficially part of a theory of individualism; far more important is what is native to all humans. Is the desire for freedom, the desire to privately possess property or the desire to possess power native to all humans? Is the avoidance of pain and the seeking of pleasure what motivates all human activity? Are human rights in fact inborn aspects of human nature? In the terminology of Aristotle, what qualities were essentially human and which were only accidentally so. These questions and more motivated me to do a historical analysis of the theory of individualism.

Being largely motivated by a desire to understand the American culture, I first investigated John Locke's work due to its influence on the founding fathers of this nation. I read his Second Treatise and found in it a steady usage of a concept of individualism, but

could find no theoretical underpinnings for the concept itself. I turned to his Essays and his Letter Concerning Toleration and delved into what he thought motivated humans to act. I also read some historical analysis and biographic information on Locke to find what had motivated him and perhaps what influenced him. I found the classic concept of an individual comes largely (although not entirely) from Locke's time. Locke himself goes a long way to formulate a theory of individualism (although I never saw it explicitly spelled out in such terms). For Locke, individuals have a natural state and the purpose of governments is to prevent certain aspects of this natural state from being promoted while allowing others to continue. Governments are supposed to prevent the "state of war" while promoting the "laws of reason."

Next I turned to John Stuart Mill because he makes what is most likely the strongest case for individualism (in the traditional sense of the term). I began by reading On Liberty and Utilitarianism but slowly realized I had to turn to his Logic to find a thorough explanation of his concept of human nature. I also found Mill to be a conflicted philosopher; in On Liberty he describes humans as primarily creative, free and desiring to stay so. But in his Logic, where he uses a more thoroughly empirical method of explanation, he describes humans as determined by necessary factors, almost mechanically operating. It is supposedly just this tension, between freedom and necessity, which brought about his emotional break-down, and it was a tension he apparently struggled with for the remainder of his years. On the one hand, he wanted to describe humans as motivated to act based upon a small set of characteristics, but on the other hand, he did not believe that human interaction could possibly be described with such a set. His

tendency toward Bentham's hedonic explanation was never far from his mind, but after the death of his father and Bentham, he began to distance himself farther from each.

Then I turned to John Dewey, arriving at an American perspective on the tradition. As is the case with any research on Dewey's thought, I had to turn to multiple books and multiple articles, from Individualism Old and New to Freedom and Culture to Human Nature and Conduct and beyond. Individualism was a theme that Dewey investigated throughout the corpus of his work; he took this issue very seriously because it had become a large cultural factor for American life. The old theory of individualism which held humans to be born equipped with natural rights, the state of nature and even the calculating utilitarian view of humans had made American into a house divided upon itself. On the one hand, people nominally espoused a theory of rugged individualism. On the other hand, almost all of our activities require or culminate in collective action be it corporate business, team sports, civic life or even just communication. Very little of what went for American life turned out to be individual endeavor. So Dewey offered a new individualism, one where we recognize the interconnected nature of political life, where we do not view ourselves as atomically separable from one another. Therefore, Dewey suggested we take seriously the fact that our "beliefs" differed from our actions and recommended changing our beliefs about what it is to be an individual to incorporate the influence of culture and others more centrally. Does this end in a "group think" or some other such collectivist mentality? Dewey did not believe so, unless democratic activity is to be considered such.

Finally I end my thesis with some critical remarks on each thinker's theories and

utilizing Dewey's theory of ends-means continuum I explicated what I believed was the next means in line to accomplish a new individualism: public philosophic discourse. I believe now more than ever philosophers should enter into public debates in order to be cultural critics and assist in assessing cultural practices.

Political, cultural, religious and military leaders during the lives of each thinker had taken qualities which were accidental or coincidental about humans and wrongly considered them to be the basis for selective treatment, privilege and the determiner of inheritance of wealth, education and power. Locke criticized the supposed lineage of Adam combined in conjunction with divine revelation that was the basis for the dominance of the landed Aristocracy of his time. Mill questioned how majoritarian democracy combined with limited suffrage and the rise of influence of industrialists could serve to better the conditions of individuals in his day. Dewey condemned the dehumanization that was experienced during the Great Depression and chastised the status quo practice of non-interventionist economic policies for the staggering unemployment as well as the exploitation of labor without appropriate compensation.

