The Five Communities

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Those of us who have experienced the joy and terror of the intensive formation of a philosophical community of inquiry (COI) over an extended period, understand intuitively that it is a process of development which has certain characteristic structures and patterns. These can be glossed in a number of ways, all of which will be metaphors, if only because any given moment within the life of the COI is an instant of vertiginous freedom.

A first assumption of the COI is that its form, which includes its characteristic structures and dynamic patterns, is not just fortuitous, or only one way of arriving at truth. It has the form it does because the world is so constructed that the individual cannot know reality adequately; therefore inquiry must be a communal venture. The truth, as Charles Saunders Peirce formulated it, is "what the unlimited community of inquirers will discover to be the case in the long run."[1] Truth which is adequate to us all is only arrived at in this way, through a long, often tortuous process of construction, reorganization, and re-articulation of the meanings which everywhere announce themselves inchoately around us.

The five structural dimensions of the COI which I am identifying could be perhaps be grouped differently, and called by different names. Furthermore, I am prying them apart in order to understand them better, but they are of course really all one thing, or at least inextricably overlapping, interdependent, and interactive. I call them gesture, language, mind, love, and interest. I want to call them "communities" because each of them is the expression of a communicative, interpretive process, converging on a common body of signs. Each is involved in a developmental process of change in which every member is determinative in some way of the group as a whole, yet the whole has an emergent character that transcends any one individual. Each community is uninterpretable in any complete sense apart from the others. Gesture and language have a certain primacy in that they are the exoteric systems through which the more esoteric bodies of signs of mind, interest, and love are expressed, but that expression is always only a translation, and both gesture and language may in a deeper sense be said to have their origins in the other three communities.

I also want to identify some dynamic patterns of intersubjectivity which run through each of these communities—ways our conversations seem to work, things we find ourselves thinking and saying and doing over and over again. One is crisis, which comes from the Greek word for judgment, and of which risk and opportunity are inseparable components. Other themes which I will characterize are dialogue, play, teleology, conflict, and discipline. But first to the five communities.

THE COMMUNITY OF GESTURE

This is perhaps the most obvious form of community, and yet the most ignored. I am referring to the fundamental somatic and kinaesthetic level of intersubjectivity "before" language, which grounds, frames, and comments on verbal and noetic levels of interaction. Even before we open our mouths we are making meaning together. Before the signs which represent ideas or even objects in the world, there are the more fundamental signs of the mental feeling states of the body—James Edie refers to this as "the physical appearance of

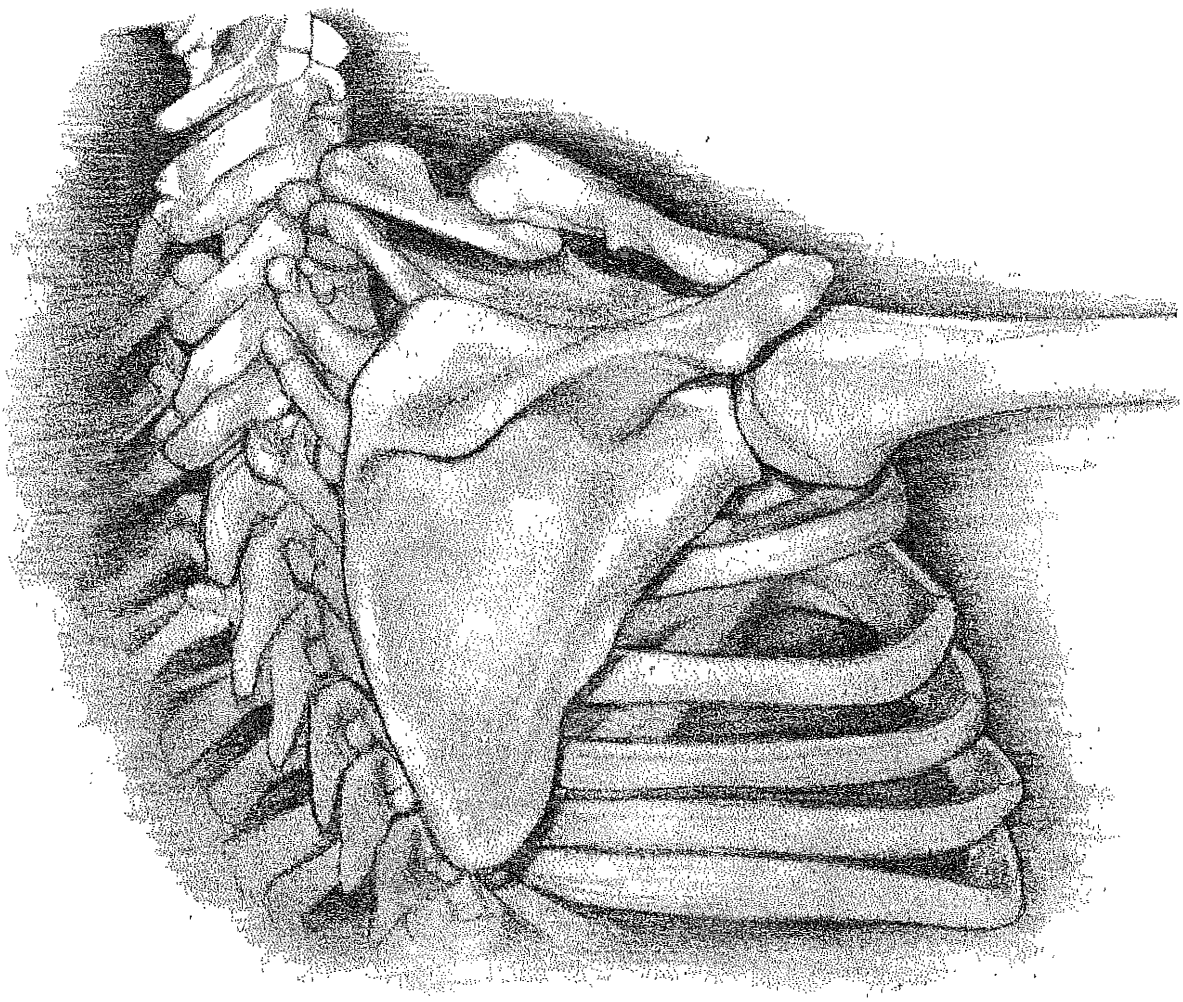
meaning"—and this sign world, like the sign world of language, is a shared, interactive, one.[2]

