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Man is in the most literal sense of the word a *zoon politikon*, not only a social animal, but an animal which can develop into an individual only in society.

KARL MARX

A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy

An artificially induced uniformity of thought and sentiment is a symptom of an inner void . . . The "joining" habit of the average American, and his excessive sociability, may well have an explanation like that of conformity. . . . We should not be so averse to solitude if we had, when we were alone, the companionship of communal thought built into our mental habits. In the absence of this communion, there is the need for reinforcement by external contact. Our sociability is largely an effort to find substitutes for that normal consciousness of connection and union that proceeds from being a sustained and sustaining member of a social whole.

The habit of opposing the corporate and collective to the individual tends to the persistent continuation of the confusion and uncertainty. It distracts attention from the crucial issue: How shall the individual refind himself in an unprecedentedly new social situation, and what qualities will the new individualism exhibit?

I am not anxious to depict the form which this emergent individualism will assume. Indeed I do not see how it can be described until more progress has been made in its production. But such progress will not be initiated until we cease opposing the socially corporate to the individual. . . . The greatest obstacle to that vision is, I repeat, the perpetuation of the older individualism now reduced, as I have said, to . . . private pecuniary gain.

JOHN DEWEY

Individualism Old and New

