Thinking of Thinking

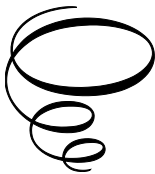# Thinking of Thinking:

An Inquiry of Practical and Reflective Reasoning in a Normative Context

By

Richard E. Duus

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PREFACE

Inquiring into what constitutes thinking is not as direct or as easy as it should be when considering the frequency one considers oneself to be of thinking. What thinking is is obvious — or is it? In a sense, whatever one is aware of is thinking. At the same time, the random, casual objects and events of one's environment moving in and out of awareness are not what is considered thinking: rather, thinking engages a problem. One, then, encounters the daily routines of practical living that consists of contiguous associations that are contrasted to a quite different abstract thinking. Abstract thinking is engaged when one encounters a novel problem which requires similarity properties of the constituents of a problem, and has little relation to original practical circumstances. The solution arrived at by abstract thinking is re-applied to one's practical life situation. This thinking process is not an individual activity, but is a continuing social dialogue that is both external and internal. These considerations indicate that thinking occurs in at least two contexts: personal-directed thinking based on practical contiguous properties that is contrasted to community-directed thinking which is abstract and based on similarity properties. These beginning considerations of a thinking episode indicates that *thinking* of *thinking* is complex.

This inquiry of thinking is of a series of psychological studies directed to: when should one consider oneself to be thinking, what are the components of good thinking, when and how does thinking occur, and how does one's subjective inner-world affect one's thinking? These questions are pursued in the context of pragmatism that enlists the thinking of William James, John Dewey, Charles Sanders Peirce, and others. That is, thinking is examined from the perspective of the pragmatic imperative of an emphasis on the consequences of one's completed actions and what is learned from these consequences. The intended result is theoretical structuring of a pragmatic psychology with a phenomenological orientation centered on experience.

Those who will find this series of studies useful are unlikely to be those tied to mainstream or academic psychology. The readership of these studies are more likely to be interdisciplinary to include sociology, communications theory, anthropology, phenomenology, philosophy, religion, independent psychologists, and artificial intelligence. The artificial intelligence

community will find well described steps to create a first-person perspective and to construct a stream of thinking. Intercultural indigenous studies are supported by the structural descriptions of second-personal we-relations consisting of four specific components of an *interdefinable circle* that includes dignity, authority, second-person reasons, and an ethical imperative to restore one's damaged dignity. We-relations occur second-personally in all cultural contexts if a community is to exist, and it is proposed that these components can be operationalized, identified, and studied across cultures. These considerations suggest that the readership is potentially broad, and can initiate a movement to develop a pragmatic psychology: to develop the pragmatic horizons of psychology.

A concern for an absence of thinking, or what could be called thinking, in the public sphere is what initiated these series of inquiries. There is evidence of deliberate avoidance of reasons to support one's actions and propositions combined with a willful ignorance of the available knowledge of well demonstrated problems such as greenhouse gas (CO_2) caused climate change. There is evidence of a deliberate and naive embrace of irrationality in the public realm that includes various conspiracy theories. Broadly, as has been said, thinking of some sort is engaged by everyone, but varies greatly as to whether one attends to reasons or to fictive imagination. For some, thinking may be restricted to what one already believes, and is no more than rehearsing one's prejudices. This is not to say that examining one's beliefs is not required as one matures and one's understanding of one's beliefs similarly mature so that new reasons supporting those beliefs emerge. One encounters difficulties when one's beliefs and values fail to mature in pace with increasing and changing responsibilities. Most of one's awareness is engaged in the practical reasoning that tracks the requirements of daily living work activities, family, community, and pursue one's interests that create life's richness. One's daily living activities are shaped by values and beliefs in the context of an intersubjective space and emergent second-person reasons. These terms are not defined here, but are developed in the series of inquiries presented. What emerges is two kinds of thinking: Practical reasoning of daily living activities and abstract reasoned-thinking that forms one beliefs and ideals and addresses novel problems.

Critical thinking, more broadly referred to as reflective thinking, is investigated by David Hitchcock (2022) within the context of education. He follows the general outline of John Dewey's *How We Think* and which is entitled *Critical Thinking.* He initially follows Dewey, but quickly shifts to an educational perspective for developing a curriculum for teaching critical thinking and student development to engaging critical thinking.

Hitchcock presents, what he refers to as, the 'causal conditions of critical thinking' rather than referring to an active agential capacity of initiating a critical thinking episode. These causal conditions include disposition, ability, and sufficient knowledge to address a problem. Disposition includes attentiveness, a habit of inquiry, suspending one's judgment, openness to reason, and evaluating evidence for one's beliefs. Ability, according to Hitchcock, includes observational skills, sensitivity to the logical and rational structure of one's ecosystem that includes inference, experimental exploration of data, and searching for relevant information. Knowledge is a sufficient understanding of a problem that arouses one's curiosity congruent with the tactics of critical thinking.

Hitchcock's intention is to present a critical thinking curriculum in an educational setting so that it can be taught to and learned by students. In a broader context of reflective thinking, the goal is to evaluate and resolve problematic issues and relate them to a practical context of living. While the investigation is relatively complete for an educational setting, the relation of reflective thinking and practical reasoning is not addressed.

A serious inquiry of *thinking* turns out to be multifaceted. A thinking episode is a social dialogue that is sustained by an individual agent attending to an idea that is maintained in external and internal conversations until resolved. Furthermore, the thought-flow of a thinking episode is embedded in experience. It is more correct to refer to an experience-thinking-emotional episode that begins and then ends with a feeling of satisfaction. Not all experiences end satisfactorily as routine experiences can be so automatic as not to be attended and might be referred to as anesthetic.

Appreciation

The author expresses deep appreciation for Dr. D'Allaird who read, made useful suggestions, and edited the whole of this book.