Each of these three thinkers was criticizing specific environmental conditions during their life. While their thought can be extrapolated and utilized outside of this context, it should be done with caution and hesitancy. The continued use of Locke's theories, once the dominant force of Aristocracy had waned, led to the exploitation of majoritarianism. Continued existence of Locke's thought combined with aspects of Mill's Utilitarianism formed the intellectual background which Dewey criticized. The sustained belief in outmoded and inadequate ideas in the face of changing or changed cultural,

social, technological and economic conditions results in the need for an adaptation or abandonment of fossilized cultural habits[97]; what is required is a new inquiry resulting in a changed conception of *an individual* through the use of human intelligence.

II. Criticisms of Locke

There are five reasons for questioning Locke's theories as appropriate for contemporary circumstances. The first deals with his dual state of nature and war and the innateness of reason, the second deals with internal inconsistencies in the role of reason for Locke, third is a criticism of the innateness of war to human nature. Fourth, I criticize Locke's faith in the laws of reason. Finally a criticism is offered comparing Locke's theory of ownership to contemporary corporatism.

John Locke's theory of the state of nature, as adopted from Hobbes, is a two-sided coin. On the one side there exists the rational co-existence of humans, living by the laws of reason and in harmony. On the other side exists the state of war, where humans impinge upon the freedom of others, perhaps even to the point of taking their lives. While these two explanations appear to describe quite a large amount of human behavior, Locke also described human reason as being innate, god-given and complete. One of the central problems with Locke's description of a dual-natured human nature is that the state of war only comes about from the corruption of reason. However, if he wishes to base innate and inalienable human rights upon the presence of reason, how would it ever be possible for reason to fail? If reason is such a thoroughly ingrained aspect of our human nature, it

[97] I owe this phrase to Nathan Ellebracht.

appears contradictory, then, for humans to ever be capable of entering into a state of war. Either reason is not inalienable (or said differently, humans are fallible and therefore Locke's foundation for human rights is shaky at best) or humans should be incapable of entering the state of war. The former is clearly at odds with Locke's work and the second is patently false; humans enter into war with one another all too frequently. Therefore, Locke's theory of the inalienable innateness of reason needs to be modified to allow for the corruption of said reason. But if such a theoretical move is made, would those people whose reason is corrupt no longer be eligible for human rights? Without further revision, it would appear individuals with corrupted or incompletely cultivated reason would not, by Locke's account, be eligible for human rights.

Another tension found within Locke's theories exists in his conception of humans as *tabula rosa* at birth compared to his conception of reason as an arbiter of right from wrong. On the one hand, Locke wishes to criticize innate ideas (in order to unseat the landed gentry as well as provide a criticism of divine revelation in general), but on the other hand his description of reason as the basis for harmonious co-existence in the state of nature appears to support a sort of innateness in reason's ability to arbitrate between right and wrong action. For Locke, either reason has the ability to innately know good action from bad action, or humans must cultivate reason to know good actions from bad actions. If humans must cultivate reason to know good actions from bad ones, then appeal to reason as the arbiter of right from wrong without appeal to the cultivation of reason is either empty or disingenuous.

Locke considers the "State of War" to be an aspect of human nature. When reason

fails to arbitrate tensions, war is inevitable. But in *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey criticizes the innateness of war to human nature. While Dewey admits that war is "woven out of the stuff of instinctive activity"[98] for humans, this does not mean that the act of war itself is instinctual. The conditions for the possibility for war stem from "anger, pugnacity, rivalry, self-display, and such like native tendencies"[99] but are not themselves determined by these drives. Further "pugnacity and fear are no more native than are pity and sympathy"[100] but rather are themselves habituated responses to native impulses; to believe these will inevitably end in warfare is "as if the savage were to believe that because he uses fibers having fixed natural properties in order to weave baskets, therefore his immemorial tribal patterns are also natural necessities and immutable forms."[101] A stronger case that war is not native to our nature is made when Dewey stated that

