The Politics of Survival

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In his Illustrations of the Logic of Science series, published in Popular Science Monthly in the late 1870s, Peirce presents a robust synecchistic individual, one who stands up to her hegemonic community whose belief-habits need to be challenged. He also presents the scientific method as the preferred method of communal belief-habit formation. The scientific method—unlike the hegemonic authority method—encourages input from individual community members, since such input fosters growth in knowledge about the external world. Scientific inquiry synthesizes many individual perspectives on the world, in order to solicit insight, compensate for bias, and elucidate common elements. This way, regularities characterizing the external world can be learned with as much accuracy as possible within the limits of human finitude and fallibility.

In what follows, building on work done in Chapters 1 and 2, I read this series through affective and social critical lenses in order to explain in more detail how it is possible for community members
to internalize hegemonic exclusionary belief-habits that can function nonconsciously. Deepening my post-Darwinian portrayal of Peircean human affectivity, I merge the concept of socio-political secondness with false universalization, the latter of which involves asserting as true for everyone beliefs reflecting a particular perspective. I also demonstrate that hegemonically exclusionary accounts of reality result in societal-level exclusionary habits, which can be internalized conceptually by individual community members, such that the very concepts by which individuals think about their world can reflect hegemonic, exclusionary bias. I will be using the term “concept” in a relatively nontechnical sense, to convey the abstract generalizations by which humans come to understand the world. Concepts are beliefs, and beliefs are habits. Where appropriate I use these three terms together to highlight this linkage (beliefs/habits/concepts). Socio-politically biased conceptualization occurs, for example, when the experience of a hegemonic group or groups (such as whites, men, the economically secure, etc.) becomes internalized as the falsely universalized concept of “human experience.” A by-product of this exclusionary conceptual internalization, which can function nonconsciously or instinctively, is the perception that non-hegemonic perspectives (voiced by people of color, women, the poor, etc.) are problematic conceptually—that is, crazy, overreactive, off base, or simply irrelevant. This can lead to the dismissal of non-hegemonic perspectives.

In conjunction with the danger of nonconscious exclusion or dismissal of non-hegemonic perspectives, my work in this chapter also highlights a methodological issue that Peirce leaves unaddressed, in this series, regarding the scientific method. The background beliefs that inform scientific inquiry may include hegemonic, exclusionary beliefs regarding the non-hegemonic groups in a community. In the Logic of Science essays, Peirce does not require the scientific community of inquiry to scrutinize these beliefs. Left unaddressed, therefore, are nonconsciously operating hegemonic belief-habits that actual scientific-community members (even well-meaning ones) may have internalized. The implementation of the scientific method, in turn, can
be undermined by exclusionary bias, such as racism, sexism, or other forms of discrimination. Discrimination, even if unintentional, undermines Peirce’s epistemological ideal of an infinitely inclusive community of inquiry (W 3:273, 284; cf. Sharp 1994, 201–7). This application problem shows how the Logic of Science series points beyond itself to Peirce’s 1900s doctrine of Critical Common-sensism, which requires the scrutiny of background (or common-sense) beliefs by the community of inquiry.

Part 1: The Synechistic Individual of the 1870s

In the Logic of Science essays, the affective process of cognition described in the Cognition Series has evolved into the rhythm of ongoing habit-taking, whose pulses are belief and doubt. This is the continuous inquiry by which individual humans and human communities converse with nature to determine how best to fix, or establish, their beliefs (or habits). The fixation of our beliefs is only a temporary measure at any point in time, as the continuous flow of experience results in regular challenges (secondness) to our habits. Peirce describes belief as a “demi-cadence which closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life” (W 3:263). Environmental resistance, which results in doubt, forces us to continually monitor, adjust, or change our habits accordingly or suffer the consequences.

Recall that the process of human cognition has an affective dimension of feeling, which stays in the background much of the time. This state of feeling is incorporated into “Fixation of Belief” as the feeling/sensation associated with belief, “a calm and satisfactory state which we do not wish to avoid, or to change to a belief in anything else” (W 3:247). In the Cognition Series, Peirce describes the bodily commotion that corresponds to emotion (W 2:230). In the present essay series, this commotion is described as the emotion of doubt, i.e., “an uneasy dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves” (W 3:247, 285).

Peirce portrays belief in its phenomenological richness—that is, its firstness, secondness, and thirdness. The firstness of belief includes
both awareness and feltness (W 3:263, 247). I will discuss awareness below. That our beliefs feel a certain way was described just above; they are “calm satisfactory state[s]” (W 3:247). Peirce also notes that “[t]he feeling of believing is a more or less sure indication of there being established in our nature some habit which will determine our actions” (W 3:247, my emphasis).

This portrays the close relationship between firstness and thirdness within the organism. Habits are thirds, mediating between organism and environment, and they have a feel to them, which reflects their firstness. Belief, then, involves the feltness (firstness) of learning, synthesis, and mastery (thirdness) that we experience as we successfully gear our bodies into the external world. Recall that each of our habits has a particular feel, its own affective signature. Seasoned baseball or softball players know there is a feel to their batting stance. For those who know how to type, “home row” has a feel beyond the touch of the keys themselves. Cooking techniques, such as flipping pancakes or over-easy eggs, can be felt as well. I have many felt rhythms to my teaching style, ranging from situating my notes and writing the class outline on the board before class begins, to pacing while I lecture. The reader is encouraged to think of her/his own habits and their felt signatures.

In its stronger form, the secondness of belief involves recovery from habit-rupture and thus struggle against doubt. When our habits are in working order, they feel stabilizing, even though we are not likely to pay attention to this stability. If a habit encounters disruptive resistance, however, the affective response thereby triggered betrays the calmness and satisfaction that has been disturbed. For example, about a year ago, there were about three minutes left before the start of a class I was teaching. We had a lot of material to cover that day in order to stay on schedule. So there was not much time to spare. I turned to the chalkboard to erase what was there (a good amount of writing, covering the entire board), so I could write my own topic outline for class. This pattern of erasing the board and then writing my outline is a very comfortable, long-standing habit of mine. On this day, however, there was no eraser. I could not execute my outline-writing habit, as the board was covered with someone else’s writing.
The affective signature of habit-rupture is doubt, the feltness of which involves the shock or surprise of habit interruption or failure. It was definitely surprising to me that there was no eraser. Doubt is “an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass into the state of belief” (W 3:247). The “state of belief” in this context refers to a state in which our habits are newly adjusted, and/or newly formed, and back in working order. I could not find an extra eraser on short notice, and I did not have a long sleeve or other such spare fabric available to use as a makeshift eraser. In the moment, I indeed felt “uneasy and dissatisfied” until my students helped me improvise by using a piece of notebook paper to erase the board, which enabled me to write my outline and subsequent lecture notes. (In hindsight, I wonder why none of us thought to run down the hall to the bathroom for paper towels.) Doubt reminds us that the world outside our bodies does not revolve around our personal desires. My expecting and wanting to have an eraser handy when I teach does not automatically translate into eraser-availability. My external environment does not always provide, so I need to be able to adjust.

As exemplified by our growing collection of socio-political secondness examples, habits (such as catching cabs or entering stores) can be ruptured for socio-political reasons. And, especially important for my project, habits can be free from rupture as well, for socio-political reasons. My being Euro-American, for example, is a socio-political reason why my habits of safely driving my car have never been ruptured by police harassment.

In its subtler forms, the secondness of belief involves more of a co-existence with doubt. As discussed in Chapter 1, our belief-habits are continually met with environmental friction, such as the feel of the computer keyboard beneath one’s fingers or the feel of the sidewalk beneath one’s feet or wheelchair. Peirce readily admits that calling these lesser doses of resistance “doubt” is overdone, but his point is that secondness is always part of human experience (W 3:261–62; cf. Anderson 1995b, 95). Our beliefs receive ongoing feedback, of varying intensities, from the external world. Another type of subtle doubt involves the avoidance of habit-rupture. For example, I habitually avoid
touching hot surfaces. My steering clear of burning my hands is informed, however mildly, by the doubt (habit-rupture) that would ensue were such painful contact to occur.

Here, too, a socio-political read is possible. Recall, from Chapter 2, bell hooks’s continual attention to racist environmental cues:

Living in a world of racial apartheid where custom and conventions invented to separate black and white lasted long past an end to legal racial discrimination, those who are powerless—black folks—must be overly aware of small details as we go about our lives to be sure we do not enter forbidden territory—to be sure we will not be hurt. You learn to notice things. You learn where not to walk, the stores you don’t want to go in. . . . [Y]ou cannot live the way other people live. (1997, 97, my emphasis)

This passage describes a socio-politically informed layer of coexistence with doubt that many Euro-American people in the United States do not regularly experience based on race.