The gestural is a sign world is one of intense, unremitting intervisiblity. We all sit facing each other at the table—we are all in each other's view, directly or peripherally . But the visual is only a sort of gateway for all the liminal and sub-liminal processes of what Howard Gardner has characterized as an intelligence unto itself—the bodily-kinaesthetic.[3] On this level, everything is happening simultaneously, and everything has an effect: shift of posture, lifting of arm, tension of back and neck, movement of head and eyes when talking, when listening, etc. This constant postural, kinesic dialogue is immediate, simultaneous, and completely unavoidable. The moment you are in my physical space, whether we are embracing, have our backs to each other, or anywhere in between, I feel and perceive my physical presence differently than when alone, and we are involuntarily in a situation of attunement or non-attunement, an interplay of mutual arousal regulation, in which, it is true, we can be more or less sensitive, more or less responsive, but never neutral. In all of our gestural interaction—proxemic, kinesic, facial expression, gaze, voice modulation, and timing of verbal response and delivery—we are continually both monitoring and acting to alter each other's vitality affects, which, especially in the COI, maintains and enhances our linguistic and noetic interaction. This dance is also gendered; each member brings both the body language characteristic of his or her sex, as well as the subtle gestural differences of inter- and intra-gender interaction to the discussion.[4]

Not only is there mutual regulation of arousal going on in the gestural community, but there is a co-construction of body images. When you, with whom I have spent hours sitting around a table together talking, agreeing and disagreeing, struggling to express ideas—when, as you talk, you raise your head, you meet my eyes in just such a way, a way which at the beginning was strange to me, but now I have come to expect and to understand as meaningful in just the way in which you, physically and gesturally, i.e. more or less unconsciously, mean—then I, in my own gestural accommodation to it, am affording you a new understanding of your own gesture. Thus, in our gestural dance we are revealed to ourselves anew. I think this is what Paul Schilder means when he says that "everybody builds his own body-image in contact with others," and his reference to it as a "continual constructive effort." He says that there is "a constant 'unconscious' wandering of other personalities into ourselves. . . . a continuous movement of personalities, and of body-images towards our own body-image. . . ." In another place he refers to this process as a "dialogue" of body images.[5] We are located in this constant co-construction because our own body image is incomplete apart from an other; on a gestural level, the other knows more about us that we do about ourselves. So we are involved in an unending process of self-understanding on a somatic level through identification, projection, and other processes by which parts of us and parts of others interplay, communicate, and dance out both constructive and destructive, dominant, submissive, and egalitarian, inclusive and exclusive energies. What is always missing, however, from the encounter, what makes it forever incomplete, what makes of it a drama of the hidden and revealed, is the uneliminable residue of hiddenness, of opacity before you—my radical isolation—for there are aspects of who I am which are present in the natural sign world of my gestures, but are unknown either to you or myself. It is the interplay of the hidden and the revealed which creates the drama of our gestural dialogue.

What also makes of it an incessant constructive effort is its inchoate character. The dance which expresses this mutual entrainement, although it both grounds and comments on speech discourse, is in itself a speechless speech. It is nature speaking, what Dewey (170) called "natural" as opposed to "intentional" signs. So, as a cloud stands for rain but does not intend to stand for rain, a blush, a tightening of the mouth, stands for something in spite of our intentions. In it we are liable to all the involuntarisms of our social animal nature: synchronization of gesture, postural impregnation, gaze patterns, and various forms of affective attunement and contagion, through "motor mimicry"—mirroring, echoing and the like. It is experienced by us, as Merleau-Ponty described it, as magic, or "action at a distance." We experience a collective participation in what he refers to as "current of undifferentiated psychic experience ... a state of permanent 'hysteria" (in the sense of indistinctness between that which is lived and that which is only imagined between self and others)."[6] To deny our location in this space of contagion, involuntary transgression, "building," "melting," and "spreading" (Schilder's terms), of incalculable effects, is to deny a form of knowledge whose source we cannot identify or control, but which is no less a form of knowledge for all that. Nor can the linguistic discourse structure of the COI exist separately from it, for it is its ground and its vehicle. "Speech emerges from the 'total language' as constituted by gestures, mimicries, etc." says Merleau-Ponty.[7] Not just speech in general, but the functional elements of dialogue—elaboration, repair, timing, and attunement—are grounded here, in the body.

Is there a definable collective process building in the process of the COI, a gestural group gestalt? Schilder says there is no such thing as a collective body image, but only what he calls a "partial community of body images" going on, but one is tempted to claim that a collective gestural gestalt is a necessary analogue to the collective process of mind and language—i.e. the Argument—which is easier to see, because it leaves traces, it is not "dumb." Merleau-Ponty at least implies a group coordination of physiognomic perspectives when he claims that "In the activity of the body, like that of language, there is a blind logic, since laws of equilibrium are observed by the community of speaking subjects without any of them being conscious of it."[8] Perhaps we can approach this idea, again with Merleau-Ponty's help, through his idea of "style," which he defines as "a 'manner' that I apprehend and then imitate" in other people, "even if I am unable to define it," through the "comprehending power of my corporeality."[9] Over time in the COI, as we understand each other with our bodies, and in coordination with the realities of language, mind, power, and desire, we build together a way of sitting at the table which is both the sum of all our postural, facial, gaze, kinesic manners, and also something which is greater than the sum. Like each of our body images in relation to each other, this whole is continually under construction, there is, as Schilder says of the dialogue of individual body images, "a continual testing to find out what parts fit the plan and fit the whole."[10] This unfinished whole both informs the movement of the Argument, and is informed by it, in the sense that when the moves are "good" it knits, there is a sense of shared excitement which is expressed gesturally. It is continually being altered as well by how well-rested people



are, by the state of their health, and by the various energies of desire and interest—whether conflict, expansion, the subtleties of eros, dominance, intimidation, confusion, etc. When a "great one" addresses us—typically a master of language and mind (although that very mastery has a gestural counterpart)—we sit, we move, we gaze, differently. When a loose canon, a "rogue" (whether a chronic, momentary, or episodic one) irritates, confuses or infects us, our whole-group style changes. Those who are gifted bodily-kinaesthetically move us gesturally, with profound, if subtle effect, around the table. As a community of love, we instinctively work to assimilate individuals who are gesturally incongruent—who are over-expressive, under-expressive, who are less well-"timed" in the sense of the gestural aspects of conversational maintenance and repair—into our larger gestural style, which is building through continuous interaction, and which in turn is influenced by them. And as the community of inquiry practices other expressive forms such as sharing meals together, dancing, making music, making drama, drinking, exercising, gaming, travelling, spending individual time together, etc., that cumulative experience is brought, dumb but expressive, back to the table, where its subtle but inalterable changes add their effect. So the gestural community, like the others, develops over time in the direction of greater inter-activity and coordination, or loss of coordination, or some place in between.

