CHAPTER 5

ACTIVE SOCIAL SYMBOLIC SELVES: THE PRAGMATIC TRADITION WITHIN AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENCE

American pragmatism developed contemporaneously with the Vygotskian activity theory tradition and the phenomenological sociology tradition, and has many affinities with both. Historically, there were some connections among them: all had common roots in Hegel; Vygotsky read and cited James and Dewey; Simmel and Husserl read and cited James; Thomas and Park did dissertation work under Simmel in Germany; Schutz interpreted James's theories (see Joas, 1993). Nonetheless, each pursued its own path. Each developed different dimensions of a picture applicable to understanding what it means to write; yet, the pictures they draw can be usefully brought together to create a multidimensional portrait. The connections will also reveal why researchers and theorists from these several traditions have been increasingly finding each other's work of interest.

The Soviet Vygotskian interests are in psychology, creating an understanding of socializing individual development and the development of meaning and consciousness in relation to the publicly available activities and mediating symbols and tools. The European phenomenological tradition highlights the formation of socially evolving typified meaning systems that help individuals make sense of situations and frame individual actions which others can make sense of through the socially available repertoires of types. This phenomenological perspective forms an alliance with Wittgenstein's (1958) ideas of meaning representations being parts of active forms of life.

American pragmatism, rather than looking inward to the mind, locates meaning and communication in creative problem solving by people responding to the changing contingencies of their times. Starting as a philosophic response to a crisis in traditional meaning systems, pragmatism directs our attention to detailed historical and social knowledge of the conditions and perceptions of groups that give meaning to their orientations and choices. Philosophic pragmatism has influenced the formation of a number of the social sciences in North America, leading most directly to social psychology and symbolic interactionism in sociology. The approach methodologically

fostered ethnographic sociology that attempts to recover the meanings and intentions among people acting within particular social systems. Pragmatism also influenced the formation of anthropology and linguistic anthropology, was instrumental in progressive social activism, and was in dialogue with interpersonal psychiatry. Each of these disciplines has important things to say about the act of writing, the social forums and activities within which we write, how we make sense of our own and other people's writing, and the relation of writing, emotions, and identity.

PHILOSOPHIC PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism has its roots in philosophic crises of the nineteenth centuries and many scholars still see pragmatism primarily as a philosophic movement, to be discussed and evaluated within philosophic discourse. The founders of pragmatism, Charles Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead all at some point found their employment in philosophy departments. For all of them, the social upheavals of the latter half of the nineteenth century in the United States—the Civil War, industrialization, and urbanization— upset the sense of continuities and verities which underlay North American values, belief, and security in the world (Menand, 2001). While pragmatism went into an eclipse within philosophy departments in the middle of the twentieth century, it reemerged in the closing decades of that century as a way out of epistemological battles fought on the shifting, alleged border between modernism and postmodernism (see, for example, Rorty, 1979).

Insofar as pragmatism is represented as a way out of philosophic and theologic dilemmas—issues that certainly motivated Peirce, James and Mead throughout their careers, and Dewey for the earlier part of his career—it is caught up in complicated arguments and semantic wrangles within those highly conceptual domains. The irony in being caught up in theologic and philosophic terms is that pragmatism suggests there is no ultimate epistemic authority to be found in theologic or philosophic abstractions. Rather pragmatists see these endeavors, as they see all human endeavors, as emergent historical creations to serve human needs. A further irony to being shackled to existing philosophic and theologic terms is that pragmatism values exploration and sees the human practical and intellectual worlds as experiments. It therefore reflexively encourages reaching towards ideas through only partly formulated and unstable terms. Dewey, James, Peirce, and Mead have all been accused of slippery terms. Moreover, each is highly exploratory in different directions, taking the starting point of a loosely related set of orientations and applying

them to a range of projects and problems. Each of these versions of pragmatism has its particular set of concerns and attempts its own form of argument. None has a strong motive to create a stable, coherent set of rock-solid claims, in part because the pragmatist approach suggests the futility of coming to knowledge that rises beyond human time and situations. Pragmatism as a philosophy is a loose and baggy universe.

PRAGMATISM AS A PERSPECTIVE FOR SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION

My interest here is not, however, in the philosophic arguments that go under the banners of pragmatism and anti-pragmatism, whether at the beginning or the end of the twentieth century. Rather I am interested in pragmatism as the source of a number of fairly straightforward premises that underlay many of the developments in American social science, which are directly applicable to literate rhetoric. Although rhetoricians, in their millennia-old skirmishes with philosophy, are ever tempted to see philosophic issues as their own (see for example Gross & Keith, 1996; and Harris, 2005), philosophy can be applied to rhetoric in a more practical way through the visions various philosophies propose about who we are, how we communicate, and what the consequences of communication are. In particular, pragmatism orients our attention to concrete human actions and communication as action, formative for human thought, interaction, and social organization.

The founders of pragmatism and their early associates were engaged with forms of practice and research in the social sciences and social services: Charles Peirce with language studies; William James with psychology; John Dewey with politics, psychology, and education; Jane Addams in the formation of settlement houses and community development; George Herbert Mead with sociology; and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., with the law. Dewey and Mead particularly were influential in fostering the climate within the new University of Chicago (opening in 1892) that was to be so generative for all the American social sciences, even though the strongly identifiable "Chicago schools" in only some of disciplines (notably sociology and anthropology) showed direct affinity to pragmatist understandings. Dewey's prominence in education and as a public figure also brought his ideas into a general climate of understanding under the banner of progressivism that far exceeded any clearly defined lines of direct influence, and indeed a number of Chicago departments became known for their community involvement, from the time of Jane Adam's Hull House onwards.

