# 1

## The Voice of Pragmatism
## in Contemporary Philosophy
## of Communication

<&>· ·<&>

*Lenore Langsdorf and Andrew R. Smith*

The upheaval in the practice of philosophy in America during this last quarter of the century is, at the very least, a reaction against a narrow conception of philosophy as analysis of decontextualized (formal) problems, carried out by a distinct professional class that minimized (even denied) the relevance of history, literature, and sociopolitical institutions to those problems. Nothing more than the inevitable exhaustion of possibilities within such a delimited field may be responsible for postanalytic philosophy's emergence. The very limited audience for mainstream analytic, linguistic, and logical-positivistic philosophy is now overshadowed by scholars who speak in a variety of cultural and disciplinary voices, about topics once relegated to the margins of philosophical discourse. We are in the midst of a protracted revolution (in the Kuhnian sense) in philosophy. Two aspects of that upheaval provide the impetus for this book.

First, scholars' current rejection of the hegemony of analysis as the method (form) and goal of philosophy in mid-century America almost necessitates thinking anew about the subject-matter (content) in close conjunction with the methods (forms) of philosophy. We need no longer ignore issues that are not amenable to analytic procedures and ideals developed in admiration of certain formal, physical, and social sciences that dominated late nineteenth-century scholarship. Our subject-matter in *Recovering Pragmatism's Voice* exemplifies this broadening of interests, for the philosophy of communication was overlooked or misconstrued by mainstream philosophy and the philosophy of science that it inspired. Some linguistic results of communication— claims,

statements, proofs—were appropriate to analytic methods and goals. But these products were taken up in reified form, without attention to the communicative practices necessary to their formation or to the communicative forms of their presence. Insofar as philosophy understood itself as offering what Rorty calls a "mirror of nature," it focused upon correct representation of things and events presumed resident in "nature." Correlatively, it ignored the ongoing discourse in which a community of inquirers (in Peirce's sense) forms, presents, and implements its understanding of "nature." Our change of orientation toward that discursive activity, however, is a refocusing on "culture" in Dewey's sense (*Later Works* 1: 361–364)—and more particularly, on how communication functions in the formation and reformation of cultural institutions.

It is this radical shift in subject matter, rather than a dominant interest in methodology, that motivates us to identify or develop alternative methods and goals for the philosophy of communication. Pragmatism's central interest in the communal formation of knowledge and of the knowing subject (the emergent self), as well as in the efficacy of fallible knowledge, informs our understanding of how communication expands human inquiry rather than contracting or reducing inquiry to arguments for or against proposed foundational representations. William James's reliance upon concrete justification of belief in natural processes of encounter with phenomena as they inform interactive knowing suggests one direction for that expansion: communicative justification is a pervasive feature of alternatives to the statistical and stipulative empirical methods that still dominate communication research. George Herbert Mead's reconception of the knowing subject as emergent in communicative interaction—rather than as functioning as the cause of such interaction—provides another dimension for developing the philosophy of communication. Insofar as the philosophy of communication relies upon communicative assessment of knowledge claims and conceptualizes the knowing subject as emergent in those communication-based processes of inquiry and assessment, pragmatic philosophy of communication does not simply concur with contemporary rejection of the Cartesian self and its claims to universal and apodictic knowledge. It goes beyond critique to reconstruction, by developing an alternative conceptualization of human beings as communicative agents who formulate conjectures, test them against experience, and use the results.

A further contribution of the classical pragmatism of Peirce, Dewey, James, and Mead to a more encompassing conception of communication should be mentioned. Ideals of assent within communica-

tive communities, and perhaps even of generalized adherence across institutional and cultural domains, can function as standards against which the value of actual communicative events may be assessed. Thus the philosophy of communication is able to reach beyond empirical research, and also beyond Rortyean "edification," into axiological and even normative inquiry. This expansion (together with other aspects of classical pragmatism) is resisted by many communication researchers as well as by Rortyean neopragmatism. Thus, a diversity of views is evident in the chapters of this book, all of which are original essays written for this volume. Most of the contributors focus upon the implications of classical pragmatism for the philosophy of communication within a postanalytic, postempirical, postmodern era of inquiry quite different from the intellectual climate in which Peirce, Dewey, James, and Mead wrote. Only some of the contributors understand the significance of that difference as Rorty does. That seems to us an appropriate breadth of perspectives in a volume unified by its contributors' appreciation of the pragmatic tradition as itself in process, responding to a universal need for localized knowledge that may be used by particular historical and sociopolitical communities—rather than responding to a particular intellectual culture's need for foundational principles, static objects of knowledge, or algorithmic proofs.

### Classical Pragmatism

Pragmatism has come to mean so many things that any endeavor aimed at recovering a singular voice of pragmatism may seem audacious, at the very least, to readers who prefer a polyphony to an oration. But polyphony, despite its poetic pleasure in the arts and its rhetorical reality in a democracy, can easily turn into cacophony when we engage in conceptualization. That danger is especially present when we attempt to understand and apply a philosophy such as pragmatism, which eschews theory in favor of practice. For in the absence of clear or unified self-definition, the many ends to which the term pragmatism is put may endanger its original force as a way of formulating and testing radically new ways of thinking that might work to advance the welfare and future sustenance of a community.

