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The critique of abstract individualism.

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THE CRITIQUE OF ABSTRACT INDIVIDUALISM

A Dissertation Presented

By

JOHN BUELL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

June 1974

Major Subject Political Science

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THE CRITIQUE OF ABSTRACT INDIVIDUALISM

A Dissertation

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June 1974

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The Critique of Abstract Individualism

(June 1974)

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The author examines two contrasting conceptions of human nature--the abstract individualist and social conceptions. The first assumes that human beings are born with a set of basic desires which determine the most important aspects of behavior. These desires do not vary with the society and society can only channel or limit these. The social conception assumes that language and social institutions constitute in large measure an individual's identity and that the needs of the individual vary with the society. The author examines some philosophical aspects and implications of these views. He then shows that different views of human nature are closely connected to particular approaches to the study of society. Lastly, he shows that different philosophies of moral discourse as well as different understandings of contemporary political issues are connected to differences in the view of human nature one holds.

INTRODUCTION

Many modern political scientists are fond of saying that their discipline has moved beyond philosophical speculation about such questions as human nature. The task of political science is to establish laws of political and social change, and in this process empirical research rather than speculation is necessary.¹ Indeed, whatever worth the great classics of political theory have lies in some of the testable empirical propositions which can be culled from them, such as Aristotle's discussion of the causes of tyranny, rather than in airy speculation on such topics as human nature.

Yet in the history of political thought views of human nature seem to have been rather closely connected with the way in which theorists study human institutions and action. And the ways in which theorists study man also seem to have pushed their conceptions of human nature in particular directions. Thus Hobbes's belief that man and society can be studied as we study a watch seemed to reinforce and be reinforced by his conception of human nature as a complex mechanism. Though the connection here does not seem to be a matter of logical entailment, each assumption puts pressure on the other.

¹ See for instance the introduction by Harry Eckstein to Eckstein and David Apter, eds., Comparative Politics, (New York: Free Press, 1963).

The possibility of this connection first became apparent to me in studying Hobbes, and I became curious as to whether it was an accident of Hobbes's work or something which could be seen in the work of other political thinkers. I will argue in this thesis that a view of human nature which may be characterized as abstract individualist² pervades much of mainstream political science and that this view is connected to a particular method of study popular in contemporary social science.

The abstract individualist conception of human nature suggests that man comes into the world with a set of given or innate wants, needs, and purposes. These basic drives in man are abstracted from any particular society, and they determine the most important aspects of man's action in society. Society is basically a collection of these independent beings. It can restrain and channel their impulses, but these drives exist with or without society and cannot be basically altered by it.

This philosophical anthropology implies a number of other important ideas. It suggests that human reason

²Steven Lukes discusses many ramifications of the concept individualism, including the concept abstract individualism in his Individualism, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

merely channels or finds outlets for the given human passions. The reasons people give for actions and the concepts developed in social life are not basic to human action. They come after the fact. This conception of human nature is also deterministic--man is a being who is driven by his innate passions and his actions are regarded as the inevitable result of the passions and their opportunity for gratification.

The first chapter of this thesis, then, will be devoted to spelling out the contours of this conception of man through an examination of its first great spokesman, Hobbes. Then the connection of this view to ways in which man is studied will also be considered.

In the next chapter I will argue that a remarkably similar view of man pervades the work of mainstream political science. My principal example here will be Robert Dahl, especially his work on the nature of political inquiry and on American democracy. With Dahl, as with Hobbes, the view of man bears a close connection to the methods of study adopted by the social scientist and the ways in which societies are evaluated. The belief in basic passions underlying our most important actions with the accompanying view of human reason and determinism imply that the proper study of man must be the search for laws which govern man's behavior. Furthermore, it is believed that in the

quest for such laws the moral values of the investigator can and must be kept separate from his scientific investigations.

Political scientists are not to be faulted because one can discover in their work such a connection between an implicit view of human nature and methods of study. The problem lies rather in the fact that the connection is unrecognized and the view of human nature unexamined and inadequately supported. If a view of man and an approach to science each reinforce the other, it is not adequate to claim that views of man are unimportant or "supported by evidence", for the method of study is not neutral with respect to the answers to the question on this point. Because of this fact it is important to look at a significant and historically influential critique of the Hobbesian position, that provided by Rousseau. In chapter three I will spell out the social view of man espoused by Rousseau and the ways in which it systematically rejects the central assumptions of Hobbesian individualism.

As is the case with the atomistic conception of man, Rousseau's view carries with it implications for the study and evaluation of society. In particular it leads us to question the search for causal law-like regularities in human behavior and to reconsider the

connection between explanation and normative discourse in social science. The fourth chapter will explore these issues through an examination of Peter Winch's The Idea of a Social Science in which a social conception of man is developed, a conception with which a far different approach to the study of man is connected. This approach explains an individual's action at least in part in terms of his reasons and denies that behavior is determined in the natural scientist's causal sense. And it assumes that the study of a society must begin from an understanding of the concepts and beliefs available to the participants.

The moral implications of a social conception of man will be examined in the fifth chapter. There I will argue that Winch has pushed a social conception of man in directions Rousseau would never have found comfortable. Rousseau maintains that human beings are social creatures constituted in part by the language and institutions of their society and, yet, also argues that some societies are better than others. I will advance some arguments in support of this apparently paradoxical position.

My purpose in spelling out these competing conceptions of human nature are threefold.

I hope to show, first, that a connection between the methods of study and assumptions about man does

exist and thus that questions about human nature may not be brushed aside or merely treated "empirically", for what we regard as empirical treatment depends in part on and helps sustain our view of man. There is a need for social scientists to become more self-conscious about the view of human nature they hold and its ties to many aspects of their work.

A second purpose I have involves advocacy of a particular perspective. I regard a social conception of human nature as superior to the theories of abstract individualism prevalent in mainstream political science. In the course of delineating the social view of man I will advance some philosophical arguments which support this position and its implications.

Finally, this thesis is not intended to be merely an academic discussion which will make social scientists more self-aware. We all hold theories of human nature, at least implicitly, and policy differences often turn on and sometimes can be better understood in terms of the competing conceptions of human nature. In the last chapter I will examine some public policy works critical of certain aspects of American politics. These works differ significantly in outlook and proposals, and I will show that they can be better understood and judged when we consider the images of man to which they are

indebted. In fact serious consideration of a radical notion of community, advocated by many today, is facilitated by recognizing that this ideal is indebted to a defensible conception of human nature quite different from that which prevails in our society and our social science literature.

CHAPTER I

HOBBS¹ AND ABSTRACT INDIVIDUALISM

Hobbes's Contract Theory and The State of Nature

In order to understnad the abstract individualist conception of human nature and its role in contemporary political science, a useful place in which to begin is Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan. Hobbes of course does not present the only possible version of abstract individualism, but its central assumptions are clear in his work, and his influence has been great even on those who do not accept the political conclusions of his theory.

Hobbes expresses his conception of human nature in the course of his discussion of the state of nature. That conception underlies his view of social interaction once human beings leave the state of nature and enter the civil social state.

In the state of nature human beings are actuated by two basic passions: they seek endlessly after all

¹This analysis of Hobbes is indebted to several studies. The most useful to me have been John Plamenatz, Man and Society, Vol. I, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963) and Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision, (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1960) and Norman Jacobson, "Thomas Hobbes as Creator," (New York: General Learning Press, 1971).

things which bring them pleasure and they try to avoid violent death. Hobbes believes that these basic given facts of human existence are reflected in our vocabulary of good and evil. "Good" to Hobbes means no more than that to which an individual aspires:

But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calls good. . . For these words of good, evil, and contemptible are ever used with relation to the person that uses them, there being nothing simply and absolutely so, nor any common rule of good and evil to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves.²

People in the state of nature are all relatively equal, and so the condition which results from the presence of the basic instincts is a war of all against all. Every man seeks power in order to gain security for his possessions. The quest for power is not itself basic but derives from fear in a world where all men are seeking goods and all are relatively equal. Yet this quest for power brings security for few. The equality of all and their endless search for power insures that life in the state of nature will be a continuous war of all against all. In a condition where each man must provide his own security, ". . .there is no place for industry because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently

²Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. by Herbert W. Schneider, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1958), p. 53.

no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea . . . , no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."³

This state of war would not end except for the fact that people are also capable of reason. By the concept reason Hobbes means that human beings are able to use their minds in order to figure out prudential courses of action which will better insure the secure attainment of their basic desires. The role of reason as a guide to the fulfillment of our passions is already implied in the discussion of good and evil. It is made explicit in the analysis of how men come to leave the state of nature. There we are told that a law of nature is a general rule "found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life . . . and to omit that by which he thinketh it may be best preserved."⁴

The outcome of reason's quest for the secure sat-

³Ibid., p. 107.

⁴Ibid., p. 109

isfaction of man's passions is the social contract. This contract is an agreement among all equal citizens that each will obey a common sovereign on the condition that his fellow citizens will likewise do so. The contract is not between citizens and the sovereign but merely an agreement among all citizens to give up the power to pursue all objects of desire at will. It is the outcome of prudential reasoning of beings motivated by their individual ambitions.

Once the sovereign state is established the citizen is under an obligation to obey the sovereign as long as that sovereign provides order. When it no longer does so it in effect ceases to be a sovereign.

Hobbes does not believe that people will be basically changed either by the process of making the contract or by entering civil society. They will continue to pursue their own individual desires within the limits enforced by the state, and the state's ultimate weapon, the use of force, is necessary to insure that each person's egoistic passions will not go so far as to destroy the social order. The preservation of order remains so problematic that Hobbes feels it necessary to suggest maxims to guide the sovereign in the preservation of order. And even within society Hobbes expects that the fear of death will remain so strong that persons charged

with capital crimes will resist attempts by the state to seize them and he regards such resistance as legitimate because the fear of violent death led to the contract in the first place.

Elements in Abstract Individualism

In Hobbes's social contract theory we can find the principal elements which constitute the abstract individualist or atomistic conception of human nature. Before going on to discuss some of the consequences of this conception of man, it would be useful to summarize in a general way the basic elements of this view.

In the first place this conception regards each person born into the world as the locus of a given set of fixed passions. The nature of the social ties or the language community into which one is born does not affect this essentially given human nature. Theorists of the abstract individual may disagree amongst themselves as to the exact contours of these passions. It is the shared assumption of a set of fixed passions which unites them. Many theorists disagree with Hobbes in attributing to people a set of exclusively self-regarding instincts. Some attribute to man more benevolent instincts and so are not as pessimistic in the political conclusions they derive from their conception

of human nature. The important point is, however, that the instincts are given and are regarded as invariant in their essential contours. In Hobbes both before and after the creation of civil society people want food, sex, and property. Society merely limits the ways in which these can be attained, but it does not change the basic objects of desire.

Secondly, a major consequence of this understanding of the passions is the implication that human action is determined by the given passions. Obtaining certain kinds of goods or performing certain types of behavior produces pleasure, and human beings will inevitably act in terms of these given drives. In addition to asserting the presence of these basic passions the psychology is deterministic. Hobbes's determinism is reflected in his famous comment on the will: "In deliberation, the last appetite or aversion immediately adhering to the action or the omission thereof is what we call the will..."⁵

Thirdly, the psychology is deterministic not merely because of its view of the passions but also because it regards human reason as a distinct and subordinate capacity. The task of reason is to channel the passions in such a way that satisfactory outlets for them are found.

⁵Op. cit., Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 59.

Reason is merely instrumental. It is not something which partially creates or evaluates and reconstructs our given feelings. Hobbes remarks: "For the thoughts are to the desires as scouts and spies, to range abroad and find the way to the things desired. . ."⁶

Hobbes view of reason is reflected in his definitions of "emotion" concepts. He does not view these concepts as essentially constituted or affected by the social and linguistic context in which they develop. Reason does not enter into our emotions, nor does it subtly differentiate those conditions which make a particular feeling like resentment, love, gratitude appropriate. The concepts refer rather to certain gut feelings present in all cultures, feelings which are manifested in similar behavioral acts. For example, in defining the concept love, Hobbes declares that "desire and love are the same thing, save that by desire we always signify the absence of the object, by love most commonly the presence of the same."⁷ Critics of Hobbes might wish to respond that love is distinguished from desire by certain ideas built up within a cultural context about the appropriateness

⁶Ibid., p. 68.

⁷Ibid., p. 52.

and characteristics of the "desired object." Love as we know it would not exist apart from those ideas we have built up about it. It thus cannot be reduced to a universal gut feeling, something which becomes more clear when we think about some of the different conceptions of love which have been built up in various cultures, such as romantic and courtly love.

Lastly, an important aspect of the doctrine of abstract individualism is that each person is merely an object for others. Your actions may aid, impede or be indifferent to my quest to fulfill my individualistic passions and I will evaluate you accordingly. Relationships are not valuable in and of themselves but only for the private satisfactions to which they lead. Both in and out of society human interaction remains external and manipulative. When men meet in society:

. . .if they meet for traffic, it is plain every man regards not his fellow, but his business; if to discharge some office, a certain market friendship is begotten, which hath more of jealousy in it than true love, and whence factions may sometimes arise, but goodwill never; if for pleasure, and recreation of mind, every man is wont to please himself most with those things which stir up laughter by comparison of the other man's defects and infirmities. . . And these are indeed the true delights of society, unto which we are carried by nature, that is, by those passions which are incident to all creatures. All society therefore is either for gain, or for glory; that is, not so much .

for love of our fellows, as for the love of ourselves.⁸

Examination reveals that these four aspects of the doctrine of abstract individualism are closely related though the ties are not of the strict logical sort. When the passions are regarded as basic regardless of the social structure it becomes more easy to consider human behavior determined, though it should be pointed out that one can be a determinist and reject every other aspect of Hobbesian psychology. When passions are seen as given entities which control behavior reason will easily be treated as instrumental. And conversely, to regard reason as instrumental makes it easier to be a determinist--the given instincts will not be reconstituted through rational interaction within society. Finally all of these views are nicely congruent with a perspective which denies any intrinsic importance to social ties.

The above tenets constitute what I will call the pure type of abstract individualism. I believe that in most respects Hobbes is an excellent example of a theorist of this type, but other great thinkers reflect in muted form some aspects of this doctrine.

The exact nature and significance of this doctrine

⁸Quoted in Norman Jacobson, Op. cit., p. 4.

will become more clear when it is contrasted with the social view of man developed in chapter three. I now want to show that this conception of man is an important doctrine because it is tied to a whole set of ways in which we study and evaluate the social world. I will do this by pointing out some of the ways in which Hobbes's conception of social science is congenial to his theory of human nature. I will then argue that some mainstream political scientists hold an abstract individualist conception of man as well as a view of social science similar to Hobbes's. In both cases the connections are reciprocal: A view of science makes a particular conception of human nature seem more plausible and that view of human nature lends support to the favored conception of science. These connections are not accidental and will be found to hold for the social view of human nature as well. In fact it seems hard to believe that the question of how to study man can really be detached from philosophical questions about the basic nature of the being to be studied.

Hobbes and Science

To understand Hobbes's approach to the study of man it is useful to put him in the context of his period. He was an older contemporary of Newton, and like Newton he

felt a great respect for the work of Galileo. He saw his task as the creation of a science of politics and human behavior, and he believed that all the work which preceded his was idle and dangerous speculation.

Science to Hobbes included two basic and related concerns. First was the need to begin with precise definitions, for words derive their meaning from the things to which they refer. If the reference is not precise the words are meaningless. Often words with imprecise references become mere repositories for emotional reactions: they certainly are not useful for scientific purposes and their use constitutes a threat to social order. Hobbes's view on definition becomes clear in some of the key concepts discussed in the Leviathan.

Thus power is defined as the present means of an agent toward the fulfillment of some future apparent good.⁹ Power is one's ability to get that which he wants and is therefore observable in the real world. It is significant that this view of power lumps together all those means which contribute to the realization of one's wants. A reputation for prudence and the implements of war are both considered forms of power and no moral distinction is made between them.¹⁰ This fully accords with Hobbes's

⁹Op. cit., Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 78.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 79

requirement that the definition be "scientific." In addition the definition assumes there is no distinction between our stated preferences and our real interests. One has power as long as he can bring about what he wants. Our articulated preferences grow out of our primordial wants. Hobbes assumes we cannot develop preferences which do not correspond to our real needs. The given wants flow smoothly into preferences and determine our actions. Hobbes's definition of the concept power fits both his conception of man and of science.

Secondly, once the relevant terms have been precisely defined, the problem or entity to be studied must be broken down into its component parts. Hobbes believed that such complex entities as a watch, a man, or a society are composed of simple and isolable elements. Eventually the researcher can demarcate and isolate for analysis the simple building blocks of the unit to be studied. Hobbes remarks:

For as in a watch, or some small engine, the matter, figure, and motion of the wheels cannot well be known, except it be taken in sunder, and viewed in parts; so to make a more curious search into the rights of states, and duties of subjects, it is necessary (I say not to take them in sunder, but yet that they be so considered, as if they were dissolved.)¹¹

The purpose of this enterprise is not merely des-

¹¹Quoted in Sheldon Wolin, Op. cit., p. 247.

criptive. One searches for irreducible elements to find causes. All changes in nature, man and society have causes, the necessary and sufficient conditions for their occurrence. These causes can be located in the changes and motions of the basic building blocks. Through the isolation and observation of these building blocks one can establish causal laws. In other words, one will then be in a position to know what events lead to other events and thus one can predict future events. These basic aspects of the Hobbesian conception of science are brought out in his discussion of the concepts of reason, memory, and science:

. . .reason is not, as sense and memory, born with us nor gotten by experience only, as prudence is, but attained by industry: first in apt imposing of names, and secondly in getting a good and orderly method in proceeding from the elements, which are names, to assertions made by connection of one of them to another, and so to syllogisms, which are the connection of one assertion to another, till we come to a knowledge of all the consequences of names appertaining to the subject in hand; and that is it men call science. And whereas sense and memory are but knowledge of fact, which is a thing past and irrevocable, science is the knowledge of consequences and dependence of one fact upon another, by which out of that we can presently do we know how to do something else when we will, or the like another time; because when we see how anything comes about, upon what causes and by what manner, when the like causes come into our power we see how to make it possible to produce the like effects.¹²

¹²Op. cit., Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 49.

This view of science is nicely compatible with the view of human nature sketched above. The belief that every person is the locus of a set of given passions, passions which exist regardless of the social matrix, suggests a mode of analysis which identifies these basic building blocks and employs them to explain behavior. A view of science which is convinced that all reality consists of isolable, irreducible building blocks will, in turn, tend to reduce the human personality to a set of discrete parts where one part moves the other in mechanistic fashion and where the basic character of each is independent of the others and of any possible interaction with them.

The quest for laws of behavior both encourages and is encouraged by a belief that the given passions determine our observed action. The faith that human behavior is similar to the movements of natural bodies and thus predictable justifies a belief in a determining agency and vice versa.

Thus, in Hobbes the conception of human nature and the notion of science are closely related. The way in which Hobbes tries to examine human behavior is not neutral with respect to the view of the person he holds; it both assumes and pushes him in the direction of a particular view of human nature. And that connection leads one to suspect that the method he adapts is less conducive to a

neutral test of the theory he espouses and more to an imposition of that theory on "materials" which may or may not themselves fit these expectations.

Moral Philosophy and Human Nature

The Hobbesian conception of man and science is also related to the stance one takes toward the evaluation of societies. The basic Hobbesian position is that questions of the morality of a given social order are irrelevant. This position has two related roots. In the first place he believes that order is a precarious achievement--to promote that is enough without worrying about higher values. Order is both very necessary and very difficult given the nature of man. People must be constantly reminded how close the human species is to disorder and what the price to be paid for disorder is.