The absence for many Euro-Americans of racist secondness is also socio-politically informed. My freedom from having to pay attention to certain environmental cues—cues that hooks must heed to avoid habit-rupture—is because of my race. It reflects white privilege. Included in Peggy McIntosh’s description of white privilege are items that can be classed as absences of socio-political doubt, which characterize her experience as a white person. Two of these items: “I can be pretty sure that my neighbors [in whatever housing I have chosen] will be neutral or pleasant to me” and “I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed” (McIntosh 1988, 293). That both of these examples, for people of color, can involve the potential escalation from subtle doubt (such as rudeness or suspicious looks) to outright attack (such as accusations or violence) highlights another aspect of doubt for those in oppressed groups. While socio-political secondness might not result in full-scale habit-rupture, it can. When socio-political doubt is subtle, this subtlety does not preclude danger. In Part 3, I discuss how the absence of socio-political doubt from the experience of privileged
groups can fuel their false universalization of the doubt-free dimensions of their experience.7

I end this section by highlighting the awareness that Peirce attributes to belief. In “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” he describes belief in this way: “First, [belief] is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a habit” (W 3:263, Peirce’s emphasis). The second and third points relate to the secondness and thirdness of belief discussed above. Peirce’s focus on awareness in this passage relates to both survival and self-control. It also relates to both firstness and thirdness, once again highlighting the close relationship between the two. Awareness, consciousness, can be subtle, in the background of firstness. I am aware that my body belongs to me, for example, and is sitting in a chair while I type these words, yet this awareness is often not a foregrounded awareness, unless health concerns (such as an aching back) or an environmental shift (such as an earthquake) bring it to my attention.

Awareness lies on a continuum from this backgrounded consciousness to the more explicit awareness characterizing the thirdness that enables humans to track their environment and learn about it. The thirdness-rich awareness makes possible the human organism’s homeodynamics-inspired environmental assessment of external objects. It also allows for a person’s attention to the consequences of her actions, so that she can make adjustments when her habits fail to harmonize with the external world. Moreover, on the macrocosmic scale, thirdness-rich awareness makes possible communal human inquiry into the regularities of the external world, so that the survival of the human species can be optimized over the long run. Humans are not merely at the mercy of their external environments, forming only those belief-habits that are compelled through environmental clash. Due to their intellectual capacity, they have the ability to proactively form self-controlled belief-habits as they learn about the regularities of their world and as they formulate aims for conduct.
The affectivity of inquiry

Part 2: Communal Fixation of Belief—Authority, A priori, and Science

The methods of fixing beliefs that Peirce discusses in “Fixation of Belief” occur against the backdrop of the ongoing affective flow of human experience, belief and doubt, within an external environment largely outside of human control. To the extent that one can control her or his belief-habit-taking, one can choose the method by which this occurs: tenacity, authority, a priori, or science. In terms of human survival over the long run, the scientific method is most effective. This is due to its attentiveness to both testimony and experience, an attentiveness that minimizes the risk involved in human interaction with the external world.

If one chooses the method of tenacity, one’s own perspective alone is the ultimate touchstone for one’s beliefs. Countervailing evidence from the testimony of others and even attention to the external world are shunned. This is the method of sticking one’s head in the sand, come what may. Peirce attributes tenacity to “the instinctive dislike of an undecided state of mind, exaggerated into a vague dread of doubt, [that] makes men cling spasmodically to the views they already take” (W 3:249). This method is unlikely to hold water practically. Peirce notes, “The social impulse is against it”; to know others disagree with one’s belief can undermine one’s “confidence in his belief” (W 3:250). This point recalls the sociality and child development discussions from the Cognition Series. The threshold of self-consciousness involves the realization that the testimony of others is just as valid, if not more so, than one’s own. In the present essay, Peirce notes:

This conception, that another man’s thought or sentiment may be equivalent to one’s own, is a distinctly new step, and a highly important one. It arises from an impulse too strong in man to be suppressed, without danger of destroying the human species. Unless we make ourselves hermits, we shall necessarily influence each other’s opinions. . . . (W 3:250)

Children and adults ignore the testimony of others at their own peril. The inclination to trust this testimony is, general speaking, survival-promoting. Thus Peirce says that “the problem becomes how to fix
belief, not in the individual merely, but in the community” (W 3:250). Adopting the beliefs of one’s community, however, can result in the internalization of growth-inhibiting habits. Peirce’s discussion of the method of authority illustrates this.

a. The Method of Authority and the Hegemonic Articulation of Reality

The authority method of fixing belief involves the state’s control of the beliefs of individuals. The authoritative state creates a hegemonic society, where social norms are dictated by those in power. Authority is a method that shuns inquiry, spontaneity, and freedom. It attempts to foreclose these elements of organic growth. When the authority method is followed,

... an institution [is] created which [has] for its object to keep correct doctrines before the attention of the people, to reiterate them perpetually, and to teach them to the young; having at the same time power to prevent contrary doctrines from being taught, advocated, or expressed. ... [A]ll possible causes of a change of mind [are] removed from men’s apprehensions. ... [They are] kept ignorant, lest they should learn of some reason to think otherwise than they do. (W 3:250)

The authoritative state aims to dictate the belief-habit formation of individuals so that their belief-habits conform to those sanctioned by the state. This is a manipulation of affectivity, which occurs through everyday saturation, as well as formal education, “to keep correct doctrines before the attention of the people, to reiterate them perpetually, and to teach them to the young.” It is also reinforced through censorship, “to prevent contrary doctrines from being taught, advocated, or expressed.”

To supplement these efforts, the authoritative state actively works to eliminate the possibility that, despite education and censorship, individuals might still hold beliefs differing from hegemonic norms. Note the affective efforts, which were cited last chapter:
Let [people’s] passions be enlisted, so that they may regard private and unusual opinions with hatred and horror. Then, let all men who reject the established belief be terrified into silence. Let people turn out and tar-and-feather such men, or let inquisitions be made into the manner of thinking of suspected persons, and, when they are found guilty of forbidden beliefs, let them be subjected to some signal punishment. (W 3:250)

The authoritative state wants unanimity. Peirce wryly notes that, if the above strategies prove ineffective, “a general massacre of all who have not thought in a certain way has proved a very effective means of settling opinion in a country” (W 3:250). It is not always feasible to kill off would-be dissenters, however, or even to make authoritative strategies explicit. In such cases, social ostracism is brought into play:

If liberty of speech is to be untrammeled from the grosser forms of constraint, then uniformity of opinion will be secured by a moral terrorism to which the respectability of society will give its thorough approval. . . . [L]et it be known that you seriously hold a tabooed belief, and you may be perfectly sure of being treated with a cruelty less brutal but more refined than hunting you like a wolf. (W 3:255–56)

The effects of social pressure on an individual’s habit-taking are pronounced. In the Cognition Series, Peirce notes that testimony can convince someone of being “mad” (W 2:202). I discussed this point in relationship to the internalization of disempowering beliefs that can occur when one is viewed as mad, abnormal, or inferior because challenging or differing from communal norms.

In the present context, Peirce highlights an internalization-related theme—namely, the self-punishment that can occur under communal pressure to hold certain beliefs: “Singularly enough, the persecution does not all come from without; but a man torments himself and is oftentimes most distressed at finding himself believing propositions which he has been brought up to regard with aversion” (W 3:256). I define internalization as the incorporation, by means of reinforcement or trauma, of a belief into one’s personal comportment and worldview such that the belief is difficult to eradicate rationally (cf.
A. Rorty 1980; Bartky 1990, 63–82). The method of authority involves both reinforcement, by means of education and general environmental exposure (such as the media), and trauma, through socio-political sanctions. Thus it uses the coercive survival dilemma faced by children, as well as patterns of socio-political secondness, to ensure that “proper” beliefs are adopted, and internalized, by community members.

Those in power in the authoritative state include only hegemonic perspectives in the articulation of reality: “[T]hose who wield the various forms of organized force in the [authoritative] state will never be convinced that dangerous reasoning ought not to be suppressed in some way” (W 3:255). The “dangerous reasoning” involves diverging from hegemonic norms. Peirce’s portrayal of the authority method thus illustrates the possibility for a limited number of powerful people to usurp the articulation of reality and to enforce this hegemonic articulation upon others. He notes this method’s historical precedence: “[F]rom the earliest times, [it has] been one of the chief means of upholding correct theological and political doctrines” (W 3:250–51, my emphasis). Reality can take on a politically unjust character when this usurping occurs.

The overall affective picture that Peirce paints of the authoritative society is bleak. Under the sway of exclusionary hegemony, the natural human sympathy that joins people together shows its darker side. Recall that sociality is “an impulse too strong in man to be suppressed, without danger of destroying the human species” (W 3:250). When fostered in an agapic fashion, the social impulse can manifest in a loving community that grows by feeling genuine concern for and embracing the diversity of each of its members. Everyone is on the same team, so to speak. I call this “agapic sympathy.” In the authoritative setting, however, the manipulation of the social impulse results in “a most ruthless power” whereby committing “cruelties” in the name of exclusion becomes an internalized reaction to dissenting voices in one’s community (W 3:251). I call this “exclusionary sympathy.” This type of sympathy can produce the fear-driven polarity of
the “us” against “them” outlook. Agapic and exclusionary sympathy will be discussed more in Chapter 4.

Despite its best efforts, however, the authoritative or hegemonic state cannot fully escape the growth-impetus provided by individuals who, for Peirce, have a more inclusive sensibility. Such synecistic individuals achieve perspective on the hegemonic beliefs of their cultures, seeing them to be accidental:

[1]In the most priestridden states some individuals will be found who are raised above that condition. These men possess a wider sort of social feeling; they see that men in other countries and in other ages have held to very different doctrines from those which they themselves have been brought up to believe; and they cannot help seeing that it is the mere accident of their having been taught as they have, and of their having been surrounded with the manners and associations they have, that has caused them to believe as they do and not far differently. (W 3:251–52)

The existence of these individuals underscores a key point raised last chapter, namely that the dangers of disempowering internalization do not paint a fatalistic picture in Peirce’s scheme. The seed of communal resistance planted in the Cognition Series has grown significantly, as Peirce places hope for communal growth in the hands of more socially attuned individuals.

b. The A priori Method

The a priori method reflects progress beyond the authority method, because it involves a more open and flexible communal inquiry. Peirce’s depiction of this method highlights the value of trusting instinct in our beliefs and actions: “Let the action of natural preferences be unimpeded . . . and under their influence let men, conversing together and regarding matters in different lights, gradually develop beliefs in harmony with natural causes” (W 3:252). And, “Indeed, as long as no better method can be applied, it ought to be followed, since it is then the expression of instinct which must be the ultimate cause of belief in all cases” (EP 1:377 n. 22). Peirce is well aware of
the potential survival value of our instincts. Here he is noting that
instincts can guide us to an intellectual understanding of the world as
we “gradually develop beliefs in harmony with natural causes” (W
3:252).