THE COMMUNITY OF LANGUAGE

I have already quoted Merleau-Ponty as saying, "Speech emerges from the 'total language' as constituted by gestures, mimicries, etc." He goes on to say: "But speech transforms. Already it uses the organs of phonation for a function that is unnatural to them—in effect, language has no organs. All the organs that contribute to language already have another function. . . . Language introduces itself as a superstructure, that is, as a phenomenon that is already a witness to another order."[11] It is of course as witness to that "other order" which gives the community of signs which is language its primacy in the COI. The gestural—a shrug, a trembling of the hand, a raising of an eyebrow, a blush or a pallor, a thrusting forward or backward of the head as a point is made, etc.—introduces a permanent element of ambiguity into any speech act. It can undermine speech acts—the trembling hand delivering confident words—support them, or comment ironically on them. Gesture can gloss the linguistic even to the point of making words mean exactly the opposite of their usual meaning. Yet words, at least in the community of inquiry, are always lifting and pointing beyond gesture, towards thought. The paradox is that they can never grasp, map, or express thought completely, because they are an ineradicable part of thought, and cannot map, grasp, or express themselves.[12]

In spite of this weakness, both gesture and mind, which are respectively "below" and "above" words, are faced with the problem that they depend on words for their complete expression, even though complete expression is impossible. Gesture, as a natural as opposed to an intentional sign, is inchoate and frustrated apart from the word which emerges from it,[13] and mind, apart from its grounding in the involuntary feeling-world of signs which is gesture, and its more mystical iconography in the arts, only emerges at all through words. Words, at least in the practice of poetry, philosophy, and of real dialogue, are a boundary phenomenon. Speech and writing emerge in front of thought; they meet mind in mid air somewhere; they never know if they are finding and expressing mind, or making it.

These paradoxes of expression all point to the mediating, or translating function of language in the COI. It is true that all the communities are in a continual process of inter-translation, each seeking to become transparent in terms of the other. But words, as "witness to another order" are pre-eminently between the communities, struggling to translate the meanings of each into an ideal tongue. The community of language is always tempted into thinking that, whatever the subject, a formal proposition is just around the corner—some way to "say it all." This assumptive role of language as the objective sphere, the community where it can be said, often blinds us to the amount of translation which is constantly necessary within the speech community itself. Most obviously, translation is necessary between the variety of languages spoken within the community, each of which has a distinctive way of putting thoughts to words, as well as distinctive interlocutive protocols, and distinctive habitual ways of combining word and gesture. Each member of a language group must work to translate, not just the words, but these more fundamental characteristics of the other group's discourse. Whenever there are two or more languages present in a group, this becomes a critical task.

Among speakers of the same language there are different genres and vocabularies (philosophical, poetic, narrative, historical, etc.) which inform, often unconsciously, the way people talk, and require intertranslation. There are also expressive styles (circular, linear, aphoristic, systematic, elliptical, allusive, inspirational, ironic, etc.) which characterize, not only individuals, but the sorts of

language necessary to express (while simultaneously influencing, in an incalculable mix) certain kinds of thinking.

Finally, there is the music of stress, pitch, contour and juncture, which acts as an even more essential ground for speech than the gestural. Imagine a voice on the telephone, or speaking from behind a screen: it can communicate independently from gesture, indeed often more intensely, uncomplicated as it is by the opacities and ambiguities of gesture and physiognomy. The musical element in speech is essential to meaning, from the most generic, e.g. the melodic contours which make questions, commands, warnings, reassurances, etc.; to the most subtly particular, for example the quality of the individual communicated by her voice. If, through a phenomenon known as "masking," we disguised the content of speech of the COI, and only heard the melodic, we would still have a record of a session, in the rising and falling, the rhythms, the pauses, the intensities, of the interlocutors. This musical level of language is in a relationship with gesture, with words, with thinking patterns, with love and power relationships, i.e. with all the communities; and as all the communities do for each other, it both expresses all the others, and is incomplete without them.

THE COMMUNITY OF MIND

The community of mind operates on a continuum from the deliberate, disciplined thinking of Western logic, in voluntary submission to its laws; to the quality of mindedness of the whole, an emergent field of ideas, which finds itself moving eerily beyond the law of contradiction and the excluded middle. The leading edge of this emergence is sometimes called the "argument," which, through a dialectical, dialogical process, seeks an infinitely receding horizon. The emerging edge implies a whole, which is apprehended by each individual as much aesthetically and emotionally as logically. I grasp it according to my capacity to integrate it, and its whole quality changes every time I act within it. It is vulnerable to the confusion of the argument "getting lost," but the very quality of emergence, of self-correctingly feeling one's way, is necessary to its advance. Perhaps more than any other, the community of mind demands a certain courage, or discipline of playfulness, a trust in the unfolding of the argument through the conflict and interplay of perspectives.

We all have the sense that mind, or thought, is to some extent outside of time; it is a system of signs—whether natural, intentional, iconic, enactive or linguistic—that brings it, however imperfectly in. But this doesn't mean it is pure, ethereal, or "spiritual" apart from language, for as Peirce points out, "the stuff of mind is feeling, ideas being nothing other than continua of living feeling." Because "vague feeling is the primordial state of mind," and feelings are vague thoughts, the COI is as much an emotional as a mental phenomenon. Both mind and feeling operate through association, spread, connections, weldings. The argument is always leading as much to a state of feeling as to some purely cognitive judgment. "The highest truths can only be felt"[14]; and strong, if vague, emotion always accompanies the most abstract sort of reflection.

The community of mind is like the community of gesture to the extent that, for one thing, thinking is specific. As Dewey puts it, "different things suggest their own appropriate meanings, tell their own unique stories, and they do this in very different ways with different persons." So a person's thinking style is as idiosyncratic, and as tied to the particular thing being thought about, as a gesture is tied to a specific person, moment, feeling, or postural and kinesic interaction.