THE DIFFERENCES AND COMMONALITIES OF EARLY PRAGMATISMS

Although historians of philosophy debate who was the proper founder of pragmatism, pragmatism was already a climate before it was formally articulated by Peirce, James, Dewey, or anyone else. The facts that Dewey was able to gather so rapidly so many like-minded people when in 1894 he became chair of the department of philosophy at Chicago and that he and Mead were able to establish so many interdisciplinary connections suggest just how fully their orientation was compatible with many then in the U.S. academic world. Pragmatism has been reasonably said to grow out of interrelated developments in nineteenth century US: the forging of a new society, great opportunities for action and social change, belief in individuality and optimism, technological transformation, economic growth which was bringing about new social roles and forms of organization, the many religious and communal experiments, the great depredations that came along with the assertion of the new economic power, the newly made social wrongs that needed so visibly to be righted, the many immigrant cultures mixing in new cities, and the practical orientation of this society on the make. When new more democratic universities arose in the post-Civil War American Midwest (such as the land grants under the Morrill Act and the independent University of Chicago) they confronted the domination of European thought with a research culture tied to practical needs of a rapidly growing society instead of reproduction of social elites. The intellectual conditions, needs, and opportunities of the time made a pragmatic orientation easily imaginable and attractive.

The various philosophic issues, research, and practical projects, and spiritual and ethical concerns that gathered in and around pragmatism drew on a cluster of related premises:

- that human knowledge and belief depended on the humans who were making them;
- that human belief, knowledge, and perception were always interpretive;
- that the interpretations come not only from the social and historical position of the person, but from their engagement in projects to satisfy their needs, desires, and value-laden senses of fulfillment;
- that these projects were shaped by perceived problems and sought solutions;
- that these projects and the perceived problems were always necessarily social and material;
- that ideas, discussions, and reasoning developed within situations appearing as problematic;

- that values, beliefs, knowledge, perception, interpretations, and identities arose out of material and social projects, and were consequential for their solution;
- that there were ethical choices to be made about projects, based on the kinds of consequences that we might project flowing from those choices.

Thus, pragmatism saw history and knowledge as emergent and never fully absolute or predictable, but rather exploratory and creative. These views have significant consequences for how we understand how people communicate, how they use language, what language in fact is, and how language influences how individuals and groups develop. Writing, in particular, provides new potentials for creative communicative, enduring and transportable linguistic artifacts, and restructuring of group relations.

PEIRCE'S SEMIOTICS WITH INTERPRETATION

Charles Peirce, among the founding generation of pragmatists, looked most directly at language and semiotics, making some first steps towards articulating the implications of a pragmatist view for language and language use. Most importantly, he recognized a major role for the interpreting speaker and interpreting hearer in the meanings conveyed by communication, rather than assuming meaning was immanent in an abstracted language system (Peirce, 1958). It is people who attach meanings to experienced worlds and issues of concern. This recognition of the importance of interpretive processes might lead to an investigation of how differences in individuals and groups of individuals might influence the bases and procedures of interpretation within specific situations (potentially a psychological, sociological, anthropological and even historical inquiry). Peirce, however, chose to seek clarity through a semiotic taxonomy of the relations among signs, objects, and interpretants (that is, interpreted meanings), a taxonomy that he kept adjusting throughout his life. His account does suggest some of the instability of semiosis, as meanings are dynamically produced through interpretation, which is potentially infinite; nonetheless, he seems to believe that this instability can be contained by establishing an abstract philosophic vocabulary about the relations of signs, objects, and interpretants. His taxonomy does not provide any specific leads about how we might inquire into the psychological or sociological variables of meaning making and interpretation. In not pursuing the motives of the individual nor the development of the individual in satisfying needs within the social and material worlds, Peirce leaves us with a mystery of the individuality of interpretation creating indeterminacy of meaning, with no way to get back to the sources, needs, and mechanisms for meaning making. Yet it is these underlying

forces that drive all utterances including writing and lead to the proliferation of new texts, new genres, and new fields of literate interaction. Pierce, therefore, does not yet provide us with an understanding of how and why people use language to produce the creative inventions that are at the heart of the pragmatic worldview.

JAMES'S PSYCHOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

William James in his psychology does, however, provide first steps towards a way of understanding individual sense-making, choice-making, and language use. His psychology is founded upon experience rather than separate sensations, systematic thought, or a rationalized view of language as a stable meaning system. He presents people as embodied creatures acting in the world, with horizons of interests, knowledge, and attention. People he sees as responding in the moment to situations driven by desires and immersed in feelings (1890, 1, chapter 10). Thus people's ideas and perceptions are typically vague in a philosophic sense, only sharpened and clarified insofar as it is necessary to act in the world (1890, 1, p. 218). The implication is that use of language is only precise as it needs to be—perhaps to elicit cooperation, or to sort out action paths, or whatever other purpose is at hand. Language does not have any meaning apart from people's uses and uses are only precise as the situation and interaction with others require it to be. Whatever degree of communal precision and clarity of language that does exist results from a communal history of developing linguistic practices. Individuals then each have a developmental history of linguistic practices in interaction with members of the community, within the accomplishment of those tasks available and motivating within that world of practice (James, 1912). Those specialized domains seeking clarity of sensation and reasoning, such as science or philosophy are equally driven by our sense of the problematic and are limited by our stance of perception and action in the world, even as they rely on written language to reflect on, sort through, and evaluate claims.