PROLOGUE

The first inquiry addressed the distinction of personal-directed versus community-directed thinking and subsequent action. The purpose was to explore the practical context of one's life that included one's citizenship and the responsibility to vote that requires community-directed thinking. It was recognized that community-directed thinking required abstract thinking while personal-directed thinking was more immediate and based on contiguous, in contrast to similarity, properties of issues or objects. It was not immediately recognized that practical reasoning of everyday living is a foundation for living, and subsequently for thinking. It was initially considered that abstract thinking directed to the community was at a 'higher level' since it required abstract concepts. This turns out not to be the case. Rather, abstract thinking contributes to and supports practical reason.

Community-directed thinking is complicated by what has become a disinformation industry along with the ongoing effort to replace or supplant reasoned thinking by loyalty that is referred to as identity politics. Politics constitutes a large portion of community-directed thinking when one's considerations move beyond family and friends. Local community, state, and national are the three political environments that provide the general political framework depending on one's professional and work setting. Repetition of disinformation seems to create independent facts that capture one's attention. Such disinformation tactics create an irrational environment in which reasons and reasoning become unimportant, and moves toward creating a public that is little more than a mob, referenced as the masses. In this context, a general strategy employed by many politicians is to distract the political conversation from the practical issues needing resolution and to develop loyalty affiliations of identity politics. It may be unknown as to what policies, if any, such a politician may advocate.

Rationality is usually not in the interests of those who seek to manipulate by the emotions that privilege irrationality. Spontaneous social organizing in groups occur when one is open to reason in a context of communicating and who associates with others with similar reasoning. It is important that one constructs a future that provides a direction and meaning to one's life. When reasons and reasoning are non-existent or

irrelevant to one's beliefs, those beliefs are irrational. When immersed in emotions, one is closed to reality checks and reason because the *passions of one's heart* may not correspond to any facts and are no more than a mental vertigo episode; a mental dizziness. To suspend one's judgment in the context of such passion and evaluate one's circumstances is a significant moral ability and responsibility. When assessing information, the necessary test is to assess the reasons that support the information, thoroughly identify alternative future actions, and assess the consequences of those alternatives.

There are two forms of democracy designated as *conservative* and *progressive*. The conservative form is often referred to as a neoliberal philosophy and emphasizes *freedom* and *individual rights*. It correlates with free market capitalism and small government. It is expected that equality and social justice will emerge and balance out without guiding policies when the principles of freedom and individual rights are unimpeded. The progressive view emphasizes *equality* and a continuous attention to the *ability to improve one's quality of life*. Social injustice and inequality are unacceptable results of an exclusive emphasis on individual rights that does not also attend to individual welfare. According to conservative values, ethical conduct is one's ability to creatively express individuality within the reasonable bonds of law. At present, the dominant form of democracy is the conservative emphasis on rights and the freedom to pursue those rights.

This is the political landscape for one attempting to understand and engage community-directed thinking. The questions are: What is thinking, and when can one be considered to be thinking, and how is community-directed thinking different than personal-directed thinking? These observations lead to a conclusion that are two kinds of thinking consisting of personal- and community-directed thinking. Progressive thinking is demonstrated to be more tied to reasons and facts because conservative thinking is tied to the abstract concepts of *rights* and what constitutes *freedom*, and are not generally concerned with the reasons and concerns that structure one's actions. Conservatives are more concerned with the quality of one's expression of rights rather than the reasons of one's actions.

i: Foundational Diversion

A commitment to the belief that the world is founded on ultimate truth antecedent to experience is an influence on and, in fact, a distraction to *thinking*. This belief is that rationality, proportion, and beauty are inherent

in and is the foundation of the world. It a belief inherited from ancient Greece. This is a fundamental belief of faith-based religions, and is the core of their spirituality. In this view, wisdom is achieved by a contemplation of ultimate beauty, rationality, and truth which distracts humanity from the practical affairs of life and the lessons of experience. There is a gap between the ultimately true and one's experience. This *gap* is bridged by the interpretations of those trained in their religion's holy literatures and practices such as Priests, Pastors, Imams, and Rabbis. This is a double (alternatively, a bi-modal) view of the world that contrasts with the realities of one's pragmatic experience. The primary difficulty caused by the pervasive heart-felt conviction of an *ultimate truth* is the interference with a rational understanding of one's practical life, ecosystem, world, and universe. Scientific and pragmatic thinking challenge the idea of ultimate truth and certainty. The pragmatic view is that what is true is determined by the consequences of action in the context of reasons set by a community, and is the path to understanding the world and its universe. Such a path is not simple as this world and its universe is comprised of many different kinds of objects and energies.

These observations are an outline of the inquiry that opens with a comparison of community- and personal-directed thinking. They reveal a complicated social environment in which one is challenged to think well. It seems that *good thinking* is achieved by reaching past ideas of certainty and ultimate truths, and conscientiously attend to reasons and the facts associated with community-directed problems with which one is confronted. In such a bi-modal environment, it not difficult to understand a general exasperation and impatience with reasoning and rationality. Indeed. such impatience is characteristic of a large part of voting as a citizen. Politicians in such described political environments seem justified to overlook reasoned-thinking in favor of loyalty- and identity-style political strategies. Even if politicians do not overlook reasoned-thinking, they cannot overlook loyalty and building identity-based coalitions, whether narrative-based or reason-based.

Beyond the political landscape, there are many gradations of thinking between an inertia to do minimal thinking and an effort to think carefully. Minimal thinking entails habitual patterns of behavior that require little awareness and do not require reasoning. Practices such as mindfulness and meditation are available to reduce thoughtless automatic behavior. A citizen has many roles of which one is to vote in the context of conscientious community-directed reasoned-thinking.

ii: Ethical Conduct?

One's belief when shared with a community may become incorporated as a cultural value that is a community consensus and not private. Loyalty is important in the Japanese culture as illustrated by the statues commemorating the loyalty of a Japanese Akita, Hachiko, but loyalty does not lead to voting for government officials as it is not related to political performance. The reasons supporting loyalty are of a different kind than the reasons projecting a politician's probable performance.

