

What "unites human beings with human beings and divides them (relatively speaking) from the rest of known creation" is "the basic mutuality of participation," "the essential sign of [which] is language," or "language, including the arts as languages."

Apart from such extreme cases as feeble minded or insane persons or infants, in which "we are for some practical purposes not dealing with human beings at all," "any inequalities in participatory power which exist are too uncertain, fluctuating, and equivocal to justify the supposition that some men are in relation to other men as men are to animals." "There is a basic mutuality of participation between [master and slave] as human beings. . . . The master may arbitrarily refuse to explain his purposes, or the slave his, but if they really share a common language, then indefinite mutual participation is open to them."

Other human differences, such as color, race, sex, or class are all irrelevant to political freedom. "The natural modes of human mutuality" are "autonomy" and "the honest expression of differences of thought and feeling." In all societies, human beings have some political freedom, in that the behavior of citizens is in some important respects protected against determination by the rulers and is, to this extent, self-determined. This is true, at any rate, if one takes account of relatively unimportant aspects of human behavior. The only practical question, then, is one of degree: "how much self-determination (rather than determination by rulers) is there, in what important respects of behavior, and--perhaps above all--how much definite assurance is there in advance as to the boundaries of freedom, that is, are there recognized limits to governmental interference, guaranteed 'rights' to make one's own decisions? This is the political question of liberty."