DEWEY'S THINKING ABOUT PROBLEMS

Dewey pursues this situated action perspective by arguing our perception and reason are based on our sense of being in the world and the projects we pursue as creatures in the world. We do not have a pure, disengaged consciousness; our stream of consciousness is not random. Our powers of consciousness only arise as a means to reflect on and resolve situations where we perceive a problem

(1896, 1910). Communal thought and action he sees equally as arising from perceived problem situations that are seen as needing response. While James finds in vagueness a space for intimations of religious experience outside the realm of science, Dewey finds in vagueness a creative force for the constant invention and change of human experience and increasing clarity, as we address perceived problems and try to look more intently and coherently at those things we sense as problematic (1910). Thus Dewey and his followers tend to be politically and socially progressive, insistent that individuals and societies address problems and seek improvement of the conditions and practices of life. They believe that in resolving problems, individuals and societies will grow toward more satisfying modes of existence.

Dewey himself was so forward looking, ready to seek social change to resolve felt difficulties in society, that he spent less attention than he might have on the particular forms and relations embodied in existing conditions, the history of how they got to be that way, or the mechanisms by which social, economic practices occurred. In retrospect he seemed to have a political naïveté about the degree and speed at which change could be brought about and suffered a chastening and withdrawal from activists (Feffer, 1993). Similarly in his own work there is little detailed analysis of the social mechanisms of the current world or the historical processes by which current problems and tensions emerged, although he often called for such analysis and emphasized the importance of studying history in the schools. He also talked about the importance of knowledge, existing disciplines, and human accomplishment as basis for building on and transforming. As the progressive education movement developed he was distressed to find that there was not always adequate attention to the available resources already developed by humans, and he often had to explain in later years his commitment to discipline and knowledge. However, his own discourse provided few examples of how that integration of knowledge of the past and new action might occur, and his own advocacy for change rarely included such close attention to the complex of things that have already come into being. Nevertheless, he saw that the motive for action, perceived problems calling for solution, and the felt discomforts of life all came from the social understandings, practices, and histories that informed people's motives and views of situations.

DEWEY'S LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVE EXPERIENCE

Because Dewey saw education as forming the individual with the skills, knowledge, and disposition to participate in activities and problems to be solved

in society, he saw education as the most important site for social intervention and contribution to society. Dewey saw learning as motivated growth arising out of the situation and experiences of the child, which educational projects needed to speak to if they hoped to enlist the most active engagement of the child (1897, 1947). Thus he argued for a substantive connection between the activities of the school and the life in the community from which the students came. He and his followers advocated project-based education addressing the perceived needs and opportunities of the time and place (Kilpatrick, 1951; McMurry, 1920; Tanner, 1997). For Dewey, in education as in life, the key to activity, growth, and accomplishment is motivation, for knowledge and growth and projects have to speak to the possibilities, opportunities, and needs in front of one.

If motivated agency is located in the possibilities one can identify in the moment, and successful agency requires a responsiveness of the material and social situation, then understanding one's situation is an appropriate object for educational inquiry so as to be able to evaluate potential action. Further, if learning depends on motivation and perceived problem—that is, felt need for action—then learning occurs within the tensions of perceived problems. The learner and the researcher are driven by the urge to intervene and transform—no matter how much the inquirer distances him or herself from the object studied through canons of objective study, under a belief, often well-founded, that to act too soon is to act with inadequate understanding. Yet, we should not mistake the distancing of responsible inquiry for total disengagement from future benefit. Rather Dewey would have us think of a deferred engagement (1896). With a total disengagement or perfect objectivity, objects lose all interest, value, and desire.

Dewey's views on problem-solving, agency, motivation, and learning are directly applicable to writing, and in fact have been repeatedly applied over the last century in various inquiry, project, and discipline-based writing pedagogies and the thematic orientation towards authentic writing tasks which engage students' interests and concerns (Russell 1991, 1993). Once the connection of personal engagement in meaningful problems is made, the task becomes an expression and development of the self, even if no overtly personal material is discussed and even if the writing task seems objective, technical, or professionally cool. After all, no one is as passionate about statistics as a statistician. Outside formal educational contexts, Dewey's construction of learning through problem-solving means that writers continue to grow as writers through the various challenging tasks they take on throughout their lives in the domains of importance to their lives.

Dewey's educational philosophy met two kinds of criticism: on the conservative side from those who felt that education should pass on the

tools of knowledge already developed and on the progressive side who saw him providing a rationale for accommodating people to the existing way of life, preparing them for factory and office work of industrial corporatism. In response to the conservative critique, Dewey regularly insisted on a middle way, respecting and passing on the historical legacy, but always harnessing that to the needs and motives and situations of people, for that was the very mechanism by which people were motivated and grew. In response to the progressive critique he argued that effective and meaningful change must be situated in the reality of situations and the problems situations present. Accordingly, he believed change was evolutionary within the continuing forces of life and that there is no absolute of value or of practice that could warrant a radical rupture from current ways of life.

Dewey's principles stood behind his collaboration with Ella Flagg Young in creating the University of Chicago Laboratory School (Tanner, 1997). Young was to continue to actively shape education on these principles as principal of the Chicago Normal School and later Superintendent of the Chicago public schools, and eventually president of the National Educational Association.

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING WITH OTHERS: MEAD

George Herbert Mead, a colleague of Dewey, both at Michigan and then at Chicago, also saw how people addressed the problems of life as core to understanding and improving society. Mead aimed to understand how individuals came to see themselves within the social relations and social understandings of their times, particularly through learning of gesture and language. In coming to learn to use meaningful symbols, the individual has to be able to anticipate how others might perceive the symbols and perceive him or herself in using the symbols. Skilled communication requires that a person needs to learn to anticipate how others might take meaning from any word or gesture, and how that meaning might prompt response and consequent actions. Further, as a person observes the response of others to comments and behaviors the person gets further data to help project how one is seen by others and thus understand the social self one is projecting. That is, in learning to use meaningful symbols, the person learns to take the perspective of the other, both particularized others and a generalized other. This perception of how others see one forms a sense of the self. Mead sees taking the part of others as part of learning to be in society and as a major theme in children's play. Thus, in learning to live within society we learn to see ourselves and judge our own behavior as others might—a process that might be considered internalization

of social norms. Yet, since we are constantly solving novel problems in novel circumstances and our motives extend far beyond just fitting in, or being secure our learning to take the part of the other hardly limits our creativity and originality. It simply maximizes the possibility that others will understand and cooperate with us without misunderstandings that lead to violence or other forms of social control (Mead, 1913, 1934, 1936).