Secondly, such moral words as good and justice do not constitute standards by which societies can be judged. As we have noted, Hobbes asserts that the only meaning of good is that to which a man aspires. Men call good that to which they aspire. Nothing in things or reality itself can be called good. Along a similar line, justice is defined in terms of the commands of the state. Anything the state commands is ipso facto just. Of course citizens will often claim an independent meaning for these terms,

but they are, according to Hobbes, speaking nonsense and opening up the door to future disorder. There is thus no meaningful standard by which the practices of any functioning political order may be judged except one: Does it promote order? The task with which the social scientist is left is to spell out in scientific or law-like terms those conditions which preserve order.

What we have sketched in this discussion of Hobbes and abstract individualism is really a coherent ideology. A view of man is related to a conception of science and moral judgment. If human beings are a-social creatures of passion, rational moral standards become inappropriate and one merely seeks scientific laws which spell out the conditions of a minimal order. Avoiding talk of moral standards clears the way for such scientific investigation. A natural science conception of man pushes us toward a deterministic psychology and the denial of any independent role for moral reasoning.

That there is a similar set of related philosophical assumptions in mainstream political science will be the theme of the next chapter. Establishment of this theme is made more difficult by the fact that contemporary political scientists generally want to deny that they proceed from any "untested" assumptions about man. Yet as with Hobbes one can see assumptions about man operating

in the ways they seek to explain human behavior as well as in other general comments on the political scene.

CHAPTER II

ABSTRACT INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERN SOCIAL SCIENCE

As I pointed out in the introduction, one problem with much of mainstream political science is that its view of human nature is seldom clearly articulated and the connection between its tacit assumptions about man and the methods of social study are never appreciated. This is an unfortunate state of affairs because the view of human nature underlying the work is not subject to systematic examination.

Yet in the work of such mainstream political scientists as Robert Dahl we can find hints of a view of human nature, and we can see that certain modes of explanation become more plausible when we become aware of the underlying assumptions about human nature. And finally, as with Hobbes, the view of man and of science is accompanied by a consistent stance on moral discourse.

Dahl comes the closest to a direct statement on human nature in a discussion of political participation in his introductory text on the methods of political science, Modern Political Analysis. In the chapter on political man he is concerned to explain the lack of any widespread and intense political involvement, except under exceptional

circumstances, in democratic political orders. During the explanation he makes the phenomenon seem both necessary and predictable, and significantly, to sustain his point of view he makes the following observation:

Just why political involvement is not more rewarding for more people is a question for which no short or easy answer is possible. The explanation, no doubt, turns on the fact that man is not by instinct a reasonable, reasoning, civic-minded being. Many of his most imperious desires and the source of many of his most powerful gratifications can be traced to ancient and persistent biological and physiological drives, needs, and wants. Organized political life arrived late in man's evolution; today man learns how to behave as a political man with the aid and often with the hindrance of instinctive equipment that is the product of a long prior development. To avoid pain, discomfort, and hunger, to satisfy drives for sexual gratification, love, security, and respect--these needs are insistent and primordial. The means of satisfying them quickly and concretely generally lie outside political life.¹

Dahl does not present here a pure variant of abstract individualism. Yet he is convinced that much of the most significant behavior in organized societies is explained by given biological drives. As we shall see, he also holds that the way in which systems evolve depends upon how and to what extent these given needs are met.

¹Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, second ed., (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 80.

Human Nature and the Conception of Science in Dahl

Dahl's approach to the study of societies reveals the connection between his conception of man and the nature of science. Like Hobbes he breaks society down into a number of component parts or systems, such as the political system, social system, and economic system. And like Hobbes he believes in the importance of using precisely defined terms in order to study societies.² As in the case of most modern social scientists he stresses the need to operationalize concepts. Concepts must be defined so that they can be measured by a series of empirical tests. The operational requirement of mainstream political science is based on the Hobbesian assumption that language is meaningful only when it reflects the world out there.³

The intent underlying this precise breakdown is to find the laws governing the relationship among the systems of society and the general laws of social development. As in the case of Hobbes the laws sought are to be causal

²See for instance Dahl's attempt to operationalize the concepts of power and influence in Modern Political Analysis, Ch. 5.

³An excellent critique of this position can be found in Hannah Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

laws--his search is for those antecedent factors which invariably precede and produce particular sorts of change. He is convinced that patterns of historical change are recurrent and when the proper antecedent factors have been identified particular changes can be predicted. Thus such factors as the distribution of wealth, the rate of economic growth, and the openness of formal political access are seen as determining the pattern of influence and degree of stability within the polity.

Dahl and his peers would be the last to claim that they have succeeded in creating a science of politics having the elegance or precision of Newtonian physics, but such an achievement remains the goal. In a discussion of the conditions of underdevelopment and patterns of change, Dahl makes some of the following remarks:

Because the path to the present that each country has taken is in some degree unique, every country has a somewhat different legacy of conditions bearing on the chances for polyarchy and peaceful adjustment. In a sense much of the rest of this chapter is an attempt to find patterns of explanation in these richly different historical legacies.

The way in which political resources are distributed among the people of a country tends to vary with its level of socio-economic development. With some important exceptions inequalities in the distribution of political resources are greatest in countries with agrarian societies, less

in industrial countries, and least in countries at the stage of high mass-consumption.⁴

The generalization stated above is of course not a law. Most of the conclusions of modern political science remain at the level of probabilistic statements--the precise concatenation of variables which determine a given result has not yet been established, yet exact laws remain the eventual goal,⁵ and philosophically the basic assumption remains the proposition that causal patterns may be determined. The only problem acknowledged is the practical one of isolating all the relevant variables, for societies are more complex but not different in kind from the entities studied by the natural scientist.

Human Nature and Social Science in Concrete Problems

Some specific problems examined by Dahl show the working of his method and its connection to an abstract individualist conception of man. A favorite preoccupation of social scientists during the late fifties and

⁴Op. cit., Dahl, pp. 65 and 69.

⁵A critique of operationalism and the quest for laws of political behavior analogous to those in natural science can be found in William E. Connolly, The Terms of Political Discourse, (Lexington: D. C. Heath Co., forthcoming).

early sixties was to explain the stability of American democracy. The pattern of explanation they used clearly exemplifies the connection of their implicit conception of human nature and their understanding of social science. Dahl argues that conflicts within American society were able to be fit within a broad framework of consensus and willingness to compromise because 1) the pattern of social cleavages was cross-cutting and 2) the size of the economic pie was large and constantly growing so that conflict would tend to be focused on the distribution of increments. No one was faced with the extreme pain of absolute loss. These factors constituted a large part of the explanation of stability and in turn generated a set of conclusions about the factors which would have to be promoted to insure pluralist stability in other lands.

A number of critical and very convenient assumptions about human nature are being made in this analysis. These assumptions are also found in much of the end of ideology literature⁶ which became popular in the fifties and early sixties. The argument is that the growth of a large economic surplus will blunt ideological concerns and make possible a politics of pragmatic compromise. The

⁶For a discussion of the themes in this literature see M. Rejai, ed., Decline of Ideology, (New York: Atherton Press, 1971).

assumption is that human beings have certain desires, especially for material comforts, and that once these are met the desire to participate in rational dialogue about the goals of the political and economic system will decline. This view posits the universality of certain desires and uses them as a way of explaining social change. Also connected with this view are abstract individualist assumptions about the relationship of reason and passion. Reason is seen as playing essentially an instrumental role. When confronted with the given passions, here the desire for material comforts, reason creates rationalizations about justice, ideologies to justify the meeting of these desires or temporarily soothe the ego for their lack of satisfaction.

That the task of reason in Dahl often is to create rationalizations for given needs is also clear from his treatment of authority and legitimacy. Dahl treats authority as a specialized and more reliable form of influence. It is one more tool which men in power will strive to use. Leaders will fashion moral arguments in order to make their rule seem more plausible. Reason follows the tasks set for it by the underlying desires:

Authority is a highly efficient form of influence. It is not only more reliable and durable than naked coercion, but it also enables a ruler to govern with a minimum

of political resources. It would be impossible to rely on fear and terror, for example, to carry out the complex tasks of a large, modern, bureaucratic organization such as the U. S. Post Office . . . or the public school system of New York . . . When a subordinate regards the orders and assignments he receives as morally binding, only a relatively small expenditure of resources, usually in the form of salaries and wages, is⁷ necessary to ensure satisfactory performance.

Reason is regarded as an instrument which bends to the given task. Any argument which works is seen as giving its author legitimacy. Yet in our ordinary discourse we distinguish between arguments which represent mere "manipulation" and those which establish the legitimacy of a given authority. Reason can serve as rationalization, but it may also fashion generally accepted and acceptable criteria which will shape the perception of needs within the social system. As such it is in some sense a creator of tasks and not merely a slave.

Dahl's view denies what the social view of man discussed in the next chapter affirms, that the concepts men develop in their social lives help to constitute their forms of interaction and that these may change in ways which will leave men with new and even quite unpredictable needs. The whole pattern of social development may change as men come to have a new view of the good life, and this

⁷Op. cit., Dahl, p. 41.

view may not be traceable to changes in so-called underlying factors, such as economic growth. That universal drives may be so few, so amorphous, and so fully shaped by man's social existence as to be useless for predictive purposes is not considered. The individualistic view of human nature is convenient for Dahl because it allows him to plug in certain highly focused economic desires, posited as universals, and come out with general laws, a requirement of his philosophical method. He can conclude that economic growth has promoted social peace because it meets certain universal desires, desires which determine the behavior of the person. The view of human nature and the quest for law-like regularities are fully consistent with and reinforcing of each other. Without such a view of human nature one could not assign law like status to the generalizations based on this evidence nor would one be seeking generalizations of a law-like form. As will be pointed out later in the chapter, the generalizations sought within a social view will be gained in other ways and will have a different status.

Not only Dahl's explanation of the stability of American government but also his whole conception of the structure of our society can be better understood in terms of his abstract individualist conception of human nature. His approach to the distribution of power reflects his atomistic perspective. On this matter his research

begins by choosing three controversial issue areas and then determining who participates in the decisions. He shows that different elites participate in each issue area and concludes that no single power elite is responsible for policy in New Haven and that each important group in the urban area can have some impact on the policy questions by which it is most affected.⁸

Bachrach and Baratz point out one way in which Dahl's approach to the distribution of power is questionable. Even if certain groups have clearly developed interests they may be unable to find or construct the proper organizational mode by which these interests can be expressed in the political system.⁹ Yet the problem here goes even deeper and is best examined by a brief discussion of Dahl's approach to the concepts of interest and power. Dahl tests power by measuring one's ability to realize a stated preference. This view is close to the Hobbesian notion that power is the ability to achieve some future apparent good. Thus Dahl looks to his three controversial issue areas in which the ability of the participants to realize their stated preferences can be tested. Any stated preference counts in the determination of who has power

⁸Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs?, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

⁹Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," American Political Science Review, 56 (1962) pp. 947-952.

as long as preferences are not foreclosed by law or intimidation.¹⁰ Yet this view disregards the possibility that power in its more subtle ramifications may include the ability of an individual to shape the preferences of the other, often through manipulation, in such a way that the other fails to recognize or promote his own real interests. The individual in other words may have stated wants which are not in his interest and his agreement with those in power may create a false consensus.¹¹

Dahl on the other hand assumes that people have given wants which constitute their real interests. They know these and can convert them into issues if these wants are insufficiently met. Because he proceeds from an individualist view of man and has an instrumental view of reason he does not see that the social patterns of some lives may be such that they cannot clearly formulate their demands and may not have even a clear sense of their own needs. The presence of a false consensus need not depend on our finding groups actually presenting coherent ideas or demands. A person can become a full political

¹⁰These ideas are developed most clearly in Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," in G. William Domhoff and Hoyt B. Ballard, eds., C. Wright Mills and the Power Elite, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 25-36.

¹¹This critique is indebted to a lecture by Steven Lukes on "Three Concepts of Power" at the University of Massachusetts in the Spring of 1973 and to discussions of interest and power in Connolly, op. cit.

participant only when he or she has had the opportunity to develop a language in which real needs can be expressed. For many years women in our society have known that they had problems--loneliness, frustrations in dealing with children, a lack of fulfillment in their lives. Yet before certain social developments and intellectual changes occurred they could not see the connection of their problems to structures beyond their personal control.¹² They saw their problems as personal problems, as consequences of personal failings. It is an impoverished social science which will deal only with clearly articulated wants already expressed as public issues.

Dahl's failure to recognize the social construction of needs and issues leads him to assert that most legitimate groups are represented in our political system.¹³ He sees different groups participating in each issue area and concludes that most needs are being responded to because there are different wants expressed in the political process, and many groups are apathetic on most issues. Their interests must not be affected for unfulfilled basic desires always lead to demands on the

¹²For a fuller discussion of the relationship of issues and personal troubles see C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) pp. 8-13.

¹³Robert A. Dahl, Preface to Democratic Theory, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), Ch. 5.

system.

Dahl's treatment of apathy makes even clearer the atomistic underpinning of his approach. He argues that in Western democracies apathy should be the expected norm and political participation the phenomenon which needs explaining:

At the focus of most men's lives are primary activities involving food, sex, love, family, work, play, shelter, comfort, friendship, social esteem, and the like. Activities like these--not politics--are the primary concerns of most men and women. . . It would clear the air of a good deal of cant if instead of assuming that politics is a normal and natural concern of human beings, one were to make the contrary assumption that lip service citizens may pay to conventional attitudes, politics is a remote, alien, and unrewarding activity. Instead of seeking to explain why citizens are not interested, concerned, and active, the task is to explain why a few citizens are.¹⁴

Once again Dahl assumes that people have certain given drives which are determinants of their actions. He does not consider the possibility that we have created the kind of society which leads men and women to find the satisfactions of politics unrewarding.

He believes that the interaction of competing elites in a democracy fulfills the basic desires of the people and so they will have no wish to get actively involved in

¹⁴Op. cit., Dahl, Who Governs, p. 279.

politics. Like James Mill he is in effect treating political participation in terms of opportunity costs.¹⁵ The time one expends in politics is painful and if one does not derive from it more than an equivalent amount of payoff the participation isn't worth it. If elected leaders and leaders of interest groups are delivering enough goods regularly then it doesn't make sense to participate.

It is interesting to note that even in a recent work where Dahl seeks to respond to such critics as Jack Walker, who has decried the lack of concern for participation in Dahl's work,¹⁶ the criteria used to defend participation are clearly still tied to an individualist view of human nature and limit the possible range and efficacy of participation. Dahl argues that participation may be a way to get what one wants, but he does not discuss the possibility that it may change and improve us as people. His criteria for authority are personal choice, competence, and economy.

¹⁵For a discussion of James Mill's conception of democracy and representation and his use of opportunity costs see Alan Ryan, "Two Concepts of Politics and Democracy: James and John Stuart Mill" in Martin Fleisher, ed., Machiavelli and the Nature of Political Theory, (New York: Atheneum, 1972), pp. 76-113.

¹⁶Jack L. Walker, "A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy," American Political Science Review, 60 (1966) pp. 285-295.

The criterion of personal choice legitimates a decision when one has the chance to pursue his rational self-interest provided others have an equal chance. The criterion of competence legitimates a decision if it is made by a person who is particularly qualified by some skill. The criterion of economy requires that the gains of participation outweigh the opportunity cost of time lost from other pursuits.¹⁷ In many circumstances these criteria will conflict with each other and applying them to particular areas will require a delicate balancing act. Yet the very possibility that participation in the right setting may change and improve us, thus altering our very needs, makes it impossible to apply such a balancing act to questions of expanding participation. Dahl's commitment to an individualistic view of human nature becomes clear in the kind of cost-benefit analysis of participation which pervades his discussion of the economy criterion. Thus Dahl declares that "if the rewards do not exceed the costs, it is foolish of you to participate at all." He further remarks that "the more likely it is that by participating you will change the outcome in the direction of your personal choice," the more attractive is participation.¹⁸ This view becomes problematic in ways Dahl

¹⁷Robert A. Dahl, After the Revolution, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), Ch. 1.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 46.

does not consider if we entertain the possibility that participation itself may change and broaden one's own sense of his needs and wants. Dahl's view is most congenial only when we assume the permanence of stated needs, as does an abstract individualist conception of man.¹⁹

Dahl does believe that some kinds of economic enterprise are suitable for direct participation,²⁰ in terms of his three criteria, but if he recognized the intrinsic good of participation he would be more concerned with increasing the number of social spaces in which direct participation would be possible.

Dahl's view of man leads him to neglect the possibility that in some social structures one's sense of himself and of a worthwhile life may involve participation with others in an effort to define the common good. Participation may itself create such a sense of need within the individual. He may come to find this life more fulfilling than an existence devoted to purely private acquisitiveness. Highly individualistic calculations of the loss of time and money may come to have only minimal relevance. Dahl does not consider that the great relevance of these

¹⁹ See a discussion of Dahl's conception of participation in Peter Bachrach, "Interest, Participation, and Democratic Theory," (Unpublished paper).

²⁰ Op. cit., Dahl, After the Revolution, Ch. 3.

considerations in our culture may in fact tell us something about our contemporary social system. Once again he tries to turn these connections and relationships into general laws. He doesn't consider that we may have created men who carry with them a Benthamite calculus, though I would argue that even these men are not pure Benthamites and could not be if we are to have any society at all.

The picture of American democracy which emerges from all this is one which neatly integrates Dahl's assumptions about a deterministic social science and his rather individualistic anthropology. He pictures the political system as one where groups continually feed interests, wants, into the political process and politicians compromise these inputs in such a way that everyone doesn't get all he wants but does get enough to make him happy. The political system works with the causal efficiency of the Newtonian universe. One can predict that new groups with new demands will be handled in the same pluralist fashion. If their demands are the sort that can be processed by the system, they can eventually achieve access and some of the valued goods.

Orthodox pluralists like Dahl find it hard to recognize that substantial groups within a culture may come to question the validity of the whole pluralist picture of society with its prevalent image of man as bargainer.

The atomistic view of man and the causal, law-like view of science makes them unable to consider the possibility that societies are communities constituted in part by their own self-conceptions and that these conceptions are subject to change often in unpredictable ways. Pluralists have absolutized one moment in time and converted it into a social law. And pluralism itself functions as a theoretical system which has helped to create the identity it claims to describe. It has contributed a moral defense of the status quo while claiming to be only scientific and thus value neutral.²¹ I will say more about this when I discuss concepts of human nature and the moral stance one takes toward various communities.

Dahl's Moral Stance

In Dahl's case we see that the conception of science along with the picture of American democracy are sustained by an atomistic view of man. In addition he believes that he cannot rationally defend moral statements. The paradox is that though his work does lend moral support to our society, support unacknowledged by Dahl, and though Dahl

²¹Analyses of the limitations of pluralist thought may be found in William E. Connolly, ed. The Bias of Pluralism, (New York: Atherton Press, 1969) and in Robert Paul Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

declares that he has a moral preference for democracy, his view of moral discourse does not allow him to see the ways in which his moral commitments and scheme of explanation each reinforce the other. He is thus not in a position to scrutinize critically important connections implicit in his own work.²²

Dahl basically shares with his classic predecessor a noncognitivist theory of ethics.²³ While he does not maintain that ethical terms are meaningless, he does not believe that any empirical foundation can be found for applying an ethical term to any given institution. His position is that the realm of fact and the realm of values are logically separate. The possibility that our values might influence our empirical research is one to be steadily guarded against. The development of an adequate science of politics depends upon sustaining this dichotomy:

So too, the Empirical Theorist would argue,

²²For a discussion of the problems and possibilities here see William E. Connolly, "Theoretical Self-Consciousness" in William E. Connolly and Glen Gordon, eds., Social Structure and Political Theory, (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1974), pp. 40-66.

²³A discussion and critique of the noncognitivist theory of ethics may be found in Mary Warnock, Ethics Since 1900, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960) and Alasdair MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics, (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1966).

the truth or falsity of empirical propositions about politics does not logically depend on what we think ought to be but what in fact is. And no matter what that famous emperor thought or pretended to think, as he paraded before his subjects, he was not wearing any clothes!²⁴

Thus the working social scientist can only unearth the facts and establish correlations among them. This view fits nicely with the belief that human beings act out of given urges and behave inevitably in certain predictable ways. The realm of reason reflects the given instincts and does not alter the nature of social interaction. The same total ideology operative in Hobbes is present also in the work of Dahl.