Loyalty promotes an identity through faithfulness and fidelity, and thinking promotes an assessment of the reasons to select one or another alternative action based on future consequences. However, groups organize around similar beliefs, ideals, and values that also promote identity. Loyalty-promoted identity is a one-step process, and reason promoted identity a two-step process. A reasoned analysis of the consequences of policy and action is not part of loyalty-promoted identity. The emotional attachment of an established identity affiliation, whether loyalty- or reason-promoted, may be equally compelling, and it is probable that reason-promoted identity will be longer lasting because such identities are logically structured and more intimately connected to a community. The consequences of reasoned actions based on particular beliefs and values set up another set of actions and further consequences which reinforce reasoned-based identity. Loyalty founded on narrative similarities is emotional, and is not a rational consideration of the consequences of a policy or of an action on one's future.

These considerations of identity in a political context of a community become more complicated by the *bi-modal, two world view* of an ultimately certain truth vs. pragmatic analysis of the consequences of action. In a bi-modal world, loyalty is renamed *faith* with the result that practical problem solving and loyalty are entwined, which makes it difficult to formulate reasoned beliefs and, instead, promotes the adoption of a set of unchanging prejudices prior to understanding the consequences of one's actions in the environment. One of the goals of reflective thinking is to develop knowledge that guides a community's interactions with its ecosystem. Loyalty and thinking are two different contexts and, therefore, different kinds of reasons to guide one's conduct. The democratic ideal is to compare reasons to vote for one candidate rather than another, and that also sides with a similar thinking constituency. One votes to manage one's future.

Reflective thinking is a skill that requires practice, and allows one to consider oneself to be thinking. It is an organic social-intersubjective

process. It is *not* an individual process. Reflective thinking is a process with at least two, and usually multiple, perspectives that interact by dialogical internal and external conversations. A reflective thinking inquiry requires the agential effort of an individual to sustain attention on an idea, avoid distraction, and resist the temptation to inertia and lapse into doing nothing, or reflective thinking processes may be shared by a group cooperatively pursuing a common problem and, hence, recognized as political. Although a thinking episode is a cooperative social process, an agential effort is required to sustain it; whether it is an individual or a cooperative group.

Reflective thinking sorts through the reasons and facts relevant to an idea, and forms a goal; it sorts through and collates the reasons in the context of the sustained idea that maintains it. A good reason is one that compels consensus, but not necessarily immediately. In this context, the distinctions between first-, second-, and third-person perspectives are necessary. A first-person perspective is a commitment to an action, idea, habit, or an ideal. Second-person perspective is to engage a WE-relation and act on second-person reasons. Second-person reasons are defined and explored later (Section 9.1). Third-person perspective is the objective knowledge shared by a community. This information is unique to a perspective, and is incommensurate to each other because one perspective cannot be transformed to another without losing the information unique to each. One is a person first-personally, one interacts with another second-personally, and the results of an interaction is knowledge that is shared third-personally. These perspectival processes are explored and refined in this section.

The last section of this chapter, section 2.2, addresses the different levels of community directed activity in the context of reflective thinking. The issues concerning community well-being are confused and obscured by disinformation media, conspiracy theories, overt anti-democratic rhetoric and groups, as well as a deliberate irrationality of extreme conservative groups. Incompatible forms of democracy are explored with conflictual emphasis on *rights* versus *equality*.

iii: Thinking and Ethical Conduct: Banal Evil

Hannah Arendt attended and reported the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 and published it as *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. The basic question was: what kind of man can manage a transportation system that transported six million people to industrialized death factories? A second question was how a person who matured and

lived in society commits acts deliberately intended to abuse and kill millions of people? Arendt thought that the undeniable evil embodied by Nazi Germany would be a primary subject of philosophical and intellectual investigation. That, with some notable exceptions, did not happen. The question of whether one who is socialized and educated has, as a consequence, an inherent ethical and moral sense has not been significantly investigated with the exception of a few not widely known philosophers such as Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas, Viktor Frankl, and the later William James. Eichmann, Arendt noted, was not a Satan-like monster, and at times seemed to be pathetic and a clown. He exhibited a limited humanity, and the question was how that came about. Eichmann seemed, according to Arendt's analysis, to not be able to understand others' point of view and to not be able to think. In fact, if one cannot apprehend the perspective of another, they by definition cannot think. She concluded that thinking was required to conduct oneself ethically.

She investigated the historical background and, in particular, Greek heritage, and found that most thinkers considered moral issues to be derived from an underlying foundation of beauty, proportion, and rationality of the world that exists before knowledge is derived from experience. In such a world, contemplation of such an *ultimate truth* is supremely important and *contemplative satisfaction* is sought rather than understanding and building knowledge of a practical world. Such a bi-modal or two-world conception conflates the ultimate essences of truth with an *appearing world* in which one acts, has relationships, and creates a meaningful life. *Appearance* is Arendt's term for the world in which one exists and acts, and ultimate *essence* and *appearance* are incommensurate and unrelated. Thinking is based on reasons, and reasoned thinking engages inquiries of unorganized circumstances that lack wholeness. Knowledge is the generalized experience shared in a community, and accumulates from reason-guided experience. Reasons are practical, public, and transient that exist for the duration of the situation in which they arose. Arendt points out that Immanuel Kant understood that thinking relates to practical ethical conduct. In that context, reasons are *normative*, and not etiological concerns of knowledge. It may be helpful to recall William James's observation that ". . . the thought seems to be the thinker." Reflective thinking is not a quest for certainty.

iv: Experience, Thinking, and Will

Thinking occurs in the context of experience. The backbone of experience is thinking about and emotions reactive to the contents of an

episode of experience. Experience episodes have a *beginning* and move to a *resolution*. When an experience episode resolves, it is *felt as satisfaction or dissatisfaction* depending on whether one's action achieved or failed to achieve a desired end. An experience is a balance between an *outgoing action* that causes an environmental change and an *incoming receptivity* that processes the change which consists of a thread of thinking and emotional binding of its contents. When a balanced experience episode resolves, its psychological aspect is *internalized* as a *sense* of satisfaction. Thinking is directed by one's attention embodied in an experience, but the thought is independent of one's control in such a way that the 'thought itself is the thinker'. William James notes that one's self-awareness results in a continuous and largely unconscious process of asking oneself 'Will you or won't you have it so?' proportional to one's effort in that setting. One responds with unconscious *consents* or *non-consents*. This is the center of the action-change-experience cycle and is a first-person commitment to own one's experience and day-to-day life. Such a commitment to acknowledge that the *mineness* of one's experience reflects one's *internal effort*.