This formation of the self and articulation of identity within the social field applies precisely to writing as we come to understand the force and meaning of our writing in the presence it creates for others. The process of seeing what sense others make of our writing helps us understand what our texts do and do not accomplish and what social presence we are creating for ourselves through our texts. The response of others also gives us information about how we can revise or reshape our statements, or create new statements, so as to bring that presence more in line with our desires. Simultaneously we become committed to the intelligible presence we have taken on in our writing. We can examine our texts apart from ourselves and learn to take the part of the other in evaluating and improving our text as we become more experienced writers, with less naïve attachment to our first sketchy formulations. Yet we also come to understand that the texts represent us to others and therefore they become an extended part of ourselves. Especially as we write to people at a greater temporal, geographic, and social distance from ourselves, to create an intelligible presence we must use the common language recognizable to others, but through that language we create the individuality of our statement.

Just as Dewey worked with the Laboratory School, Mead worked with Jane Addams in Hull House. Addams (1997) viewed the settlement house as a way of being of an entire community to change people's view of themselves and capabilities to act in society. It was aimed at social change based on people being empowered to identify and act on problems in their lives through jobs, education, and access to social services and other forms of support. The settlement house in many ways was the concrete realization of Mead's thinking about the formation of ourselves as actors in society.

MEAD IN RELATION TO OTHER TRADITIONS

In some senses Mead was following on the heels of the Scottish moralists (such as Francis Hutcheson, Dugald Stewart, and Adam Smith. Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1986), in particular, described the conscience which guided moral behavior as a perception of how others might perceive and evaluate one's actions if others were to have the full knowledge of the situation as oneself (or

see the situation as one perceived it). Mead apparently was familiar with Smith's writings and had written an undergraduate paper on Smith while at Harvard (T. V. Smith, 1931; see also Blasi, 1998). Mead, like Smith, recognizes that no two people have the same set of experiences or knowledge so they never quite see the circumstances exactly like another—thus there is always an individuality of judgment, evaluation, decision, and action. Mead, like Smith, equally recognizes that one's judgment, perception, thoughts, and capacities are very much influenced by things like education, occupation, class, cultural background, family organization, prosperity, and historical moment—and these influences might conflict with an unencumbered understanding of one's interests.

In the years between Smith and Mead, Hegel and Marx also noted the influence of social ideology on beliefs and actions. Marx sees the socializing impulses to be so strong as to potentially blind oneself to one's needs, desires, and impulses in favor of fitting in with the reigning thoughts and formulations, or ideology (Marx & Engels, 1971). Smith similarly recognized a tendency of people to admire hierarchy and the perceived power of the dominant class, which can obscure perception of one's best interests; nonetheless, Smith suggests that the individual is in the best position to know what he or she needs and wants and what the local opportunities are, if they are freed to make unencumbered judgments in one's own interest. Mead characterizes this tension between social belief and individual perception of interest in a different way. Mead sets the socialized *me* in tension with an impulsive *I* (like Freud's id and ego) which regularly surprises oneself by its spontaneous assertions of desires and perceptions, with a result that individuality and agency cannot be fully suppressed. This agency sometimes acts within the bounds of the socialized self, but always is ready to push beyond the bounds of what one might anticipate others seeing as acceptable or intelligible (1934).

Thus both Smith and Mead see great variety within the socialized selves of any time and place, arising from the variety of positions, experiences, and spontaneous expressions of interests and desires. Consequently both saw institutional and other organized aggregations of activity as complex, embodying the multiple motives and activities of participants. Mead, along with other pragmatists, was particularly interested in the creativity of problem solving, as each person brought new resources, perceptions, and problem definitions to situations to remake the social order. Smith, on the whole, was more cautious, even pessimistic about change, in light of what he saw as peoples' desire to stick to older ways and to respect the elites who had an interest in maintaining arrangements that granted them privilege.

Mead's recognition of the role of language processes in the formation of the socialized self and the mind, however, clearly sets him apart from the

Scottish Moralists or Marx, and puts him nearer to Vygotsky. Mead sees the mind formed in learning to make meaning with and for others, as one sees the effects of communications on others. For both Mead and Vygotsky, though in slightly different ways, self and mind are products of language use in society. For Vygotsky and Mead, speech is a form of act, not a disembodied meaning or truth, but always formulated in action, as part of action, and therefore acting in the world. Thus the meanings we develop in interaction and the thoughts we ponder are saturated with the shades of prior action and the anticipations of new actions. The formulas of unconsidered, unproblematic, habitual utterances are part of those activities we think we know so well that we don't have to think about or contemplate—all we need to do is produce the prefabricated words that carry out the old solution (though we may well find ourselves wrong, or we might do better if we stopped to think afresh). Thoughtful speech—the words that make us think or that we feel we need to think about before we speak—is a creative action prompted by a perceived unresolved problem to which we are responding (Blasi, 1998, p. 167; Mead, 1934). Writing is paradigmatic of thoughtful speech as it readily affords planning, examination of alternatives, choice-making, and review and revision.