In the course of these first two chapters a number of important philosophical terms and issues have come up, such as causal laws and the separation of reason and emotion. The full significance as well as the inadequacies of the views summarized here can be made clear only after examining the contrasting social view of human nature espoused so clearly by Rousseau. We shall find that this view suggests a different conception of the study of society and opens up potentially far deeper criticisms of our society than can be developed within an atomistic

²⁴Op. cit., Dahl, Modern Political Analysis, first ed., p. 103.

understanding of man. The remainder of this thesis will be concerned with delineating a social view of man and its implications and with the defense of this view.

C H A P T E R I I I

ROUSSEAU AND THE SOCIAL CONCEPTION OF MAN

A careful analysis of Rousseau's Discourse on the Origins of Inequality illuminates the difference between his social and developmental conception of human nature and an atomistic understanding of man. To become clear about Rousseau's views and about the ways in which later social views of man are deeply indebted to him it is necessary to consider specifically his conception of the relationship between reason and passion and his understanding of the nature of morality before society exists. Perhaps the best way into these issues is to contrast Hobbes and Rousseau with reference to the changes society makes on natural man.

To Rousseau society has a radical effect on man's nature whereas Hobbes assumes that society leaves in tact and merely reinforces the basic human instincts. Though Rousseau has often been falsely accused of being a primitivist who wanted to see a return to an uncivilized state of nature,¹ he in fact attributed a major role to

¹See Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, and Goethe, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945) for a discussion and critique of this view.

society in the development of persons. He did not regard it as a mere auxiliary outgrowth of certain preformed drives. Society basically alters the nature of man. And to Rousseau the principal alteration is that it makes us social beings. Even those acts which we call egoistic have to be understood in a way different from Hobbes's conception of them. But before we can discuss these questions adequately, some preparatory ground must be covered first.

In the introduction to the Second Discourse, Rousseau remarks that the task of unearthing real human nature is extremely difficult because man has been so greatly altered by society. It is hard for us even to imagine what man is like outside society and consequently many authors project onto an original human nature tendencies they observe in their own societies.

The human soul, like the statue of Glaucus which time, the sea and storms had so much disfigured that it resembled a wild beast more than a god, the human soul, I say, altered in society by the perpetual succession of a thousand causes, by the acquisition of numberless discoveries and errors, by the changes that have happened in the constitution of the body, by the perpetual jarring of the passions, has in a manner so changed in appearance² as to be scarcely distinguishable.

²Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, Lester G. Crocker, ed., (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), p. 167.

To see how much we have been transformed by society, it is necessary for us to perform an act of imagination which will allow us to think about man in his pre-social state.

In this condition Rousseau imagines man had (or would have) only two very generalized instincts, self-preservation and pity. But man in the state of nature is not evil nor is life in the state of nature a war of all against all. In his pre-social state man acts out of momentary needs. He will kill animals or pick fruit as he is hungry, but he has no forethought about future needs because he cannot think. He has no concept of future and no concept of mine and yours. These are all social concepts. They depend on a rudimentary society and the development of language.

The philosophers, who have examined the foundations of society, have all perceived the necessity of tracing it back to a state of nature, but not one of them has ever got there. Some of them have not scrupled to attribute to man in that state the ideas of justice and injustice, without troubling themselves to prove that he really must have had such ideas, or even that such ideas were useful to him: others have spoken of the natural right of every man to keep what belongs to him, without letting us know what they meant by the word belong; others, without further ceremony ascribing to the strongest an authority over the weakest, have immediately brought government into being, without thinking of the time requisite for men to form any notion of the things signified by the words authority and government. All of them, in fine, constantly harping on wants, avidity, oppression, desires and pride, have transferred to the

state of nature ideas picked up in the bosom of society. In speaking of savages they described citizens.³

Before the existence of settled society it thus makes no sense to speak of man as having evil instincts. Before society there can be brief conflict if two hungry men converge on a rabbit, but there is no war because grudges and revenge are out of place when there is no concept of past wrongs or even of person for that matter. In the pure state of nature man runs when he is afraid and he is always satisfied when his momentary instincts are met. The sort of man Hobbes describes is really a civilized man developed within and adapting to a particular form of society.

But eventually a number of historic accidents combine to produce society and transform man. As the population increases men interact more frequently and rudimentary societies begin to emerge. The growth of society means the development of institutions and language. Rousseau has a strong sense of the centrality of language, and such modern philosophers as Wittgenstein and Winch echo his analysis on this point. Rousseau sees language and social institutions as complexly interwoven. It is hard, he says,

³Ibid., p. 176.

to imagine men able to interact regularly without language and yet it is hard to imagine the growth of language before society exists.

The first (difficulty) that offers itself is how languages could become necessary; for as there was no correspondence between men, nor the least necessity for any, there is no conceiving the necessity of this invention, nor the possibility of it, if it was not indispensable. I might say, with many others, that languages are the fruit of the domestic intercourse between fathers, mothers, and children: but this, besides its not answering the difficulties, would be committing the same error as those, who reasoning on the state of nature, transfer to it ideas gathered in society, always consider families as living together under one roof, and their members as observing among themselves a union, equally intimate and permanent as that which exists among us, where so many common interests unite them;⁴

Somehow the two grow together, and Rousseau implies that no neat temporal priority or causal connection can be established here. The relationship between language and thought is analogously complex. We cannot imagine the creation of language except by men who can think, but conversely one cannot conceive of complex thought apart from language.

Rousseau obviously stands in awe of the complex and basic relationship of language to human life as we know it. The relationship between language and human development is crucial. Language is crucial to institutional life by relating men to each other in systematic ways.

⁴Ibid., pp. 192-193.

The roles we play are constituted by the general abstract system of language. He strongly disagrees with the Hobbesian notion that language merely describes a previously existing reality. Once language and institutions exist, the basic nature of man is changed. These changes have good and bad aspects.

In the first place, with the growth of language and institutions, it now makes sense to speak of right and wrong ways of doing things as well as of moral right and wrong in general. Rousseau argues that we are transformed by society into moral beings, and he means this in a radical sense. His contemporary, David Hume, had argued that society makes us moral, but to Hume morality is a set of rules of efficiency. Social experience teaches us what helps or hurts.⁵ To Rousseau the growth of society makes us moral by giving us wants and needs we would not otherwise have. We come to prize a given set of relationships because part of our identity is tied up in these institutional relationships. We are not beings simply of self-interest. Thus the "family man" makes sacrifices for his family not simply because it is a source of pleasure to him but because he comes to regard himself as a

⁵John Plamenatz, Man and Society, Vol. I, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1963), Ch. 10.

family man and to know that he is so regarded by those in his family and community. It may then result that he feels a kind of happiness from his fulfillment of the role but he does not act for the sake of that pleasure.

Implicit in this discussion is a rejection of the abstract individualist's view of the relationship between reason and passion. In the Hobbesian tradition reason is instrumental. Its role is to find satisfactory outlets for the gratification of the passions. In the often quoted though somewhat ambiguous phrase of Hume, reason is and ever ought to be the slave of the passions. But once we say that the development of concepts and institutions gives a person a new identity we can no longer take so simplistic a view, for we are really arguing that reason itself helps mold the passions and thus that the conceptual development occurring in a given society will have much to do with the nature of the passions prevailing there. There is a complicated interdependency which cannot be expressed in simple causal terms. As Alasdair MacIntyre remarks, a passion is not just what it is as a toothache is what it is whether you or I think about it. Our thoughts about the passions, the way we break up the world conceptually, affect the nature of them as "passions". We have a scheme for interpreting our emotions and our

conception of these emotions depends on this scheme.⁶ When I feel gratitude toward you I am not automatically responding to some inner physiological state within me to which I always attach the word gratitude. I believe you have intentionally done me some good for which I had no call on you. My feeling of gratitude may be associated with a "warm feeling," but that feeling will be understood and in part constituted by my recognition of our total relationship and thus my comprehension of a number of related concepts and actions.

Rousseau explicitly rejects a neat separation of reason and passion when he declares that each is greatly indebted to the other.

Let moralists say what they will the human understanding is greatly indebted to the passions, which, on their side, are likewise universally allowed to be greatly indebted to the human understanding. It is by the activity of our passions, that our reason improves; we covet knowledge merely because we covet enjoyment, and it is impossible to conceive, why a man exempt from fears and desires should take the trouble to reason. The passions, in their turn, owe their origin to our needs, and their increase to our progress in science; for we cannot desire or fear anything, but in consequence of the ideas we have of it, or of the simple impulses of nature;⁷

⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre, "Reason and Passion: The Modern Tradition," (Unpublished paper).

⁷ Op. cit., Rousseau, pp. 188-189.

He also makes it clear that needs are socially created. These social needs may bear some relationship to the original given instincts, but they are so altered and expanded by society as to be virtually new.

This appears to me as clear as daylight, and I cannot conceive whence our philosophers can derive all the passions they attribute to natural man. Except the bare physical necessities, which nature herself requires, all our other needs are merely the effect of habit, before which they were not needs, or of our cravings; and we don't crave that which we are not in a condition to know. Hence it follows that as savage man longs for nothing but what he knows, and knows nothing but what he actually possesses or can easily acquire, nothing can be so calm as his soul, or so confined as his understanding.⁸

Human beings are not, then, prisoners of fixed instincts whose reason is tied to the task of finding outlets for these instincts. They are beings with a conceptual and institutional past who cannot throw off concern for their moral responsibilities. And they are both descendants and creators of this past.

So much of man's identity is created by his presence in society that there is no turning back. Just as it is almost impossible to imagine what man was originally like, so it is inconceivable that man could completely repudiate

⁸Ibid., p. 254.

the social nature of his existence. Thus despite the fact that some commentators persist in seeing him as a primitivist, Rousseau explicitly rejects the idea that we can ever go back to a happier state of nature. There is no return to the Garden of Eden, which in any case to Rousseau was not idyllic because it lacked a sense of good and evil.

Rousseau does believe that much of the history which creates us has been unfortunate. Thus through a historical accident property was invented and with property came inequality. Inequality produced in some men the need to dominate, and it made all men insecure. It led to prolonged and violent conflict. He agrees with Hobbes that human life under some circumstances can be a war of all against all, but these are "civilized" beings who carry on the war. They are creatures of the institution of property and the moral code and sense of identity which property creates. But paradoxically some moral codes limit the range of human awareness and thus blunt the full development of man's potential.

Basic to Rousseau's thought is the view that some passions are better than others. Some forms of social structure create passions which bring men closer together and create a more harmonious society. Men can combine independence and a sense of responsibility to and for others. Though Rousseau believes that society creates

needs, he does not push this toward a cultural relativism which sanctions all forms of society. But because his historical sense is so strong he is not one to push for rapid, radical changes. Standards by which to judge and direct the course of historical change are however relevant and may be derived from man's capacity for rationality and moral growth. Though every society has its ongoing institutions and moral codes, there are certain universal moral parameters which may be applied to all societies and these parameters contain the only adequate justification for the loss of man's natural independence. I will return to this topic when I discuss the relationship a social conception of human nature and the evaluation of societies. At that juncture an examination of the Social Contract will be in order.

Men can apply moral judgments even to their own societies because, while children of history, they are not trapped by history. As conceptual beings we are aware of the right way to do things, but because we create these concepts we can also bring about change. Concepts are constantly being altered as we seek to apply them to new situations and consider new information. Thus we need not remain trapped in established ways of doing things as would mere stimulus-response beings: ". . .the beast cannot deviate from the rules that have been pre-

scribed to it, even in cases where such deviation might be useful, and man often deviates from the rules laid down for him tho his prejudice."⁹ As we shall see, such modern philosophers as Winch have drawn heavily on the insights implicit in this remark.

Philosophical Arguments between Hobbes and Rousseau

The conception of man as a social being, one whose emotions are in part constituted by his social environment and whose actions are not to be treated in mechanistic causal fashion, is buttressed by a number of important philosophical arguments. These involve a discussion of some of the important differences between Hobbes and Rousseau.

Hobbes has frequently been criticized for deemphasizing the extent to which social institutions apart from the formal political system are a source of order in society. While accepting this criticism, I think it is possible to go even deeper and show that the Hobbesian notion of sovereignty is really an outgrowth of an inadequate view of morality and moral concepts. And the lack of an adequate moral and social perspective on human

⁹Ibid., p. 186.

nature leads to certain crucial incoherences in Hobbes thought. These suggest problems with any attempt to hold consistently to such an atomistic view of man.

As has been pointed out, the Hobbesian view of human nature is egoistic and deterministic. Human beings are creatures of emotion driven by fixed, permanent needs. Power is a means to achieve future emotional gratification and human reason is merely instrumental. These characteristics are not altered by the inception of the social contract, which is itself an instrument of hedonic egoism. The Hobbesian conception of moral discourse is an outgrowth of these premises, and this conception is present in modern positivism and thus in much contemporary political science, though its ancestry and full philosophical basis is neither recognized nor admitted. Hobbes declares that what we call good, in other words the meaning of this moral concept, is that which satisfies an immediate private pleasure.

It follows from the Hobbesian conception of man that the justification of sovereignty is its preservation of order--all we may reasonably expect of any functioning state is that it preserve order. If we ask more and demand justice society easily reverts to anarchy. Hobbes is able to make such an assumption because he does not have a satisfactory theory of moral development. He

assumes that within society men continue to interact in an external, manipulative, deterministic way--other men are only potential instruments of my pleasure and so I will manipulate them in accordance with the goals determined for me by my passions. Now one would be foolish to deny that this is an accurate picture of some aspects of relationships within society, but it is extremely problematic to draw this as a picture of every aspect of all human relationships.

The Rousseauian argument that human nature is changed significantly in society is buttressed by a close look at language itself. We have a whole vocabulary which reflects the fact that we regard other human beings as conscious freely choosing moral agents. We say that we resent x's behavior only when we attribute intention to him. We do not resent a rock falling off a cliff and damaging our car. In society we enter into a whole series of relationships where we cease to treat other persons as objects. We would find it very difficult if not impossible to get along without the moral vocabulary of resentment, love, obligation.¹⁰ Once one understands how elements of choice are built into our most vital human relationships, conventional determinist

¹⁰P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," in P. F. Strawson, ed., Studies in the Philosophy of Thought and Action, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

these which view our actions and ideas as controlled by given passions become hard to sustain. In fact the understanding of another person as a consciously choosing agent and the recognition that he sees us as such is an important part of what we know as human existence.

Because the concept of guilt is so integrally related to our moral and social life, a close examination of this concept can provide additional support for the interdependent arguments I have been making about the social nature of man and the inability to separate neatly reason and passion. As John Rawls points out,¹¹ guilt is a complex concept which involves ideas we develop in our social relationships with others. In the first place the concept is related to other concepts such as right, fairness, obligation. If we did not have these other concepts and the kind of social practices with which they are interwoven we could not speak of guilt as we know it. Secondly the concept of guilt is susceptible to varying degrees of complexity as one develops within a society. Thus in a situation where a person has been taught to love, obey, and trust a figure in authority who treats one well, he will feel what Rawls calls authority guilt

¹¹ John Rawls, "The Sense of Justice," Review of Philosophy, 72 (1963).

when he violates the injunctions of the authority. But as an individual develops in society, learning new and broader roles, a more complex concept of guilt will be developed.

If we imagine a group of individuals involved in a cooperative enterprise the rules guiding which are fair and known to be fair, the individuals involved will develop a sense of trust and friendship. Through joint participation in the activity they become closely bound to their fellows. They see them intentionally living up to the rules of the game and develop a sense of responsibility to the others. If in this situation an individual violates the rules of the game, he will feel guilt, a feeling which will manifest itself in several ways, including an inclination to make good the loss to others and to accept the penalties. The individual who avoids actions which make him feel guilty thus is not responding to some simple inner physiological state. His feelings grow out of his complex understanding of the world embodied in his concepts and social institutions.

Language and the social roles with which it is connected make possible the development of a state of reciprocal consciousness among human beings. I know that a given task is part of my role and the other person knows that I know. The value of this type of

experience lies in a state of consciousness between two human beings;¹² it does not make reference to a state of feeling of one isolated being, as in the conventional instances of egoism or altruism. The growth of a whole set of institutional ties among people creates a large possible set of reciprocal relationships and fundamentally changes the nature of man. It makes us moral beings because our mere existence now as social, rational beings implies a whole new set of responsibilities. We can evade these but we cannot be fully unconscious of them because they are now a large part of our identity.

These considerations about the nature of language constitute no final proof of the invalidity of an atomistic and deterministic view of man. But if human beings really are the causally controlled atoms of Hobbes and much of contemporary social science, beings driven by innate passions, one will have an enormous problem explaining the existence and subtle nuances of some of the most important ideas in our vocabulary, ideas we could hardly imagine getting along without.

I would argue that the whole vocabulary of good and evil grows out of social existence and reflects our per-

¹²Robert Paul Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism, Ch. 5.

ception of others as conscious agents and our realization that we are similarly perceived. This communal life is the source of our humanity and our moral concepts are aimed at preserving that community. Moral concepts are aimed at furthering my interest only if by interest we mean not my private egoistic pleasure but the full human development which community life makes possible.

Conclusion

Rousseau thus presents a thoroughgoing attack on all the basic postulates of abstract individualism. Passions are not simple given entities; rather our needs develop in society. They are complex and changing. Nor can we speak of them as determining behavior in any simple way. The rational dialogue occurring within society has an impact on these and so a neat separation of reason and passion must be rejected. The individual contributes to this dialogue and so, as we shall see, law-like treatment of human behavior after the fashion of natural science is not appropriate.

I have shown that there are solid philosophical reasons to support this view of man. This conception carries with it important consequences both for how we study society and how we evaluate it. Some modern philosophers are indebted to a Rousseauian conception

of man in their effort to suggest some of the limitations of contemporary methods in the social sciences. In the next chapter I will show that Peter Winch, one of the leading critics of a natural science approach to society, does proceed from assumptions on human nature close to Rousseau's. Then I will discuss some aspects of the method of social science he advocates. In the process I will advance some reasons for accepting such a conception of social science.

Before I can finish discussion of a social conception of man something must be said about the moral stance which it generates. Thus far I have only alluded to this issue. Because there are differences between Rousseau and Winch on this very important issue and because both differ from the modern noncognitivist theory of ethics, I will devote all of chapter five to these questions. I will argue that the recognition that human beings are in part constituted by their societies need not end in the relativistic assertion that all societies are equally good.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE SOCIAL CONCEPTION OF MAN

The social and moral view of man espoused first so clearly by Rousseau underlies much of the current philosophical attack on positivism. The close relationship of concepts and action, the refusal to accept a simple dichotomy of reason and passion, the rejection of neat causal mechanism in the explanation of human action have all been important in this attack on positivism. Peter Winch, drawing on the later work of Wittgenstein, has played a significant part in this attack. His work suggests that a view of man and of social science have helped to sustain each other, with dubious consequences for each. It is necessary to examine the work of Winch in detail because he applies important arguments characteristic of Rousseau to certain modern philosophical problems as well as to contemporary social science.

The view of human nature held by Winch comes through in his discussion of two topics which he considers to be closely interdependent. He begins The Idea of a Social Science with an analysis of the nature of philosophy, epistemology in particular. His initial polemical target is the "underlaborer" conception of philosophy. This

conception holds that the task of philosophy is to deal with problems that come to it from other areas. Philosophy can tell us nothing about the world; that is the job of science. Philosophy deals with linguistic confusions which may develop in the course of science. Its real task is to sharpen the tools with which to examine the world. The underlaborer conception of philosophy rejects the assumption that philosophy is an autonomous enterprise.