Thinking occurs when one's perceptions are converted to signs. Semiosis is the process that creates the signs that represent one's perceptions and thoughts. A sign has two balanced processes: it points to the future by setting the context of an anticipated future, and it reflects back and adds meaning to the original sign. The meaning of a sign grows as it is used, and may result in an action, an idea, an ideal, or evolve to a habit. A balance is required between pointing to a future and reflecting back to the original sign. An object is originally *felt* as a *quality* that is pre-conceptual and cannot be verbalized. This is referred to as *firstness*. When a perceived object that is originally *felt* as *quality* associates in a relation, it becomes a sign. Both the original quality and its sign occur as experience, which is *secondness*. A sign is interpreted, used, and becomes public knowledge, which is *thirdness*. It is this process that converts perceived objects and events to signs that engage thinking and function to build community knowledge.

Thinking for the Greeks was a process of apprehending and appreciating rationality, proportion, and beauty. For the Romans, thinking became scientific and a way of restoring harmony between men and the world. In this context, Hannah Arendt proposes that the purpose of political action is to engage the future, and is a separate faculty-of-will. Because it is a separate faculty, she separates *will* from thinking. Arendt's concept of *will* is contrasted with William James's presentation of *will*. For James, *will* begins with desires that mature into ideas, values, and ideals that includes

an openness to reason, and staying in touch with one's community requires an openness to reason. Will consists of *voluntary conduct* that develops during childhood. Voluntary movement occurs when one attends to a goal and seldom considers the individual movements to achieve it, and is caused by the *feeling* of an *idea* that produces the movement. Voluntary action is the result of a balance between a desire to act versus an opposing inclination to inhibit that action that is psychologically *felt* as *doubt* and *indecision*. One's ability to reason is directly related to one's range of voluntary action that results from one's uninterrupted attention on an idea that fills one's awareness. James credits this as 'effort's sole achievement', and says that "the strain of attention is the fundamental act of will." It is clear that a complete account of will *includes* and in fact *requires* thinking, and is incompatible with Arendt's conception of will as excluding thinking.

v: Grounding Continuity of Thinking

This inquiry begins with an assessment of ethical conduct related to the assertion that there is no final truth in ethics just as there is no final truth in physics or chemistry. An ethical situation is set by the reasons embedded in a situation, understanding one's ideals in the context of those reasons, a sensitivity that contributes to one's judgment, and an enacted act. One's *judgment* is aesthetically determined to fit the reasons of a situation, rather than by a time-consuming reasoning process.

A *person* emerges in a reflexive relation of one's concept of oneSELF to one's non-phenomenal-I that is ONEself. ONEself-oneSELF is a terminological maneuver to indicate the reflexive relation of the concept I as oneSELF (designated I*) and the non-phenomenal I as ONEself. This reflexive relation is straightforward although it may initially seem difficult and slippery. It is necessary to grasp the significance of the relation between ONEself and the *concept* of oneSELF, and that the *concept* is meaningful only when *reflexively* referred back to ONEself. Thinking (I**) is an independent and autonomous process with an equivalent reflexive relation to one's non-phenomenal I (ONEself) that is parallel to one's conceptual acting-I* (oneSELF). Both the *acting-I** and *thinking-I*** processes are autonomous, independent, and parallel to the other. The *acting-I** functions in social and material spaces while the *thinking-I*** functions in a *space of reasons* set in place by one's community and varies with the different realities one routinely engages. The different realities one engages is explored and defined in Chapter VI. Both the *acting-I** and the *thinking-I*** exhibit causal efficacy and *agency*.

Not only is it necessary for one's community to allow one to act without constraints, one must also learn to act freely — because such an ability is not automatic. One learns to act freely which is not easily achieved, and which must be supported by one's community. Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen list nine attributes of a community to adventurously promote development, and to realize one's potential capacities and talents. Even in such an imagined ideal social context, one does not always act freely and not everyone will successfully achieve one's full potential to include acting without external influences. Community-directed thinking influences the extent that fairness and justice is supported. Participation in such a supportive community is *felt* as *satisfaction*, and makes possible changes that lead to more satisfying achievement experiences. Emotion creates a hodological space of one's environment that set different intensities of desirability to the contents of one's experience, and to which one experiences as satisfactory or not satisfactory.

vi: Creating Reality

There are two kinds of realities: practical objects and related activities *and* imagined objects and activities that are recognized as not existing such as winged horses and unicorns. We regularly *dip-in-and-out* of imaginatively-constructed realities that include novels, movies, television shows, theater, painting, gaming entities, and on. Such aesthetic experiences are paths to enculturation, education, and of understanding one's intellectual heritage. It is helpful to understand the historical context of one's realities, and the philosophical underpinning principles of those realities. One informs one's management of the future by understanding history.

The question is: How does one come to accept what is real? One centers oneself by engaging one's practical work-in-life activity, but which does not limit other realities that result from one's beliefs. *Reality is subjectively determined by an object of thought that is believed*. Reality is understood subjectively, and no reality is sole, absolute, or unchanged through time. One's actions are based on one's experience so that there is no certainty that an external world exists except that the reasons and logic guiding one's actions work. That is, one's actions achieve a desired outcome. Nature, that is the external world, is one's master.