This problem-solving activity, however, does not necessarily put us in the realm of pure individualistic utilitarian instrumentalism as a number of the critics of pragmatism have asserted, for Mead's communicative mechanism of learning to take the part of the other draws us into social relations as part of our participating in the world. In learning to talk with each other we learn about common values and norms. We develop social consciousness and orient towards the maintenance of the group. We learn our own interpersonal needs and the ways other persons enter into our own needs. We learn of the importance and power of social bonds, and we learn to recognize those who think well or poorly of us—and adjust our behavior and relations depending on how we evaluate their opinions. We recognize whom we can talk to about what, with what kind of support and seriousness. Obtaining and maintaining the positive opinions of others, particularly those on whom our daily life depends and who are partners in our daily life and daily needs satisfactions, becomes itself a social motive—as elaborated by Harry Stack Sullivan, discussed later in this chapter. Similarly we learn to enter into the larger orders of publicly organized systems of meaning and community, such as investigated by Durkheim. While Mead does not pursue this line of reasoning, and Durkheim even sees pragmatism as threatening to obscure the social production of values by being too individual and instrumentalist, there is no necessary incompatibility between Durkheim's more macrosociological considerations and the ethnographic tradition, as

numerous ethnographic studies have since recognized, starting with Radcliffe-Brown (1922, 1931) and Mauss (1922) (see also Joas, 1993).

Further, typification processes, as discussed in the previous chapter, allow individuals to build senses of more or less generalized others who operate within recognizable systems of typifications (for discussions of Mead's relations with phenomenology see Natanson, 1956; Pfuetze, 1954; Rosenthal & Bourgeois, 1991). Micro-processes of self-recognition in interaction thus have the potential to scale up into larger social orders, particularly as the interactions are mediated by the more enduring and transportable means of writing (as will be examined in Chapter 6, see also Bazerman, 2006). Indeed, as Joas (1985) discusses, there is no necessary incompatibility between Meadian processes of self-formation and certain forms of structural functional sociology, which often are built upon mechanisms of orientation to the other, such as role theory and reference group theory, as to be discussed in Chapter 6. Indeed orientation to others is one of the areas that there is much cross citation and cross acceptance of findings between symbolic interactionists and structural functionalists. We may indeed see in such hybrid researchers as Erving Goffman, discussed in Chapter 7, the power of such conjunctions of micro and macro considerations around phenomenologically drawn individual problem solving.

MEAD, CHICAGO SOCIOLOGY, AND SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Mead's understanding of the formation of the social self is the direct antecedent of those branches of sociology that emphasize meanings people attribute to situations, themselves, others, and actions. Social psychology and symbolic interaction see themselves as direct heirs of the Meadian tradition (see Bulmer, 1986; Faris, 1979; Matthews, 1977; Tomasi, 1998; but Joas, 1985; T. V. Smith, 1931 and others argue that far too much has been made of Mead's influence). As we will see in the next chapter, other concepts of other aspects of American sociology are grounded on Mead's view of the socialized self-perceiving its own position through the eyes of others, or at least what it can glean of the eyes of others. Participants' definition of situations (which involves their definitions of selves and others within particular action contexts) has become a key element in most programs of empirical and theoretical sociology.

As both Blasi (1998) and Joas (1993) point out, Chicago sociology has had a widespread, diffuse but pervasive approach on interpretive, qualitative and

empirical sociologies that examine the individual's perceptions of self within social groupings and activities. The sociology department in the University of Chicago dominated American sociology in the field's formative years. Prior to the Second World War that department produced the majority of PhDs in the field and many of the most prominent. The American Journal of Sociology (founded at Chicago in 1895 and still there) was until 1921 the only major journal in sociology and remains one of the dominant journals of the field. Chicago sociologists were instrumental in founding the American Sociology Association in 1924, and of the first twenty-five presidents of that organization, fifteen either taught at Chicago or obtained their PhD's there. The relevance for this study is to suggest that many of the assumptions underlying the profession of sociology have their roots in a pragmatic orientation, even though only some schools claim an explicit descent, and others seem to arise from polar theoretical positions.

LEGAL INSTITUTIONS AND LEGAL PRACTICE AS EXPERIMENT: HOLMES

To the usual quartet of founders of pragmatism, Menand (1997, 2001) adds a fifth: the jurist and legal theorist Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who is known as the founder of legal pragmatism. But his presence in this group is contested, not least by his own followers who rightfully draw many distinctions between legal pragmatism and philosophic pragmatism and further find long-developing roots of legal pragmatism within the legal system (see for example, the essays by Posner, Grey, and Luban in Dickstein, 1998). Indeed, although Holmes as a youth did sit at some meetings of the Metaphysical Club 1870-1872 in Cambridge with the young Peirce and James, and where presumably some proto-pragmatist ideas were discussed (Howe, 1957, p. 152), Holmes did not have kind things to say later about either Peirce or James (Pohlman 163-164). Yet there remain some striking homologies between legal pragmatism and philosophic pragmatism, as Menand (1997) argues. Holmes considers law a continuing and changing experiment that shapes all the conditions of our life, just as the philosophic pragmatists consider life and society ongoing experiments. Holmes sees law as a series of uncertain actions trying to anticipate judgments to be made in the future. Law offers no final truths or ultimate principles to Holmes, only anticipation of what might be taken as determinative principle by the magistrate, or future magistrates. Yet history and precedent have created models and patterns that future individuals are likely to adhere to,

particularly as they themselves are held accountable by others to the common body of precedent.