The problem with the a priori method is that our instincts are not
completely trustworthy; they do not necessarily reflect the regularities
of nature. Instead, instincts in some cases overlap with sentiments,
such that inquiry becomes “something similar to the development of
taste,” which is easily swayed and not conducive to communal agree-
ment (W 3:253). Since sentiments can be influenced arbitrarily, in-
stincts cannot be appealed to reliably. Thus, on the one hand the a
priori method is superior to the method of authority because it in-
volves a flexible, intellectual, communal inquiry. On the other hand,
Peirce notes that the a priori method “does not differ in a very essen-
tial way from that of authority. . . . [T]hough governments do not
interfere, sentiments in their development will be very greatly deter-

The a priori method is not assured of being geared toward human
survival over the long run, because our “natural preferences”/instincts/sentiments do not necessarily reflect the regularities of the ex-
ternal world (W 3:252–53). Since these natural beliefs cannot be relied
on without some measure of critique, Peirce turns to the method of
science.

c. The Scientific Method

Of all the methods of fixing belief-habits, the method of science best
promotes human survival in the long run, because it esteems testi-
mony and takes seriously the consequences that stem from belief-
habits and other habits in nature. Scientific method is an ongoing and
self-revising communal process. Its ideal practitioners embrace the
fallibilism of beliefs and are thus open to revising beliefs in light of
testing. That is to say, the ideal scientific community embraces or-
ganic growth. This embrace is essential in the complex environment
with which humans must cope.
While the other methods allow for the denial of the external world, the scientific method considers this world to be a continuous touchstone for the truth of beliefs. It maintains that beliefs are caused not merely by human will but “by some external permanency—by something upon which our thinking has no effect” (W 3:253). While the external world can be articulated only via human thought, it cannot be fully controlled by human thought (cf. Hausman 1993a, 144–45). The scientific method requires a community of inquiry that generates explanatory hypotheses, deduces the expected patterns of consequences that follow from said hypotheses, and then tests the hypotheses against experience. This testing optimizes learning, enabling humans to minimize risk and plan for the future most effectively. The other methods do not require this testing and so do not manage risk well over the long run.

Recall the Cognition Series discussion of the relationship between risk and epistemology in terms of the social principle. Peirce’s requirement that a community, not merely an individual, undertake scientific inquiry reflects this endorsement of communal epistemology. Indeed, Peirce reaffirms the risk of solitary, as opposed to communal, reasoning in the third Logic of Science essay, “The Doctrine of Chances.” Over the long run, we most effectively reduce the risk of life-threatening surprises from the external world if our beliefs about it are informed by as many perspectives as possible (W 3:282–85).

The ideal scientific community of inquiry is infinitely large and extends over an indefinite period of time. This breadth of scope is required so that humans may have the best grasp possible of the regularities (or habits) of nature, which are infinitely complex, grow, and elude capture in absolute laws. Since scientific inquiry is not a finite endeavor, it is immature for an individual person or a finite community to decide they have a lock on truth. Such hubris would be in violation of Peirce’s oft-repeated admonition: “Do not block the way of inquiry” (EP 2:48). Peirce says of the ideal community of inquiry, “This community . . . must not be limited, but must extend to all races of beings with whom we can come into immediate or mediate intellectual relation. It must reach, however vaguely, beyond
This ideal of infinite inclusiveness and infinite projection into the future has significant implications regarding social justice and truth.

On the social justice front, while Peirce does not make the point explicitly, his ideal community of inquiry requires justice toward all human beings, as potential participants in scientific inquiry. Science and politics meet on this point, despite the colloquial belief that science can separate itself completely from political interests. Peirce’s use of “intellectual” is inclusive of all human beings as animal organisms (“logical animals”) who have the capacity to grasp the regularities of nature and to establish aims for conduct (W 3:244, 285; EP 2:348). Indeed, Peirce is not just limiting his discussion to human beings; he includes “all races of beings with whom we can come into immediate or mediate intellectual relation” (W 3:284). Thus when Peirce specifies the “intellectual relation” that characterizes the infinitely inclusive community of inquiry, this is meant as a point of inclusiveness, not exclusivity (W 3:284). His account of cognition and his articulation of the ideal community of inquiry do not support the rendering of some human groups “unintellectual” and others “intellectual,” as has commonly occurred in the history of Western thought. On this point it is important to recall that we are separating Peirce’s personal racism and sexism from his philosophical ideas.

For Peirce, truth is “[t]he opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate” (W 3:273). While the terms “fated” and “ultimately agreed to” can give the impression that it is merely a matter of time before truth is reached, truth can never be finished on Peirce’s terms, due to the infinite nature of the community of inquiry. That is to say, “all who investigate” is not a finite group of people operating within a finite time frame. Once again, Peirce says, “This community . . . must not be limited, but must extend to all races of beings with whom we can come into immediate or mediate intellectual relation. It must reach, however vaguely, beyond this geological epoch, beyond all bounds” (W 3:284). The community that underwrites truth extends “beyond this geological epoch, beyond all
bounds.” Thus truth must be an ongoing journey, due to the community’s infinite inclusiveness and indefinite extension into the future (cf. Sharp 1994, 203). Carl Hausman describes the community required by the scientific method:

[T]he method of science is other-directed and dependent upon a standard that transcends finite determination. . . . [T]his standard consists in a community that has no assignable, actual boundary. It is the drive toward the realization of this community that guarantees the growth of thought and the survival of mankind itself. At the same time, however, this community remains unknown to the finite mind. It cannot be envisaged as a defined goal, for it remains to be given form and it lies in an infinite future, a future not wholly free of surprises and irregularities within a growing system of laws. (1974, 18; cf. Anderson 1995a, 108–9)

Hausman is describing the unfinished and growing character of the community of inquiry that pursues truth within an organic universe that itself grows. Since this community cannot be finished, neither can truth itself. Instead, truth requires a community’s consistent revision of its beliefs in light of both new experience and new perspectives. This reflects Peirce’s fallibilism: “[I]t is conceivable that what you cannot help believing today, you might find you thoroughly disbelieve tomorrow” (EP 2:337, 1905).

Peirce’s conception of truth does retain a sense of unitary agreement, despite his fallibilism and his infinitely growing community of inquiry. As he succinctly puts the point in 1907, “I hold that truth’s independence of individual opinions is due (so far as there is any ‘truth’) to its being the predestined result to which sufficient inquiry would ultimately lead” (EP 2:419–20). This comment holds in place both fallibilism and ultimate agreement. I am unconvinced, however, that truth, on Peirce’s own terms, needs to involve ultimate agreement in the infinite future. I would argue that this unitary characterization of truth could be challenged by further inquiry conducted over a long enough time frame by communities that are far more diverse than the narrow Western cultural circles with which Peirce was most familiar. Hausman notes, in the passage cited above, that
inquiring communities can encounter “surprises and irregularities” in the future (1974, 18). I would add that inquiring communities—that reflect deep and broad diversity, free from exclusionary bias—can themselves be sources of surprise regarding how truth itself is best conceived, especially considering the infinite time frame allowed by Peirce himself. This point requires far more attention than I can give it here, but I do think that Peirce’s ideas about truth do potentially point beyond themselves—that is, beyond the necessity of unitary agreement—in ways that merit exploration.  

Let us return more specifically to Peirce’s discussion of the scientific method in “Fixation of Belief,” where he says that the “fundamental hypothesis” of the scientific method is the following:

There are real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them; those realities affect our senses according to regular laws, and, though our sensations are as different as our relations to the objects, yet, by taking advantage of the laws of perception, we can ascertain by reasoning how things really are, and any man, if he have sufficient experience and reason enough about it, will be led to the one true conclusion. The new conception here involved is that of reality. (W 3:254)  

In this passage, Peirce says “any man” acting according to the scientific method is following the path to truth. This is an unfortunate choice of words, which reflects Peirce’s appeal to individuals to exhibit self-control in choosing the best method of fixing their beliefs. Scientific method does not revolve around an individual’s pursuit of truth about reality. It is a communal inquiry into reality that, ideally, includes all possible perspectives. Recall his description of reality in the Cognition Series:

[W]hat do we mean by the real? It is a conception which we must first have had when we discovered that there was an unreal, an illusion; that is, when we first corrected ourselves. Now the distinction for which alone this fact logically called, was between an ens relative to private inward determinations, to the negations belonging to idiosyncrasy, and an ens such as would stand in the long run. The real, then, is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore
independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a community, without definite limits, and capable of an indefinite increase of knowledge. (W 2:239, my emphasis)

For Peirce, reality exceeds finite human thought. It is something outside any single person’s control or articulation. It is also outside the grasp of any particular group of people. Even if we rounded up all the scientists living today, we would still have a finite group and thus an incomplete grasp of what lies external to human thought. Once again, the pursuit of truth cannot be finished.