One's beliefs and evolving realities develop in a second-person intersubjective world from reasons connecting one to a community and its ecological niche. One's internal subjective world includes internalized

others as *alternate I-positions* constituting different perspectives for thinking and contributes to a richness and creativity of one's realities. To interact with another is to internalize the other's I-position. One has several areas of reality in addition to a working-in-life activity that includes family, camping and hiking to connect with nature, astronomy, sports, and on. Every object one thinks is referred to some reality or other. One's centering reality is working-in-life activity that anchors one's different realities to the practical world. What is *real* relates to the strength of one's emotional reaction to an object that excites and maintains one's interest, and fills one mind. To invoke William James, "Whatever things have intimate and continuous connection with my [working-in-] life are things of whose reality I cannot doubt" (bracketed *working-in-* inserted by author). One is centered in one's *working-in-life* reality. It is suggested that if one's connections to one practical working-in-life mode of reality is disrupted, one's sense of orientation and connection with the larger community becomes out-of-touch and imaginary. It is supposed that such an out-of-touch orientation leads to imaginary conspiracy theories.

The way one interacts with and manages one's ecological niche evolves through evolutionary processes of which one is a part. This fact accounts for a natural intimacy with one's ecological environment that includes one's community. A subjective inner world is created by the variety and creativity with which one interacts with one's community and its larger ecological niche.

vii: Feeling-Idea Continua

This inquiry is deceptively complex and important. Thinking flows when a thought evolves from a previous thought and is succeeded to a new thought. The flow of thinking is autonomous and is directed by one's attention. It is apparent that 'the thought is the thinker' as is observed by William James. Although a routine unstructured flow of material passes through one's awareness at any one moment and such unstructured material cannot be considered thinking, still ". . . thinking of some sort goes on." Much of one's life consists of routine repetitive events and habits that one enacts and which pass through one's awareness. Habits are the practical counterparts of one's beliefs. The goal of thinking is to form a belief or a habit that contributes to one's realities and leads to meaningful activity. Thinking is the structural center of an experience episode that is bound by one's emotional reactions to the contents of an experience. Every episode of experience *ideally* has a beginning and moves to a resolution that is a psychological feeling of satisfaction. The

conditional term *ideally* indicates that an experience episode that reaches resolution is balanced between an out-going action and an in-coming receptiveness of the consequences of one's out-going action that then reaches a resolution judged to be satisfactory, and is *felt as satisfying*. When the out-going and in-coming flow is out of balance, an experience episode does not reach resolution. Such unresolved experiences may occur because of many possible kinds of interference that are often, if not usually, insignificant. When an unresolved episode of experience leads to a troublesome emotional discomfort, one's resources to confront such a challenge may be to engage parental relationships, friendships, or professional treatment.

Thinking functions through the contiguity of associated objects and concerns practical daily activities and events. When a subject is not immediately present and is spatially and temporally distant, similarity properties are the basis of associations and become *reasoned-thinking*. One's reasoned-thinking then addresses issues that require abstraction and when complete are referred back to its practical context. Reasoned-thinking begins by abstracting some attribute of an object as its *initial datum*. An empirical and practical thinker gets lost at this point unless one can transcend practical constraints and engage abstract reasoned-thinking. A reasoning-thinker may consider a tree (object) and select the primary *datum* as the *vascular network* of the wood of a tree. One's judgment that arrives at selecting *vascularization* is an insight, and maybe the genius, of the reasoning-thinker that is a hypothesis concerning why and how a tree is alive. A different thinker might choose a different *datum* such as a tree's roots. Choosing the vascular network as the primary datum is a hypothesis to account for how the tree is alive.

The datum, vascularization, is the *mode of conceiving* of a tree. The *property* of vascularization is the conduction of water and nutrients to the upper reaches of a tree, and is *similar* for all trees. The *mode of conceiving* a tree by the *property of conduction* is an abstract proposition. All objects have many attributes that can be incorporated as *datum* that become the mode for one's way of conceptualizing and understanding the objects of the environment. The process is not so different than choosing *thinking* as the *primary datum* of one to be a person. There are two essential components to reasoned-thinking. The first is to choose and attribute the datum to stand for a whole object so that the whole object itself is disregarded. Secondly, the chosen datum suggests the direction for resolving a question more effectively than the whole object. The end conclusion is that a mode of grasping (conceiving) one's environment

requires the selection of datum to connect with the objects of one's environment.

The purpose of thinking is to form stable beliefs and habits that facilitate negotiating an uncertain future. Thinking is a social process that is a continuing conversation in a context of the normative reasons of one's community. Logical relations arise in a normative process and become the norms of one's community. *Norms* are inferences that guide one's actions and what one expects of others. Logic and ethics in this context are indistinguishable. A community's *norms* evolve and change. The objects of one's beliefs create the regions of realities that constitute one's life to which one is emotionally connected, attends, and acts. One's different realities are anchored by one's working-in-life activity that is the center of one's identity to oneself and to a community. One's separate realities move toward a holistic harmony with a maturity that is spiritual.

Habits are, by their nature, predictable, but are not determinate. A habit is the practical counterpart of an idea, and is an organic process characterized by chance, although social pressure may shape a pattern of behavior in such a way as to seem to eradicate its chance element. One's *mental properties are to feel, believe, and think*, and becomes practical when an idea evolves to a habit and one acts. An idea is formed when one attends to an environmental or a conceptual object. One's thinking dialog joins different ideas that creates a similarity that did not exist prior to joining them.

A continuum of ideas occurs in two ways. One is by a social dialogue that is initially small, and when others engage the idea in conversation, it grows in an enlarging and continuous community discussion. Such a *social-continuum* of an idea becomes a cultural theme. The second way is the continuous psychological *feeling* of an idea. This is the psychological presence of a continuum of a *feeling* constituted by many parts that include a stream of maturing thought processes. The *felt-continuum* continues out of awareness, and is recalled when one directs attention to a *social-continuum* that activates the *feeling-idea* continuum. An idea is socially conceived although one with ability and genius can uncover and create a new category of reality, and subsequently another set of continua becomes functional.