> pugnacity, rivalry, vainglory, love of booty, fear, suspicion, anger, desire for freedom from conventions and restrictions of peace, love of power and hatred of oppression, opportunity for novel displays, love of home and soil, attachment to one's people and to the altar and the hearth, courage, loyalty, opportunity to make a name, money or a career, affection, piety to ancestors and ancestral gods – all of these things and many more make up the war-like force. To suppose there is some one unchanging native force which generates war is as naïve as the usual assumption that our enemy is actuated solely by the meaner of the tendencies named and we only by the nobler.[102]

The impulses and habits which lead to war are not native to human nature; they are acquired responses handed down and habituated by continuous use, generation after

[98] Dewey, John *Human Nature and Conduct* p. 110.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid p. 11.
[101] Ibid p. 110.
[102] Ibid p. 118.

generation.[103] To be sure, war is a deeply ingrained habit, perhaps, but to call it an innate aspect of human nature appears to be a hasty generalization.

Locke put great stock in the laws of reason. He believed that were it the case that all individuals were fully cultivated in reason, living by the laws of reason alone would bring about the state of nature and require no intervention by governments or other political bodies. People would, in effect, live in a state of perfect harmony with one another, were they only to follow the laws of reason. However, Dewey was critical of this theory when he stated that

> The aroma of the continental tradition brings about the sayings of those who settle so many social problems to their own satisfaction by invoking a distinction between liberty and liscense, identifying the former with "liberty under law" – for in the classic tradition law and reason are related as child and parent. So far as the saying assigns to law an origin and authority having nothing to do with freedom, so far, that is, as it affirms the impossibility of free conditions determining their own law, it posits directly, even if unintentionally, to the totalitarian state.[104]

Reason, by this argument, dictates to the laws their possibility of freedom. However, whenever a condition exists such that the law is dictated by a source other than "free conditions,"[105] it runs the very real risk of fascism, totalitarianism, dictatorship or tyranny. Faith in reason, devoid of the conditions required to bring about freedom, is just one more misplaced faith. Recognition of slavery is not the same as actualizing freedom. The role and use of reason to bring about freedom is only ever one factor of many. Taking reason

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[103] Recent studies of a tribe of baboons (a war-like simian cousin of homo sapien), whose overtly aggressive males were decimated, resulted in overturning the balance of power in the favor of the more docile female baboons. Since then, even new-comer males have exhibited an abject lack of hostility *four* generations later. A "cultural shift" occurred resulting in a more peaceful tribe of baboons.

Sapolsky, Robert M. A Natural History of Peace, *Foreign Affairs*, February 2006.

[104] Dewey, John *Freedom and Culture* p. 26.

[105] Conditions not decided by free institutions but instead by fiat.

as the sole arbiter of freedom is a course of action that runs the very real risk of overturning the very goal it aims at.

Locke's theory of ownership stated that mixing one's labor with natural products is the basis for granting ownership of the finished product. This very straight-forward principle, when applied to the labor of contemporary corporate practices appears conflicted. On the one hand, people are free to sell their labor, on the market, for whatever price it will garner. This appears to be quite in line with Locke's theory of value. However, corporate laborers are incapable of controlling the means by which they labor; many are not able to come into the possession of the machines and financial resources necessary to perform contemporary business practices outside of pure chance or dumb luck. The inability to own land, in Locke's time, was the main focus of his theory of labor precisely because it was the means by which people could labor freely and not at the whim of another. Since ownership of the means of labor are not at the disposal of those now working, it appears that contemporary practices are at odds with Locke's concept of ownership.

III. Criticisms of Mill

This section will consist of five criticisms of Mill's philosophy. I question the "profit and loss" mentality of the theory of utility as being little different than bottom-line pecuniary practice. Next I question the consequentialist bent of Mill's philosophy and how this can support atrocious means if the end result is "good." Then I discuss Mill's view of society as an aggregate of individuals and criticize this view as too narrowly fixated on

individuals. Following that, I criticize Mill's theory of freedom and harm as too narrowly focused on the result rather than the means to accomplishing it. Finally, I apply Mill's harm principle to some contemporary corporate practices.