Winch objects to this conception, which he sees as being dominant within the field, because it assumes right from the start a sharp distinction between the world and the language with which we try to describe the world. He denies that it can make sense to speak of an independent social reality which exists apart from the concepts we use to comprehend it. Philosophy is concerned with the relationship between language and reality and thus with the nature of reality. It is an autonomous discipline which cannot be limited to problems brought to it from without.¹

The fields of metaphysics and epistemology, which have always been the special preserve of philosophy, therefore come in for close attention from Winch. If the philosophy of natural science is concerned with the criteria of intelligibility in the natural sciences,

¹Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), Ch. 1.

epistemology is concerned with the criteria of intelligibility as such. This leads Winch into a discussion of what it is for a word to have meaning. How do I know that two objects with which I write are both instances of the same thing, pen? It is only by following the rules built into the concept pen that I can derive the criteria which allow me to make this judgment. Built into or constituting our concepts are rules which allow us to apply them to various situations.

If we are to understand Winch's view of human action and thus his conception of human nature, it is necessary to follow his discussion of rules. We say that x is following a rule only if we could in principle discover the rule he is following. Rules are public in the sense that they can become clear to others in a social context. Related to this condition is the requirement that if one is following a rule it must be logically possible for him to make a mistake.² If any possible action is congruent with x's following a "rule" we would not want to say that he was following a rule. The notion of mistake again is vital because it points rule following in the direction of a social context. By mistake we mean that an action is recognizably in contravention of established ways of doing something. We cannot speak of a mistake

²Ibid., pp. 30-32.

unless we can speak of the possibility that other people will point out my action as a mistake. Otherwise I may continue to apply the "rule" as I like and there is no external check on me. The rule does not serve as any limit to my behavior. This does not mean that all violations of rules must be spotted for us to say that the rules exist. It means that the concept of rule makes no sense apart from a social context, public criteria and the possibility of checks for mistakes. This discussion of intelligibility and rule following is important because Winch has, through an analysis of the nature of language, related both language and action to a social context. His philosophical analysis sustains and reflects an assumption Rousseau shares; that we need society for language and that the growth of society itself depends upon the existence of language.

Winch's method in approaching this subject is fully consonant with the substantive conclusions he is defending. After a discussion of the meaningfulness of language which has moved toward society, he then moves toward human action itself, a concept which once again leads him back to language and society.³

A central distinction underlying Winch's examination

³Ibid., Ch. 2.

of the concept of human action is the contrast between a happening and human action. If a tennis ball strikes my head and I fall to the ground this is exactly what happens to me; but if in the middle of the match I go to my knees in a particular posture, to "beg for mercy," this is a meaningful action different in kind from the happening. The action is symbolic in that it goes together with other actions in such a way as to commit me to behaving in one way rather than another. And I am committed in the future by what I do now if my present act is the application of a rule. Human action is rule governed and therefore related to a social context. In other words actions can have meaning only if they are rule governed and thus express the concepts which help both to describe and constitute the various forms of human interaction. We cannot speak of the actions of taking the marriage vow apart from the concepts and rules which constitute this practice. The practice does not somehow exist and then social scientists come along to invent a vocabulary to describe it. Human actions differ from happenings in that the former are intrinsically related to the concepts which describe and constitute them.

Implicit in the whole discussion of the relationship of language to reality is the notion which Winch inherits from Rousseau and his tradition that society fundamentally

changes human nature. The importance of the social context in human action comes through in an essay in which Winch defends certain basic aspects of Rousseau's conception of human nature against Hobbes. Winch remarks: "Where Hobbes thinks that the citizen must be taught what man's nature unchangeably is, Rousseau's view is that a man's nature is created by his education."⁴ Winch would clearly agree with Rousseau that we cannot speak of men in the state of nature being "evil" and desiring the "property" of others. In effect men in the state of nature cannot be regarded as fully human though they have the potentiality to become human. For Winch to be human one must be a social creature with language who develops needs through his participation in society and who learns rules through language and then applies them to new and changing situations.

Winch's recognition that we are social beings constituted in large part by the social and linguistic communities of which we are a part comes through very clearly in his discussion of the concept of authority, a discussion usefully contrasted with Dahl's.

⁴Peter Winch, "Man and Society in Hobbes and Rousseau," in Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters, eds., Hobbes and Rousseau, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), p. 236.

Winch's central point, as we have seen is that human action is rule governed. There must be a right and a wrong way of doing things, and this fact must be understood by the participants. To participate in rule governed activities includes the acceptance of authority. There cannot be a right and a wrong way of doing things if the decision as to what is right and wrong is merely arbitrary, a matter of my own caprice. When it comes to following rules I must as a matter of logic accept what certain other people say as decisive. Authority thus is not a sort of influence, but an internal, conceptual relationship among persons and one which is basic to social life.

When we submit to authority we are not bowing to an alien will. We are directed by the idea of the right way of doing something in connexion with the activity we are performing. The authoritative character of an individual's will derives from its connexion with that idea of a right way.⁵

Winch is here arguing against Dahl's contention that authority is simply one form of power. The difference is significant because it once again suggests different conceptions of human nature. Authority to Winch is an

⁵Peter Winch, "Authority" in Anthony Quinton, ed., Political Philosophy, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 97-101.

internal set of relationships, shared concepts basic to society as such. It is not something added after the fact to secure certain ongoing activities because we could not have these activities in the first place without these internal ties. Dahl sees society as a set of individuals in conflict for certain given or instinctive (primary) goals. Authority is the construction after the fact of rational justifications for these goals and not basic to the social interaction out of which such goals emerge.

In considering these points it is important to realize that Winch is not denying the possibility of completely conditioned behavior, for failure to see this has been the source of much misunderstanding of him. He is denying that fully conditioned behavior is human action. The dog who has learned a trick possesses a learning different from the man who has learned the number system. In the former case a given stimulus will always produce the same response. In the latter case the man is applying a rule and because he knows the rule he can produce results he has never seen before and has never seen his teacher produce. Knowledge of a rule is more difficult, but it implies the possibility of creativity, the totally new response. The creativity opened up by language and society is basic to the view of man.

On a related plane is the fact that language and

society make us moral beings, beings who are not merely atoms of self-interest. Our concepts define for us rules of interaction with our fellows and these constitute our identity. Human beings who act according to rules can know a right and a wrong way to do something. As soon as we can be said to understand what we do we can be said to act morally. For example to respect the rights of property involves knowledge of its contradictory, what it would be to do otherwise. The understanding of rules means that we are capable of becoming aware of an alternative to our conduct, and in so far as we are rule governed beings we can choose to do otherwise. Knowledge and choice are key aspects of the concept of moral behavior. Thus the growth of language and society makes us moral beings and it is only as we become social beings in this sense that we achieve full humanity. Even if we could give any meaning to such concepts as conditioned virtue, it would be a denial of our full humanity because it robs us of our freedoms.

Winch's critique of Hobbesian atomism is further reinforced by his analysis of the relationship between reason and passion. He argues that reason cannot be torn from the fabric of human life.⁶ Because it develops in

⁶Op. cit., Winch, The Idea of a Social Science, p. 100.

the total fabric of life, it gets its shape from and shapes the passions of man. The principles and precepts of reason all derive their sense from the context of human activity in which they are applied. Though accepting Winch's grounding of reason and logic in ongoing societies, I will later criticize his attempt to make criteria of logic totally relative to the society being studied. Here, and in an analogous way in the discussion of moral discourse, his recognition of the social nature of man is pushed too far toward complete relativism.

Thus Winch clearly shares Rousseau's repudiation of the atomistic view of man, a view developed in the utilitarian tradition and prevalent in muted form in much of contemporary political science. We shall now want to show that this social view of man also carries with it a far different approach to the study of man than that employed by contemporary political science.

Winch and the Study of Action

Coming out of the tradition of Wittgenstein, Peter Winch rejects the causal-predictivist approach to the study of human behavior advocated by Hobbes and Dahl. He makes a sharp distinction between the sort of explanation appropriate to natural science and the kind which is fitting in social science. The distinction can be

made more clear by spelling out in abstract terms the philosophy of science built into the work of Dahl we discussed above.

When a natural scientist seeks a causal explanation of an event he is trying to identify recurrent regularities. What kind of event always precedes the event in question? If he can find events of type A which always precede events of type B, he will say that A causes B. A is a necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence of B. The natural scientist also insists that events A be fully distinct and separately identifiable from events B. Through this approach he tries to arrive at natural laws.⁷

Explanation of this type became immensely popular in physics during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, largely in response to the discoveries of Newton and the subsequent application of Newtonian mechanics to a whole range of problems. In the twentieth century this kind of causal explanation has been carried over into social science. As Thomas Kuhn has pointed out,⁸ in the history

⁷Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Antecedents of Action," in Alasdair MacIntyre, Against the Self-Images of the Age, (New York: Schocken, 1971).

⁸See Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

of science one field often comes through its success to exercise a strong influence on other areas.

When the physicist is trying to determine the effects of high speed neutrons on the nucleus of the atom he has set procedures or rules for determining if two events are of the same type. These rules give him the relevant criteria of sameness. He has fixed ways for establishing mass and velocity, and he can say that neutrons of a particular velocity can cause the fission of nuclei of a given mass. In this manner he can fashion a law or even a whole series of laws.

The motion of the subatomic particles is in no way dependent upon the descriptions given by the scientists. The criteria for determining the sameness of events are merely the scientific community's. Through this procedure predictivist laws are to be established. Laws must be distinguished from rules, a point of great importance for the remainder of this analysis. Laws exist independently of the events they describe. They are not normative principles--there is no obligation to obey or disobey them. They either apply or they do not apply. If phenomena not predicted by a relevant law occur and eventually lead the scientific community to construct a new law, we say that the law has been overturned, not that it has been violated. In natural science we use laws

to predict events, though whether the possibility of prediction is an adequate criterion of good laws is a debated topic among philosophers of science.

In the social sciences there has been an attempt to apply the same procedures as the natural scientists use to fashion a science of society, one which would embody laws of society. Thus social scientists construct definitions of social class, national wealth, political stability and seek correlations among these factors in the hope of generating laws or at least probabilistic generalizations. They want definitions which will allow them to compare these factors cross-culturally so that instances of their operation can be compared to give law like regularities. The work of Dahl discussed above is an excellent example of this quest, and we have seen how in his work an atomistic conception of human nature nicely sustains and is supported by these scientific assumptions.

Winch's conception of human nature and human action suggest that this whole approach to the study of man is wrong. It is wrong in the ways which it seeks to produce generalizations and in the status assigned to the generalizations.

Let us consider the social scientist who wants to correlate degrees of wealth with participation in politics.

Perhaps he wishes to establish cross-culturally the generalization that those with more wealth are more likely to participate in politics. If he is trying to be a good behaviorist, he will take certain observable criteria as his operational definition of wealth and of political participation.

Winch would argue here that the behaviorist has systematically misunderstood human action, for what determines whether the degree of wealth x has equals y 's degree of wealth is not a set of criteria developed by the scientific observer but the rules built into the ways in which the given culture understands and bestows wealth. In some cultures the man with much money in the bank will not be considered as wealthy as the owner of large tracts of land. Some cultures may not even make distinctions based on wealth. The conclusion which Winch and others correctly draw from this is that the study of a culture, unlike the study of atoms, cannot begin with definitions imposed from the outside. Human action is constituted by the set of rules we learn as social beings. The study of a society must therefore begin from the inside. It must begin with an examination of the ways in which the language of a given culture structures its world. I will say more about what this means and how it is done later in the chapter.

From the perspective of Winch if we are going to understand political participation in a culture, we must begin by looking at the culture's understanding of politics, of participation, and of other related concepts, perhaps even the culture's view of man. Such a conceptual study may be able to find the ways in which wealth, as understood in that society, constitutes reasons for and opens up avenues to political participation. But we accomplish this task only by getting at the common meanings which make communication and behavior possible in the culture. The behavior of participation is not something which exists apart from the concept of political participation, with its rich ties to many other concepts.

If the essence of social study is the pursuit of a society's basic world view as embodied in its language, the generalizations at which we arrive are not law-like. When we establish a tie between wealth and participation, we point to an institutional and linguistic connection. Perhaps stewardship is closely connected conceptually with wealth and so political responsibility has come to be part of what it means to be a wealthy man. Certain reasons for political participation will be culturally acceptable and comprehensible. This does not mean that members of the culture would give formal definitions of the concepts in these terms, only that they in fact use the terms in

these ways. The actual use of language in life is always far richer than formal definitions suggest and this must always be so. Nor are actors in the culture usually aware of all the rich associations which grow up around the concepts of their language. I am only suggesting that a Winchian would argue that the connections could be made clear and comprehensible to a member of the culture and that in ideal circumstances this would be one measure of the adequacy of his analysis.

When we say that wealth constitutes a reason for the action of participation in our hypothetical culture, the reason is in some sense a cause of the action, but there are important differences from normal natural science causality. There is a conceptual connection between the cause (wealth) and the effect (participation) and so we do not have strict Humean causality, where cause and effect are completely separable entities. We are really explaining action through reference to reasons which would be appropriate to and comprehensible by members of the culture.

The generalizations may be causal in the extended sense of the word, but they are not law-like. This is one of the most important consequences of the view being developed here. This approach to a culture will end up laying out that culture's own regularities--how it fits

its world together. We may find a whole series of linguistic-institutional connections between land and political participation. Built into these are a set of rules which help to constitute the behavior of men in the culture. Included in the notion of a rule, however, is the possibility of changing or breaking the rule. Especially as a culture becomes clear about the rules it implicitly follows, possibilities of change are even more fully open. A culture's whole understanding of the nature of wealth or participation may change and with it many related concepts and institutions must change. And even if a culture wants to live by its given rules, new marginal instances of the concept will come up and it will have to decide whether to include these. A culture whose paradigm instance of wealth has always been grazing land will have to decide whether to include wheat acreage. And we cannot in principle predict ahead of time what their decisions will be because to predict the evolution of a concept is in effect to clarify it for them. As Winch points out, this is analogous to predicting a poem; to predict it we would have to write it. Thus whatever generalizations we attain must derive from an interior understanding of the culture and to attribute law-like status to them is to misconstrue their real nature.

Even where the connection between underlying factors

and effects seems to have no underlying cultural component, the connection still exists in and can only be understood in terms of a conceptual-social matrix. Thus it may be possible to establish connections between genetic determinants and violent behavior. But what will constitute "violent behavior" varies with the culture and so an understanding of the culture's own view of man and society as built into its concepts and practices remains crucial. Even in those cases where a more traditional sort of social science analysis seems feasible, we cannot be content, as would a natural scientist, with establishing mere temporal priorities. Genetic factors may be probabilistically related to murder, but murder as a concept and social practice is closely tied to other concepts and practices which are subject to change. The social scientist who does not make society aware of this tragically misleads. Treating human action like the movement of electrons, he may unduly constrict possibilities for social change.

Nothing that I have said denies that we can and do establish generalizations about a culture at a given point in time. We may find that certain groups are always regarded by others in a specific way and that consequently they are denied important privileges. We also make predictions on the basis of these generalizations. Thus generalizations about the relationship of racial prejudice

to economic affluence may be correct, but when we view them as laws we forget that the relationships may change, especially as changing instances of the "inferior" group occurs. Secondly and more importantly we forget that this generalization is tied to and gets its meaning from a whole set of cultural meanings about wealth and personal worth. By failing to put the regularity in the larger context of cultural meanings we deprive people of a chance to become fully aware of its implicit connection to many facets of our cultural life. The possibility that social change can be effected through the actions of self-conscious moral agents is thus blunted. When the possibility of expanded consciousness is lessened, whatever social change occurring is more likely to be the result of manipulation or other forms of behavior control.

To conclude this discussion of an internal conceptual approach to social science I want to distinguish it briefly from contemporary social science's concern with "political culture." Then I will provide an indirect defense of this approach by showing that it gives us a way around some of the difficulties presented by the conventional free will debates. I am not claiming that these questions are solved or that a final proof of a social view has been developed, only that plausible reasons can be found for adopting this approach.

Even positivist social scientists have for some time been aware that the study of human behavior would have to involve some consideration of the concepts of the actors, but their ideas differ widely from Winch's. Recent attempts to explain the stability of certain Western democracies have placed great emphasis on the political culture. Political culture is defined as the cognitive, affective, and evaluative orientations of individual actors toward the political objects of the system.⁹ To many behaviorists this seems an ideal way to embody the ideas of people in their models of society. The social scientist can objectively ascertain what groups and people know and what their feelings and attitudes are, and this data can then be used as evidence to construct causal laws.

These categories suggest that reason and emotion are fully distinct and separable entities and that action is fully separable from the ideas the actors have about it. I have commented on some of the problems in making such assumptions. A second limitation of this approach lies in the fact that one is getting at a set of individual attitudes without laying out the set of cultural meanings and connections which give these attitudes their full

⁹Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1963), Ch. 1.

significance and which are the basis of communication within the culture by people who disagree with each other. An analogy here will help make my point more clear.

Let us suppose we were to study the game of chess with the aim of explaining the behavior of the participants. We might ask each participant how he played the game and how his strategy differed from his opponent's. One player might say that he believed in an aggressive style of play; another might declare that he tried to confuse his opponent. On the basis of such research we might draw some conclusions about victory in chess.

Yet a question of transcendent importance remains: do we really understand what the game of chess is all about. We cannot understand victory or aggressive play until we understand the meaning of a move in chess. And we don't understand that until we know the rules shared by both opponents, rules which make the game of chess what it is. When the players are asked about the game and why they often win or lose they will discuss their differences from their opponents, but they are not discussing the shared rules which make meaningful and possible the game they both play. These shared rules are implicit in and make possible the practices of the game and their discussion of it.

Let us move from this analogy to the question of

understanding human behavior. The argument now becomes that human action can be understood only in terms of the shared meanings which constitute a culture. Consider the example of voting. Voting is an action which takes on its meaning because of a set of basic distinctions present in a culture. It is not the mere physical act of pulling a lever. It means something because of such distinctions as that between free and coerced behavior, distinctions which are built into our language and practices and give meaning to such actions as voting. There is in other words a set of intersubjective meanings which are present in the practices of a society and give them meaning.¹⁰ These are in a sense assumptions built into the total way we conceive the world and because they are so basic and underlie all the communication of a culture they do not come through in any set of answers to questionnaires about individual opinions on topics of current interest.

But finding the central linguistic distinctions in order to understand the important practices of a society is a problematic process. As Taylor points out, its difficulties are equal and analogous to those of ferreting

¹⁰The discussion of this point and the voting example draws on Charles Taylor's excellent article, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," Review of Metaphysics, 25 (1971).

out the symbolic meaning of a Biblical text. There is always room for legitimate dispute in the interpretation of texts, though I would not agree with the implication which sometimes creeps into Taylor's essay that the process is totally relativist and subjective. Some interpretations clearly stand outside the pale of the plausible.

We must therefore be engaged in the process of ferreting out the root metaphors of a culture, and to do this we must understand the culture from within. We can't begin by imposing our concept from without but must intuitively insert ourselves into the culture.

From the behavioral perspective there are serious problems with this approach. In the first place once we argue that the basic conceptual distinctions a society makes are inextricably bound up with or constitute the behavior of the society, we can no longer aim for causal generalizations about societies. Actions can be understood only within the context of individual cultures and practices cannot be predicted. Two "similar" actions or remarks in different cultures are not necessarily the same. Thus these events cannot be used to formulate cross-cultural causal generalizations. Consider Alasdair MacIntyre's discussion of the problems faced by Almond and Verba:

. . . Almond and Verba argue that Italians . . .

are less committed to . . . the actions of their government than are Germans or Englishmen, offering as evidence the fact that the Italian respondents as compared to the English and German respondents to their survey, placed such actions very low on a list of items to which they had been asked to give a rank order in terms of the amount of pride they took in them. At no point do Almond and Verba pause to ask whether the concept of pride is the same in the three different national cultures, that is, to ask whether the different respondents had after all been asked the same question. But in fact the concept of pride . . . in Italy is not the same as that pride in England. The notion of taking pride in Italian culture is still inexorably linked . . . to the notion of honor. What one takes pride in is what touches on one's honor. If asked to list the subjects which touched their honor, most Italians would spontaneously place the chastity of their immediate female relatives high on the list--a connection that it would occur to very few Englishmen to make. These notions of pride and honor partially specify and are partially specified by a notion of the family itself importantly, if imperfectly, embodied in the actualities of Italian family life.¹¹

The above quotation clearly illustrates the close interweaving of language, thought, culture and practices and the problems thus created for a simple causal approach. These problems are closely tied to the impossibility of a predictivist model of social science, as discussed above.