There are different aspects of an idea-continuity: temporal, intensive, and extensive. Temporal continuity is one's concept of and belief in an idea until it is succeeded by a new idea or replaced by a contradictory idea. Intensive continuity is when one is attending to an object of an idea that might be something like brightness or loudness. Extensive idea-continuity is a feeling-sensitivity that tends to spread. It is a mental-psychological

conceptual object that is the feeling side of an idea and is independent of the object that gave rise to an idea. Feeling-ideas are in some manner *active agents* that influence each other. Charles Sanders Peirce asserts that *ideas* are *feelings* spread out so that it is more accurate to refer to feeling-ideas rather than simply ideas. These immediate and intimate processes are continuous with evolution, and with which one (we) is an active part of evolution.

viii: Extending the Thinking Cycle

A thought is whatever comes into one's awareness that is not observed, sensed, or perceived. Thinking is a train of thought constituted by a chain of ideas linked rationally and purposefully. Secondly, thinking is autonomous and is directed by one's focused attention. Thinking is autonomous because it is each thought that seems to be the *thinker*. One cannot stop a train of thought and singly catch and attend to a thought as when one attempts to do so, the thought evaporates and disappears. A third characteristic of thinking is that it is inseparable from an experience episode. Thinking provides an experience with a structure that is held together by one's emotional sensitivity to the contents of the experience episode, and cannot be considered independently of its experiential context. A connection with a factual or a conceptual object forms an *idea-object relation* that has *meaning*. Meaning provides a view or a perspective of the context of the idea-object relation and that tends to influence and spread to other ideas. An idea is an idea-object relation, and has an agent-like property as discussed earlier.

What are the characteristics of effective thinking? These characteristics include: a) a secure connection with the conceptual, social, or material environment addressed; b) to guide one's adaptive actions; c) to judge the probable success of one's actions to achieve an intended effect; and d) to follow the reasons pursued by a thinking cycle to a logical end. Logic very generally is what works. There are two styles of living. One is an emphasis on *freedom*, *self-expression*, *individuality*, and *authenticity*. Notice that all these characteristics are *abstract* and are *inferred* from one's pattern of conduct. This life style is currently recognized as *the right* or *conservative* position. The second style emphasizes a *logical disposition* and recognizes that thinking begins with an infant's logical facility that is developed by discovering cause-and-effect relations when exploring its world. A child's logical interactions grow in complexity to fit the increasingly complex world that emerges as one matures. One concurrently learns the self-control necessary to track logical relations and the emerging reasons

representing those relations, and that what is psychological is interdependent with what is logical. It emerges that logic and ethics are not just similar, they are identical. A logical disposition is the end point of an adult and not the beginning for a child. These two approaches to life, characterized as conservative and logical dispositions, emerge as two incompatible forms of democracy.

Logical relations in context of community constitute a *normative process* that establishes the *norms* of a community. Norms are essential to negotiating one's community that consists of institutionalizing and elaborating the foundational relations of primary care givers (parents) and primary attachment relations. Norms are identified by their ability to elicit and pull one to perform so that its performance feels automatic. Achieving positive beliefs and developing related habits that support successful living is the ability to inhibit inappropriate actions and to disinhibit, allow, and facilitate congruent action. Inhibiting spontaneous desires that are incongruent with social *norms* may be more important than facilitating appropriate actions. Pursuing an ideal of rationality is a decision of a maturing adult.

A reflective thinking cycle can be analyzed into six stages: 1) a *felt* difficulty; 2) attending to the context, developing an understanding, and defining the problem; 3) attending to the *suggestions* of possible solutions; 4) sorting through suggestions by collating the reasons supporting and countering the different suggestions; 5) making further observations and devising experiments to support or eliminate possible solutions; and 6) formulating, supporting, or rejecting beliefs that result from the emergent solutions. A significant characteristic is that a *difficulty* is *aesthetically felt* and precedes logical and rational analysis. An aesthetic sense of *completeness* and *harmony* is as characteristic of rationality as is logical relations. A second characteristic is an openness to a flow of suggestions (of inferences) of possible solutions to a problem once defined and understood. This includes the ease of flow, variety, and meaningfulness of suggestions. The source of the suggestions is indefinite and somewhat mysterious, but is perhaps thinking's tendency to generate inferences and hypotheses concerning the objects of one's environment to which one is attending.

The meaning of an idea creates an intellectual point of view that is third-personal and from which one can re-access one's environment. Meaning emerges when the inferences regarding an idea-object relation reach a conclusion. Evolving new meanings require one's judgment concerning how the new set of meanings affects one's environmental context. Reflective thinking occurs in the context of a fund of meanings

that are applied as needed. Relevant new meanings are recruited and judged whether to apply to one's circumstances and emerging future events. Concepts are the tools for collating meanings, enlarging a set of meanings, and incorporating a meaning set into a conceptual system. The results of a reflective thinking episode, no matter how abstract, returns to the practical circumstances from which a problem arose. It is *thinking* that frees one from concrete practical circumstances, but which also returns to thinking's practical origins. Further, the *will to believe* commits one to become intimately acquainted with one's pluralistic fragmented world.

What is intended by meaning includes more than a *fund of meanings* internal to conceptual processes; it also encapsulates how one lives. Meaning-making is directed outwardly, in contrast to conceptual meaning which is directed inwardly. Outward meaning-making is investigated through Viktor Frankl's internment in a Nazi concentration camp as related in *Man's Search for Meaning*. The immediate task for an inmate of a concentration camp is to survive, *to stay alive*. The *meaning of one's life* in such circumstances begins with one's *inner decision* about how to face the circumstances in which one has no influence, is unpredictably physically abused, morally abused, and is practically considered to be dead. One makes an inner choice to be responsible for the consequences of one's action in order to hold on to one's humanity, claim a future, and create meaning in one's life. The task of the camp environment is to get as much work out of each inmate as possible before they die. By claiming a future, one has a direction and subsequently a meaning to one's living.