Mind is also like gesture in that—again in Dewey's words— "it is not we who think, in any actively responsible sense; thinking is rather something that happens in us." Like the gestural dance in which we are all engaged, the inexorable dialectic of thought plays itself out in us, individually and as a group. We are familiar with its double movement, from the finite, partial, confused given, to a whole which involuntarily suggests itself, which then calls forth additional cases which that suggested whole has directed our attention to. Group inquiry is bridging gaps, binding together, moving back and forth, by a process of analysis and synthesis, between the observed and the conditional. The drive is always, however inchoately or deviously, toward generalization, comprehending and uniting elements which were previously understood as isolated, disparate.[15] Thus ordinary logic—the logic of classes—is operating under what Peirce characterizes as the "lure" of a whole, which it vaguely senses as a meaning freed from local restrictions, and only understood through another kind of logic, which he calls the "logic of relations." The latter intuitively understands its own current position as moving from fragment to system, proceeding towards ever more comprehensive systems of relations.[16] Often this movement involves what Corrington calls a "leap beyond the current data, [in an] attempt to reach greater generic spread."[17] Ideas spring up spontaneously, spread, become affected by one another, and form more general ideas.

But though we are intuitively aware that no thought is isolated, and that any given noetic

structure we are contemplating is a fragment of a greater whole, that whole lies beyond us. And because thought can only be expressed in signs, and any sign is determined by both what came before it and what comes after it, mind is intrinsically hampered in its movement; it is fallible, always contested, at risk. The direction of the argument emerges only through tentative probings, and is never more than partially visible. But what keeps us in a state of obscure excitement as we follow the argument, is the sense that what lures us is a summum bonum—a coordination of perspectives which is as much an emotional, gestural, and perceptual state as a cognitive one.

THE COMMUNITY OF LOVE

The community of inquiry is a group romance, whose eros is both sexual, Platonic (in the sense of the eros of the Symposium), and agapic. The sexual eros of the COI is experienced as, not only various mutual attractions between individuals or combinations of individuals, apprehended at various levels of sublimation or desublimation, but as a group drive for unity on a somatic level, which is both initiated and sustained by the community of gesture. The telos of the community of love can be hypothesized as what Marcuse describes as the "transformation of sexuality into eros," through the emergence of "non-repressive sublimation."[18] This transformation is experienced by members of the group as a vivid sense of beauty, energy, and mutual affinity, as well as a drive for disclosure, vulnerability, and mutual care, which is where it assumes agapic proportions. It is the analogue of the drive of the noetic community toward the coordination of perspectives which is implicit in the apprehension of the whole, and of the gestural community towards the perfectly fulfilling kinesic, proxemic, haptic, and gaze dance. The risks which the community of love face include the ever-present possibility of personal and social disintegration through sexual and/or emotional exploitation, and emotions of jealousy, unrequited love, antagonism, excessive diffidence, etc., all of which are associated with the vicissitudes undergone within the community of interest. Also associated with the community of love is the "group illusion," i.e. the perception of a harmony which is as yet wishful thinking. But it is the community of love which offers the opportunity of healing, in the sense of making whole, of regaining a kind of emotional balance in which the individual experiences his identity as completed, by the group, and visa versa.

The community of love is no less a noetic than an emotional one. Reason may be understood as a form of love,[19] a hunger for which meaning and beauty are synonymous. All persons have a natural desire, like a form of curiosity, for a widening of their range of acquaintance with persons and things. We instinctively understand that we are not whole as long as we are single, that one person's experience is nothing if it stands alone.[20] This drive for association is the Eros which Freud called an instinct,[21] the creative, sympathetic force that impels us toward relationship as a form of self-realization, and connects us to each other even as it connects ideas to each other. In its agapic dimensions,[22] love sublates the more concrete, sensuous, sexual quality of the erotic, and is experienced as a mediating influence, which, analogous with the law of mind, both projects us into independency and draws us into harmony.

But it is through all the modalities of love—from the sexual to the agapic—that the community of inquiry comes together, is held together, works through conflict and undertakes discipline together, and grows in both unity and complexity. It is in love that we understand the COI as a "greater self" in formation. In the community of love, as Corrington says, "Individual horizons of meaning become open to each other so that horizonal plenitude may replace the narcissistic self-reference of pre-communicative life."[23] The COI is by definition a community of persons who are friends or in the process of becoming friends, who in the face of the powerful forces of self-interest and fear, undergo a growth of reasonableness which is as much ethical, aesthetic, social, and emotional as cognitive.

These relations are hard-won. There is an already existing connectedness in any group, in which love and interest are tangled up (nor are they ever completely untangled), and it is the work of the COI to forge relations of love out of this already existing connectedness. At a certain point in our formation, we face the developmental crisis of the "group illusion" mentioned above; at which point a "rupture" is necessary, something which breaks the false sense of harmony, and confronts us realistically with our differences, our distances, and the extent to which what appears as love is self-interest disguised. And that is not the only crisis. The success of the community of love is more often than not snatched from the jaws of what Corrington calls the "corrosive forces of solipsism and aggressive individualism,"[24] at the cost of conflict, careful self-discipline, and numerous acts of sacrifice, small and large. But this work, although it progresses through sacrifice, is ultimately in league with the community of interest, because it is sustained by our intuitive understanding that love is not irrational; on the contrary, it is the highest logic, which, according to Peirce, "inexor-

ably requires that our interests should not be limited. They must not stop at our own fate but embrace the whole community. . . . Logic is rooted in the social principle."[25]

THE COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

The community of interest could also be characterized as the community of self-interest, or simply of self, or as the political community. It is the community of individuals who are seeking power and invulnerability through friendship, alliance, performance, influence, domination, hierarchy, special favor, etc. Each individual is driven to "be somebody," to count, to make a difference, and in order to do that, is continually, mostly unconsciously, negotiating influence and recognition both with the group as a whole, with various subgroups, and with each individual within the group.