From this anti-behavioral perspective the social

¹¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?," in MacIntyre, Against the Self-Images of the Age, pp. 262-263.

scientist should essentially be engaged in the process of providing a portrait of a culture--what is its basic conception of itself as expressed in its institutions and in the assumptions embodied within its language. This task is closely allied with that of the English ordinary language philosophers, of whom the late John Austin is perhaps the most outstanding example.¹² Such a social science raises the self-awareness of a culture, makes us aware of many of our implicit rules and thus brings about the possibility of change. Thus it can hardly be value free. And in fact the social scientist's view of human nature will have a bearing on his interpretation of a culture, a point Taylor has properly stressed. Thus in addition to a retreat from causality this perspective also rejects the possibility of the positivist's idolized "neutral observer." Different interpretations of a given society may in effect involve a paradigm dispute. Evidence will be relevant, but not in the simple knock-down sense assumed by an earlier positivism.

In conclusion we have discussed a philosophical position which rejects the possibility of law-like generalizations. A major reason for a science of comparative

¹²John Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," Philosophical Papers, Second Edition, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

politics has always been the notion that comparison is the social scientist's replacement for experiment in the natural sciences. Comparison yields law-like generalizations. The argument made by the critics is that the so-called laws established by comparative politics have resulted from reading into all cultures certain aspects present only in our own, and ones subject to change even in our own. Thus the view of man as autonomous bargainer has been an important source of meaning in our culture, and social scientists have universalized this notion by suggesting that interest articulation and interest aggregation are what politics is all about. But these very concepts would mean nothing to a society which had no concept of bargaining. The laws based on the use of such concepts can only be literal nonsense.

On the basis of these arguments I do not want to suggest that there is no basis for comparative politics. I merely want to redefine the nature of the field. The real task of the discipline is to help us become aware of the meaning of our own culture by broadening our awareness of other cultures. Nor does it follow from the above arguments that we must accept all cultural patterns as being equally fulfilling. Man is a social being and his behavior must be understood from the inside first, by reference to the basic meanings built into his culture.

But once we understand our own and other cultures we are in a better position to elaborate an ideal of man and to consider the ways in which various cultural patterns frustrate or enhance the emergence of various facets of that ideal.

My remaining task in this chapter is to discuss briefly one important philosophical implication of this view of man. The effort to view human behavior in causal, law-like terms has become connected with a philosophical debate which goes back at least as far as Augustine. If human behavior is caused, in what sense if any can we speak of men as free agents, deliberating beings who make choices in terms of their goals and purposes? Advocates of causal laws have responded to this critical question with two major arguments. To say that human behavior is caused is only to assert that certain factors invariably precede the occurrence of particular actions. Causality in this sense is not the same thing as compulsion. The preceding factors do not compel action. Advocates of a causal approach also argue that an unwillingness to study man in this way leaves us with a view of human action as totally random or disorderly. We cannot give any sense to the regularities and coherences which we recognize as a part of human life--and which we need if we are to be held responsible for the consequences of our

own actions.

These arguments have led in turn to long discussions about the relationship of causality and compulsion and about the concept of moral responsibility. It has been observed that these traditional arguments about causality and the freedom of the will appeared to be getting no where. When this is the case it is often because the debate has not been stated in proper terms and needs to be restructured. It seems to be that such advocates of ordinary language as Winch and Austin have in effect done just that. Their vehicle for this achievement has been the examination of the concept of human action which we have been discussing in this chapter.

The view of human action developed here leads us to regard major, large social change as inherently unpredictable. The social scientist may show how certain root metaphors and conceptual distinctions have fitted into the institutional development of the culture. These concepts do not exist in a vacuum and thus do not change in entirely random ways. The social scientist may foresee problems for a society in its self-interpretation. Taylor, for instance, suggests that the kind of meanings implicitly present in our Protestant, work-ethic culture may have gone sour for us. This kind of culture may once have implicitly meant community to us, but it can no longer

carry that meaning because its actual development has altered us and our relationship to each other and our world. A productive, work-oriented bargaining culture may have once supplied the humanly necessary pattern of meaning embodied in the notion of community, but once built such a culture comes to lose this meaning. There is nothing new to accomplish, no task of building a new society which unites men in rebellion against the old. The social scientist can perhaps foresee these problems, or more accurately he can see the meaning of practices changing; but he cannot predict the emergence of new concepts and practices which will replace man as bargainer with new needed meanings and give us a new sense of identity and community. If we had these new concepts and practices, in a sense we would already be in the future.

But this does not mean that human behavior is random. Behavior is related to language, and language is a social product. The behavior of any individual will show orderliness and coherence over time because we are all implicated in conceptual systems which none of us as single, isolated beings creates, and which cannot change immediately. But this view also suggests that we are free in the sense that we contribute to the development of this common language. We can develop the sort of cultural self-awareness which allows us to participate in the process

of changing the cultural web in which all men are implicated and which men create.

The social critic can be engaged in a dialogue with his culture which creates new meanings and so new patterns of action. I would argue that today within certain parts of our culture the meaning of the concept work is being subtly changed as the concept becomes tied to ideals of human fulfillment no longer related to the denial of self-aspirations for the sake of later egoistic rewards. The concept is freeing itself from certain acquisitive features. With this will inevitably go many other cultural changes. Our freedom lies in effect in our ability to be social critics, to become aware of our culture and to participate in the ongoing cultural dialogue. But this freedom is not adequately characterized by the image of the individual, isolated atom striking out randomly, "at will." One reason the old free will debate has generated such problems is its close connection to this atomistic view of freedom, a view which seems to equate freedom with whim. But real human freedom lies in the ability to make changes in meanings and practices which are comprehensible to a culture or subculture. Free acts are part of cultural change and development.

This view of the nature of freedom is highly congruent with the social view of man we have been elabor-

ating in this chapter. It is furthermore, congruent with an examination of the way in which we use freedom in ordinary discourse. For we do not say that an individual is free simpliciter, but that he is free of an obstacle to achieve certain ends.¹³ Freedom is always related to some context of sociall comprehensible ends.

¹³Gerald C. MacCallum, Jr., "Negative and Positive Freedom," in Anthony De Crespigny and Alan Wertheimer, eds., Contemporary Political Theory.

CHAPTER V

HUMAN NATURE AND MORAL CONCEPTS

We have already seen that different views of human nature are connected with different approaches to the moral evaluation of societies. Atomistic views of human nature are connected with causal, "scientific" approaches to the study of man. These approaches seem to encourage, though perhaps not entail, a certain attitude toward the moral evaluation of societies and moral discourse as a whole.

The contemporary political scientist believes he should strive to discover the laws governing the evolution of society. In this process he is concerned with the actual patterns of social evolution, not with prescribing what ought to be. He believes that in so far as his commitments to a particular moral point of view influence his concepts and research, his ability to derive social laws will be lessened. If he comes to believe that a given form of social organization is morally desirable, he may become tainted with a strong psychological tendency to believe that it will inevitably come to pass. This belief may affect his capacity to derive causal laws in an objective manner. Mainstream political scientists

often accuse Marxism of this failing. They argue that one reason why Marxists believe the course of history will inevitably produce a classless society, despite great historical "evidence" to the contrary, is their strong moral commitment to this outcome, a commitment which blurs their capacity to read the evidence.

The conception of moral discourse held by mainstream political scientists is closely related to their view of how science must proceed. We have already alluded briefly to this connection in the case of Dahl. He along with most mainstream political scientists accepts noncognitivism in ethics, the view that moral positions cannot be rationally defended and are mere expressions of preference.

The genesis of this position is interesting because it reflects Hobbesian assumptions about reason and about language. The logical positivists of the thirties, who first put this position in modern philosophical garb, declared that to be meaningful a proposition must admit of one or a few procedures which could verify it. This verifiability criterion grew out of their basic assumption that language reflects the world out there.¹ Since moral

¹Discussion and critiques of this view may be found in J. O. Urmson, Philosophical Analysis, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956) and in Hannah Pitkin, Wittgenstein and Justice, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

propositions do not seem to admit of a simple set of observations which would verify them, positivists asserted they were meaningless. Later the position was modified to suggest that they were mere expressions of preference or efforts to get one to abide by one's preference: I like x, do so as well.² The view of human discourse as a tool of our private interests slips in here.

From this point of view one moral judgment is rationally speaking just as acceptable as another. Opposed groups in society are always defending their position in terms of the public interest or other morally-laden claims. But the fact that radically different policies are defended in moral terms proves that these terms are mere expressions of personal preference. And because moral propositions are merely emotive the social scientist has no business defending a moral view toward any society he studies or letting moral judgments affect his work. Nor will his analysis of society necessarily entail any moral conclusion. "Facts" and "values" are separate. Research is to be "value neutral."

Critique of Moral Stance of Mainstream Political Science

Despite its pretensions of value neutrality, con-

²The development of noncognitivism in ethics is analyzed in W. D. Hudson, Modern Moral Philosophy, (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1970).

temporary political science does carry obvious ethical implications. There is already a large literature on various aspects of the connection between is and ought in modern political science and so I shall make only a few general remarks.

It is not surprising that there is a strong tendency in pluralist literature to define the good society in terms which bear a striking resemblance to contemporary American society. Like Hobbes, Robert Dahl cannot fully eschew the use of moral terms, and when he uses words of moral praise these are often reserved for American democracy. A political system in which a wide range of desires is expressed is favored because all desires are regarded as ethically equal and the social construction of desires is not understood. People simply have wants and in a formally open society lacking extreme inequalities these wants will surface. Thus a system with many interest groups and open access to decision makers is regarded as the good society. The same view of man which sustains a particular conception of value neutral science also paradoxically sanctions pluralism as the good society.

Secondly, a pluralist society is likely to be especially congenial to modern political scientists because it is a society to which their whole methodology seems especially applicable. There are clear inputs into the

system in the form of interest group demands and outputs in the form of policies. This allows one to explain outputs through a vector sum analysis of the inputs. This system squares perfectly with the nature of science. It is as though modern social science were a clear copy of the Newtonian universe.

Lastly, pluralists show a tendency to assume that American society represents some sort of highest resting point in world history. They see it as the culmination of forces present in various stages around the world. This tendency is most apparent in the development literature. Development theorists look for prerequisites of pluralist democracy and they find these in industrialization, urbanization, literacy. These underlying factors are considered to be the important causal agents in political development.

Development theorists are doing two things of dubious validity here. They are absolutizing the pattern of development of the United States and Western Europe. Historically in the West the growth of cities and industry was associated with democracy, and the assumption is that everywhere else this pattern will hold. No thought is given to the possibility that in societies with a different understanding of the value of material comforts the scheme of development as well as the content of the

democratic ideal might be very different. Secondly, a major reason why the experience of the West exerts such influence is the causal framework within which development theorists work. It has been said that development literature reflects the ethnocentric bias of much work in comparative politics. But one reason why this field has been so ethnocentric is that its philosophical underpinnings assume the regularity and inevitability of patterns with which the investigator has become familiar. A number of societies went through similar patterns of development and one therefore asserts he has found a causal pattern. In the future the same events will produce the same effects.

Before we can fully understand the inadequacies of the moral perspective of contemporary political science, it is necessary to turn to problems in its noncognitivist theory of moral discourse. Many modern philosophers have become dissatisfied with the positivist view that moral terms are mere expressions of preference. The real grammar of moral terms, as revealed by a close study of ordinary discourse, suggests that these terms are much more complex than attempts to view them in emotive terms imply.

Charles Taylor and Kurt Baier have led the attack

on the positivist theory of moral discourse.³ I will argue first that their work provides a sound description of moral discourse in our culture. Then I will show that their view of moral terms is not ethnocentric but rather is an outgrowth of certain features necessary to moral discourse as such. In the process of developing these claims I will correct some of the extreme relativism implicit in the conclusions drawn by Winch from his social view of human nature. If there are formal criteria for moral discourse there are then standards by which we may judge some practices within a society to be inconsistent with its own basic moral posture. Lastly, I will argue that we can provide some reasons for supporting a concept of person which allows us not only to criticize particular practices within a society but also the opportunities for personal development within a society. These allow us not only to question the consistency of social practices but also to weigh societies as a whole. We can give some content to the formal requirements of moral discourse. Winch has failed to grasp Rousseau's insight that a social view of man need not imply acceptance of all practices

³Kurt Baier, The Moral Point of View, (New York: Random House, 1965) and Charles Taylor, "Neutrality in Political Science," in Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman, eds., Philosophy, Politics, and Society, 3rd series, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967).

within a society nor of all societies.

In attacking the positivists Taylor and Baier deny that the political scientist can plausibly claim to be merely drawing out causal laws which explain and describe reality. Our interpretation and analysis of reality inevitably carries with it ethical implications, and the connection is not merely psychological but logical. In maintaining that a given theory in the social sciences necessarily carries with it ethical implications, Taylor also implies that there are rational criteria relevant to ethical judgments. He and Baier defend such a contention through a close look at the way in which we use ethical terms in ordinary language, a proper approach for those who see language and reality as inextricably connected.

The central contention here is that the logical grammar of statements about likes and wants is different from that of statements of good. We see this point when we look at the different ways in which we talk when we use these concepts. If I say that I like x, questions about why are only appropriate in the sense that I may specify what it is about x that I like, as for instance its taste. We might then go on to say we liked its sweet taste, but we would find it odd if someone kept pressing us at this point as to why we liked the sweet

taste. But if I say that a policy or event is good, I am normally expected to be able to give reasons, and the reasons must be of a certain kind. Statements about good must, that is, meet certain requirements. They are not arbitrary expressions of preference. If I say that socialized medicine is good and when asked why can only repeat that it is good I will not be understood as engaging in proper use of the term. Taylor summarizes this point as follows:

A judgment that I like something doesn't need grounds. That is, the absence of grounds doesn't undermine the claim "I like x" . . . But unless we adduce reasons for it (and moreover reasons of a certain kind as we shall see below) we cannot show that our claim that x is good says more than "I like x."⁴

The reasons used to defend something as good must take a certain form. If I say that the murder of x is good because x is a Vietcong sympathizer, I must be willing to say that I should be killed if I shared the same characteristics which made the sympathizer evil. Otherwise I would not be understood as making a moral argument. In addition the principle must be one which can be applied to everyone; it must, that is, be universalizable. Lastly, the reasons used to defend a moral judgment must

⁴Op. cit., Taylor, p. 50.

be ones which pertain to the purposes, needs, and interests of human beings. Or as Baier put this, something we defend as moral must be for the good of all alike. If we are not willing to defend a position in these terms our hearers will suspect that we are merely expressing our personal likes and dislikes. Taylor makes this kind of argument in the case of an individual who declares that socialized medicine is bad:

But supposing he was willing to give grounds for his position . . . , saying . . . "Too many people would be dressed in white"? We would remain in doubt as to how to take his opposition, for we would be led to ask of his opposition to the increase of doctors, say, whether he was making a judgment concerning good and bad or simply expressing a dislike. And we would decide this question by looking at the grounds he adduced for this position. And if he claimed to have nothing to say, his position would be unintelligible in exactly the same way as if he had decided to remain silent at the outset and leave his original statement unsupported.⁵

An analysis of ordinary discourse does then seem to provide sound grounds for some connection between our factual view of the world and our evaluation of it. For Taylor here is not constructing his own definition of good. He is reminding us of the rules we tacitly follow when we use the concept. This is what he is doing when he points out the distinctions we always make in questions

⁵Ibid., p. 53.

we ask when a man says he likes x versus the questions which are appropriate when one says x is good. Taylor appeals to ordinary discourse in an effort to show that we do have formal rational criteria for the use of moral judgments and that we are thus not merely expressing preferences.

On the basis of the arguments which have been made thus far it might seem that the social scientist is in a position to apply moral criteria to ongoing societies. Yet throughout this work I have been defending the plausibility of a social view of man, a major contention of which is that societies must be understood in terms of their own language systems, in other words internally. The argument above seems to try to move us in the direction of applying moral standards cross-culturally. We seem now to be saying that outsiders can judge the moral adequacy of a society's practices, perhaps even according to standards not accepted by the participants themselves.

At this point I will explore some differences among those who take a social view of man. Peter Winch has in fact argued that moral criteria are relative to a society and that outsiders may not pass judgment. Taylor, Baier, and Nielsen would reply that they are not constructing ethnocentric moral criteria and that they are only showing the criteria of moral discourse which must prevail for

beings to be social and moral. If we can accept their arguments we will be able to say that such criteria as meeting human interests needs and purposes are applicable to all societies. The task will then be to give some content to that phrase "human interests, needs and purposes," and I will attempt to explain and provide some defense for the content given it by Rousseau. I will want to make it more than a formal notion, something by which we can move beyond questions of cultural inconsistencies.

It is necessary first to distinguish Winch's conception of cultural relativism from the noncognitivist position held by the logical positivists. In an article on human nature Winch attacks the position of those ethical philosophers who try to tie moral terminology to certain sorts of human needs.⁶ Though he is attacking Alasdair MacIntyre, his arguments would apply equally to Charles Taylor or Kurt Baier. Winch argues that because human nature is constituted by society the nature of morality will depend upon the conception of human nature built into the culture. Winch remarks: "What we can ascribe to human nature does not determine what we can and what we cannot make sense of; rather what we can and

⁶Peter Winch, "Human Nature," in Royal Institute of Philosophy, The Proper Study, (New York: MacMillan, 1971).

what we cannot make sense of determines what we can ascribe to human nature. It is precisely for this reason that the concept of human nature is not the concept of something fixed and given; . . ."⁷

In other words moral codes and the needs on which they are based must be explained in terms of the given culture. Even the connection of morality to human needs depends on the culture, and presumably one could find cultures in which there is a moral discourse not tied in any way to human needs. Moral evaluation may be characterized as merely a set of standards which are involved in various institutionalized practices.

Winch thus denies that we can establish cross-cultural moral grammar. Furthermore he denies that we can question if a particular practice in a society is inconsistent or irrational. We who are outsiders must begin with the assumption that there is a logic, an internal logic, to their practices. Criteria of logic are not God-given; they are themselves part of a culture.⁸ Winch has pushed a social view of man as far as it can be pushed.

⁷Ibid., p. 10.

⁸Peter Winch, The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 100.

The beginning of an answer to his position must show that there is a common logic to moral discourse and that the existence of such a logic is in fact one necessary aspect of man's social nature. These formal requirements of moral discourse do allow us to raise legitimately questions of consistency within a culture. Once this is established we can move on to discuss the possibility of giving specific content to these formal standards and so of judging whole societies.

The issues here become clearer when we recognize that Winch is not taking a noncognitivist theory of ethics. He would probably admit that the work of Taylor and Baier is a good analysis of ethical discourse in Anglo-American culture. I suspect, though, he would side with Paul Taylor in the assertion that Baier and Charles Taylor have inappropriately universalized certain aspects of modern Western liberal morality: They have been guilty of an ethnocentric fallacy in attributing to all moral discourse features found only in the moral discourse of the modern West.⁹ The argument is that certain egalitarian features supposedly common to moral discourse everywhere are violated by some institutions and those

⁹Paul Taylor, "The Ethnocentric Fallacy," in The Monist, Vol. 47, (1963), pp. 563-584.