One resists being totally absorbed by camp routine by the inner decision to claim direction and meaning in one's life, and to unobtrusively maintain relationships with other inmates. Unobtrusively because if the guards notice *normal* behavior and relationships, one is punished and such relationships would be disrupted as savagely as possible. Meaning in one's life is the extent to which one takes responsibility for the *consequences of one's actions, and to which there is a direction to living.* It is by resisting being absorbed by camp routine that one can avoid being reduced to a *thing,* and a *tool* for the concentration camp's purpose. One is free to choose how to confront a situation. This inner decision is recognized as *spiritual freedom*. It is *spiritual* because it *is the meaning of one's life*. It is the way one transcends the *totality* of the concentration camp environment.

Totality refers to a continual pull of an environment to a full and complete surrender to the pursuit of the purpose of that environment, which can be a concentration camp or any conflict driven environment. Totality, as used here, is a concept developed by Emmanuel Levinas. One transcends and escapes that *totality* by the inner decision to be fully

responsible for the consequences of one's actions and claim one's future. It is one's first-person commitment to claim a future and the meaning for one's life. By resisting totality, one acknowledges the plurality of an environment that resists unity, which insists on one's individuality, and the plural individuality of the environment. Levinas asserts that war is an amoral and anti-moral failure of culture, and creates an environment that seeks to absorb everything that comes in touch with it whether a person-object or other object.

How does one escape or transcend such an environment? Frankl, from his personal experience, asserts that it is by an inner spiritual decision to be responsible for the consequences of one's actions to the fullest extent possible, to include friendships. Levinas asserts that one escapes a totalizing environment in relating to another person by internalizing the other, and accepting ethical responsibility for the other's well-being. In this way, a pluralistic community evolves and the intersubjective relations with others build a community maintained by communication that transcends violence as a problem solving tool. Levinas argues that Western European intellectual history privileges the monistic unity principle and predisposes European based societies, including the United States, to violent conflict. It is interesting that this conclusion is congruently asserted by William James.

ix: We-Relation Sharing

This inquiry addresses the properties of second-personal we-relations. It turns out that we-relation interactions exhibit a characteristic pattern that Stephen Darwall names an *interdefinable circle* constituted by four components. These components interdependently structure second-person interactions that include: (1) the *authority* that derives from one's dignity as a participating member of a community and in an immediate shared interaction of a we-relation; (2) whose dignity is damaged by being morally wronged that is the recipient's authority to place a *moral claim* to the perpetrator; (3) this second-person moral transgression creates a *second-person reason* that the moral claim be corrected; (4) the perpetrator has the *moral responsibility* to respond to the *second-person reason* to restore the dignity of the recipient, if the we-relation is to remain intact. The example used in the inquiry was that one removed a rag rug from the living room without consulting one's spouse. It turns out that the spouse strongly disagrees. To replace the rug to the living room does not solve the *second-person reason* of the spouse's damaged dignity which is "Why did you not talk to me? This is my house, too." One must apologize for being

thoughtless, and promise not to do such a thing again. Depending on the history of the we-relationship, this probably will be insufficient to resolve the second-person transgression and some time may pass before the *dignity* of one's spouse is fully rebuilt. In sum, the constituents of an interdefinable circle are *authority*, a *moral claim*, a *second-person reason*, and the *accountability to respond* to a *moral claim*.

Morally responsible actions require *freedom* and *autonomy* to act free of coercion or influence external to oneself. Acting in a second-personal context of an interdefinable circle requires one to act freely. A fundamental requirement of moral actions is that one is free *to choose* or *not to choose* between ethical and unethical alternatives available in a situation. To the extent that one's actions are ethical, they are rational. Autonomy is one's capacity to act on a principle independent of the influences from one's external environment. To be free is to act without external restrictions of one's community. Free, as used here, assumes that one accepts the expectations and norms of an integrated community in which one lives, and that being free refers to an ability to contribute to one's community. Viewed in this context, *autonomy* is conceptually enlarged to become *will*. William James describes the capacity to direct one's action according to principle as the *concept of will*. *Will is the capacity* to direct one's voluntary actions to modify one's environment according to one's desires, beliefs, and ideals. One's maturing desires are directed by beliefs connected to reasons presented by one's community.

Will is the *I of acting* contrasted to the *I of thinking*, and concerns voluntary movement. What is voluntary addresses the dictionary of movements one has learned. There are no *novel* voluntary movements. That is not to say novel voluntary movements cannot be developed and learned as required. The essential components of a healthy will consist of one's focused attention on an idea until a goal is accomplished, a habitual pattern of behavior, and a capacity to inhibit an action. The *will to act* is a balance between an impulse to action and inhibiting processes. *Will* acts within one's vision of reality and attention to an idea until achieving a goal. *Effort* is required to fill one's mind with an idea that produces an action and intended consequences. Will is the autonomous capacity to act on a principle without external coercion and, in the context of an interdefinable circle, is the conceptual space to think about second-person reasons.

The ethical interactions within an interdefinable circle *pulls for one to perform* and to complete one's role. This property is a *normative pull* for the enaction of norms in intersubjective we-relations, and of an interdefinable circle in particular. *Norms* have a self-evident property that is a prescription or is an imperative to perform. This property is an

aesthetic sense of appropriateness and wholeness determined by one's judgment of whether or not a pull for enaction is, in fact, a norm. A norm *binds* one to act if a second-person relation is to remain intact. There are three kinds of normativity, which Charles Sanders Peirce refers as sciences, that include *logic*, *ethics*, and *aesthetic sensibility*. Logical relations arise in one's interactions with the social and material environments that begin at infancy. Ethical norms arise by extending logic to intersubjective second-personal relations. Aesthetic sensibility develops with one's maturing sense of a community's expectations of wholeness and appropriateness, and that is a feeling of satisfaction when a norm is enacted appropriately.