The negotiation is socially constructed, with power relations always already, tacitly or otherwise, defined, but always in the process of change and shift. This is necessary to the extent that to be a self is to undergo a continuous series of interpretations that are partly derived from the communal structure, and so my self-understanding depends in large degree on how the group understands me. On the other hand, it is a tragic necessity, because what makes it necessary at all is my radical finitude, an involuntary solipsism that grounds the "narcissistic self-reference of precommunicative life" mentioned above. I am trapped in my own horizon, and that horizon is rooted in what Corrington calls the "unbridled and unguided will to live. . . . found in all beings, [which] forces them to struggle against each other for domination. . . [giving] rise to a tragic struggle that, in its extreme, makes community impossible."[26]

This tragic finitude makes for the pathological and dysfunctional elements which so easily beset the COI—individuals or subgroups who hold too much or too little power, or who are struggling with resentment or exclusion; individuals involved in personality struggles, or with needs or ambitions that have a disruptive effect upon the group, etc. In such an atmosphere, distortion of the community's drive towards semeiotic transparency is inevitable. It manifests, not only in the sorts of struggles and tensions just mentioned, but in a politicalization of the hermeneutic process itself, resulting in individuals, groups, or the whole group not so much following the argument where it leads, as unconsciously orchestrating the argument to validate prior ideological structures, or to glorify themselves even more directly. Given this tragic situation, full of unconsciousness and ambiguity, the task of a true coordination of perspectives appears as an infinite and arduous one, for it involves the crucifixion of the solipsistic elements of one's own horizon.[27] It is also the case, however, that the greatest gift to the COI is the individuality of each member, in all his or her finitude; and it could be that interest is the force which drives the development of the community from one end, while love "lures" it from the other. My ineradicable individuality is both my tragic flaw, through which I find myself in a state of horizonal fragmentation, and also my "happy fault," for it goads me to overcome my separation through dialogue. The argument, which promises to overcome the distortions which selfhood creates, is in our ultimate interest to follow, because it promises the overcoming of division and distortion, and thus represents the completion of self.

The COI takes very seriously the task of developing towards a community which includes all, favors none, and limits the tendencies of dominant or disruptive individuals. The closer a group gets, the more the danger of such disruption is present, through each individual's drive for affirmation and power. This is because love draws us toward self-disclosure, but that self-disclosure includes the disclosure of our radical finitude, the darkness and abjectness we all carry, our particular forms of self-ishness. The more we see into each other, the more we need to tolerate. But there are also things in each other we need, not just to tolerate, but to forgive: conditions of moral and intellectual isolation which, to the extent that the COI is a transformative process, must be overcome, or the whole group is compromised. The isolated individual is brought back/in through both sacrifice and confrontation. But the outcome is never assured, and the process of the transformation of the isolated and disruptive individual through the love of the group is rife with ambiguities and blind spots. Just as what we judge to be the argument losing its way might actually be where we need to follow it; so an individual's disruption, apparently solipsistic, might be just what the whole needs in order to overcome a collective solipsism; nor does that fact necessarily mitigate the solipsistic origins of the disruptive individual's behavior. What does seem clear is that the COI moves most genuinely forward through acts, small and large, of self-discipline and sacrifice, which break the spell of interest, and point to the omega point of the community of love—every individual merging his or her individuality in sympathy with his or her neighbors.

SOME INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

Now I want to explore some of the analogical relationships, expressive attunements, and mutual influences between the five communities; not forgetting that these relationships are always only described "in a manner of speaking," given that in experience the five communities are inseparable.

Gesture and language are always in some relationship of direct entrainement, although the modalities of that entrainement may be ironic, contradictory, or ambiguous. Gesture also interacts with mind, in the form of mirroring, or expressing its generalizing and dialectical movement within us and between us, in a natural semeiotic whose more intentional form is the dance.[28] So thought moves us: our faces brighten, contract, we are electrified posturally by an idea; a contribution which pulls the argument together also pulls us together around the table.

Love and interest inform the most fundamental energies and modalities of the gestural, in that, biologically, movement is rooted in desire and fear (we move toward or away from) which play themselves out in the goals, cathexes, antipathies, securities and insecurities of the ego and its relations. Interest and desire are also reflected and expressed in the intersubjective dancing that goes on between individuals and sometimes between subgroups, whether the dance is erotic, diffident, aggressive, playful, abstract, ambiguous, formal, indecisive, etc.

Language, just because it is a translation of mind, is already a distortion, if a coherent one. This is also true for its effect on the other communities. In each case, the cost which it extracts for translating things into words is the very dimensionality which makes the community it is translating what it is. Although the poetic, to the extent it is a disordering of language, breaks this hold of the logic of grammar, it only allows glimpses of "pure" mind, desire, interest, and not systematic translation, for that would end one back in a linguistic system again. Besides, the COI cannot long sustain the poetic as a form of discourse, because the latter is a transgressive, asymmetrical, individualistic discourse, and thus inimical to the community's need for the building up of a universe of common signs.

Mind, language and gesture are stages, or screens, or expressive spaces, where the dissimulations of eros and agape, of the ambiguities of individual selfhood and the will to power, are represented and played out. As you come to know me through my ideas, through the characteristic way I talk about my ideas, and through my postural and kinesic presence, you increasingly understand all these to point to a characteristic quality of self, a way I have of bearing my identity through time; which in turn is connected with characteristic forms of interest and desire, i.e. a way of reaching (or not reaching) beyond myself for you, or for an other, and for the community as a larger whole of which I feel myself a part. What am I really after? What am I willing to give up in order to get it? How am I a part of this group? How am I using it? How am I allowing it to use me? What sort of love am I capable of, finally? This is true for the characteristic forms of love and interest, not only of individuals, but of subgroups, and of the group as a whole. The interplay between love and interest is complex and fraught with vicissitude and self-dissimulation, and it is their intersection which makes of the COI a community of justice or injustice, of real democratic impulses and practices, or subtle tyrannies. This becomes particularly problematic when justice issues in the school, the community, or the larger society become so pressing that the COI, in order to maintain its ethical identity, must assume them as one of the elements of its inquiry.[29]

In addition to the relationships between the communities, there are characteristic dynamic, interactive patterns that run through the whole developmental process of the COI, which we see playing themselves out again and again. The extent to which any given COI stays together, and grows, and reaches judgments that are meaningful, depends to a great extent on how its members undergo these patterns—how they endure them, are obedient to their constraints, master them, learn to take a direction (or avoid one) by them. I have identified six.

CRISIS

It has become almost a cliche of developmental theory that forward movement in any dialectical process involves a falling out of a previous balance in order to establish one on a higher level. Inquiry progresses through continual disruptions; Lipman compares it to walking, "where you move forward by constantly throwing yourself off balance."[30] Doubt and belief—a complex web of instinctive beliefs and assumptions, mostly vague, many of them at any given point in time altogether unconscious[31]—stand in constant state of dynamic tension. It is when these belief-habits come into crisis, are thrown by experience into a state of perplexity, that the act of search, of investigation begins. As Dewey says, "Thinking begins at a forked-road situation."[32] Like the need to put the other foot down, the drive to come back into balance, to a state of belief, is irresistible.[33]

The quintessential experience of the COI is of a

dramatic sense of heightened meaning through being confronted by a problem which is not a mere exercise, but is genuinely compelling. The COI is a place apart, where we have come together to experience this crisis of meaning. It is the space of problematization, of wonder and reversal, where the lack of understanding, the partial absence of meaning which inhabits even the most familiar and commonplace, is no longer routinely suppressed, but elevated into what we notice most.[34] This requires a certain courage, abandon, and ability to endure. It makes of the epistemological, psychological, and social space of the COI an extraordinary location, a place of agon from which we emerge changed.