"violations" have been defended in a language which can only be considered moral. Paul Taylor also, along lines similar to the Winch attack, suggests that the Baier denial of self-interest as the basis of any possible morality is clearly ethnocentric and that one could easily conceive of egoistic ethical systems.

Kai Nielsen has advanced arguments on two levels against this position.¹⁰ He first remarks that a number of seemingly "immoral" institutions are in fact embraced within the terms of moral discourse as set forth by Baier and Taylor. The storm trooper who advocates the death of Jews is still making a moral argument (for he says he would accept death if he had the qualities he attributes to Jews.) His argument becomes understandable as a moral position only if he is willing to reverse his position and apply it to himself. The storm trooper and the modern liberal differ not over the meaning of moral terms but over their own factual understanding of various groups in the population. Study of some of the most notorious causes in human history will sustain the kind of argument Nielsen is making here. Aristotle's defense of slavery is a moral defense precisely because it attributes certain

¹⁰ Kai Nielsen, "On Moral Truth," in American Philosophical Quarterly, 32 (1968), pp. 9-25.

rational deficiencies to the barbarians who are to be enslaved and justifies the practice in terms of all concerned. An analysis of the Southern defense of slavery before the Civil War reveals the same characteristics. Thus an examination of moral arguments in different cultures and periods points to a common grammatical structure present in such arguments.

On a deeper level Nielsen and Taylor argue in effect that moral discourse must have certain basic criteria given the nature of man as a social and rational being. Cross-cultural similarities in grammatical structure are not merely accidental. The argument is analogous and related to the contention that language and society presuppose certain general criteria of rationality. The requirement that moral discourse be a discourse of principle and not merely self-interest and that moral reasoning advance considerations pertaining to human needs is not merely relative to a particular culture because morality is constructed by rational beings who live in society, and the very existence of society demands a point of view above self-interest, a moral point of view. As Nielsen puts it:

Any society needs some device for impartially adjudicating conflicts of interest. Society is necessary for human beings, and when human beings live together, band together in a society with at least the minimal coop-

eration this implies, they will have conflicts of interest. If, when such conflicts occur, each man were to seek to further his self-interest alone, there would be the kind of conflict and chaos in society that no reasonable man could desire. In fact if men were to act in this way, it would not even be correct to speak of them as living together in society. Thus to live together, to further one of the main ends of morality, men must adopt rules which override self-interest. To take the moral point of view of necessity involves conforming to such rules. But to conform to such rules is not simply to commit oneself to liberal Western morality. It is rather to adopt a point of view that is and must be implicit in all moral reasoning.¹¹

Thus these characteristics are not infinitely variable. They are basic to man as a rational, social being, a point with which Rousseau would fully concur.

Once we see that our very understanding of man as a rational, social being forces us into this view of the nature of moral discourse, certain conclusions follow with respect to the evaluation of existing societies. It becomes possible for us to point to specific practices in any society as wrong or irrational in terms of the general moral norms built into society as such. In most societies we can find examples of groups who are treated in ways which tacitly controvert the formal principles of the society. We now cannot assume that such treatment

¹¹Op. cit., Nielsen, p. 21.

is moral in terms of that society's view of morality. Logical consistency is built into morality, but in most societies we will find groups who are denied privileges and yet held to responsibilities which attest implicitly to their full personhood. When no morally appropriate reason is being given for this inconsistency we are proper in pointing out the moral contradiction involved in the practice.

The first part of the argument against Winch's pure social relativism thus must be that a social view of man must not end in a denial of the very possibility that certain aspects of a society might be inconsistent with one another. We must not attempt as empathetic students to find criteria of logic or rationality after the fact to justify or explain every social practice. All societies are not internally coherent, rational, and moral in all respects; and certain generally applicable criteria can be used to bring out the inconsistencies and irrationalities in ways which could in principle be understood by members of the culture. Thus in Victorian England and even to a considerable extent in the contemporary United States one can find instances of citizens who strongly protest the presence of pornography and call publicly for laws to limit its dissemination. Yet these same persons can be found enjoying pornography within the

the confines of their own homes and passing it to friends. A social science committed in advance to find the consistency in such practices might well misunderstand either the individual hypocrisy or the more subtle psychological and social problems symptomized by the inconsistency in these patterns of action.

In addition we cannot always assume that the stated reasons for an action are an agent's real reasons. Some members of a society may feel hostility toward others they are ashamed or afraid to admit their real reasons for. Thus hostility toward young college students or poor blacks may be defended on the grounds of the "subversive" impact of these groups whereas far different factors underlie the hostility. We cannot ever get at such reasons if we assume from the beginning that stated reasons for action are always the real reasons.¹²

In raising these questions of consistency we are not applying external criteria of morality and rationality, but the criteria of morality and rationality as such. Views and practices which do not correspond with a society's conception of reality or which are internally inconsistent are irrational. These criteria of rationality are, as

¹²For a discussion of this and related points see Alasdair MacIntyre, "Rationality and the Explanation of Action" and "The Idea of a Social Science" in MacIntyre, Against the Self-Images of the Age, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

Steven Lukes correctly points out, required for the existence of language as such.¹³ This line of thinking is not inconsistent with the requirement that the study of a society begin with the society's own understanding of itself as expressed in and through its language. Rather it grows out of a more complete understanding of what it is to be a creature of language and society, for to begin with the gratuitous assumption that everything in a society is defensible and comprehensible in that society's terms is paradoxically going to lead to misunderstanding of that society.

At this point in our argument it is, however, necessary to point out what we have not established. The requirement about for the good of all alike (Baier) or human interests, needs, and purposes (Taylor) does not take us too far. When human societies are inconsistent in their treatment of particular groups, do not treat them in terms of their conception of human needs, we can call these specific practices into question. But thus far we have given these phrases no specific content. All I have done is suggest a common cross cultural grammar for moral terms. Is there any way by which we can choose between different social conceptions of human needs and

¹³ Steven Lukes, "Some Problems about Rationality," in Bryan Wilson, ed., Rationality, (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

purposes? Perhaps here we will once again be driven back into a more reduced form of cultural relativity with the claim that the meaning of good of all alike depends on the concept of person developed in the different societies, and that such a concept can legitimately vary indefinitely from society to society. Can we give content to this grammatical structure and thus put ourselves in a place to weigh whole societies against each other or against some ideal?

These questions bring us to the heart of Rousseau's Social Contract. Rousseau recognized that in entering society men become fundamentally different beings. They give up their original independence and are transformed into moral beings with a knowledge of good and evil. Yet to Rousseau this was a mixed blessing and the state of nature with its independence provided a standard by which to weigh the justifiability of this sacrifice. Only in communities where there is a particular sort of relationship of individuals to the moral and social code is the sacrifice of this primeval independence justifiable. In the remainder of this chapter I will discuss the nature of the community advocated by Rousseau and some of the arguments which can be advanced in its behalf. This analysis will show that the concept of person may not properly be given any content we wish and that moral

notions thus have substantive as well as formal requirements. An argument of this sort is based upon a recognition and defense of the participant capacity of all human beings and is finally an outgrowth of the claim that human beings are ends and not mere objects. These considerations provide some grounding for the development of a cross-cultural moral point of view, a point of view implying both grammar and more specific content. Finally I will consider the kinds of moral perspective on and proposals for change of contemporary society to which a Rousseauian view of man leads. The critiques from this perspective are far deeper than the ones managed by those political scientists who do advance some critiques of pluralism from within the perspective of abstract individualism.

Before going into Rousseau's ideas about a satisfactory notion of moral and communal development, I will briefly sketch a diametrically opposed and historically very influential view, one which provides a contrast model which will sharpen our understanding of Rousseau.

Burke and Durkheim both hold a moral developmental view of man which rejects the Hobbesian assumption that man can only be a creature of self-interest. Both believe that man without a stable set of moral restraints is aimless and self-destructive. Man must experience a stable

moral law over against his inclinations, because these, left to themselves, are so strong and so numerous that they can never be fulfilled.¹⁴ Man can have a satisfying life only when he experiences over against himself a moral code which places clear limitations on his desires. This moral code must become a part of one's whole personality or self-identity. One can then know the limitations of the human situation and find acceptance of these limits itself a rewarding experience as well as finding his moderate pleasure all the more rewarding because they are seen as right and the impulses toward them not unlimited.

If morality is to serve this role in human life it must be part of a tradition handed down to men. Hierarchical societies where roles are clearly structured and not subject to the whims of individuals are ideal in this respect. The moral code grows out of and sustains the structure of society and the great mass of men merely learn what is expected of them. Morality cannot achieve its purpose unless it is experienced as something over against man, and it will not be so experienced unless it is handed down to men as part of the position they inherit in society. The relationship of men to the moral law is passive.

¹⁴For a discussion of Durkheim's view of man see Steven Lukes, "Alienation and Anomie," in Laslett and Runciman, op. cit.

Now it would be very misleading to imply that Rousseau found everything in such a picture of moral community laughable. It had great appeal to him, and indeed his attitude toward authority remained ambivalent throughout his life. Yet the central thrust of his political thinking demanded a much more active orientation toward the moral dimensions of social life on the part of the average citizen.

In the Social Contract¹⁵ Rousseau recognizes that the condition of a man's becoming a social being is the surrender of the independence of the state of nature. This sacrifice is justifiable when it makes possible a higher kind of freedom, the freedom to participate in the creation of the laws by which one's will is limited. Because we are basically social-moral beings, our highest freedom and fullest development consists in the full recognition of this fact and then in active participation within our communities in the creation of the laws by which we will be governed. One gives up his individual independence, and this sacrifice is justified only by receiving the right to participate in the making of the general will.

Now it is notorious that the concept of the general will has been variously interpreted, but much of the best

¹⁵Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract," in Lester G. Crocker, ed., The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967).

contemporary scholarship has converged on an interpretation quite at odds from those who have tried to write off Rousseau as a precursor of totalitarianism.¹⁶ The general will is the will of the whole community for justice and the public interest. The concepts of community, justice, and the public interest are the key concepts for understanding Rousseau's ideal of the general will.

The concern for justice and the public interest, as well as Rousseau's understanding of these terms and their importance in individual development becomes clear when we consider, following Plamenatz,¹⁷ some of the conditions necessary for the emergence of the general will. Individuals are to speak and vote as individuals rather than as members of a group. There will be no special interest groups in the ideal community. In this way individuals are encouraged to think in terms of the needs felt by all citizens as citizens rather than in terms of special interests with which they might be connected. General equality must also prevail. To Rousseau this means that individuals must have economic independence. He is so concerned about these conditions because to him the will of all can be the

¹⁶See for instance George Kateb, "Aspects of Rousseau's Political Thought," in Isaac Kramnick, ed., Essays in the History of Political Thought, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

¹⁷John Plamenatz, Man and Society, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.), Ch. 10.

general will only when it is concerned with the well being of every person as a person rather than as a plumber, businessman, etc. Great economic inequality prevents the development of such general concern; in other words it prevents full moral and communal development. In the ideal community men will achieve full moral freedom: they will freely identify with and work to promote the needs of persons as persons. Within a truly participant community of this sort the voice of the majority is likely to express correctly the general will; but it is important to see that Rousseau is not affirming the universal wisdom of majority rule and full participation for all social contexts. This point will be important when we consider a Rousseauian perspective on contemporary American society.

Rousseau recognizes that man's identity is in large measure created by the sort of society in which he lives. He is also clearly aware that most men in existing societies will feel no need to participate in the decisions affecting them. Perhaps the most basic point to understand about Rousseau is that he is not a need theorist because he understands so deeply the social construction of needs. The need theorist believes that an ideal of community may be grounded on those needs displayed by individuals in society. He fails to see that these are in part the

product of history: the slave may often show no "behavioral manifestation" of a need for freedom.¹⁸ Need theory provides an inadequate foundation to ground an ideal of community upon--it is a very loose and shifting foundation. Rousseau founds his vision of the community on an ideal of the autonomous person. He recognizes that his political theory is utopian in the sense that it is not based upon the experience of actual communities nor upon actual felt needs, but he would argue that any political theory which lacks a utopian dimension must be in large measure an apology for the established order. Rousseau wants to broaden self-awareness and open up wholly new possibilities of development.

It is his basic assumption that the complete development of what it means to be a moral and social person implies a commitment to a participant view of human nature and thus the participant community. I do not believe that knock-down arguments can be advanced to sustain this view, but there are considerations which can be advanced in its behalf.

The strongest argument for his position lies in the contention that to be a fully developed person includes

¹⁸For a discussion of this subject see William Connolly, "Comment on Bay," Inquiry, Vol. 14, (1971), pp. 237-243.

not only the ability to obey moral rules but also the capacity to become reflective about the rules themselves. Any social view of man recognizes that man is a rule following being; and to be rule following is different from being moved by laws of nature. Part of the notion of following a rule is the possibility of violating or changing the rule. But for this possibility to be fully present, people must become aware of the rules they follow. The existence of rules requires, as Winch correctly points out, the presence of authority in the community. A rule implies a right and a wrong way of doing something and thus established authority which provides a means of determining what constitutes the right and the wrong way. The existence of rules depends upon the existence of community, as our discussion of a private language made clear. But none of this implies that authority must be something over the community. Authority can reside in the community as a whole, and when men participate in the creation of the most important rules, which determine the whole tenor of their lives, they can become more reflectively aware of the rules. Through the creation of rules men must become aware of their existence. Participation is a way by which one develops the capacity for reflection about the moral law and thus the ability to modify it critically. Some important rules are mere

habit. Those habits could be but are not brought to formal awareness. It becomes more completely accurate in this situation to say that men are following rules because the possibility of choice is necessarily present.

Unthinking or habitual obedience to law may also create eventually enormous problems for society as well as the individual. As Richard Flathman points out:

Despite its apparent virtues, however, habitual, unreflective conformity with particular rules on the part of any very sizable segment of a populace can be a source of difficulties. Law, after all, is an instrument that human beings use to serve their purposes, to assist them in achieving their objectives. Particular legal rules are ordinarily passed to solve some problems or meet some need. The sense that they do so is what lies behind the sense that they are important and should be obeyed. When men conform to them in an unthinking manner this sense is lost. One result of such a development is that a sense of the importance of a law cannot be conveyed to new generations. Since the latter may find the habits of their elders unattractive, and since the elders have lost the capacity to defend their own behavior, conflict may develop between generations. Similarly, technological and other types of change may take place that render the laws inappropriate. Since conformity to the laws has become unthinking, these changes and/or their implications for the laws may go unnoticed and neither the laws nor the behavior patterns associated with them will be changed to adapt to them. The most general and most dangerous outcome of such a situation is the accumulation of social problems until a crisis is reached.¹⁹

¹⁹ Richard Flathman, Political Obligation, (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 59.

In addition, when authority is above one and rules are handed down an individual is still in some sense a means rather than an end. He is a tool of an alien law, no matter how fair the law may be. This is the basis of Rousseau's contention that sovereignty cannot be delegated and that representative government is inadequate. When the law is a creation of the community one develops a deeper commitment to the community and the whole structure of moral discourse because the rules are one's own. And along these lines, the mere continued existence of moral codes is no proof of their necessary connection to the common good. In fact where moral codes are not the result of a participant process the moral law is likely to embody the treatment of some within the community as means to others' ends.

The final argument for this view of community also is connected to the social view of man I have been defending. Human nature develops in society and is an outgrowth of the concepts and institutions of society. A society, the institutions and ideology of which are based on the assumption that man can create his own moral laws will have more chance of functioning in this way and thus of meeting the full requirements of personhood sketched above. This is not to say that in an unlimited sense wishing makes it so, but there is no good reason not

to proceed from the most optimistic assumption given the plausibility of a participant view of man.²⁰

Yet with Rousseau's understanding of the role of society and history in the development of the human personality, one who accepts his framework is unlikely to adopt a revolutionary posture toward existing society. A social view of human nature makes one reluctant to accept social transformation within a short time frame. In this view what we are is in part constituted by the institutions and practices of our society. One can be both a radical in terms of his appraisal of the ultimate worth of particular social practices and a reformist in terms of the immediate changes he is seeking. In fact both perspectives are necessitated by Rousseau's social view of man. That Rousseau sustained both positions in his own practical work becomes clear from a look at his work on Poland. He tells us that, "Unless you are thoroughly familiar with the nation for which you are working, the labor done on its behalf, however excellent in theory, is bound to prove faulty in practice."

²⁰ See William Connolly, "Theoretical Self-Consciousness," in William Connolly and Glen Gordon, eds., Social Structure and Political Theory, (Lexington: D. C. Heath Co., 1974) and Arnold Kaufmann, "Human Nature and Participatory Democracy," in William Connolly, ed., The Bias of Pluralism, (New York: Atherton, 1969).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that to draw from the doctrine of man's social nature a view of morality which argues that a moral code is any set of rules by which social practices are regulated is inadequate. The inadequacy lies on two levels.

In the first place in all cultures moral codes will have certain formal grammatical traits. And this fact is not accidental. It is a consequence of man's moral and social nature. Moral codes must transcend self-interest narrowly conceived for this is the purpose of morality and a requirement of social life. The logical requirements of reversibility and universability follow from this purpose. Thus it becomes possible to criticize certain practices within a society as inconsistent with basic moral requirements. We do not need to start with the presumption that all social practices in a given society have an adequate reason for existence.

And secondly I have sought to show that arguments can be advanced to defend criteria by which we may judge the content given to the concept of person in various cultures. Some institutions may be defended in ways consistent with the formal grammar of moral terms, but an impoverished notion of the person may be assumed. A recognition of the

nature of human action, including the notion that man makes rules and is not a mere object, leads to a view of the participant capacity of individuals. Recognition of this capacity provides substantive as well as formal criteria by which to judge societies. It was because Rousseau was aware of the full consequences of a social view of man that he could reject an abstract individualist conception of man and yet find grounds for the rejection of complete cultural relativism.

In the last chapter I will illustrate some of the critiques and questions generated by a Rousseauian view of man and social science. The significance of this perspective will become more clear by comparing those few critical perspectives on pluralism within the utilitarian tradition with those which a Rousseauian view generates. In elaborating a participant perspective, I will examine possible attitudes toward technology, the structure of government decision making, and the role of workers in the modern corporation. These themes are all related and will be tied in with current controversies about decentralization. Lastly I will briefly consider appropriate strategies of change.

CHAPTER VI

HUMAN NATURE AND CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Today it is a commonplace that our modern liberal welfare state is undergoing a crisis of confidence. The crisis goes beyond any particular set of policies and touches the nature of our institutions themselves. Yet the remedies being suggested, especially the most thoughtful, owe deep intellectual debts to classical political theory. The growing crisis of liberalism is of course not primarily a consequence of developments solely within the intellectual community, but the nature and direction of responses is often very much affected by one's philosophical debts. These debts are, however, not always recognized, with the consequence that some of the fundamental assumptions dividing the critics of contemporary practice are not brought out. One critical standpoint is concerned with the fragmentation of government institutions and sees currently the demise of a government of laws. Another major critical tradition, while also concerned with rule of law, seeks to combine it with opportunities for genuine participation in government and society. I will show that the first tradition descends intellectually from Hobbes and Locke, whereas the second

derives its view of man and society from Rousseau.

The critics generally take as their starting point the conviction that pluralism in some sense is an adequate empirical characterization of our society, though this pluralism is differently interpreted than in the traditional Dahl-Truman¹ mold. Kariel, Bachrach, and Wolff² see American pluralism as a system which puts political power into the hands of a few well organized and traditionally accepted pressure groups, which in turn are controlled by oligarchies. In other words modern pluralism is conservatively biased in two senses. It favors established groups and within even these groups real political power is in the hands of insulated group leaders. Pluralist theory has, following the lead of Joseph Schumpeter, redefined democracy as competition among elites.³ In its attempt to create a "realistic" theory of democracy, the radical normative implications of classical democratic theory have been cast aside and

¹David Truman, The Governmental Process, (New York: Knopf, 1951).