The community provides varied perspectives that give information about reality, in the manner of the blind persons and the elephant. The varied perspectives also help identify and eradicate exclusionary bias, including false universalization. In the passage about reality in “Fixation of Belief,” Peirce notes both the regularity with which external objects affect human organisms, and the fact that “our sensations are as different as our relations to the objects” (W3: 254). This is an acknowledgement of the inescapability of human bias. Scientific inquiry synthesizes many perspectives on the world, in order to solicit insight, compensate for bias, and elucidate common elements. This way, regularities characterizing the external world can be learned with as much accuracy as possible within the limits of human finitude and fallibility.

Note that there is a circle of influence between reality and science. On the one hand, science inquires into the nature of reality, based upon the effects of the external world on human organisms. Thus reality—in so far as it represents “external permanency”—is the starting point of scientific inquiry and its continual reference point, as scientists test their theories against it (W3: 253). On the other hand, science influences reality in so far as reality involves communal, human articulation. Thus, scientific inquiries into the nature of reality, since they are conducted by human communities, also shape the articulations given to reality, since these are human articulations. This reciprocity of influence represents the ongoing conversation between
humans and the external world. If humans are to survive, they must pay attention to the regularities (or habits) of nature, that is, to reality in so far as it lies outside of human organisms. Science is rooted in this truism of human existence. At the same time, any particular articulation of reality is fallible, subject to revision based on factors such as the growth of nature itself, as well as new hypotheses generated by new or existing community members.

Of particular interest to my project are the socio-political implications of this fallible dimension of reality. Humans cannot survive if they wait for a perfect articulation of reality to occur, and reality always exceeds the complete grasp of present scientific inquiry. Thus humans must act from working knowledge. Yet reality can be hijacked by hegemonic groups who use the authority method to inculcate growth-undermining belief-habits. This hegemonic articulation of reality can be internalized as “the” reality. When this happens, the ideals of science can be undermined by hegemonic background beliefs that enter the scientific method through the back door.

d. Science Meets Authority and A priori: The Application Problem

Peirce’s discussion of the scientific method, in these Logic of Science essays of the 1870s, points beyond itself to his 1900s work on Critical Common-sensism. First of all, before outlining the four methods, in “Fixation of Belief,” Peirce asserts that we reason from “a variety of facts” that must be “taken for granted” in the reasoning process (W 3:246). This echoes a comment, made in the Cognition Series, regarding philosophical investigation—namely, that “[w]e must begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy. These prejudices are not to be dispelled by a [Cartesian] maxim, for they are things which it does not occur to us can be questioned” (W 2:212, Peirce’s emphasis). We cannot reason without beliefs already taken for granted. To assume we can simply detach ourselves from such beliefs is mere self-deception (cf. W 3:248). In “Fixation of Belief,” Peirce notes that “common-sense, or thought as it first emerges above the level of the narrowly practical,” needs to be subjected to “a severe course of logic” (W 3: 246).
Second, Peirce does not incorporate this concern about background or common-sense beliefs into his articulation of the scientific method. That is to say, in the Logic of Science essays, he does not explicitly require the scientific community of inquiry to examine its background beliefs in order to eliminate those that undermine the inclusiveness of the scientific pursuit of truth. Third, in concrete scientific communities, scientists reason from common-sense beliefs that may be shaped by the state, via the authority method, or through other accidental causes, via the a priori method. In other words, the scientific method overlaps with both the authority and the a priori methods. These background/common-sense beliefs will, in his later work, become the fund of instinctive, common-sense beliefs scrutinized by the Critical Common-sensist.

It is difficult to tell how aware Peirce is of the socio-political dangers that could threaten an actual community of inquiry and thus undermine the implementation of the scientific method. His discussions, in “Fixation of Belief,” of the different methods for securing our beliefs-habits imply that the adoption of the scientific method reflects a maturity that has left behind the less mature tenacity, authority, and a priori methods (W 3:253 ff., 331). Peirce does not, however, adequately address the fact that any flesh-and-blood community of inquiry is situated historically. If a community of inquiry is located in an oppressive society, its members are likely to internalize the corresponding hegemonic beliefs. When this occurs, these authoritative/hegemonic beliefs become part of the instinctive background beliefs that inform scientific reasoning. An analogous danger applies to a priori beliefs, since these are not easily separable from authority-derived beliefs, especially in a hegemonic society. In other words, on the plane of practical implementation, the authority, a priori, and scientific methods are intertwined regarding the fixation of belief-habits. In what follows I use the term “background belief(s)” as a general term to refer to beliefs that may have been shaped by either the authority or the a priori method, or a combination of the two.

As an example of this implementation issue, take the nineteenth-century study of craniology undertaken by Western scientists. This
study of craniology reflects science conducted under the influence of background beliefs presuming the inferiority of women and non-European races. Nancy Tuana outlines the attempt by craniologist Hermann Schaaffhausen to establish the inferiority of women, an attempt that begs the question of the inferiority of both women and people of color:

Schaaffhausen claimed that there were five characteristics of female skulls that proved that woman's development is imperfect in comparison to man's: "the projection of the parietal protuberances, the lesser elevation of the frontal bone, the shorter and narrower cranial base . . . the more elliptical dental arch and the inclination to prognathism [having a small facial angle]." Schaaffhausen argued that these characteristics were reliable indicators of more primitive skulls because they were traits possessed by women and non-European races. In other words, Schaaffhausen presupposed the inferiority of women and non-European men in order to obtain a list of characteristics by which to classify skull types as primitive. A more obvious example of unconscious, circular reasoning is difficult to find. (1993, 44–45, Tuana’s emphasis; Schaaffhausen 1868)

Tuana’s example illustrates that practicing scientists can be biased in their work by background beliefs, such as the beliefs informing racism and sexism (cf. Gould 1981). In this particular case, the logical fallacy of begging the question goes unnoticed by the scientist. Peirce’s advice that common-sense be subjected to “a severe course in logic” can be applied here (W 3:246). It should be noted that Schaaffhausen’s work occurred in a community of scientists reasoning from racist and sexist background beliefs. He was not merely a lone eccentric. Tuana’s and Stephen Jay Gould’s work on sexism and racism in nineteenth-century science shows the prevalence of these socio-political biases (Tuana 1993, 34–50; Gould 1981, chapters 2–4).

Let me be more specific about this application problem. The scientific method has ideals of infinite inclusiveness and truth, which go hand in hand. To this end the ideal scientific community of inquiry embraces the self-revision of its beliefs. Since, however, the scientific
method does not call for an examination of background beliefs, it is possible for an actual community of inquiry to think it is being adequately inclusive when it is actually discriminating against groups who have little socio-political power. The background beliefs that form an inescapable grounding for scientific reasoning can be repositories for instinctive socio-political prejudices that can, and historically have, limited membership within communal inquiry. Euro-American white, propertied men in many cases held exclusive membership and perpetuated this exclusivity.

It should be noted that Peirce does acknowledge, in the Logic of Science essays, that human stubbornness can impede, to some extent, the progress toward truth (W 3:273–74). I doubt, however, that he was complacent about such a blockage occurring within an actual community of inquiry practicing the scientific method to the best of its ability. Thus Peirce’s work in the Logic of Science essays points beyond itself to his mature doctrine of Critical Common-sensism.

Part 3: Interest, Survival, and Power: Politicized Habit-Taking and Internalization

In this section, to further elucidate the application problem just outlined, I show how deeply background beliefs can shape the communal inquiry of science. I begin by examining the interest in regularities that characterizes the human species as a whole. Peirce’s linkage of science, in this respect, to the promotion of human survival is marked. Humans must learn about the regularities (or habits) of their world if they are to survive and grow over the long run. Yet these regularities concern not only reality as a natural realm outside of human conduct but also socio-political interests. Focusing on the latter, we find that the regularities of reality can embody exclusionary, falsely universal beliefs/habits/concepts that undermine Peirce’s epistemological ideal. In the case of children, whose interest in reality’s regularities is especially pronounced in terms of survival concerns, the internalization of exclusionary, falsely universal beliefs/habits/concepts is all the more likely.
In “Fixation of Belief,” Peirce describes humans as “logical animals” (W3: 244). I take this as a reminder that human reasoning, for all its glories, is rooted in survival interests. In their ongoing inquiry with nature, if humans are wrong about how the external world works, it can be life threatening. Recall the story of Chris McCandless from Chapter 2. His inquiry with nature in the Alaskan wild ended tragically when he misjudged the edibility of the seed pods of the *H. alpinum* plant (Krakauer 1996, 189–95). Notwithstanding the human accomplishments that grow from the capacities for self-control and abstraction, the promotion of survival is fundamental (Damasio 1999, 309 ff.). Recall Peirce’s tracing of scientific development to the human instincts for nutrition and reproduction. Physics is rooted in “instincts connected with the need of nutrition” and “psychics” in those linked to reproduction (EP 2:51, 1898). He goes so far as to say, “Now not only our accomplished science, but even our scientific questions have been pretty exclusively limited to the development of those two branches of natural knowledge” (EP 2:51).