Situations and people, nonetheless, are always different; and actions speak to the perceptions of the moment. Further, the future brings unanticipated changes, with new meanings and precedents. For such reasons, to foster experiment, Holmes was a great advocate of the freedom of expression and the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He spoke of the importance of the marketplace of ideas and of limiting judicial interference in even apparently unwise actions so as to let experiments to run their course. The law only sets the conditions for social experiment, but does not judge it. Further he was willing to change precedent whose only continuing warrant was that it was precedent, as conditions change and make prior wise decisions irrelevant to changing ways of life. Yet these changes and new experiments are always accountable to the realistic conditions of the new way of life. Experiments have to pay their costs in the marketplaces of life, and judicial wisdom comes in seeing the conditions of life that warrant reevaluation of precedents. All these views are consistent with philosophic pragmatism and the social activism of the pragmatists, though Holmes' politics were more conservative than reformers like Dewey.

Holmes views on freedom of expression to address changing conditions of life and propose new directions for society speak directly to the importance of writing as a mode of reasoning about current conditions, developing new ideas, and arguing for new social arrangements. He provides a warrant for the writing within the public sphere, both in its more traditional forms of journalism, commentary, and advocacy publications and in the newly evolving forms of digital public discussion. From his perspective this work does not simply represent, rehearse, and persuade fixed interests and views, but rather provides the medium for social innovation, new relations, and novel solutions. As we are seeing with new technologies, this innovation goes beyond specific ideas and arguments to the very organization of public community, the kinds of bonds that may be formed among citizens, and the ways they may act individually and as groups to influence public discussion eventuating in policy. But Holmes also points out that public discourse and proposals have to face the judgment of the marketplace of ideas and survive only if they seem attractive and useful to others.

Holmes' views also bear on the more specialized communicative domain of lawyers. As a practical lawyer and jurist, he is concerned with the preparation of briefs and opinions, concrete utterances, concrete symbolic acts, filed on pieces of paper as the very material out of which the law is composed. His organic view of the law invites analysis of the preparation, presentation, and circulation of

concrete communicative acts in the formation of the law and its life in shaping and adjudicating life actions.

Holmes' views are significant for communication because of the kind of practical influence he has had on the development of one of the overridingly important institutions in the United States, and on the attitudes many people, lawyers and citizens, take toward the law. Thus reflexively, pragmatic beliefs about the evolution of law and society are now built into the views of many lawyers, legislators, and citizens, and have gone into the constructing of legal, governmental and political action, despite others who hold more essentialist views about law. Thus the very way of life studied by American social scientists itself is being built in part on pragmatic assumptions. If law and society are living and evolving as the pragmatists believe, then reflexive understanding of this allows an even greater monitoring, evaluation, and support of these processes, as well as a climate of public belief that favors pragmatic formulations and thus a public ideology of change and experiment. Such pervasive views support a view of legal texts and texts within all domains of society influenced by the law as contingent, situated, and evolving in meaning as conditions change.

PRAGMATIC INFLUENCES ON SAPIR AND LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

The pragmatist approach to understanding socialized individuals, individual and group action, the role of language in individual and group formation, and thought within situated activity also influenced several other parallel lines of development within American social science (See Bulmer, 1986, Chapter 11), including anthropology and linguistics. Edward Sapir, the linguistic anthropologist, is the most direct vehicle of that influence in both fields. After fifteen years as the chief of the Division of Anthropology for the Canadian government in Ottawa, he arrived in 1925 in the small combined department of anthropology and sociology at the University of Chicago, where he remained until 1931 when he went to Yale to found the department of anthropology there. Although his name is now best known through the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity, he had a more moderated view than Whorf about the influence of language on cognition. Sapir was interested in interactions between language form and use and such things as social interests, activity, culture, physical and social environment, thought, and personality (see for example his essay "Language and the Environment," 1912). One could more properly say that, unlike Saussure and other linguists who wanted to isolate linguistic phenomena from social, historical, rhetorical, situational and

psychological issues in order to make linguistics and autonomous discipline, Sapir wanted to understand language in all its complexity and in its relation to all other aspects of being human, so that language necessarily should be studied in relation to all the other social sciences (see Sapir, 1949). While only some detailed influences between him and his sociological colleagues in Chicago can be concretely traced (Darnell, 1989, p. 214), Sapir clearly shared with them an interest in the activity and interactions within communities, and he provided a means for exploring that interaction through what Mead and Dewey had seen as the key vehicle of social and psychological formation—communicative language (see Sapir, 1935).

Sapir and his teacher Boas are viewed as the founders of linguistic anthropology, and Sapir was one of the founders of the Linguistic Society of America. Linguistic anthropology generally views language as coming to be in interaction, and in doing so becomes a primary vehicle for the creation of social realities and personhood within social-cultural circumstances (see, for examples Bauman, 1986; Duranti & Goodwin, 1992; Gumperz, 1982; Hanks, 1996). One area of concern for linguistic anthropologists is pragmatics. While the term pragmatics within linguistics has a technical meaning distinct from philosophic pragmatism and should not be confused with it, the study of linguistic pragmatics is based on the assumption that people do things through language, and manipulate the common stock of symbols to interact, form relations, modulate social relations, manage impressions others have, and carry out activities, and thereby make their social world and their own place within it.

Sapir also identifies another point of conjunction for a comprehensive understanding of language practice within a complex social science inquiry. From early in his career he was interested in psychiatry and the formation of personality, and he reviewed books, for example on Freudian and Jungian psychology (for examples, Sapir, 1917, 1923). He saw societies and cultures both as formative of personalities, and formed by people with individual personalities. This interest in psychiatric inquiry took more concrete form after his meeting the psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan around 1925, forming a close personal friendship for the remainder of his life. They were to collaborate on many project including conferences, grants, the creation of the interdisciplinary journal *Psychiatry* and the founding of the Washington School of Psychiatry (See Bazerman, 2005).