²Henry Kariel, The Promise of Politics, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Peter Bachrach, The Theory of Democratic Elitism, (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), and Robert Paul Wolff, The Poverty of Liberalism, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

³See Bachrach, op. cit., and Carole Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

democracy has been made a conservative doctrine. In general terms one could characterize Kariel and Bachrach especially as making a critique of our society on participant terms.

Theodore Lowi and Grant McConnell are also disturbed by the implications of current American pluralist practice, but they view pluralism and its defects in somewhat different terms.⁴ The principal problem, for them, is not so much that interest groups play a role in the making of public policy; rather each private group has appropriated unto itself that area of public policy by which it is most affected. Thus the railroads and rail unions have taken over the ICC and large commercial farmers control the farm program. Lowi and McConnell emphasize slightly different aspects of the problem. McConnell is concerned with the practice of grass-roots administration of federal programs, a practice which usually amounts to the administration of such policies as farm relief by local farmer committees. Within these narrow constituencies it is easy for the most powerful farmers to dominate. One special powerful interest is likely to dominate within

⁴Theodore Lowi, The End of Liberalism, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1969) and Grant McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

a narrow constituency, and thus the American ideal of grass roots democracy really means domination by different powerful special interests.⁵ Lowi sees the same sort of process as coming about at the federal level as well. The philosophy of interest group liberalism, which states that those interests most affected by a policy should be represented in the interior processes of decision making, has led to a situation where power is delegated to administrative agencies without any clear standard of delegation. The agencies are both confused and lacking in public understanding, support, or even visibility. They are easily captured by the private interests with which they deal. In the process the public interest is sacrificed. In short, the works of both Lowi and McConnell heavily stress the loss of the public interest under our current pattern of policy making. Thus McConnell cites instances where public works projects have been carried out to serve the needs of powerful local construction companies though at the expense of environmental and aesthetic concerns. These concerns are shared by all of us, but within any one narrow locality these public concerns are not strong enough to override the demands of those private firms. Lowi attempts to show that in-

⁵Op. cit., McConnell, Ch. 4.

terest group liberalism cannot plan and cannot achieve justice. The power of government lends sanction to decisions really made by powerful private concerns. The ICC engages in a process of case by case bargaining which serves the interests of the most powerful railroads. Federal housing policy is taken over by the banks and real estate firms, with the result that federal policy has subsidized the white flight from the big cities and also prevented the integration of the new white suburbs.

I do not wish to imply that these critiques of pluralism are incompatible or that there is no overlap between them. But they differ in emphasis and in basic assumptions, something which becomes clear when we examine the positive proposals which emanate from the two perspectives. Different concepts are emphasized by the two groups, a fact which provides a key to the underlying assumptions. To Kariel, Bachrach, and Wolff, participation and community are the terms emphasized. Though the injustices and conservative biases of the system are clearly recognized, these are seen as outgrowths of the non-participatory structure of modern life. Even if these problems could be solved without important institutional changes, these improvements would be regarded as far from satisfactory. The key concepts underlying the Lowi-McConnell criticisms are the public interest and government of law. And for

them the concept of the public interest takes on a somewhat different meaning than in radical works. It tends to be equated with diffused or social goods which most of us want but which will not be satisfied within the confines of the market. National defense is the classic instance of such a social good. The term is not used by them to include development of a deeper sense of the needs of others and thus development of one's self through participation in a community. I will return to this theme later.

The importance of this difference in emphasis becomes obvious when we examine the ways in which the two sides define the current crisis in legitimacy as well as their proposed remedies. One of the major themes in Lowi's book is the crisis of confidence in American institutions. He repeatedly defines this crisis in terms of the inability of a fragmented government really to govern, especially its failure to make clear choices as expressed in unambiguous laws. The radical critics are bothered by a general lack of real self-government and participation.

Lowi advocates an effective federal government which could truly be called a government of law. McConnell wants to strengthen the nationalizing tendencies of the American political system. Federalism was initially a compromise rather than an ideal. Its nature has changed

and can continue to do so. Reforms which would strengthen such institutions as our national parties are needed. Along similar lines Lowi wants to stop the centrifugal tendencies within the federal government itself. His call for juridical democracy is simply a demand that Congress and the administrative agencies themselves reverse their abdication of responsibility. His principal criticism is that interest groups have been allowed participation in the interior processes of decision making. He believes that various special interests have taken over particular agencies and regulate themselves in their own interest. Juridical democracy would require of Congress and the agencies that they make clear laws rather than allow special interests to bargain over policies.

Lowi and McConnell both work within a Madisonian view of politics. Government is to guarantee equal rights for all, and it can do this best in a situation where there are multiple competing interest groups. They support a pluralist politics when many groups can be in the arena all the time. Powerful special interests will cancel each other out and formal political leadership will then be able to fashion policies in the public interest. This view stresses the role of formally elected elites and identifies legitimate government basically

with policy outcomes. It also assumes and accepts as inevitable the self-interestedness of groups, which are thought to be composed of the self-interested individuals who benefit from them. Little thought presumably is given to the structure of these groups as long as there is a relatively balanced competition among them. Unlike Hobbes there is no assumption that government's only legitimating task is to preserve order; government can secure certain positive conditions for the private development of all. But there is no assumption that political society has a role in the development of full moral and communal sense of the individual. The lack of any concern with problems of human development and political socialization is conspicuous in both Lowi and McConnell.

Both Lowi and McConnell are completely opposed to any response to the current crisis which involves decentralization and community control. Lowi explicitly attacks the poverty war for its attempt to solve the problems of poverty by giving the poor some power in the administration of programs intended to benefit them. The effect, as he sees it, is to create one more area of public policy to be appropriated by a private group. Lowi remarks that there will be time enough to decentralize once a public interest has been established and articulated in public policy. Again his primary interest seems to be

the consistency and clarity of public policy outcomes. To give urban renewal or housing policy to city government is to make these policies the prerogatives of the local real estate and construction industries.

It is at this point that the dispute between Lowi and the other group of political scientists and new left critics becomes the most apparent. They would argue, and I think correctly, that Lowi has only partially understood the present crisis in legitimacy. Especially in the ghettos there has emerged a black consciousness which wishes to express itself through development of a different life style and control over the immediate aspects of their lives. This emerging consciousness is in part a reflection of ineffective and unjust national policies, but it is inadequate to regard it solely in this light, for it expresses a deeper aspect of the human personality neglected by Lockian and Madisonian theory, the desire to be bound by laws of one's own making.

The new left critics call for a participant society. The crisis of legitimacy must be resolved by turning important powers over schools, housing, police forces to smaller scale political units where more direct individual participation by the affected individuals will be possible. The suggestion that industry be democratized is also an important part of this program. In some authors this

means control over day-to-day working arrangements and discipline. In others it means actual control of all important corporate decisions.⁶

Now it is in the spirit of Rousseau's concern for moral and communal development that modern theories of decentralization and participation have been developed. Such theorists as Bachrach and Kariel feel that the modern concept of democracy has lost an important dimension. The aim of Rousseau was to provide a set of institutions in which full participation would be possible and thus moral development would occur. Policy outcomes provide only one perspective in this participant theory. As in the case of both Plato and Rousseau, modern participant theory seeks the creation of institutions which fit man's full developmental potential. The assumption of participant theory is that the participant community makes possible man's full humanity. Community fosters the mutual recognition of individuals as persons, that is, as beings who develop moral codes based on a recognition of the needs of others and of the community as a whole. Men learn to treat each other as subjects and freely choose to live by a moral law.

⁶Op. cit., Carole Pateman.

Obviously these two critiques of modern pluralism are in tension with each other. It may be possible to imagine a constructive dialogue between them, but such a dialogue can be rewarding only when each side fully recognizes the strength of the other. Each must deal with the other's strongest case. And this will come about only when all sides become clear about the ways in which conceptions of human nature are implicit in this debate.

Lowi's whole argument is couched in terms of the effects on public policy outcomes of interest group liberalism. And under interest group liberalism he includes such proposals as the devolution to local authority of major policy initiatives.

Kariel and Bachrach are concerned with the individual's alienation from the political process and even day-to-day life. They focus on such facts as the political apathy of the average American. To Lowi and McConnell this is not a problem as long as the average citizen is benefitting from satisfactory governmental policies.

In assessing Lowi's critique of contemporary American democracy it is important to keep in mind that he remains within the limits of a basically pluralist approach. His call for juridical democracy is really a request that the system become more fully pluralist. As in the case of all pluralists, the doctrine operates for him both as an

ideal and as the basis for a description of the system. His picture of current American politics is one of various groups each pushing for its own immediate interest. Out of the conflict of such groups, at least when the conflict is as wide as possible, will emerge policies which provide the maximum satisfaction of the largest number of groups.

Lowi's conception of American politics and his projected ideal are tied to a view of human nature far different from Kariel's and Bachrach's. His is the sort of atomistic, a-social view of human nature which is characteristic of the liberal tradition as far back as Hobbes. The view is that men are self-interested atoms--they are born with a well defined set of innate needs or desires, such as for power, property, security. Society exists for and is created by the quest of men to fulfill these needs. The individual person, embodying these developed interests, needs, and purposes is not only morally but logically and temporally prior to society and the state.

His conception of human nature includes no theory of moral development within society. In a discussion praising Madison's Federalist number ten, Lowi argues that we must assume that groups will always pursue their self-interest.

Madison in Federalist 10 defined the group ("faction") as a "number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the

whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the right of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." (Emphasis added.) David Truman uses Madison's definition but cuts the quotation just before the emphasized part. In such a manner pluralist theory became the complete handmaiden of interest group liberalism. . . . To the Madisonian. . . groups were necessary evils much in need of regulation. To the modern pluralist groups are good; they require accommodation. . . .

A revived feeling of distrust toward interests and groups would not destroy pluralist theory but would only prevent its remaining a servant of a completely outmoded system of public endeavor. . . . Such distrust of prevailing theory might then lead to discomfort with the jurisprudence of delegation of power, for it too rests mightily upon an idealized view of how groups make law today.⁷

While one might not wish to quarrel with Lowi's statement as an assessment of how present day interest groups actually function, what is noteworthy is his assumption that groups must always behave this way. He does not consider the possibility that groups and individuals might move beyond a narrow self-interest under the right forms of social life, and he cannot consider this possibility because he has no conception of human development in a social context. Human beings are merely creatures of a given self-interest.

⁷Op. cit., Lowi, pp. 296-297.

Lowi's policy proposals unite an abstract individualist view of man with the conviction that social science can yield the same sort of regularities as those in the natural sciences. If one channels enough interests into the political process they will cancel each other out in such a way that the public interest will inevitably emerge. Simple alterations of the system can produce automatic changes. Lowi is in effect assuming law like regularities in the system, an assumption made easier by a conception of a fixed human nature.

Such political theorists as Bachrach and Kariel derive from Rousseau assumptions about human nature contrary to those of Lowi. Man is not an isolated atom with a set of given interests and needs which exist apart from society. Rather man becomes what he is within a social structure. Society in large measure constitutes his make-up. He learns a language and a set of roles and from these he learns his needs and purposes. He learns what good and evil are. Apart from or before the existence of society men are not good or evil, for they have no conception of these.

Men in any society are not therefore atoms of self-interest. They have roles and act in terms of the conception of themselves developed in their socially created roles. This does not mean that they never act in ways we

would want to call self-interested. But even what goes under the label self-interest is in part constituted by the conception of man developed within a social framework. The quest for property is something we learn as we learn language and roles, for the forms of property differ in various societies. An individual learns who he is and what his self-interest is as he learns his social role.

Bachrach derives from Rousseau the recognition that the existence of society depends upon men who have a sense of right and wrong. Men must have learned who they are, including their duties to society at large. Man is a creature who follows rules he learns in society rather than a programmed being who follows his preformed desires.

Society cannot exist without certain general moral rules. Rousseau does not believe that the existence of morality is a mere matter of convention or that moral codes guarantee efficiency in the pursuit of pleasure, as did Hume. Like Kant he believed that there are certain basic criteria which any moral system will meet and this must necessarily be the case. Morality is that higher order system of rules which provides a standard above self-interest and thus guarantees the existence of society as such.

Rousseau did not of course believe that any existing society was fully developed morally. Men did not recog-

the breadth or the extent of their dependence on others and on society in general. Thus while recognizing some duties to other men, they were always trying to take advantage of them in some aspects of their lives. Our institutions do not make us fully conscious of the needs of others as complete human beings. In some aspects and relationships others become objects for our use. Rousseau knew that Hobbes was not completely wrong. Only the problem was that Hobbes described the modern bourgeois individual socialized to limited moral awareness and certain forms of self-interested competition with his fellows.

Rousseau recognized that the fully developed moral person emerges from the proper process of moral decision-making. An understanding of the concept of the general will in Rousseau makes this point clear. Rousseau argued that one is legitimately bound only by the general will.

We have seen that in his analysis of the general will Rousseau makes two significant points. He believes that the good society is one where all men are clearly aware of their moral duties to others. Fully to follow rules, which is part of being social, is not merely to follow them from habit but to understand and follow them from reflective choice. The second related argument is that men achieve this full moral development (and in fact

this is part of his conception of moral development) when they create the most important rules which guide their society. Men gain the clearest conception of themselves as social beings, including a full sense of the depth of their ties to other persons, when they participate with their fellows in the creation of laws which affect all.

The dispute between Lowi and Bachrach involves fundamentally different conceptions of human nature. Lowi can be less concerned with widening opportunities for participation because he sees human nature as an abstract given entity. As long as the desires people have now are being met things are fine and there is no necessity for participation. What people feel now is an expression of a given human nature. Bachrach believes that people are social beings who learn who they truly are and what their real needs are only when they participate fully in political life. Bachrach criticizes Dahl, and his argument is equally applicable to Lowi, for treating participation as dispensable when one is already getting what he wants from society.

Dahl fails . . . to conceive of political participation two-dimensionally: as instrumentality to obtain end results and as a process that affords him the opportunity to gain a greater sense of purpose and pride in himself and a greater awareness of community. In Rousseauian terms, Dahl

has failed to consider participation as a process through which man can become a master of himself.⁸

Through participation people develop a new sense of needs, such as for fellowship, communal pleasures, and joint participation and intellectual development itself. As social beings our needs do not remain constant. The satisfaction of these communal needs comes to mean more to people than those earlier needs felt before political participation. Thus political participation is not one good whose value can be compared in utilitarian terms with other goods, because it is a process or way of life which changes our perception of all goods. It is in other words a good in itself.

While I believe that the stronger philosophical case can be built for some version of Rousseau's social view of man, in the next part of this essay I will confine myself to showing that a more fruitful debate between the policy proposals espoused by each side becomes possible when we recognize clearly the depth and origin of the "paradigm" dispute we face here. While I will proceed from basically Rousseauian assumptions, I think it possible to learn more from other positions when we are self-conscious about our own and our opponents basic per-

⁸Peter Bachrach, "Interest, Participation, and Democratic Theory," (Unpublished paper).

spectives.

Lowi can so easily equate participation and decentralization with devolution to conventional units of local government or cooptation of local elites because he is not concerned with human development and does not see that this is one principal concern of the new left critics. Thus neither he nor McConnell sees that the New Left want to restructure local decision making bodies in such a way that the power of traditional elites, or of any elite, will be minimized. A set of procedures, to be discussed below, should be designed to maximize the opportunities of persons to participate in decisions which most affect them. This is neither cooptation of favored local people, with its conservative impact, nor transfer of power to traditional local bureaucracies. Smaller more homogeneous constituencies will be created within large cities and in these constituencies real attempts to institutionalize the participation of all will be made.

Decentralization in this sense will not fully please Lowi because it could cause some fragmentation of policy, but his lack of concern for development leads him not to consider these changes in the radical notion of decentralization and what they hope to achieve. Thus he cannot weigh the costs of possible policy fragmentation against the gains of human development. His lack of concern

for questions of human development is also revealed in his inadequate perspective on the emergence of the public interest.

As we have seen, Lowi is worried that an effective program of decentralization would fragment an already divided nation, and one would rightly imagine that in such a climate a public interest could not be developed.

I do not see any easy resolution to this dilemma, but a number of points are relevant. In the first place some of the reforms suggested by Lowi and McConnell could make for easier development of true national policies, such as welfare reform and environmental laws. But I am convinced that such laws will be easier to pass and implement if they are at least in part the result of public interest politics. We need the emergence of more and stronger public interest groups, to borrow a term from Schattschneider.⁹ The many ties between government and business and the concentrated power of big business¹⁰ make it far easier for people to organize on the basis of occupational groups for the sake of private advantage. In addition a prevailing ethos which regards the pursuit of private

⁹E. E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), Ch. 2.

¹⁰For a discussion of these ties see John Kenneth Galbraith, Economics and the Public Purpose, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973).

monetary advantage as natural contributes to the same effect. It is the great strength of the Rousseauist tradition to recognize that in the proper institutional setting men can learn to have other broader concerns.

A major problem with both pluralism and Lowi is that a concern for policy outcomes has obscured consideration of the political potential which produces those outcomes. A developed political community can grow through participation and provide the thrust for new programs. While too extreme a level of participation, such as unwillingness to listen to experts, can be a threat to effective solutions, the problem today is to find a constituency at all concerned with public interest problems.

One reason for the lack of interest by political scientists and other commentators in problems of participation and human development has been a paradigm among historians which associates the rise of totalitarianism with extreme levels of political participation. Yet writing during the thirties, John Dewey made some suggestive remarks which indicate the possibility of covering the disturbing facts of Nazi Germany with another theoretical perspective at least equally convincing. Democracy fell in Germany not because there was too much of it

but because it was not part of the fabric of daily life.¹¹ If we can offer equally plausible and more potentially optimistic explanations of political extremism, we have a strong case for advising political scientists to work on the basis of paradigms which assume the potential for human development. For what human nature can accomplish is in part a consequence of the way we view it and the social institutions which are an outgrowth of our beliefs.¹² The indications of voter irrationality in the behaviorist literature¹³ should be seen not as proof of man's irreversible irrationality, but as inadequacies fostered by the present system beyond which individuals can develop. We should be chastened by the recognition that no remedial action in the form of institutional engineering can be final, but that human beings can transcend present social evils.

We are left with the conclusion that a constituency

¹¹John Dewey, "Democracy and Educational Administration," in School and Society, Vol. 23, (April, 1937).

¹²William Connolly, "Theoretical Self-Consciousness," in William Connolly and Glen Gordon, eds., Social Structure and Political Theory, (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1974) and Arnold Kaufmann, "Human Nature and Participator Democracy," in Connolly, ed., The Bias of Pluralism, (New York: Atherton Press, 1969).

¹³See especially Angus Campbell et al., The American Voter, (New York: Wiley, 1960).

for the public interest must emerge among men who in their immediate lives have had some opportunity to see problems from more than a self-interested point of view. Rousseau, and Tocqueville after him,¹⁴ have recognized that local political participation is the key to the development of such consciousness. Participation thus may have some role in the restructuring of national politics. The emergence of local political consciousness could provide the lever for reform, and Lowi's work is quite lacking as to the potential sources of reform energy.¹⁵ And even if Lowi's reforms were magically instituted, we cannot assume that the politics of juridical democracy would insure a stronger place for the public interest. Bringing all interests into the national arena and hoping for the emergence of the public interest seems to be a modern version of Adam Smith's wonderful world. To hope that the blind self-interest of all these groups will produce farseeing results is a kind of naive optimism on which we had better not count.

On the other hand it must be admitted that Bachrach and others have slid rather easily past the question of the

¹⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. by Max Lerner and J. P. Mayer, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

¹⁵ For a discussion of this point see William Connolly, "Liberalism Under Pressure," in Polity, Vol. 2, (Spring 1970).

effects of increased decentralization and participation in our type of society, for even decentralization of the sort they envisage will create problems; and to bring about such decentralization will itself be a very problematic process. Their correct recognition of the need for more opportunities for self-development obscures these aspects of the problem. It is of course a commonplace that our society is highly interdependent and structurally centralized. There are risks that in many policy areas we would have to pay a high cost for the wrong decisions by various local communities. And in fact self-development at the local level will not be possible if minimal economic prerequisites are not guaranteed. And one must also ask whether and how effective decentralization can be brought off at all in our kind of society.