DIALOGUE

It is through an other that the crisis is precipitated. Dialogue begins in the realm of Peirce's "secondness," where experience offers contradictions to our perspectives, which in turn requires mediation, which process results in judgments which lead to an increasing coordination of perspectives. So dialogue begins in what Gadamer calls a "moment of negativity,"[35] of contradiction by an other, through which complexity deepens. Because it is a process in which some elements of my perspective are confirmed and some are rendered doubtful, to undergo it requires loyalty to the belief that the experience of contradiction, undertaken in good faith, will lead to a strengthening of my own perspective and a further coordination of perspectives among us; so, according to Peirce, the direction of evolution is towards an increase in variety and diversification, and an increase in regularity, of lawfulness. "Even as `the homogeneous puts on heterogeneity' these diverse elements are drawn into harmonious relationship on another level, and become coordinated within some more general system of relations. From this perspective variety is never mere chaos, the simple disruption of order; it is, most essentially, a necessary catalyst for the growth of reason." The COI may be thought of as a larger person, and the growth of persons is never just addition, but "continual diversification and the harmonization, one with another, of ever more complex systems . . ."[36]

Dialogue has the paradoxical character of "travelling apart toward unity."[37] The argument finds its way forward through entanglement in contradiction. This is inevitable, in that communication is asymmetrical—the very reception of a sign by another is its irrevocable transformation into another sign, and it is impossible to return to its original meaning before interpretation. The argument takes its way through this endless process of interpretation and reinterpretation, through which meanings come to be truly shared by the community.[38] Although each member's perspective, in its finitude, is irreducible to each other, yet each perspective can become part of a larger perspective, which is forever emergent through the continual reformulation of positions as a result of the interplay of perspectives.

PLAY

As a moment of negativity, of the undergoing of contradiction, dialogue is a most profound kind of work, even what Socrates referred to in the Phaedo as a "practicing death." From the point of view of the field of emergent meaning it creates, dialogue is profoundly playful, because it breaks the spell of the instrumental, the "unbridled and unguided will to live." In opening ourselves to the perspective of the other, we are released into a space of emergence and transformation, where the argument no longer comes from any one person, but from the interplay of persons. Through what Peirce called "interpretive musement," we "allow signs to unfold in creative and novel patterns,"[39] and it is often the unexpected, the chance combination which allows the argument to move forward.

It is the principle of Peirce's notion of "tychism" (Gk. tyche, chance) that chance begets order, for in its spontaneity, its difference, its variation, it acts as a catalyst in the production of higher levels of uniformity, through breaking up old habits, and stimulating the development of new laws of behavior.[40] Tychism is a function of the logic of relations, which operates through association of apparently unlike elements, which are then found to be related within ever larger frameworks. It is through an allowance of the play-impulse in the community of language, mind, and even gesture, that these larger patterns become visible. For if, as Peirce said, "emotion is vague, incomprehensible thought,"[41] play is the feeling-response to ideas, to the unity of a horizon of meaning beyond us, which acts as a lure, for the very meaning of playing is entering and responding with our whole being to something larger than us.

Both Peirce and Dewey associate the "purposelessness and disinterestedness" of the play impulse with the scientific attitude.[42] The ideal mental attitude is "to be playful and serious at the same time," in that "free mental play involves seriousness, the earnest following of the development of the subject matter," while "pure interest in truth coincides with love of the free play of thought."[43]

When we are playing with ideas in the COI we are allowing the structure of the community of mind to crystallize and articulate beyond us, from between us and among us.

The release of ourselves to the intrinsic play of the relations ever-emergent in the community of mind requires the courage to take, in Dewey's words, "a leap, a jump, the propriety of which cannot be absolutely warranted in advance, no matter what the precautions taken."[44] It takes discipline to suspend judgment, and to cultivate a variety of alternative suggestions without settling on one prematurely. We learn to balance our focus between the inquiry as it flows from moment to moment, and as it promises a culmination, an outcome. We know we are at play when we find ourselves noticing the beauty of the internal relations of the emergence of mind in the logic of relations, all the while sensing its ultimate direction as a horizon, imminent yet infinitely far. Through the moves which carry us along, we have an aesthetic sense of its structure as it forms just beyond us, a thread of continuity binding together the successive stages. This gives us the strength and trust to follow the argument where it leads through apparent chaos, avoiding what Dewey called "fooling," which, as an excess of playfulness, leads to dissipation and disintegration of the inquiry.[45]

I have been concentrating on the play of the community of mind, but play is certainly present as well in language, which loves to play with sound, sense, and structure; in gesture, where imitation and unconscious commentary of posture, movement, and expression engage in constant interplay; in interest and love, which both seek, spontaneously and mostly unconsciously, playful expression in erotic, compassionate, dominance-submission and intrigue relations with others. All these forms are, not just analogues but elements of the play of the community of mind, in that each community is a dynamic, reflective translation of each other.

TELEOLOGY

We are able to give ourselves up to the play of dialogue in the COI because we trust implicitly that there is an immanent formation and unfolding of both thought and relational structure



among us. We sense that we are embarked together on a movement toward a coordination of perspectives through which our universe of meaning will be transformed, including the fundamental relationship between the individual and the group, i.e. the ontic structure of the community itself. This telos presents itself as what Corrington calls an "unconditional source of value" which both drives us from within and lures us from without. It promises a state of perfect reasonableness, inclusive unity, and radical openness,[46] i.e. the overcoming of the tragic finitude which blunts and distorts our inquiry, as well as our relationships. So each individual interpretive act points beyond itself to a whole-in-formation, an encompassing perspective in which all signs are located in relation to each other. Each interpretive act is ultimately judged by that infinite horizon, that felt promise of a whole truth, or "infinite long run which guarantees the validation of interpretive acts."[47]

Although we cannot help but operate under the lure of this infinite horizon, it always exceeds the horizon of what can be present to us at any given time; so we have only partial truths, glimpses of the truth as it displays aspects of itself in human discourse; nor can we deduce in advance what it will look like. As Corrington puts it, "no [sign] series will reach totality, yet no series will be free from the longing for full encompassment." Something like a "generic hunger animates each series as it drives toward the Encompassing itself."[48]

CONFLICT

Conflict in the COI is usually associated with the community of interest—with ego battles, or ideological divisions, or insensitive, presumptuous, backbiting, etc. attitudes or behaviors. But in that reason necessarily involves itself in contradictions in order to develop, conflict is a universal theme of the COI. The experience of inquiry always bears a negative element, a necessity that one be refuted in order to learn what one does not know. The dia of dialectic stands for the process of differentiation, of a going-through in which there is implicit a taking things asunder, which always involves a certain degree of conflict.