Through their friendship, Sapir gained further direction and impetus for his interest in the relation of personality and culture. Sapir was to write a number of papers on the interaction of psychiatry, language and culture (see 1927a, 1927b, 1934a, 1934b, 1938). Sullivan in turn was brought into conversation with the Chicago sociologists, gaining a more concrete sense of the cultural variability

of life conditions, the ways individuals emerged within social relations, and the role of language in the formation of the individual.

SULLIVAN'S PRAGMATIC INTERPERSONAL PSYCHIATRY

Sullivan formulated his distinctive theories during the time of his friendship with Sapir. Through Sapir, the political scientist Harold Lasswell, and other acquaintances in and around the University of Chicago, Sullivan became familiar with the ideas of Mead and other pragmatists. Contact with pragmatist theories provided the means for Sullivan's ideas to mature through the remainder of his career and reached their fullest expression in a posthumous reconstruction of his lecture courses *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (Sullivan, 1953). In fact, in that work he discusses the ideas of Mead and his colleagues for several pages (16-19). In the *Interpersonal Theory* Sullivan draws a developmental picture of the child trying to satisfy needs and forming social relations in a social and cultural world. The infant's most fundamental and deepest learning occurs in activity situations with primary caregivers, in which fundamental perceptions of the self and relations to others are formed. In coordinating such activities as feeding, the child learns to integrate in shared events, satisfying mutual needs. Part of that coordination is the sensing of anxiety within the caregiver, which in turn raises anxiety within the infant, for the caregiver's anxiety indicates possible difficulty and uncertainty of outcome. It is out of discovering the emotional spectrum of security, interpersonal unease, and terror in interaction that the child forms a sense of the self (the good me—the range of action and interaction in which I will feel secure), the boundary areas of insecurity and anxiety (the bad me), and those interactions and activities so deeply imbued with extreme anxiety that they are beyond coherent perception and possible participation (the not-me—the realm of uncanny sensations). The infant also learns means of coping with or avoiding those situations that raise anxiety. As the child grows into an adult and moves out into the world, filled with people and situations that may challenge an already developed sense of secure situations, a sense of self may expand by experimenting with new ranges of interaction. Nonetheless, most people spend much time in security operations, keeping at bay the anxiety aroused by life's variety.

This model of development is consistent with the pragmatist account of active selves engaged in purposeful need-satisfying interaction. Moreover, Sullivan provides a mechanism for self-formation very closely allied to that proposed by Mead. According to Sullivan, the individual begins to sense a self in relation to the response of others and how one then acts to elicit favorable response.

Thus the individual is motivated to make interactions go well and anticipate the responses of partner, so as to elicit the cooperation of the other. Sullivan adds to the pragmatist picture the development of the anxiety system that defines the areas of comfort within which the person operates and the areas of discomfort that make it difficult or even impossible to operate. The development of the self system means that one's sense of self formation is saturated with affect, as some behaviors feel more comfortable and secure, while others raise anxiety, and still others are insurmountably aversive, no matter how strong the need, impulse, desire, or attraction. We can then see socialized behavior as a kind of emotion-laden tropism, where one is drawn to anticipated satisfaction by positive anticipation and repelled by the discomfort of behaviors that seem fearfully disruptive of the social bond with partners, based on one's history of interactions. In this pull of needs and desires and push of aversions, one finds a way to act, although the conflict of these forces may cause one to abandon either the need or the security.

Sullivan considers development occurring within interactions over the life course unlike the Freudian view which sees life as irrevocably fettered to the earliest sets of social relationships within the family—primarily with the parents, and barely even with siblings. Sullivan, while recognizing the importance of the earliest relations in learning to coordinate fundamental needs and establishing starting points for trajectories of social participation, still observes that the course of life brings us into important and motivated contact with others. The expanding cast of characters we meet in life presents new developmental challenges, but also allows us to explore new possibilities, and learn new forms of interaction. New relations may also expand the domains of the self that had been bounded by anxiety, as trusted partners help us sense security in situations where we previously had sensed only impending difficulty. While early self-formation and the power of anxiety forcefully lead us to keep replicating early behaviors, that is not necessarily the end of the story.

These complex life trajectories and transformations of the self are driven in part by biological imperatives, but also are responsive social, cultural, economic, and material conditions. Culturally learned patterns of child rearing, widespread taboos and anxieties, and concerns about the good opinions of community and family influence parental interactions and emotions with children. Social arrangements and beliefs affect the range of people one is likely to meet at different junctures in life (at school, in summer camp, on the job) and the patterns, social meanings, and restraints on forming friendships and sexual attachments. Economic opportunities and challenges of daily living focus our energies, turn our attention away from other endeavors, and influence whom we interact with, under what conditions, and for what purposes.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING AS INTERPERSONAL AND SELF-FORMING

The relevance of such issues for language and writing should be apparent in that language and writing are media of expansion, learning, and interaction. We use language at the point when our motives meet the motives of others in interaction, always with some challenge and growth as we confront different self-systems with their divergent understandings, motives, attentions, and anxieties. If communication follows well-worn and familiar tracks that everybody knows exactly where things are going and is perfectly comfortable and secure, the challenges and risks are less. If not, the communication, mediated activity, and learning are rife with possibilities of crossed purposes, misunderstandings, and disjunctions that will lead to ruptures or redefinitions in the communicative situation.

