

The Democratic Self and Moral Community: A Deweyian-Pragmatic Perspective

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In the United States, and increasingly in the world at large, there are ongoing efforts to further democratic community, which, in Dewey's words, is "the moral ideal" of community life at its best, and is constituted not by a particular body of institutions but a way of life incorporating particular types of personal attitudes in individual human beings.¹ However, in the United States, and increasingly in the world at large, the attempt to build a democratic community as a moral ideal is complicated by rapidly growing multiculturalism with its moral, as well as social, political and economic ramifications. The dominance of the problems posed by pluralism in the move from totalitarianism to democracy throughout the former Soviet Union and its satellite countries is apparent in the tensions that have developed within many multiracial or multiethnic societies in the process of this transition. These societies house substantial ethnic and religious minorities, and the problems posed by this pluralism are developing as part and parcel of the transition to liberal democracy. The rejection of totalitarian unity and the transition to democracy and a liberated pluralism is bringing in its wake a fragmentation that is incorporated in a tendency to stifle a sense of community embodying values held in common. The problems of cultural, national, linguistic, and religious difference are

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