Conflict is a result of the resistance by secondness, the non-ego, the particular and disruptive, to our expectations. This resistance is a key element in the progress of the argument, for through it, reality resists the claims of any theory which becomes presumptive, and attempts to explain more than it really can; thereby false paths are eliminated.[49] But the fact that conflict is a necessary, central aspect of any dialectical process does not reduce the great risk it represents for the COI. This risk is only increased by the fact that we tend to hold implicitly to a homeostatic or "order" model of group process, which understands conflict to be inherently demonic and disintegrative, and therefore to be avoided or suppressed at any price. But as cognitive conflict transforms the community of mind, so social conflict transforms the communities of love and interest, and produces moral awareness. When conflict is undergone with a humility which comes from the awareness that it is potentially transformative, individualism is tempered, and the individual-group relation is gradually altered.

What causes social conflict in the COI? All persons experience themselves as parts of a greater whole, but we also experience a fundamental, irreducible dimension of discontinuity, because each of us occupies a horizon which both connects and separates us from others. We rarely attempt to probe and articulate our own horizon—in fact, as Corrington says, "It is part of the logic of horizons that it forgets it is a horizon." In addition, there is a drive from within each individual horizon to become all in all; Corrington calls it "the hunger of each horizon for generic expansion and encompassment, its desire to become identical to the world itself."[50] This hunger is in fact connected to the "happy fault" mentioned above—the drive for unity which, combined with the lure of the "encompassing," impels us toward the coordination of perspectives. It is always an ambivalent drive, but only becomes demonic when it persists in the otherness, the independency which is the source of its drive for unity. In Peirce's formulation, "individuality is the locus of evil if it is construed as the terminus rather than as a moment or phase of the circular movement of love.[51]

This forgetfulness of my own horizon—or even that I occupy a horizon—typically leads less to wickedness than to various forms of rigidity and inertia, or to ideological commitments which "blunt the open movement of sign articulation."[52] My forgetfulness can not be overcome from within my own horizon, but only through its being humiliated in one form or another: it is the shocks, the ruptures which I experience through dialogue which serve to clarify my horizon for myself, and thereby allow further coordination with the horizons of others. My horizon will never be fully transparent to myself—that seems to be an ontological impossibility. But when it collides with an alien horizon, what's hidden in it is revealed, and it is forced into a new self-reflectiveness.[53]

The irrevocable character of our finitude makes for an inexpungable element of hiddenness of individuals from each other. This "ultimate recalcitrance on the part of horizons to reveal all of their

idiosyncratic and demonic traits"[54] is a tragic element in communal life. But from the point of view of the dialectical movement which we sense we are involved in as a community, this radical surd of individuality appears as the necessary negative moment in love's creative development.[55] The tension between the irreducible obscurities of our own horizon and the horizon of horizons which lures us forward, calls for a discipline of which, through love, we find ourselves to be capable.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is the operative virtue of the COI, in that it implies the minimal level of individual and collective self-control which makes it possible to undergo the conflicts and vicissitudes, not only of the argument, but of the group's social process without losing heart, turning inward, striving to dominate, becoming entangled in ideological conflict, expecting more of the community than it is able at any one moment to give, and so on. Each COI demands its particular form or expression of this virtue, depending on the individuals involved, but what seem to be generic to all its modalities are self-restraint and perseverance.

The community of mind demands the discipline of the logic of classes, and also the larger, more rigorous discipline of enduring the psychological suspense which critical thinking requires. In the realm of the expression of ideas, there is a discipline made necessary by the phenomenon that, in Dewey's words, "direct or immediate discharge or expression of an impulsive tendency is fatal to thinking. Only when the impulse is to some extent checked and thrown back upon itself does reflection ensue."[56] This is true not only for the individual, but also for the group, for in following the argument where it leads there is a holding to a course which often demands of us that we restrain a thought or contribution when there is no obvious or intrinsic reason to do so, except that at any one moment in the COI there are as many contributions possible as there are members, and each one has a claim to being the one which could move the argument along, even (remembering the principle of tychism) if it appears to be a digression. The discipline required of me to withhold my contribution in the interest of another's is rendered even more rigorous when the other's contribution appears to my understanding as confused, obfuscatory, off the point, or even if it just seems to be taking the discussion away from a point that I do not understand us to have finished with. In order to be able to practice this discipline, I must believe in the evolutionary character of the COI—that though "reason loves to hide," the argument, like water seeking its level, will eventually overcome all obstacles to its advance.

In the areas of love and interest, the same discipline is necessary to protect the spirit of inquiry from the pitfalls of monopolization, aggressiveness, competitiveness, seductiveness, timidity, intimidation, overexcitement, dissipation, negativism, paralysis, trivialization, and so on. In addition, any given discussion will generate its own logic and rhythm, which cannot be brought to closure by a mechanical method. Understanding must wait upon the kairos, the opportune moment, and not force the dialogue into predetermined patterns.[57] Each member of the COI must come to understand and practice the sacrifices, large and small, that are necessary to foster and protect this opportune moment. This sacrificial ability is expressed in very concrete ways as members learn to withhold a contribution because they sense some larger emergence on the discursive horizon, or to phrase a contribution as a question rather than as a positive statement, or to give up the opportunity to continue an exchange that limits the contributions of others. This discipline is under the Christian sign of crucifixion, or the principle that nothing is transformed without a death, or loss—in this case, the little death of our own potential contribution. It acts to undermine the more extreme forms of individualism, and to progressively purify the individual of subjective hermeneutic distortions,[58] which in turn increases her acuity of judgment, and thereby her discipline. The better the sense I have of the argument's overall movement, the easier it is for me to suppress my own contribution for the moment, for I'm intuitively aware of more than one place I can contribute. Thus Dewey said that when discipline is conceived in intellectual terms, it is "identified with freedom in its true sense." So the discipline of the COI becomes less onerous and more joyous as the community develops. The excitement of following the argument where it leads rewards our patient, tenacious efforts, and our continual skirmishes with confusion and delay. That excitement reminds us that we are being transformed, individually and in terms of our relation to each other, by an unceasing dialectical process.