Dewey says of Utilitarianism, the doctrine Mill openly and loudly espouses, that it is a theory which "consists in calculation of courses of action on the basis of "profit and loss" to which they lead."[106] Even in light of Mill's modification of Bentham's hedonic calculus to a more qualitative or ethical calculus, still the central criticism remains sound. Taking profit and loss as the basis for determining action, however, can often result in performing actions for another which that individual would not like performed in the name of utility. Wiredu has argued that while Mill did at points claim to have included the Golden Rule in his conception of utility, even going so far as to claim that "to do as you would be done by … and to love your neighbor as yourself" are the highest formulations of the principle of utility, nevertheless the Golden Rule was not explicitly stated in the principle of utility.[107] If the Golden Rule is how we are supposed to interpret the principle of utility, why not include its formulation as a principle (if not the principle) of Utilitarianism? Evidently even intelligent commentators did not realize its "centrality" otherwise they would not have pushed him to make the statements I quoted earlier. Without some variation of the Golden Rule, Utilitarianism's inclination to profit and loss thinking easily habituates an individual into operating on bottom-line thinking. It is no surprise that many businessmen today espouse something like a Utilitarian mindset (albeit

[106] Ibid p. 199.
[107] Wiredu, Kwasi On the idea of a Global Ethic *Journal of Global Ethics* vol. 1, no. 1, June 2005, p 49, quote from Mill found in *Utilitarianism*.

devoid of a principle such as the Golden Rule).

Another criticism of Mill's theories is of their consequentialist inclination. A consequentialist theory determines the rightness or wrongness of an action or rule based upon its *actual* consequence. While at first blush this appears entirely sensible, some rather disturbing means can be used to accomplish otherwise praiseworthy ends. Take, for instance, the preemptive invasion of a country in order to free said country of a brutal dictatorship. While the end, were it accomplished, is an admirable and praiseworthy end, if the means of accomplishing this are the bloody and devastating use of military might, many individuals shudder to accept this as an acceptable course of events. A thorough-going Utilitarian would tally up the profits (no more brutal dictatorship) versus the losses (civilian casualties, the temporary disruption of economic progress, destruction of infrastructure, etc.). If the pain and suffering caused by the continuation of the dictatorship are outweighed by the benefits of its overthrow, regardless of the means needed to accomplish it, so be it. A strong criticism of this is Dewey's continuum of ends and means. On this he states that

> means are means; they are intermediates, middle terms. To grasp this fact is to have done with the ordinary dualism of means and ends. The "end" is merely a series of actions viewed at a remote stage; and a means is merely the series viewed at an earlier one.[108]

Since I never encountered a similar reliance upon the continuum of ends and means in Mill, I am only left assuming it is lacking. With this ends-means continuum lacking, unsavory means could be utilized to bring about otherwise "useful" or even "good" ends. Another way of stating this is some ends would be pursued *by any means necessary*. But

[108] Dewey, John *Human Nature and Conduct* p. 34.

if Dewey's continuum of means and ends is correct, brutal means result in nothing other than brutal ends. The bloody means are the end viewed at an "earlier time" while the "end" would be those means viewed at a later time. Said differently, Dewey would be critical of any attempt to bring about peace through violence, any attempt to bring about democracy through tyranny and any attempt to bring about freedom through enslavement. Mill, also, might also have been unwilling to accept these courses of action, but his writings are silent on the matter.

Mill's harm principle states that human freedom should ring out and stop only where it impinges upon the ability of others to likewise be free. However, this formulation of freedom ignores the concrete social, political, economic, and other conditions that *allow* for freedom. Someone may not be capable of entering *freely* into a course of action, whether it harms anyone or not. Merely placing harm as the limitation does little to *produce* freedom. Case in point, the victims of Hurricane Katrina were "free to leave" New Orleans whenever they wanted. No one was preventing them from leaving. However, lacking the material ability (i.e. lacking ownership of a vehicle) prevented them from leaving. In effect, they were less free than those who owned vehicles. While no one directly caused them harm, still their freedom was checked. Without theory specifically directed at meliorating this difficulty, Mill's theory of freedom appears inadequate.