In “The Order of Nature” (1878), the fifth essay of the Logic of Science series, Peirce discusses human interest in the regularities of nature (W 3:312). Recall that, for Peirce, interest has an affective charge. In the Cognition Series he notes that “[e]verything in which we take the least interest creates in us its own particular emotion, however slight this may be. This emotion is a sign and a predicate of the thing” (W 2:237). This makes sense in a post-Darwinian evolutionary scheme. Humans do not merely observe the world from a detached perspective. They are organisms that must successfully navigate the world around them in order to survive and grow. To this end, humans have the capacity to learn about the life-threatening and life-promoting regularities of the world, versus merely reacting to them each time anew. In an 1895 manuscript, Peirce links the “interesting” more closely to his evolutionary thematic:

There are certain combinations of feelings which are specially interesting—that is, they are strongly suggestive of thought. *What* combinations are interesting? Answer: those which are very near a reaction between mind and body, whether in sense, in the action
of the glands, in contractions of involuntary muscles, in voluntary
outward acts, or in inward acts by which one part of the nerves
discharge in an extraordinary manner upon another. (EP 2:23,
“Of Reasoning in General,” Peirce’s emphasis)

This linkage of interest to “a reaction between mind and body”
brings to mind the homeodynamic environmental assessment
whereby humans perpetually monitor their environment to promote
survival (EP 2:23; Damasio 2003, 30, 35).

In “The Order of Nature,” Peirce presents the reader with a de-
scription of a hypothetical world that humans would find
uninteresting:

In the first place, there would be nothing to puzzle us in such [an
uninteresting] world. The small number of qualities which would
directly meet the senses would be the ones which would afford
the key to everything which could possibly interest us. The whole
universe would have such an air of system and perfect regularity
that there would be nothing to ask . . . [T]here would be nothing
to stimulate or develop either the mind or the will, and we conse-
quently should neither act nor think. The interest which the uni-
formities of Nature have for an animal measures his place in the
scale of intelligence. (W 3:312, my emphasis)

This brings to mind a plant, satisfied with light, water, and the nutri-
ents in its soil. If humans were not interested in the world—that is,
affectively invested—scientific inquiry would not arise.18

Peirce’s point is that humans are interested in the regularities of
the world, as evidenced by their levels of curiosity and intelligence.
Later in the essay, Peirce re-examines an issue that arose in the Cogni-
tion Series, regarding synthetic reasoning. He asks how humans can
have an edge in reasoning about the causes of nature’s regularities,
such that human synthetic reasoning19 meets with success far more
often than probability alone would allow. Peirce’s examination of this
issue in the present context is distinctly survival oriented. He notes,
“It seems incontestable . . . that the mind of man is strongly adapted
to the comprehension of the world” (W 3:318). His search for an an-
swer includes the following exploration:
How are we to explain this adaptation? The great utility and indis-
pensableness of the conceptions of time, space, and force, even to
the lowest intelligence, are such as to suggest that they are the re-
results of natural selection. Without something like geometrical, ki-
netical, and mechanical conceptions, no animal could seize his
food or do anything which might be necessary for the preserva-
tion of the species. (W 3:318)

Peirce does not, in this essay or series, reach an answer that fully satis-
fies him. But his discussion of the question makes clear that scient-
ific investigation is rooted in concrete human survival interests.

a. The Politics of Interest and False Universalization

Clearly enough, then, human interest in the regularities of nature is
ultimately grounded in survival-promotion. To learn about nature’s
habits is to be able to anticipate them and plan future behaviors ac-
cordingly, so that humans can avoid danger and pursue resources
most efficiently. The tapestry of learning woven together via human
interest, however, includes socio-political strands.

To elucidate these strands, I highlight four points. First, to identify
the regularities that characterize the external world is to articulate re-
ality. Such an articulation, as argued by Peirce in the Cognition Series
and reviewed in the last section, is socially mediated. That is to say,
any articulation of reality is a communal, human articulation. Second,
determining regularities involves identifying patterns that are at play.
Third, this pattern-identification involves attention to relevant simi-
larities. Peirce notes that any “plurality” of things has “some charac-
ter in common” (W 3:310). To come to terms with the “order of
nature,” then, “it is requisite to consider the characters of things as
relative to the perceptions and active powers of living beings” (W
3:311–12, my emphasis). This is where human interest in the regulari-
ties of nature comes into play. Human interests determine which
commonalities are relevant, that is, which regularities matter. Fourth,
in addition to regularity identification driven by interest in human
survival, there can be regularity identification driven by exclusionary
socio-political interests and power structures.
Someone might object that it is inappropriate to address socio-political concerns in the present context, because Peirce is talking about the logic of science in these essays. Scientific exploration into the regularities of the world is not a socio-political endeavor. There are many answers to this objection, including the points raised in the last two chapters, regarding the synechistic shaping of the human being. A person cannot simply put on a “scientist hat” and thereby distance herself from her embodied, socio-political, and other situatedness. In “Fixation of Belief,” Peirce also identifies political applications of the methods of fixing beliefs, especially regarding the authority method (W 3:248–57). In addition, as mentioned in the discussion of the scientific method, Peirce himself requires an infinitely inclusive community of inquiry. By implication, this requires all humans to be given membership, which is a political issue, especially given the exclusionary history of science in the West. When it comes to communal inquiry, then, political concerns actually precede epistemological, scientific ones, due to issues of communal membership (cf. Babbitt 1996, 34). A socio-political critique of the scientific identification of regularities is, therefore, appropriate in a Peircean context.

In her book Impossible Dreams: Rationality, Integrity, and Moral Imagination, Susan Babbitt sheds light on this point by examining how human interest in regularities can take on pernicious socio-political forms (1996). While she does not draw upon Peirce, her discussion is compatible with Peircean themes, and thus helps enhance their social critical dimensions. She notes, “We cannot make sense of our experience or of information without applying unifying general concepts” (15). Identifying unities involves not only determining relevant similarities, but also relevant differences. This takes on socio-political urgency regarding one of the most basic regularities to human experience, namely “humanity” itself. Who is included in this regularity? Who is excluded? Babbitt explains, “When a concept such as ‘the people’ is rooted in traditions of racism and sexism, entire groups of human beings are typically unable to be understood, or even identified, as people at all” (2). She also poses a question that further demonstrates the socio-political import of
Peirce’s point (outlined above) that identifying “uniformities” in nature requires attention to relevant characteristics, that is to say, “the characters of things as relative to the perceptions and active powers of living beings” (W 3:311–12, my emphasis). Babbitt notes, “The question to be answered is about how we can properly identify real similarities and differences given that the conceptual and practical traditions upon which we base such judgments are often, among other things, racist [and sexist]” (1996, 21).

Babbitt stresses that the identification of “relevant” similarities and differences among human beings “depends on general background beliefs about human experience” (1996, 24). She thus helps show the political implications in Peirce’s own points about both regularity identification and background beliefs. In society’s characterized by racism and sexism, Babbitt continues, “racist, sexist assumptions are implicit in fundamental meanings and ways of thinking” (26, 27). It is thus the case that socio-political questions precede epistemological ones in some cases, as just noted (34). That is to say, the very concepts by means of which humans come to know the world can be informed by exclusionary socio-political bias. In Peirce’s scheme, these concepts—including humanity and personhood—should be informed by an infinitely inclusive community of inquiry, since an inclusive communal articulation is implied in the ideal articulation of “reality” itself. The fact that hegemonic interests can interfere with how reality is articulated and conceptually understood is acknowledged by Peirce in his discussion of the authority method of fixing beliefs. His discussion of the scientific method, in the present series, however, neglects addressing the socio-political prejudices that could undermine the implementation of this method, due to unexamined exclusionary background beliefs.

The issue can be explained this way. The scientific community of inquiry embraces self-revision if one of its beliefs or concepts becomes doubtful. This revision of beliefs is integral to pursuing truth and the growth of knowledge. The problem of application, however, can arise if communal inquiry is undertaken by a hegemonic, exclusionary group. Due to power imbalances, the group’s exclusionary
beliefs—such as a conception of “humanity” that excludes non-hegemonic groups—may not meet with environmental resistance sufficient to trigger doubt and self-revision. In the history of the United States, for example, Euro-American propertied men with power and privilege formed an exclusionary community that excluded people of color and women from “humanity.” These non-hegemonic groups did not have the political power to fully enforce their inclusion in “humanity.” That is to say, they did not have the political power to generate anti-racist/anti-sexist secondness sufficient to effect immediate change. In turn, the racist and sexist beliefs of these affluent Euro-American men did not meet with secondness sufficient to generate doubt.

It cannot be assumed that, in the absence of significant anti-discrimination secondness, members of the exclusionary group would, of their own accord, question their exclusionary beliefs/concepts. They may either think the exclusion, as in the case of humanity, is justifiable, or they may not be consciously aware that the exclusion is occurring. These issues will be discussed more fully below and in Chapter 5. I am not overlooking the fact that people of color and women in the United States eventually gained considerable power to effect change and to gain de jure equal rights. The length of time this took, not to mention persisting systemic racism and sexism, underscore the problem of implementation I am describing. So does the fact that many other groups still face discriminatory secondness stemming from disability, economic class, sexuality, and so on. After all, the United States has been from its inception a self-proclaimed democratic country where all are equal and deserving of rights.