The three normative sciences are inter-related semiotic processes of first-, second-, and third-person stages. (a) One's beliefs-ideals leads to (b) an action engaging an object that produces (c) a social result that is aesthetically judged to be or not to be satisfactory and that is a (a) *potential*, (b) *sign relation*, and (c) *qualitative judgment*. One's interactions with one's community fill this three-step process, and are a continuous recycling, maturing process which results in an accumulation of meanings and influences a community's institutional culture. One's beliefs-ideals are first-personal, one's resulting ethical interactions are second-personal, and the qualitative meaning to oneself and one's community is a third-personal perspective of one's community.

x: Inward-Outward Interface

This inquiry addresses what is meant by one's *inner world*. What is an inner world begins with one's experience. Self-awareness, an experience episode, thinking, and qualitative emotional binding are all different sides of an experience. An experience is a balanced flow of *doing* and *undergoing*. A *non-phenomenal-I* emerges with *self-awareness* that creates one's capacity for *agency*. *Agency* is the ability to *insert a cause* into a sequence of causal events that result in changes to one's environment that would not otherwise occur. The most complete investigations of agency and experience are by Hector Neri Castañeda. He describes that one's capacity of agency emerges in hierarchical levels of self-awareness created by *I-indices* tied to corresponding *not-I-indices* of objects such as others, material objects, and conceptual objects. A *basic I-strand* is created by a person as ONEself, a non-phenomenal-I, that thinks the concept oneSELF and that is a concept of one's non-phenomenal-I (ONEself). This sets a reflexive pattern that is one's first-person perspective and a sense of ownership of one's experiences.

This is an *I-strand* of awareness which is initiated when one attends to some aspect of the environment and sets into motion a *pulse of thinking* that is accompanied by other thinking pulses. Each I-strand is an *I* connected to a *not-I-object*. An *I-strand* consists of a pole of one's I and a pole of a not-I-object to which one is attending. Each I-strand has an integrity the separates it from other I-strands. I-strands are created when one attends to a specific aspect of one's environment that initiates an experience episode. The I-strands comprising the thinking of an experience episode come to an end when the experience episode resolves and ends. The I-strands dissolve when the experience episode resolves, and triggers *feelings of satisfaction, warmth, and familiarity* which then becomes I-strands of the qualitative feelings of the experience. These properties are all assimilated into one's doxastic materials. The goal here is to describe how one's interactions with the one's world structures one's inner subjective world. The beginning of inwardness-subjectivity is an experience episode that consists of an elaboration of thinking I-strands in the context of related doxastic materials. One proceeds in life with the faith that one's experience is adequate to negotiate the world and engage one's relationships.

The second part of this inquiry addresses a different kind of internal subjective world. Collectively shared subjective experiences are created by religious traditions that include liturgical ritual routines, a holy literature and prayer, and visual imagery. Collective participation builds a shared inner collective subjectivity that emphasizes its cooperative and collective nature, and creates a sense of connection and intimacy. Gavin Flood explores three very different axial age religions of Hindu Saivism, Buddhism, and Christianity. He refers to the shared collective subjective experiences as *inner truth*. Similar collectively created participant subjectivities are not limited to religious traditions. One's understanding of their subjective inner world is founded on the hypothetical reasoning of external facts and is determined by logical cognitions. That is, one's knowledge of one's subjective internal world is achieved in the same way one constructs one's knowledge of the external world.

The axial age era originated around 800 - 200 BCE in response to an agronomy culture that consisted of organized violence of perpetual war and slavery. Axial age thinkers sought ways to ameliorate and overcome the violence. The result was a remarkable converging consensus across centuries and cultures of an emphasis on mental control, compassion, benevolence, and love. The depth and breadth of this convergence recognized the complex and deep nature of the person and humanity. From this, a modern system of values evolves as the concept of individuality

evolved in the Roman Empire in which a Roman citizen was responsible for obeying civil law. Individuality and conscience merged to create an autonomously moral person. One's freedom becomes the responsibility to create *authenticity* and *integrity*, and morality becomes an issue of *autonomy* and *reason*. The pre-modern focus on *inward truth* splinters and becomes a number of principles of modern society to include conscience, morality, recognition of unconscious thought, phenomenology, existentialism, and other modern themes. It is realized that one's awareness arises in an intersubjective space of second-person we-relations, and that being *a person* requires relations in the context of the reasons available in a community's intersubjective space.

A third aspect of this inquiry concerns the recognition that one's internal world need not be a reflection of one's external reality. It is necessary that one's subjectivity is at least that, but it is an internal reality that, it turns out, can be directly manipulated. This is the project of a Portuguese philosopher and poet, Fernando Pessoa, which he names *analytic phenomenology* and is an exploration of intentionally changing one's subjective inner landscape with the goal of enlarging one's subjective self-awareness. Pessoa does that by creating an *alter-I* to replace one's first-person-perspective-I that he call a *heteronymic-I*. The heteronymic-I becomes the center of one's awareness and activities, and one's *first-person-perspective-I* is depersonalized and becomes a witness of the heteronymic-I's activities and experiences. The *heteronymic-I* occupies a forum created by the depersonalized *first-person-perspectival-I* which is now a forumnal space occupied by one or more *heteronymic-I's*. One's activities are initiated by the heteronymic-I, which is the interpreter of one's experiences. There emerge two facets of self-awareness: an awareness of oneself as an heteronymic *alter-I*, and a forumnal awareness of a hetero-I.

Intentionally altering one's subjective space by creating *other centers of presence* that are *identities* other than one's own is novel and creative. However, the concept of multiple-I positions is not unique. It has been recognized that multiple I-positions emerge that comprise a mini-society representative of one's interactions with one's community, and that multiple I-positions are required to think. A comparison of a heteronymic-I with the non-phenomenal-I, following Castañeda, reveals that a heteronymic-I does not have a capacity for agency, but rather is a conceptual-I. The creation of heteronymic-I's is creatively unparalleled and demonstrates that one can deliberately and intentionally build one's inner-geography. Creating one's inner geography follows a logical structure as is demonstrated by Pessoa's *analytic phenomenology*. Other