A final criticism is in light of the application (or rather the lack of application) of his harm principle. Taking Mill's harm principle at face value, harm is the arbiter of where freedom is checked. Dumping of toxic chemicals that would otherwise be expensive to dispose of, speeding to sale products not fully tested for safety in order to save money on

research and development, as well as lobbying efforts meant to motivate nations to war by munitions manufacturers are all examples of common corporate practices that would violate Mill's harm principle.

While the Utilitarianism mindset of profit and loss may have been widely adopted, the greatest good for the greatest number has not been so likewise adopted, nor has Mill's harm principle. Taken in piecemeal, the principle of utility without the principle of the greatest good is dangerous. Consequentialist thinking combined with the mentality of "profit and loss," and non-social atomistic individualism, make for a dangerous concoction.

IV. Criticisms of Dewey

I discuss three problems with Dewey's theories. I question Dewey's optimism in democracy, examine his description of returning to immediate experience, especially as related to people who readily and quickly drop into their cognitive mode, and I examine Dewey's support of armed conflict in WWI in light of his ends and means continuum.

Dewey had great faith in the ability for Democracy to arrive at the most intelligent solution to a given problem. Through collaboration and deliberation a community of inquirers was better equipped than any single inquirer to arrive at the best available course of action. However, Dewey had failed to take into account the influence of widespread propaganda usage and how insidious this form of mass suggestion could be on individuals until after the end of World War I. Rather than promoting discussion and engaging the public on a given issue, mass suggestion limits issues to short "sound bites" easily

digestible and requiring little in the way of critical engagement. Mass media in the form of radio and television had subdued public debate more thoroughly than ever before. Instead of acting democratically and creatively, people separate into bitterly divided camps along loose and shaky grounds. To be fair, Dewey had envisioned a restructuring of the institution of public education to combat this effect, but lacking implementation, democratic activity became little more than mass suggestibility and empty verbiage on the part of public officials to avoid commitment to a position that could be criticized.

Dewey's concept of immediate experience can be characterized, with little in the way of violence to the theory, as returning to homeostasis. When problems or situations far outside of normal expectation of events occur, Dewey stated that we drop out of the immediacy of experience and enter into a diagnostic mode of sort. Typically, this mode was the cognitive mode (if people's habits are properly oriented), but it could easily be the aesthetic, political, ethical or any number of other modes. The point of entering this new mode was to interpret the experience, incorporate it, direct it and *return to immediacy*. However, there exists a pugnacious group of individuals that appear to violate this rule continuously and Dewey himself belonged to such a group: philosophers.

By most accounts, philosophers spend as much, if not more time, utilizing the cognitive mode of experience than they do in its immediate form.[109] Too often the immediate mode is the less familiar to those who feel more comfortable dropping into the cognitive mode of experience. Aristotle went so far as to describe cognition as the greatest

[109] Thales was so often inclined to have his head in the clouds that it is rumored he once fell into a well! If the cognitive mode is supposed to return us to immediacy, why is it then that philosophers often appear to others to have their "eyes ruined" from the journey outside of the cave of ignorance? See also Plato, *The Republic* VII, 516e.

end for which humans are suited, rather than just a mode utilized for problem solving.[110]

Dewey supported America's entrance into WWI because he believed doing otherwise would be disastrous for America and perhaps even for all of Europe. His outspoken support of armed conflict appears deeply at odds with 1) his own preference for non-violence and 2) his means-ends continuum. The first criticism perhaps can be circumvented by stating something along the lines of "in times of dire need, preferences should be overlooked, even on matters of major importance." While this statement may be true, it does nothing to protect against the second criticism: if war is the means, how could Dewey have conceived of an end that was positive? It appears to be an outright contradiction to hold the continuum of means and ends (to see means as "steps on the path" toward an end) where bloodshed and violence is the means and the democratic community is the end.