When a hegemonic group articulates reality by means of “conceptual machinery” that reflects only the experience of a particular group, false universalization occurs (Babbitt 1996, 17). False universalization—whereby a particular perspective is attributed to all of humanity—has been prevalent in Western thought historically, as affluent Euro-American men have rendered articulations of reality that excluded the non-hegemonic perspectives of people of color, the
poor, women, and others. In terms of the blind persons and the elephant metaphor (where differing perspectives result in more information about the parts of the elephant, its trunk, ears, tail, legs, and so on), the exclusion of perspectives results in an unduly limited portrayal of the elephant. Marilyn Frye, who uses a similar metaphor, gives a humorous depiction of Euro-American patriarchal thinking:

Imagine that a single individual had written up an exhaustive description of a sedated elephant as observed from one spot for one hour and then, with delighted self-satisfaction, had heralded that achievement as a complete, accurate and profound account of The Elephant. The androcentrism of the accumulated philosophy and science of the “western” world is like that. (1992, 59)

That the accounts of these men are biased towards a particular race, sex, and economic class (among other favored factors) is not the ultimate problem, I would argue, since any account of reality will be biased to some extent, for Peirce. Their accounts of reality are problematic, because they have been hegemonically enforced as neutral accounts of reality. I do not mean to imply such men have agreed on all details regarding the regularities of the external world. Nonetheless, this group of privileged men has shared many biases that have become incorporated conceptually into a “reality” that rests upon the exclusion of many perspectives. Mills argues:

The universalizing pretensions of Western philosophy, by which its very abstractness and distance from vulgar reality seemed to be all-inclusive of human experience, are . . . illusory. White (male) philosophy’s confrontation of Man and Universe, or even Person and Universe, is really predicated on taking personhood for granted and thus excludes the differential experience of those who have ceaselessly had to fight to have their personhood recognized in the first place. (1998, 9, my emphasis)

Affluent Euro-American men are not the only culprits here; similarly situated women have enacted analogous false universalizations in feminist movements in the West, neglecting issues including economic class, race, sexuality, and other factors (Lugones and Spelman...
Generally speaking, anyone who is privileged on some axis, such as economic class, race, sex, sexuality, etc., can fall prey to falsely universalizing their experience to this extent (cf. Lerner 1993, 209–16; McIntosh 1988). Peirce’s promotion of an inclusive, communal inquiry into reality and truth can be applied to address these blind spots that can characterize the articulation of individual and group experience.

An important point for my project, which Peirce’s ideas help articulate and address, is the following: when false universalization occurs in a hegemonic context, the exclusionary articulation of reality is enforced as both neutral and authoritative, such that divergent articulations are rendered conceptually problematic. Since the hegemonic account is supposedly neutral, no one is supposedly excluded. Since it is authoritative, those who would challenge its neutrality—such as those who are indeed left out—are likely to seem, or to be portrayed as, crazy, overreactive, merely emotional, or simply irrelevant, in comparison to the supposedly ahistorical, transcendent, objective “Truth” (Williams 1991, 8–9). Thus divergent viewpoints can be readily dismissed as falling short of the “real standards” by which “Truth” is assessed (8–9). Recall the example from Marilyn Frye in Chapter 2. Historically speaking, “reality” in the West has excluded the lesbian perspective. Lesbianism has been rendered both conceptually and naturally impossible: Since sex and sexuality revolve around what occurs “with respect to the penis,” women having sex is “unnatural” (Frye 1983, 157 ff.). Thus, according to the dominant view, if a woman were a lesbian, something would be wrong with her (159–60).

We can describe this de-legitimizing phenomenon in Peircean terms, as a non-agapic stance towards what is different from oneself. For Peirce, the concepts involved in a hegemonic, or any other, articulation of reality are communal belief-habits, and the community itself is a macroscopic person. As we will discuss next chapter, both individual and communal persons grow by means of agapically embracing new perspectives, even and especially when these perspective
are at odds with existing habit systems. A typical non-agapic stance is the rejection of diverse perspectives. For example, take the founding credo of the United States: “All men are created equal.” In its application, this belief/habit/concept was proclaimed from the falsely universalized perspective of an elite class of Euro-American white, propertied men. It thus only reflected their experience of respecting equality within this hegemonic group. And it resulted in contradictory patterns of behavior that upheld their equality with each other, while perpetuating the oppression of people of color and women. Although there were exceptions, as a hegemonic group, these men primarily resisted the growth opportunities provided by people of color and women who protested being oppressed. Thus people of color and women were not embraced as part of “men” who shared “equality”. The hegemonic group members did not succeed in fully foreclosing social growth over the long run, but they tried to through the non-agapic rejection of voices differing from their own.

As I will argue below and in Chapters 4 and 5, the de-legitimizing tendency described here is not merely a historical phenomenon linked to conscious racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. It can be enacted present day by individuals in privileged groups who are consciously anti-racist, anti-sexist, and so on. This is due to the internalization and reinforcement of exclusionary beliefs/habits/conceptual schemes still in play in mainstream society in the United States. This type of internalization can begin in childhood due to the coercive survival dilemma and can be fueled both by an absence of socio-political secondness and by mainstream cultural reinforcement of privileged beliefs/habits/concepts. In other words, the socio-political shaping of affectivity, via belief/habit/concept formation, can occur without one’s awareness.

b. Revisiting the Politics of Child Development

The survival value of human interest in the regularities of the world takes on a special form for children. This is because these regularities
often are mediated by the habits of caretakers and community. John Dewey makes this point nicely in *Human Nature and Conduct*: “[A]n individual begins life as a baby, and babies are dependent beings. Their activities could continue at most for only a few hours were it not for the presence and aid of adults with their formed habits” ([1922] 1988, 66, my emphasis). Human infants and young children are utterly dependent on their caretakers and community for survival. And as the stove example from last chapter illustrates, part of this survival entails trusting the testimony of their caretakers and community. Even if this testimony involves explicit or implicit prejudice, small children are likely to trust it, since they are probably too dependent and naïve to question it. This is the coercive survival dilemma. By means of it, I would argue, the needle is threaded with respect to exclusionary habits and other habits of privilege for those in hegemonic groups.

Shannon Sullivan notes the young age (by three years old) at which children are aware of patterns of race in their world (n.d., 15–22; cf. 2006, 63–93). When these social habits are reinforced through personal experience, education, and cultural messages, they can become virtually impossible to detect, since they involve a self-validating false universalization. In this section, I focus on habits of white privilege, to simplify the presentation, but other forms of falsely universalized privilege, with respect to economic class, sex, sexuality, etc., can be extrapolated. My objective is to show how internalized habits of false universalization fuel the nonconscious operation of prejudice in people who, on a conscious level, are anti-racist. The hypothetical white child I refer to below is one who is raised in a middle-class, predominantly white environment, where racism is taught as morally wrong but where white caretakers do not discuss race issues, such as white privilege, beyond this.

Communal habits/beliefs/concepts form the backdrop against which one’s individual habits are formed. Building on ideas discussed above, we can say that falsely universalized, hegemonic communal beliefs translate power differentials into the concrete experience of community members. In the United States, for example, hegemonic
communal habits underwrite the privilege of whites by largely elimin-inating socio-political secondness tied to race, such as the inconvenience of being harassed by police. The experience of white privilege is also hegemonically reinforced as a neutral depiction of human experience. This falsely universal neutrality promotes the oblivion of Euro-American whites to the discrimination suffered by people of color, and the former may thereby unintentionally act to reinforce the false universalization of white privilege.

Peirce’s account of belief and doubt provides phenomenological insight into the roots of this oblivion. Whites are often unaware of the absence of race-based socio-political secondness from their experience, an absence that white privilege affords them. This unawareness is linked to the corresponding lack of socio-political secondness (or doubt) in their experience. The habit of expectation regarding the absence of race-based socio-political friction can be internalized, because of the continued experience of a lack of environmental resistance to one’s race. In addition, since this type of absence may never arise as an absence in the first place, it is all the more difficult to detect. For example, if a small child burns her hand on the stove, that experience involves habit-rupture and doubt. In the future, the child probably conducts herself so as to avoid getting burned. In contexts where hot stoves are nearby, she will probably, on a conscious and/or nonconscious level, experience the absence of hand-burning as an absence. She will know what is absent from her experience in this respect—namely, the pain, doubt, and habit-rupture of burning her hand. In contrast, someone who is white may experience only unimpeded habit-execution insofar as race is concerned, without the corresponding doubt that could highlight the socio-political nature of her experience.

White privilege involves, then, the following affective factor: a race-based absence of socio-political secondness, which is rooted in the societal habits into which the white child is born. These same societal habits result in the race-based presence of socio-political secondness for people of color. This is tricky phenomenologically for the white child, since the exclusionary, privileged habits are articulated as
reality itself. That is to say, the “neutral” view of “human experience” is, in fact, the hegemonic concept of white privileged experience. For the white child who has not been educated otherwise, her failure to experience race-based socio-political secondness can appear to reflect the way things are for everyone else. That is, after all, what the hegemonic messages reinforce; for example, “Anyone willing to work hard enough can make something of themselves in the United States,” “Race is no longer an issue in this country,” “Anyone can pull herself up by her bootstraps,” etc. In other words, the white child’s experience of race not being an obstacle for her can take the generalized form of “race is not an obstacle for anyone else either.” After all, the civil rights movement in the 1960s supposedly eradicated institutionalized racism, such as legalized segregation in the South (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2–4; Sullivan 2006, 4–5; Williams 1997, 41). This promotes the white-privileged false universalization, “I don’t see racism, thus it doesn’t exist.”