Language is learned in use within a developmental history of relations and anxiety, and the meanings and uses a person finds in language are colored by the emotions of security and anxiety. We all learn to disrupt situations that make us anxious by changing the subject, leading the situation down alternative paths that protect our security, or otherwise being disjunctive of the trouble we sense coming down the road, thereby transforming the situation into one that alleviates our anxiety, even if this means turning away from needs and desires. In the most extreme cases, people who have had consistently unfortunate and anxiety-raising experiences learn to use language far more to ward off anxiety by placating or misleading or distancing others than to communicate in pursuit of the satisfaction of needs. Where anxiety rules, there develops a radical disjunction between, on one hand, a person's needs and embodied experience— that is, the self one knows as one withdraws from the anxiety of relationships— and, on the other, the face one presents to the world to keep anxiety at bay. This social learning, of security and anxiety, of self-definition and taboo, of language used to modulate and fend off anxiety, adds another dimension to the social learning of language and interaction to those more typically noted by Vygotsky and socio-cultural psychologists. Additionally, the personal anxiety system described by Sullivan adds another dimension of aversive and mind-clouding affect to the goal-shaped affects of motive and frustration noted by Vygotsky (see Bazerman, 2001a, 2001b).

Sullivan was aware of and interested in the work of Vygotsky, though after Vygotsky's death in 1934. Sullivan was instrumental in publishing in 1939 the first translation of the last chapter of Vygotsky's *Thought and Speech* (Vygotsky, 1939). Sullivan also wrote a commentary on a Vygotsky article in a 1944 volume (Kasinin 1944). While Sullivan sees the origins of the self-system developing

out of prelinguistic sensations of anxiety, he sees the development of linguistic reflection on the self as extremely powerful in the extensive construction and monitoring of identity and in choice-making as one grows older. In short, language, for Sullivan, as Vygotsky, is the chief tool of reflective action, although Sullivan allows for the interference of security operations to warp the processes of reflective choice making, to provide for indirect or even dysfunctional terms for reflecting on one's needs and desires, and to create distances between one's public expressions and one's inner sentiments. Sullivan, as Vygotsky, gives an account of the development of internal linguistic thought through an internalization process in which language goes sub-vocal and private, a process that Sullivan characterizes as reverie formation (1953, pp. 184-185).

For Sullivan, in addition, language is a means of sharing our perceptions and emotions, validating those individual formations of self, knowledge, and perception. In receptive environments we may have a strong impulse to share how we see ourselves and the world. This sharing of experiences can expand our vision and repair the idiosyncrasies of our experience and personal interpretations. This social validation can impact our constructions of algebra or gravity or the meaning of a John Milton poem as well as our sense of what is socially appropriate to mention to a friend, our perceptions of the emotional reactions of others, and our evaluations of how much risk or pleasure a situation may hold.

Language for Sullivan, as for Vygotsky, is also a means of organizing learning and thought. The developing child, according to Sullivan, as he or she learns language and thereby learns to give shape to thought and coherence to perceptions of the world, moves through stages of prototaxic, parataxic, and syntaxic modes of thought (Sullivan, 1953, pp. 28-29), which are closely congruent with Vygotsky's stages of children's thought and perception 1) prior to the reorganization of thought through language, 2) as the child makes associative connections while using language to organize thought (Vygotsky's sub-stages of congeries, complexes and collections, and pseudo-concepts), and 3) when the adolescent develops coherent systems of language characterized as true concepts, and accommodates thinking to the disciplined and schooled systems of concepts presented through the formal learning of the society—or scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1986, pp. 110-124).

Sullivan's developmental model of persons learning to act (in large part through language) in fulfillment of needs in interpersonal relations—within the cultural conditions of a time and place and within the particular dynamics of a particular relationships—allows us to consider the role of language development and expanding literacy competence, without being caught up in particular cultural or historic forms of participation taken to be natural.

We can see language development and literacy development as taking many courses in relation to the historical and social moment, the particularities of the person's prior experience and current motives, and the particularities of the communicative system and situations.

Sullivan, like Vygotsky, shows us an optimistic potential for growth into and beyond the available social and cultural arrangements and activities of one's time and place. Sullivan, however, does not see that growth as necessarily easy, as we must constantly face the anxiety of those things that stretch us beyond that which we are comfortable with. This discomforting anxiety makes it difficult to see what lies in front of us and around us and leads us to want to turn our eyes and thoughts elsewhere, back to the worlds we are comfortable in, where we find a familiar self-definition and perception, in interactions where both ourselves and our partners are secure. Further, in participating in growth-oriented relationships, we must not only persuade others of the innovations we create as useful to their own ends, we must address their anxieties, uncertainties, terrors, and senses of where self-security lies.

Although Sullivan never specifically raises issues of writing, he provides a framework of thinking about writing issues as anxiety, formulating and synthesizing knowledge, the anticipating audience, the changing roles for writing as one moves through one's life course, and the cultural variation of literate tasks and its relation to personality and personality development (see Bazerman, 2001b). Sullivan in this way can provide us means to see why writing may be so difficult, why we may resist and struggle with some modes of expression, why we find some audiences easier to address than others. At the same time he provides ways to account for the self-expansion, self-formation, discovery, reflection, and growth that people regularly report as the result of writing. Finally, he allows us to see these processes as within the difficulties and rewards of integrating in social relations with others as part of social projects.

Overall, the pragmatists help us see writing as part of social problem-solving, invention, and evolution. Through writing we address our current needs and concerns and create new arrangements that change our way of life. In doing so, we assert identities and recognize ourselves through what we contribute. We see ourselves reflected through our presence in writing and the presence that writing takes in society. Our challenges, emotions, and difficulties in writing are as much about the place and actions we take in society through our writing as they are about manipulating the technical means and resources of language. Addressing our present circumstances and making our futures means we are never fully sure about where our writing is taking us, how others will see us, and what the consequences will be.