V. Closing Remarks

For traditional Liberal thinkers, a "grab-bag" of theoretical positions has historically gone "hand-in-hand." To begin, there is Locke's empiricism whereby all knowledge is reducible to sense-experience. Anything else is *merely* the gluing together of sense experience known as reason. Once committed to a view of sense-datum and mere relations of ideas, materialism comes easily afterwards. All of this is in accord with certain modern thinkers, who hold there are either mental substances, or there are physical substances; a dualism adopted from Descartes. This dualism was pushed further when

[110] Aristotle *Nichomachean Ethics,* book X, chapter 7.

Descartes' incompatibility of interaction of substances forced Modern thinkers to choose either a plurality of non-interacting pre-established substances (Leibniz' monadology) or a single substance (Spinoza's idealism). Sense-datum falls squarely under the category of physical "stuffs" and so Locke believed an empirical epistemology committed one to a material ontology and denied any purely "mental" substance.

Materialism, in turn, goes side-by-side with a mechanistic conception of the universe adopted from Newtonian or Cartesian physics. Causal determinism follows from mechanistic materialism and so many empiricists are likewise committed to causal determinism. Where in this model exists freedom, some ask. It appears to systematize the universe and make no room for freedom save for "the absence of external impediments" that Hobbes posited in *Leviathan*. Humans, in this vision, are mere phenomenon operating entirely causally and determined from the point of creation; a re-hashing of Leibniz' pre-established harmony has effectively occurred, even though his ontological monadology is rejected in favor of materialism. It is no surprise that these thinkers also believe human rights can be little more than the removing of "artificial" blockages to the inherently "free" human nature. After all, "freedom" in this view is something inherent and inborn; it needs only the removal of the chains of society before it can be actualized.

However, if this freedom is omnipresent in human nature, no institution would be capable of stamping it out. It would be "ontologically prior" to any intervention on the part of culture or experience. A conception of *laissez faire* would of course follow, by removing "artificial" blockages, human freedom could ring out. Historically this is precisely what occurred. The conceptual tension of blocking immutable aspects of human

nature with "artificial" institutions was glossed in order to institute pecuniary practices that favored the rising dominance of the middle-class and merchants. .

Just as John Donne stated that "no man is an Island unto himself," a theory of individualism, especially as espoused by thinkers such as John Dewey, erodes the dualism of self and society. I do not believe this commits one to some version of communism, but rather a variant of socialism or perhaps communalism, where private ownership and common ownership converge at a happy medium. Neither the "individual" nor the collective as a whole are taken as logically prior; rather, the individual is a part of society and society exists as more than merely a collection of individuals. Societal factors loom large in any given human's life, but there would be no societies save for the existence of humans. Neither could exist without the other.

At this point, some may ask why an individual could not live without social existence; Aristotle called such entities that lived outside of social life either "Gods or beasts" but not people. Further, a newborn child could not exist for more than a single day (perhaps less) without the altruistic intervention of another, typically its paternal guardians. Therefore human community is required for anyone to reach adulthood. Feral children, children raised by other animals, never develop beyond simple animalistic instincts and therefore do not cultivate their innate reason, human intelligence or their ability to communicate with others outside of simple yelps, grunts and moans. Even feral children must be a minimum age before being abandoned else they do not live at all. Likewise, were a fully developed and cultivated person to retreat forever into solitude, they would bring with them the acquired social intelligence of their culture, history and

education as learned from others.

Philosophy serves as one social factor that plays a role in the development of individuals. Just as more "concrete" factors of economics, politics, military conquest, religious activity, education and mass media play pivotal roles in contributing to the absence of human freedom, so also does philosophy play a role of systematizing these influences and abstracting them from specific situations into general concepts and allowing for the identification of proper weight. But systemization occurs only if philosophy discusses "cultural conditions, conditions of science, art, morality, religion, education and industry so as to discover which of them in actuality promote and which retard the development of the native constituents of human nature."[111] If the bulk of the critical philosophy being produced by "the schools"[112] continues to be myopically concerned with necessary conditions of language rather than the applications of languages to social conditions, philosophy has ushered in another age of counting how many angels fit on the head of a pin.