For example, in a feminism class I taught in 2004, where about 85 percent of the students were white, we were discussing issues of white privilege and false universalization, in conjunction with writings by theorists who are women of color. During class discussion of an article by bell hooks, two or three white students voiced their frustrations with hooks’s “complaining” about racism. It sounded “dated” to them. From their white point of view, racism issues in 2004 were obsolete, the implication being that the civil rights movement of the 1960s took care of everything in this respect. Several African American students in the class volunteered their perspectives on the negative race issues (socio-political secondness) that indeed did characterize their experience as African Americans living in the United States in 2004. This disparity was a by-product of false universalization. My white students did not experience race as an obstacle for them or see it being an obstacle for anyone else. They then falsely universalized their position as normative, declaring obsolete the class reading from the 1980s that addressed post–civil rights movement racism. It did not occur to them that other present-day accounts of experience were available—namely, from people of color.
To their credit, I must add, these white students were open to the African American perspectives voiced by their classmates. It is difficult to tell, however, to what extent this was influenced by my authoritative presence and classroom rules about respecting the input of other students. I mention this point not to take away from the integrity of my white students but to highlight the application problem plaguing the scientific method. I would argue that without some kind of check, whites—when in the majority of a community—can easily fall into nonconscious habits of dismissal toward input from people of color.

Formal and informal education lie at the intersection of the socio-political and the affective, since education influences the concepts/habits/beliefs learned by children and adults. This influence can cut two ways. Formal education can be used to raise awareness regarding white privilege, and it can just as easily be used to reinforce the “invisibility” of white privilege. The media can collude in this as well, depicting a homogenous white human experience as normative (cf. hooks 2003b, 38–39). McIntosh describes her white education in the United States: “My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself . . . as an unfairly advantaged person. . . . [It] followed the pattern which Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average . . .” (McIntosh 1988, 292–93). 31 McIntosh also notes:

My life was reflected back to me frequently enough so that I felt, with regard to my race, if not to my sex, like one of the real people.

Whether through the curriculum or in the newspaper, the television, the economic system, or the general look of people in the streets, we received daily signals and indications that my people counted, and that others either didn’t exist or must be trying, not very successfully, to be like people of my race. (1988, 295, emphasis in original)

Here McIntosh addresses the media in addition to curriculum—an important point. For many children in the United States, the media is a significant source of informal education by the community. 32
In contrast, note Helen Zia’s experience of television in respect to race:

It was so rare to see a real Asian American on television when I was a kid that we had a family ritual when one was spotted. It constituted what I now call an “Asian sighting.” A hoot went out: “Hey, come see this, look now!” . . . Asian sightings are more common now, but they are still infrequent enough to create a thrill whenever real Asians appear on the screen, as martial artists, for example, or television reporters. (2000, 252–53)

Whereas McIntosh, as a result of race privilege, saw her race reflected on television “frequently enough so that [she] felt, with regard to [her] race . . . like one of the real people,” Zia’s television viewing was an experience where her race was rarely represented (1988, 295). These “insider” reports from McIntosh and Zia represent the differential experience of white children and children of color with respect to the common media portrayal of human experience.

As an example of a well-intentioned white person’s nonconscious perpetuation of white privilege, I offer an anecdote shared by the clinical psychologist Harriet Lerner. Lerner self-identifies as a white, middle-class, Jewish woman and mother (1993, 215–16). She describes being confronted by an audience member who took issue with a talk she had just given:

. . . I gave a lecture on the West Coast that I called “Mothers and Daughters: The Crucial Connection.” When I took questions from the audience, an African-American woman raised her hand and pointed out that what I had said was not accurate to her experience, and certainly not for black women in general. I told her quite frankly that I had little experience with black mothers and daughters. She said, “Well, if you’re talking about white mothers and daughters, why don’t you say so?” (215, my emphasis)

The title of Lerner’s talk—“Mothers and Daughters . . .”—involved falsely universalizing her experience as a white mother. She had spoken as if her experience as a mother were true of all mothers, regardless of their race. The experience of the African American audience member was not represented in Lerner’s talk.33
Interestingly enough, Lerner also shares how she once asked a famous runner for an autograph for her son. She was dismayed when the runner wrote: “To Ben, Run for Jesus” (Lerner 1993, 215). Recall that Lerner is Jewish. While the runner was possibly trying to use the autograph to explicitly preach his beliefs, it is also likely enough that he was falsely universalizing his experience as a Christian, for whom “Run for Jesus” is unproblematically inspirational. A former student of mine, who is Jewish, has told me how her “white” skin earns her privileges like those listed by Peggy McIntosh (McIntosh 1988). Yet she has had many experiences with anti-Semitic secondness in the United States when she has revealed that she is Jewish. This includes classmates ridiculing her at school and friends not being allowed to come and play at her house. A striking example of enforced false universalization in this context occurred when she suggested using snowflakes instead of Christmas trees for a holiday party being planned by the varsity dance team at the public school she attended. Her input was rejected.

The complexity of these examples underscores the value of Peirce’s fallibilist, communal outlook. Each of us can be on the receiving end of false universalization, where our experiences are rendered invisible by assumptions that everyone is, say, white or Christian or middle class, and so on. At the same time, each of us may perpetuate false universalization. An infinitely inclusive, communal ideal requires embracing input from all community members. This promotes the identification of blind spots rooted in false universalization a person may not realize she is promoting.

This lengthy discussion of child development and falsely universalized privilege has a direct bearing on Peirce’s scientific method. This method cannot be fully separated, in the realm of concrete application, from either the hegemonic belief enforcement of the authority method or the accidental factors of belief-shaping classed under the a priori method. The internalization promoted by authority and other factors can result in nonconscious or instinctive belief-habits of race, sex, and other forms of privilege that undermine the inclusiveness of an actual community of inquiry. These habits can become part of the
background beliefs that influence scientific inquiry, a connection that Peirce does not sufficiently address in this context. Moreover, since false universalization promotes the dismissal of supposedly “non-neutral” perspectives as crazy, overreacting, irrelevant, etc., nonconscious privilege in an actual community of inquiry can be self-perpetuating.

Part 4: Pragmatic Maxim, Imagination, and Power

My treatment of Peirce’s pragmatic maxim further elucidates the application problem outlined above, foregrounding the contrasting characters of the scientific and authoritative methods of fixing belief, as well as the troubling overlap between them (which also includes the accidental belief-fixing factors of the a priori method). Peirce introduces the pragmatic maxim in “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” to help us “know what we think, to be masters of our own meaning” (W 3:260). By locating the meaning of our ideas in practice over the long run, the pragmatic maxim can be a provocative tool for revealing strands of meaning of which a person or community may not be aware. Applying this maxim to concrete examples in human communities reveals how exclusionary background beliefs can inform practice such that a professed meaning is undermined or even rendered contradictory.

Peirce’s pragmatic maxim weds thought to habitual action by asserting that an object’s meaning lies in its conceivable patterns of effects: “[W]hat a thing means is simply what habits it involves” (W 3:265). In “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” we find the oft-quoted version of the maxim: “Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object” (W 3:266). In his later writings, Peirce returns again and again to this articulation, to clarify that he is not reducing thought to the immediacy of one set of consequences. Rather, his focus is on habits, both human and nonhuman, that order the world. Carl Hausman gives a helpful explanation of Peirce’s example,
“To say that a body is heavy means simply that, in the absence of opposing force, it will fall” (W 3:267). Hausman notes that the heaviness of the body refers to consequences that “are to be expected at any time in the future. Thus, a central condition for intelligibility is the continuance of patterns of consequences into an indefinite, perhaps infinite, future” (Hausman 1999, 196). So the pragmatic maxim finds meaning in the regularities of the behaviors that stem from the belief, concept, or aim in question. Thus meaning extends into the future (EP 2:339–41).

On the plane of human conduct, the pragmatic maxim applies to self-controlled, aim-driven behavior that manifests in habits that are subject to further self-control.36 In this context, the “object” of thought is an aim. To assess the meaning of a human aim, we conceive or imagine all the possible consequences to which it leads in the long run. Peirce says, “Now, the identity of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be—no matter if contrary to all previous experience” (W 3:265; EP 1:131, 378 n. 7).37 Christopher Hookway, giving a problematically exaggerated interpretation of the pragmatic maxim, says, “Peirce claims that, if we apply the pragmatic principle, we become completely aware of the relevant features of the meanings of our terms” (2000, 143, my emphasis). I disagree with this reading, because its confident wording implies we can “completely” know ahead of time how our aims will grow. We cannot. Moreover, the initial imaginative enterprise cannot be exhaustive; it can only reveal features that are relevant to us at the time we are imagining. We might not catch everything. Finally, since our habits grow as our aim is implemented, the meaning of our aims is never complete.

Peirce notes the open-endedness of meaning when he discusses committing oneself to the meaning of a word:

[B]esides the consequences to which the person who accepts a word knowingly commits himself, there is a vast ocean of unforeseen consequences which the acceptance of the word is destined to bring about, not merely consequences of knowing but
perhaps revolutions of society. One cannot tell what power there may be in a word or a phrase to change the face of the world. . . . (EP 2:256)

Peirce is highlighting the fact that meaning grows, and it can grow unpredictably. His point that words and phrases can have the power to “change the face of the world” brings to mind a phrase such as “liberty and justice for all,” whose meaning continues to grow and to change the social fabric of the United States (EP 2:256).

The method of science embraces the pragmatic maxim, and the method of authority rejects it. The former takes inclusion as its ideal, embracing the ongoing growth in meaning that this implies. The latter takes exclusion as an ideal, in an effort to forestall growth. Let us examine social aims in the context of each of these methods and then within the overlapping that occurs between them because of background beliefs.