It seems to me that the insights of a Rousseauian perspective allow the transcendence or synthesis, in a Hegelian sense, of both sides of this debate. Because he was so strongly aware of the social nature of man, Rousseau's concern for self-development never led him to advocate simplistic repudiation of the existing society. He was not the sort of radical to exclaim: "Burn it all down and start all over again!" In his work on existing societies he recognized that his ideals could never be fully attained. And he knew that reform proposals

would have to embody compromises with existing injustices. He argued, for example, that serfs in Poland could not be immediately freed because they were not ready for the responsibilities of freedom. Some program of gradual emancipation was necessary.¹⁶ But Rousseau also knew that his ideal was nonetheless relevant as a standard by which to judge existing societies and as a guide to directions for reforms. Rousseau was free of the illusion of so many contemporary political theorists who assume that ideals which cannot be easily and quickly implemented are irrelevant, "merely" utopian fantasies.

A full Rousseauian perspective will then transcend excessive obeisance to existing society and a simplistic utopianism. It will do this through a two pronged attack-- by advocating a set of specific reforms which could at least eventually be achieved in some degree within the political system and then by encouraging the development of other "new culture" alternatives outside conventional politics. These two prongs of the attack are and must be complementary.¹⁷

Let me begin first with the more practical political

¹⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Considerations on the Government of Poland," in Frederick Watkins, ed., Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1953), pp. 159-187.

¹⁷ Though I do not exactly follow him, I have gained insights from Philip Slater, The Pursuit of Loneliness, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

side of the attack. (Though I am not implying that the political will to implement these proposals is here or can be immediately generated.)

In the first place some aspects of Lowi's juridical democracy are useful even from the perspective of a more participant orientation to politics. The tenure of statutes proposal and the requirement that Congress rather than administrative agencies make laws¹⁸ are useful in that they may force interest groups and their leaders to deal with Congress and thus become more public. Proposals which will force interest group leaders to deal with each other and Congress as openly as possible are to be encouraged because making the process of interest group dealings more public will put pressure on the leaders to reform their own organizations in the direction of greater responsiveness to membership. But in saying this we must remember that Congressional Committees themselves all too easily have developed tacit ties to special interests. This suggests that Lowi's reforms can be more effective when part of a general reform of Congress itself.

There are other obvious ways in which federal policy can be effective and is in fact absolutely necessary in

¹⁸Op. cit., Lowi, Ch. 10.

fostering a more participant society. Rousseau correctly recognized that men who were financially enslaved to others could not participate as full independent beings in the development of the general will. On one level this insight can be pressed into a full critique of the capitalist economic system; but at the level of contemporary politics it needs to be pressed toward continuing demands for tax reform. One of the things which the federal government is uniquely equipped to do is to collect taxes in an efficient manner. The tax system needs to be pushed gradually toward greater income equality. And part of this must be programs for guaranteed annual incomes. Truly participant communities cannot be created by men who are worried about where their next meal is coming from. Equally important to the development of community is a reasonable degree of national economic stability. This means the control of inflation and the avoidance of severe economic downturns. In an interdependent economy effective federal power will also be needed for this purpose, and experience has shown that an interest group liberal approach to prices and wage policy is inadequate.

But stable communities depend upon more than minimal price fluctuations. One aspect of modern society which militates against stability is rapid technological change and technological unemployment. Historically our tax

policy has favored technological innovation, allowing corporations large write offs for investment in new technology. But the concern for ever expanding economic abundance leads us to pursue technology wherever it leads. The question of abundance for what is not asked. Ways of life and communities are constantly disrupted and the pace of technological change severs the generations and increases the already pathological fixation on youth in our culture. Technology and abundance need to be subordinated to a concern for human happiness, and federal economic policy can play a role here by ceasing to encourage those technological innovations which can be justified solely by increased productivity, corporate profits regardless of damage to the social and natural environment.

Participant reforms must also involve the large corporation more directly than in matters of tax policy. If federal policy must create the proper context for participation, it must also open up opportunities for participation of both a geographic and functional sort.

It is becoming increasingly difficult today to deny that the large corporation is a public, political entity.¹⁹ Government policy should be changed by requiring federal

¹⁹There are many statements of this theme. Among them is Michael Reagan, The Managed Economy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

charters for private corporations, and a major condition for the granting of such charters would be that corporations include effective mechanisms for the representation of consumers and workers in their decision making processes. This is far from a full answer to the problems created by the corporate capitalist structure of our economy but it is an effective first step which will give many more persons the chance to participate in decisions having a large effect on their daily lives. There will need to be considerable experimentation as to the forms which this will take so as to minimize the role of new workers and consumer elites. Representative bodies will have to play a role, but imaginative uses of committees and provisions for mandates, recalls, and public meetings can mitigate the undesirable effects of representation. Especially at this level of the individual plant local study groups and political action groups can begin two-way communication with leadership as well as manage some of the more immediate plant concerns.²⁰

It may seem to some that these proposals will result in a decline in economic efficiency for the American

²⁰Nils Elvander, "Democracy and Large Organizations," in Gideon Sjoberg and M. Donald Hancock, eds., Politics in the Post-Welfare State, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 314.

corporation. This is certainly true in that it will at least to some extent generate a concern about the effects of technology on the worker qua worker. The proposals seem more reasonable when we realize that demand for the continuing high levels of production is only made possible by an artificially induced levels of demand. Automation and technological progress already have created problems about unemployment, and only increased public sector spending in the area of personal services, such as for teachers, social workers, etc., can begin to alleviate our unemployment problems.²¹ American economic development is at a point where decent comfort can be assured without continuing the obsessive concern for increased corporate efficiency.

Thus far it would seem that my reform proposals for the creation of a more participant society have entailed the creation of a more powerful federal government. This is correct because decentralized participant communities stand any chance of working only in the proper context, and federal power properly used is one of the most important instruments for the creation of that context.

Federal policy must also directly make possible increased participation at the local level. If we examine

²¹See Michael Harrington, "The Politics of Poverty," in Irving Howe, ed., The Radical Papers, (New York: Doubleday, 1965).

local communities we find that they face decisions about zoning, the education of their children, the regulation of industries in their boundaries, the administration of their police, the construction of new houses and recreation facilities. When we examine this list of issues and functions, which does not purport to be complete, we will see that important distinctions need to be made. In the present state of our economy it is inconceivable that some of the areas should be handled primarily at the local level. The social costs would be too enormous. The task of regulating pollution must be federal because corporations go beyond the boundaries of local neighborhoods, and because local regulation would allow corporations to play off one community against another in the pursuit of the lowest bidder. The regulation of pollution has a direct effect upon society and failure to perform this task adequately will be catastrophic in its results.

But there are other areas on this list where the results of the policy adopted will have a direct and immediate impact mainly on the local community. The local community will have to pay the largest and most immediate price for failure to educate its children properly or adequately design public housing, recreation and urban renewal. I am not suggesting that decisions here will have no impact on the larger metropolitan area or the nation

as a whole. In our kind of society there are no such areas; but where the direct brunt of the decision must be borne by the local community, a concern for human development dictates that responsibility for these decisions be delegated to that community. And by this I do not mean that urban renewal, education, etc., be delegated to existing city governments, which is the net result of current revenue sharing. These functions must be turned over to truly local neighborhoods so that decisions will be made by people who have some sense of daily relationships to each other. I do not have precise formulas for the achievement of this goal, but federal programs should begin to carry as requirements local plans for effective decentralization. Educational assistance can require the creation of local neighborhood school boards; urban renewal projects can include the right of veto to groups immediately affected in the ghetto.

When we "decentralize" to cities as a whole, these constituencies may indeed be dominated by large private firms. But such need not be the case when functions are turned over to many smaller areas, including ghetto communities. A large number of such constituencies cannot be controlled by small, localized affluent groups. Decentralization will dislodge these traditional elites.

It may be true, as Grant McConnell has charged, that

within the small constituency there is a danger that policy will be made by elites not responsive to a larger national interest. What is required is that decisions defining this larger public good be made in broad constituencies but that there also be areas for important decisions by smaller constituencies. The proposals here for neighborhood government and for changes in corporate structure reflect this outlook by extending some space, both geographic (local neighborhoods) and functional (corporations) for decisions which affect the group significantly and yet will not undermine the public interest. Certain very general policies crucial to the whole nation and yet beyond the scope of any one area, such as environmental protection, will inevitably be the prerogative of central authority, but workers at the plant level should have the opportunity to have a say in the structuring of their work lives and local neighborhoods should have a say in redesigning their neighborhoods and the schools and public facilities within them. Decisions made by such constituencies in these areas will have only a marginal impact on the public interest as conceived by Lowi and McConnell. Indeed, providing this kind of opportunity could strengthen concern with the public interest because, as Bachrach points out, many people are often apathetic about larger political events,

but they will learn the importance of politics when they begin to understand that politics can have a bearing on their lives. A less apathetic electorate can provide the basis for more effective definitions of the public interest by representative bodies.

In this connection it should also be pointed out that within a new corporate structure a less alienating form of work life could become a possibility, and workers who have been allowed to develop more fully in their work are less likely to be manipulated by elites in their work or neighborhood life. This will also minimize the dangers of power in small constituencies. Andre Gorz suggests that workers who are given or who gain some chance to affect their job situation can and should try to control a number of specific areas. These should include the training schools, so that workers may have more than one skill. Control over the speed and rhythm of work should be sought as well as over the kind of new techniques to be introduced.²²

Alienating work life has so dulled the capacities of many workers that they leave their jobs able only to indulge the pursuit of those pleasures programmed for them

²² Andre Gorz, A Strategy for Labor, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 43-44.

by corporate giants. Only if the problem of alienation is adequately dealt with can we begin to guarantee that participation at the neighborhood level will be as widespread as possible.

In carrying out decentralization to the local communities, a number of practical problems and potential dangers must be faced. We must first consider the size of local areas within large cities that we will create. The size of the local community must be small enough to increase significantly chances for individual participation and yet large enough so that decisions will not be trivial. Large cities must not be so fragmented that coordination among subunits will be extremely difficult. Experience will provide some clues about how to weigh different factors. Ethnic, historic and geographic factors should be taken into account in defining the neighborhood areas.²³

How will these neighborhoods be governed? As mentioned before we must design a set of procedures which will give as many people as possible a chance to participate directly in political decisions. We can imagine a small elected council having responsibility for the ongoing administration of police, sanitation, schools, welfare.

²³There are several essays on the problems of defining neighborhoods in Terrence E. Cook and Patrick M. Morgan, eds., Participatory Democracy, (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1971).

would have the force of law and be binding on the council. Furthermore, council members can themselves be regionally elected. This will foster direct communication between very small groups of citizens and political leadership. The general intent of these practical suggestions is to blend direct democratic participation with representation in such a way that men have alienated their sovereignty neither to a representative elite nor to an elite of those fanatics who have the patience to endure long meetings. These suggestions also recognize that leadership and expertise must have a role in any successful organization, but there is a vast difference between experts and leaders who must use their talents to serve the common good and those who define their values as the common good. With these proposals even those individuals who choose minimal involvement will still feel closer to politics. Those who make decisions affecting them will inevitably be in much closer contact with their immediate friends.

These proposals are not, however, without risk and are not guaranteed to end apathy. Some neighborhoods may yet be taken over by unrepresentative fanatics; but these costs must be weighed against the need for ghetto communities especially to develop self-awareness and respect. Failure can be a salutary lesson and the costs must also be weighed against the mounting failure of

State and city authorities may set certain minimum standards of performance, though problems may arise as to what constitutes minimum standards and what is undue interference. This local council may be given legislative power, but we are here faced with the recurrent problem of delegation of responsibility. It would seem impossible to do away with representation at the local level because, as Walzer points out, most people do not want to be political all the time.²⁴ This is especially the case in a society where work is dull and deadening, as we can expect it to be for some time to come. But perhaps the representative principle at the neighborhood level can be qualified in a number of ways. Committees in individual subject areas can be appointed, with additional members coming from all interested citizens. The committee would be fully responsible to the elected representatives, but those with a real desire to participate would have the chance to be heard. In addition, referenda and town meetings could be a possibility: a specified percentage of local voters would have the right to request either. Decisions through a town meeting with an adequate quorum

²⁴Michael Walzer, "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen," in Irving Howe, ed., Beyond the New Left.

white liberalism to deal with the educational and other problems of the slums.

These proposals will mean that individuals in their corporate and neighborhood life will have some chance to participate in the decisions the consequences of which will have a clear impact on them. But no full scale abrogation of federal power is being suggested. The federal government will continue to regulate the most pervasive social forces, such as the corporation. The federal courts will enforce civil rights and guarantees to minority groups. And federal power will be needed to provide a proper environment for these changes. Federal policy must be coordinated so that in as many related areas as possible people will have direct responsibility for the decisions affecting them. A cluster of related functions would go to each neighborhood area. Increased opportunities for participation in related areas plus a larger public sector (more money for public parks, schools, etc.) will help to foster a more participant view of man and life. When the stakes involved are not great and only an isolated policy here and there affected we cannot expect people to develop a commitment to participation.

These reforms are difficult to achieve, and political will is required. But these changes within the system, if they are to become more feasible and point toward a fuller

change in the nature of American life, require activities of a utopian sort by those "outside" the system. It seems to me that a full Rousseauian perspective would point in the same additional directions. The nature of this further perspective becomes more clear when we consider the inadequacies of the reforms proposed, even could they be fully implemented.

Modern American corporations are very large and the nature of the work life extremely alienating. Proposals to make corporations more fully participant may alleviate some of the worst features of work, but a truly non-alienating life would require a smaller scale technology. At present there is a strong need for groups "outside" the system to demonstrate the feasibility of a smaller scale and decentralized technology.²⁵ They will show that human beings can produce enough to live in decent comfort without becoming specialized appendages of the machine. The size and geographic dispersion of corporations means that their governments will likely become representative, pluralist structures with most individuals still having all to little say in some of the most important decisions. In addition it is one of the paradoxes of alienation that

²⁵Questions of the feasibility of smaller scale technology are discussed in C. George Benello and Dimitri Roussopoulos, eds., The Case for Participatory Democracy, (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1971).

we cannot expect alienated men to be able to fully envisage alternatives to existing arrangements. The ways in which a more fulfilling work life may compensate for the endless spiral of material accumulation will not be fully apparent to them.

Another inadequacy of the proposed reforms is the sort of communities they would create. These communities would often be lacking in two respects: they are not intergenerational and there is a separation of work and leisure.²⁶ The individuals with whom I associate in my work life are often not the same persons I know in my neighborhood. We are fragmented and relate to others in fragmented ways. And both suburbia and corporations are generationally segregated. Our relationships with the next generation and the previous one are infrequent and superficial and thus the sort of community which can exist is insufficient. Such psychologists as Eric Erickson have pointed out that a secure sense of personal identity derives in part from these intergenerational relationships.²⁷ We can face the fact of

²⁶The effects of this kind of separation are considered by Kenneth Keniston, The Uncommitted, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1960).

²⁷Erik Erikson has dealt with the need for intergenerational community in Childhood and Society, (New York: Norton, 1950).

our own death less traumatically when we have close ties to our children and grandchildren, and death and ageing to them is neither so mysterious nor frightening when we do not institutionalize them out of the picture. It is characteristic of the atomism and youth orientation of our society that most neighborhoods, excepting some ethnic communities, are extremely segregated by age. We take every opportunity we can to separate out "the elderly," and not merely in a geographic sense. And as with the case of alienation they generally accept this as normal; the way the world is.

These inadequacies all suggest the need for a more radical long range perspective on community. This perspective is not one that can or should easily be imposed by government. But it suggests that communal movements "outside" the system can play a vital role by attempting to use technology to create a far more decentralized and less alienating form of work life where people can relate thought to action more immediately. Such work life should be closely integrated to community life, as will be much more feasible with smaller scale enterprise. In addition these communities should strive not merely for racial integration but also for generational integration, something most of today's communes have lacked. A large part of such a community must also be an educational system

which places far less stress on competition and individual achievement. Cooperation and human happiness must replace achievement and personal rewards as hallmarks of the educational system.

A communal movement outside the system is not a "cop out" and should not be discouraged by political activists. Successful communes can suggest new economic arrangements and life styles to persons too fully shaped by our alienating work life and fragmented communities. These men and women have been so deprived of other satisfactions that far too much learning is derived from the accumulation of material goods. New communal arrangements may be utopian in the sense that they cannot soon be realized by the whole society, but they will constantly challenge those within existing structures to make further reforms. New communities will also create new people, who will challenge the present society by demanding reforms. They can be a refuge for new activists and can pump new blood into the system.

Those who participate in reformist politics and those who form utopian movements each need the other. Reforms prepare the way for a new culture. More local neighborhood freedom will mean greater chances for experiment. Men in nonalienating work will be fuller political participants and make the whole concept seem more feasible.

to "realistic" observers. Without utopian communities and constant protest against the system too many of these reforms can be perverted to old uses. Participant reforms can become further tools of manipulation by corporations and political machines. The full genius of a Rousseauian perspective on contemporary America lies in its call for gradualist reforms to open new possibilities within the system and the emergence of a new view of man, work, politics and democracy. The development of a new view in these areas can open up new perspectives and debates in our political life, allowing specific reforms to become catalysts for further change.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have tried to show that an often unarticulated and unexamined conception of human nature underlies some of the most influential work in modern political science. Because many political scientists are unaware of the ways in which certain basic assumptions underlie their methods and outlooks they are in an inadequate position to assess these.

This is especially sad at this juncture for at least two major reasons. Some important modern philosophers have advanced arguments which tend to undermine the basic assumptions of the abstract individualist conception of human nature and the view of social science and moral discourse with which it is associated. Conceptions of human will and purpose have gained a new respectability as we come to recognize the problems involved in viewing human beings as essentially similar to neutrons. Persistent problems about causality and free will have been unsolved in this tradition: intuitively even social scientists know human beings cannot get along without a vocabulary of good and evil, guilt and resentment. Yet what can such a vocabulary mean if we are all atoms whose behavior is determined and predictable. The nature of

reason and emotion are badly misunderstood, particularly the way in which our social and historical development contributes to the emergence of our needs. I have discussed some of these philosophical arguments in the course of this thesis, but many contemporary political scientists are unfamiliar with or fail to see the significance of what is occurring in the philosophical community. There is great need for serious consideration of these issues from the side of political science because they have so important a bearing on how the political scientist works.

The political scientist must begin to consider these issues if his whole system is not to be built on a collapsing foundation, and the best way in which to shore up that foundation is to study systematic critiques of it and their implications.

This thesis has focused on an intellectual tradition and the theoretical problems in that tradition. But obviously the problems with that tradition are not merely theoretical. To deal with some of the practical problems briefly alluded to at the end of my thesis we need at least to consider radical alternatives to our present modes of handling problems. The days of unexamined business as usual hopefully will not be much longer tolerated. And so the needs for examination of a different perspective on man and the study of his societies is not merely the

intellectual's problem. It is a problem for all of us as citizens.

If there are intellectual obstacles to such a reexamination in a stubbornly held and self-sustaining ideology, there are also practical ones. My thesis has given scant consideration to these latter. For there are not merely intellectual barriers standing in the way of the implementation of a radically different society. The very scale of our society makes extremely difficult the realization of a Rousseauian world. I have briefly mentioned some of the practical directions in which we would have to devote attention, but hopefully the difficulty of the task will not prevent us from beginning to ask the tough practical questions of how to deal with our society here and now. Rousseau may be a utopian, but the utopian vision can become an important stimulant to eventual progress.

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