The "Linguistic Turn" of 20th century philosophy ushered in an age of formalism that Dewey had long feared would occur. By formalizing philosophy, larger and messier issues such as social justice become mere "linguistic anomalies."[113] Why must many philosophers in America be largely silent rather than constantly and loudly engage in discussing those activities which promote and retard the constituents of human nature? Power-brokers in Washington do not accept such limitations nor do the International

[111] Dewey, John *Freedom and Culture* p. 33.
[112] A term of derision in Locke's time that just may be appropriate today
[113] Philosophers such as Richard Shusterman suggest that in the "post-modern" era philosophers should be confined to campus activism (reference)

Monetary Fund and World Bank harbor any such limitation of scope.

It is not that public philosophy is impotent or lacking a voice; we are merely purposely self-muted. When philosophers such as Peter Singer communicate with the wider public, there are mixed reactions. Some hate him for his message, many do not understand him, but those who do understand him often find it compelling and interesting. Those not steeped in the canon of philosophy are not swayed by deconstructionalist arguments, post-modern puzzles or analytic formalism. They are engaged by discussions about the rich and the poor, access to healthcare, environmental degradation and political reform. Formalizing these issues will do little to resolve them.

It is just these issues that philosophers need to focus on in order to empower philosophy, engage the public, become more involved with melioration of societal ills and work to reduce suffering. It is also these issues that philosophers are largely silent about. There are rare individuals that venture onto the public stage, but they are few and far between. Paradoxically, with the largest enrollment of the American Philosophical Association than ever before, there are likewise fewer public Intellectuals than ever before.

Therefore to enter again the public stage, philosophers must examine the concrete practical effects of the current and existent social conditions and take these as a starting point. Then, we must imagine a point in the future that is desired to be attained. Then we must project the most immediate means to accomplish this end. Finally, we should examine the power structures that exist which promote widespread injustice and attempt to mediate their influence.

Locke has shown that it is possible to contribute to the bloodless disruption of a

hegemonic power by loudly criticizing the assumptions which its system is based upon. Mill's time in parliament saw an expansion of suffrage, the first work on women's suffrage and child labor laws. During Dewey's life, he was pivotal in founding organizations such as the NAACP, the Teacher's Union and he also sat on the trial of Trotsky, in Mexico. Many existing social ills can be meliorated, but only through the use of intelligence, careful planning and the intervention of people willing to question the indoctrination of the status quo. This is the spirit of Socrates as he ceaselessly questioned those in power showing that they, by and large, did not deserve the responsibilities they held. It is the role of philosophy to be the watchdog of freedom.

Dewey took culture to be the most active aspect of human nature and he took the role of philosophy to be a critic of culture. Combine this with the fact that culture, and not power, or love of money, or love of freedom or some other supposed "psychological factor" is at the root of human action, then criticism of culture is a far more influential role than most philosophers are willing to admit. But philosophers are only critics of culture when they engage cultural issues. Therefore, unless philosophers once more engage in criticism of culture, especially pecuniary culture, then love of money and power will continue to be dominant explanations for human motivation. Much like when an inappropriate diagnosis of a medical condition is made, steps to meliorate current social ills will continue to be ineffective at best and counter-effective at worst without the correct ailment in mind.

In conclusion, in order to isolate which conditions "promote and which retard the

development of the native constituents of human nature,"[114] it is important to focus on educational reform. With educational experimentation focused on promoting the native constituents of human nature to assist individuals in becoming self-directing, flourishing members of communities, it is possible for those that come after us to receive their culture "more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it"[115] such that they may more easily adapt to the conditions they face. The reader will here have to excuse me since the educational consequences of individualism go beyond the scope of this work and therefore must be the subject of a monograph of their own.

[114] Dewey, John *Freedom and Culture* p. 33.
[115] Dewey, John *A Common Faith* p. 87.

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