CONCLUSION

Even before it is a community of natural and intentional signs, the COI is a communicative context, a field of dynamic intersubjectivity, which is always growing, changing, busy being born or

busy dying. Its inquiry is not just cognitive, but linguistic, personal, social, emotional, political, erotic, agapic. If it is developing well, it is open on all these levels to the emergence of something, in a dialectical, self-correcting movement which appears infinite. What keeps it going is the erotic drive for wisdom, and it is this eros which makes possible the sacrifices it demands. The lover of the whole sacrifices his exclusive claims in the interests of a transformation of the group which will also transform him. This principle runs like a red thread through all the dimensions of the COI. In the community of mind, we must accept the dismembering of our claim, the giving up of a temporary closure in order for the argument to continue, and to come together on a higher level. The very nature of dialogue involves this wandering in the interests of getting there. In the community of gesture the stronger ego learns, in the exchange of vital affect, to hold back and allow the other to initiate, so that we reach a common plenitude. In the community of language, we learn to question rather than declaim, to clarify rather than proliferate points. In the community of interest, we learn that our own personal empowerment, the recognition by the group of who we are and who we want to be, depends ultimately on our own recognition of the unique, irreplaceable individuality of the other, and on our honoring of that individuality as having its source in something even beyond that individual. In the community of love, we discover the complex affective and erotic disciplines which lead to a capacity for deeper levels of mutual friendship.

These sacrifices seem worth it to us, because we sense the connection between them and the Socratic notion of philosophy as "practicing death." We sense that nothing advances, is transformed, without death. The tragic relation between the individual and the group is resolved through sacrifice, on the other side of which the individual finds himself again in a larger context. The risk is that the sacrifice leads nowhere—that one holds back for a truth that never emerges, or is sabotaged by those (including oneself) who are too self-interested, or lack the discipline, to hold back. But as unavoidable as is the risk, the drive for individual and collective transformation is even greater, and its promise beckons eternally.

NOTES

1. Michael L. Raposa, *Peirce's Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 154.
2. James M. Edie, "Foreward," in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language.* Translated by Hugh J. Silverman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. xiii-xiv.
3. See Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).
4. These fundamental mutual arousal regulation patterns can be traced to the primal interlocutive situation of the infant and mother. The mother and infant are one person to the extent the infant lacks the ability to regulate her own vitality affect, and therefore depends on the mother for self-regulation. The way the mother "dances" with the infant in order to do this is internalized by the child, and becomes a framework of gestural expectations, a particular style of dancing, which can be more or less inhibited, more or less attuned, etc. See Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant,* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), especially Chapter 7, where he describes what he calls "affect attunement."
5. Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in the Constructive Energies of the Psyche* (New York: International Universities Press, 1950), pp. 235,273.
6. Merleau-Ponty, pp. 45-46.
7. Ibid, p. 12.
8. Ibid, p. 95.
9. Ibid, pp. 42-43.
10. Schilder, p. 286.
11. Merleau-Ponty, p. 12.
12. This seems to be related to the paradox pointed out by Russell, of the class which cannot include itself—e.g. the class of chairs is not itself a chair.
13. I have always wanted to conduct a session of the COI without words—gesture only.
14. Raposa, pp. 38, 131.
15. John Dewey, *How We Think,* (Buffalo NY: Prometheus Books, 1991 [1910]), pp. 39, 34, 79, 80, 211.
16. Raposa pp. 18, 25.
17. Robert S. Corrington, *The Community of Interpreters* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), p. 3.
18. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), Chapter 10, "The Transformation of Sexuality into Eros."
19. See Ann Sharp, "Peirce, Feminism, and Philosophy for Children," *Analytic Teaching* (14,1), p. 58.
20. Raposa, p. 83.
21. Peirce identified it as more than that. For him it is in fact the principle of "evolutionary love," for which both nature and mind, or thought, tend towards unity and wholeness. Given Freud's metaphysics, "instinct" may have been the only thing he could call it.
22. I am deliberately refusing any sort of final distinction between eros and agape. I consider them to forms, modes, or dimensions of the same thing.
23. Corrington, p. 43.
24. Ibid, p. 17.

25. From *Collected Papers* 2.654. Quoted in Raposa, p. 103.
26. Corrington, p. 26.
27. Ibid, pp. 47, 67.
28. In the latter, gesture moves ahead of mind, and leads it.
29. For an example of this dilemma, see Marguerite and Michael Rivage-Seul, "Critical Thought and Moral Imagination: Peace Education in Freirean Perspective," in McLaren, P. & M. Lankshear, Eds. *The Politics of Liberation* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1994).
30. Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 232.
31. Raposa 96. On p. 104 he refers to "a whole system of opinions, habits of thought that may be regarded either as instinctive or, in Peirce's words, as `due to infantile training and tradition.'" 32. Dewey, p. 11.
33. This point is made by Raposa, p. 95. He distinguishes this form of doubt from the Cartesian zero-belief doubt, which is a sort of intellectual pathology, or at least a fanaticism.
34. In *How We Think*, Dewey says, "No object is so familiar, so obvious, so commonplace, that it may not unexpectedly present, in a novel situation, some problem." (p. 120)
35. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975), p.318.
36. Raposa, pp. 78 and 83.
37. For a brilliant phenomenology of the dialectic, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). For a summary of his arguments, see my "Hans-Georg Gadamer's Dialectic of Dialogue and the Epistemology of the Community of Inquiry," in *Analytic Teaching* 11,1 (1990): 43-51.
38. Corrington pp. 41 and 42.
39. Corrington, p. 8.
40. Raposa 32, 74; Corrington 126.
41. Raposa, p. 131. He also said, "The highest truths can only be felt." (Ibid).
42. Ibid, pp. 218-219.
43. Dewey, p. 219.
44. Ibid, p. 75.
45. Ibid, p. 217.
46. Corrington, p. 12.
47. Ibid, p. 47.
48. Ibid, p. 66.
49. Ibid, p. 4.
50. Ibid, p. 64.
51. Raposa, p. 90.
52. Ibid, p. 57.
53. Ibid, p. 64.
54. Ibid, p. 66.
55. Raposa, p. 89.
56. Ibid, p. 64.
57. Corrington, p. 43.
58. Ibid, p. 77.

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