In a community that practices the scientific method, efforts to imagine the habits to which social aims lead involve, to the extent possible, the perspectives of all the members in the community. Community members understand that, to the extent that any perspectives are excluded, the meaning of the social aim is unduly constrained. Thus feedback is solicited from as many of its members as possible. It is fallibilistic in its outlook, realizing that there are always more perspectives to be included and that the implementation of an aim can result in unforeseen, unwanted consequences. For example, a good friend of mine who lived in Los Angeles during the first Gulf War, around 1989–90, lived in a small community where many were overseas fighting. The community implemented an aim to support the troops by placing yellow ribbons on trees throughout the community. An unforeseen consequence of these efforts was a marked increase of crimes, such as burglary and rape, targeted against women whose family members were away fighting. Some criminals were taking the yellow ribbons in trees of residential homes as a sign that the occupant(s) would be easier crime targets. When these harmful consequences came to light, the community took the feedback about its
aim seriously. It held the aim in place, on the one hand, by maintaining the ribbon theme in public spaces. It also, however, responded to the unintended consequences with public announcements warning those vulnerable to attack, as well as through the action of various women’s groups and college students who helped spread the warnings door-to-door in the neighborhoods themselves. This communal response reflects the fallibilist and self-corrective spirit of the scientific method, where communal feedback is part of the process by which an aim grows and is modified if necessary. It also shows that any societal aim is really an experiment whose results are never fully collected. Just as laboratory experiments can overturn a hypothesis, large-scale social “experimentation” can challenge aims by presenting unanticipated data, like the unexpected crime in the current example. Ultimately, then, there is a healthful dialectic between feedback and the self-controlled growth of a community. The road of inquiry is kept open.

In a hegemonic community, where those in authority dictate the fixation of belief, there is a finite community of inquiry consisting only of those in power. In this sphere the pragmatic maxim is rejected. Aims affecting the community are not inclusive, and their meaning is dictated and reinforced by a group dedicated to blocking the road of inquiry. The only consequences of merit are those that promote the status quo. Any problematic feedback is suppressed—by suppressing the individuals who would bring the feedback to light. Inclusiveness toward a diversity of perspectives is shunned, because this would undermine the hegemony of those in power. For example, in the true story portrayed in the movie Erin Brockovich, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is an authoritative community that has an aim to maximize profit (Erin Brockovich 2000). It manipulates the beliefs of those living near one of its factories who are suffering serious health problems due to the hexavalent chromium that PG&E has introduced into the community’s well water in the process of running its plant. These residents are led to believe, by PG&E, that their problems have nothing to do with the hexavalent chromium. Beyond this,
PG&E dismisses the feedback of the community residents, so its aim will not be challenged. It is likely that the health problems of the community residents were unintended consequences of PG&E’s aim of maximizing profit. Even when it was made aware of these consequences, however, PG&E refused to take responsibility and alter its course, until a major lawsuit forced it to.

I argued above that we cannot simply separate communities where science is practiced from those where authority rules. This is because the former are situated in socio-political contexts where hegemonic norms may hold sway, even among conscientious practitioners of inclusiveness. The background beliefs that inevitably inform scientific inquiry could include, and historically have included, exclusionary bias. This dynamic has been at play in the United States since its inception. This brings us back to the example, discussed earlier, of “All men are created equal.” One the one hand, the United States has always prided itself, theoretically, on the inclusiveness of its democratic, communal inquiry into practical affairs, which is compatible with Peirce’s scientific method. On the other hand, authority has reigned. Racism, sexism, and other exclusionary social practices underscored the fact that “All men are created equal” was really a narrowly targeted concept, or aim, at the beginning. It was an aim of the founding fathers, who had the power to direct its meaning to include contradictory habits that supported their own equality, while oppressing other groups. For all its worthiness as an ideal, the practice of “All men are created equal” as an aim and a belief-habit reflected its false universalization. Inquiry was open only to those within the elite class of white, propertied men. Regarding the pragmatic maxim’s focus on the habits to which a concept leads, only habitual consequences to these men were considered legitimate. Individuals and groups representing non-hegemonic perspectives were excluded from imagining the meaning of “All men are created equal.” And they have been, and continue to be, excluded when voicing negative feedback regarding this aim—including its bold contradictions.
Throughout the birth and growth of United States as a new country, non-hegemonic groups have been uniquely suited to point out contradictions between ideals and behavior, contradictions that undermine the scientific spirit of the pragmatic maxim. For example, those African Americans who were brutally enslaved against their will could voice the contradiction between “equality” and enslavement and, after the emancipation, legalized segregation. Native Americans could voice the contradiction between “equality” and genocide, broken treaties, and land theft. From the hegemonic point of view, however, since “all” were created equal, then “all” could own slaves and stolen land. Owning slaves and stolen land were outrageously contradictory habitual consequences stemming from “All men are created equal.” Because the community of inquiry was composed only of affluent, white men, however, these contradictions did not officially emerge as red flags sufficient to stop these barbaric practices. Instead they became part of the contradictory foundation upon which the United States was built. And alongside the “equality” of all has been the “subpersonhood” of people of color and women, a hegemonically imposed “inferiority” that has been used to justify their exclusion from the community of inquiry.

Contemporary U.S. culture lives in this legacy, including the persistence of its conceptual false universalization of privilege. On the one hand, mainstream U.S. society embraces many ideals of inclusivity, including repudiations of both racism and sexism. On the other hand, deep-seated discriminatory habits undermine the efficient implementation of these ideals, because of persistent exclusionary bias. In terms of the methods of fixing beliefs, the Peircean scientific inclusive ideal is undermined by background beliefs that consciously and/or nonconsciously perpetuate exclusion. These background beliefs allow the authority and a priori methods to enter the scientific method through the back door. My primary focus is on the shared, nonconscious exclusionary bias that occurs within communities of inquiry, where well-meaning men, white people, and/or others in hegemonic groups can nonconsciously perpetuate prejudices that, on a conscious level, they repudiate. Because of this application problem,
the efforts of well-meaning scientists, formal or informal, can be taint-
ed by exclusionary background beliefs.

For example, Marilyn Frye tells the story of her efforts, along with
those of other white feminists, to address the problem of racism
within feminism. Their plan was to first meet together as a group,
namely, as a “white women’s consciousness-raising group to identify
and explore the racism in our lives with a view to dismantling the
barriers that blocked our understanding and action in this matter”
(Frye 1983, 111). Despite their well-intentioned efforts, which were in-
formed by the “encouragement of various women of color—both
friends and women speaking in the feminist press,” Frye and her
group were met with criticism (111). Frye notes that “one Black
woman criticized us very angrily for ever thinking we could achieve
our goals by working only with white women” (111). Frye explained
that this consciousness-raising group was only an initial stage and
that she and her white colleagues intended to “organize a group open
to all women shortly after our series of white women’s meetings came
to a close” (111–12). Her critic was not satisfied with this explanation,
as it still reflected the exclusion of women of color from the key deci-
sions being made. Frye confesses her bewilderment at this woman’s
anger, because it seemed crazy to her. Frye caught herself, however.
She recognized that attributing craziness to a non-hegemonic per-
spective can be symptomatic of privileged, exclusionary bias (112).
Frye was thus able to modify her understanding of the woman of col-
or’s perspective. It seems that the key for Frye was that she herself, as
a women in relation to men, had been on the receiving end of “you’re
crazy” (112). This is significant, as it points to empathy and the power
of imagination to help a person bridge from her limited perspective
to the perspective of others.

In Peircean terms, Frye could imagine that, even though it seemed
crazy to her, the woman of color’s testimony was a legitimate source
of doubt of the belief, “I was not behaving in a racist fashion.” Frye’s
efforts here are characteristic of Critical Common-sensist inquiry,
whereby imaginative reflection is used as a tool for creating doubt
about our background beliefs. In 1893, Peirce appended a note to his
“Fixation of Belief” essay, stating that we can bring about a state of doubt through the use of our imaginations. This kind of doubt occurs in the context of self-controlled habit change (CP 5:373 n. 1). In this example, Frye was engaged in self-controlled habit change, as she was consciously trying to correct racism in her behavior. To this end imaginative reflection helped her embrace the testimony that, despite her well-intentioned efforts, her behavior was still racist.

The scientific method’s application problem involves cases where, in contrast to Frye, people in privileged positions do not “catch themselves” and instead dismiss non-hegemonic perspectives as crazy, irrelevant, overreactive, and so on, because these perspectives simply do not reflect “everyday human experience.” Yet the concepts by which the privileged conceive this experience are often falsely universalized. The background beliefs from which scientists reason can include exclusionary beliefs/concepts that make it hard to respect input from non-hegemonic perspectives. And since these background beliefs often function without conscious awareness, well-intentioned people can unknowingly perpetuate exclusion, discrimination, and ignorance.

The Logic of Science essays describe a stronger synechistic individual than that presented in the Cognition Series, the latter being at odds with her community but also in danger of being convinced of her “madness” (W 2:202). The synechistic individual of the present series is in conflict with her hegemonic community and also stands up to this community, in the name of human sociality. The question arises, then, as to how the individual and her community are to be ideally related for Peirce, since implicit in this series is the irreducibility of both. Also implicit is the application problem of the scientific method, since the scientific, authority, and a priori methods are intertwined via background beliefs. How can communal growth occur that holds in place both the perspectives of individual community members and the holistic vision of the community itself? Peirce’s ultimate answer involves his mature doctrine of Critical Common-sensism. His answer also includes a model of agapic evolution, to which
we now turn, whereby individual spontaneity provides a creative impetus for a community to grow beyond its present habit systems. In stark contrast to the authoritative model’s rejection of an individual’s diversity from communal norms, the agapic model embraces this diversity. The inclusiveness of the spirit of science is, thus, ideally fueled by agapic love.