The essays in this volume explore what we (the editors) understand as the intension of pragmatism; the persistent themes that can be identified as present in one after another of the tradition's classical extensions, and commend pragmatism as a methodology for social change and human development. Our interest in recovering a singular

voice of pragmatism thus begins with appreciating the extent to which certain themes are not present in it—for that very absence documents pragmatism's contrast to other modern philosophies. Pragmatism fosters inquiry and pluralism by eschewing strategies for closure (including essentialism), questioning prevailing metanarratives, and encouraging the development of new habits of conduct through a critical practice that is fundamentally self-reflective, to the extent of reconceptualizing the very concept of the self.

Moreover, pragmatism to some extent assumes, and to some extent proposes, a philosophy of communication that has scarcely been articulated, despite the wealth of commentary on other aspects of pragmatism. We suggested earlier that the impetus for this philosophical development may be an exhaustion of earlier conceptualizations of communication as reduced to its linguistic products, conceived as providing (at least ideally) a mirror of nature. For such a philosophy of language, communication simply is a means for expressing preconceived ideas and truths about an antecedent reality. From early through late empiricism—from Locke through Carnap and the early Wittgenstein and extending into Austin and Searle—there was a good deal of philosophical analysis focused on how that transmission can lead us astray in our thinking, and so, on how transmission might be accomplished more clearly and distinctly. The basic prescription was to minimize transmission interference through strategies such as conceptual (logical and linguistic) analysis and the development of normed languages that would eliminate, insofar as possible, the plurivocity intrinsic to natural language.

Beginning with the recognition of linguistic performativity in the work of the later empiricists, however, this conception of language as merely reportorial, at best, or as a barrier to inquiry (by virtue of multiple meanings), at worst, expanded to include a conception of linguistic activity as a social process of discerning how things are, what language users believe about how things are, and how we would have them otherwise. In effect, this is a new domain for philosophical investigation. It begins in recognizing communication as a process encompassing the use of language by someone to inform someone. Insofar as all communication is concerned with informing, it is concerned with ways of inquiring and goals of inquiry; with assumptions about inquiring and with objects of inquiry. As traditional philosophical endeavors (such as metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology) are pursued in relation to communication, the particular value of pragmatism for the philosophy of communication can be articulated in terms of pragmatism's understanding of inquiry as intrinsically fallible and oriented toward

its consequences, and of the self—the instigator and assessor of inquiry—as emergent from and effectively reflective on communicative practice. We hope that the essays in this volume initiate that articulation, and so contribute to what we see as a philosophical turn—a reconceptualization of the field—within contemporary communication studies, as well as to what may be a communicative turn within contemporary philosophical thinking.

Perhaps we can best begin that articulation by looking briefly at both classical and Rortyean pragmatism. In speaking of the "classical tradition" in American pragmatism, we mean a body of philosophical thinking and social theory formulated by John Dewey, William James, George Herbert Mead, and Charles Sanders Peirce. The work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Josiah Royce, George Santayana, Henry David Thoreau, and Alfred North Whitehead exhibits strong affinities with that core of work, and often is identified in commentaries as pragmatic. However, we are concerned in these essays only with the work of Dewey, James, Mead, and Peirce, because their work demonstrates explicit and sustained interest in the phenomenon of communication.

Metaphysically, classical pragmatism rejects certain dualisms that have marked mainstream modern philosophy: mind and matter; nature and culture; belief and knowledge; thought and action; facts and values; individual and community. This is not to say that pragmatism ignores the powerful effects of these oppositional modes of thinking. Rather, by rejecting them as metaphysical categories intrinsic to reality, pragmatism is able to respecify them as functional distinctions that we use and find useful in developing practices that respond to acculturated experiences in which reality is present for us. This respecification enables and even requires investigating both the genesis of these dichotomies and the interests they may serve. In other words, by abandoning unquestioned acceptance of these categories, pragmatism encourages our reflection on how and to what end they are instituted. That line of inquiry may then extend to reconstructing categories so that they might serve alternative ends.

In pursuing epistemological and axiological questions, classical pragmatism replaces "the quest for certainty" with a quest for testable answers that make a difference within specific domains of culture (experience). Thus, pragmatism does not base inquiry on conscious subjects' knowledge claims about values and objects understood as either directly perceived or deduced from observation. Rather, it advocates persisting inquiry by communities of inquirers, who acknowledge their own complicity in constituting those values and objects in relation to particular exigencies and anticipated consequences.

Researchers are thus constrained to reflect on that constitutive process as a complex of axiological, cultural, physical, psychological, and social conditions. For pragmatism, in other words, the very conditions for inquiry are also topics for inquiry.

Furthermore, classical pragmatism displays a marked meliorative determination that contrasts with the distanciated ideal of other philosophical orientations. Thought is to be used—put into practice—so as to improve the human condition. Thus, in its practice of philosophy, pragmatism rejects both the "analytic" and "descriptive/interpretive" models, insofar as those traditions have understood philosophy as the posing and solving (or dissolving) of theoretical "problems" about facts or values. That rejection follows from pragmatism's recognition of those problems as products of the very search for abstract values, certain knowledge, eternal truth, or unchanging reality that preoccupied philosophy for several centuries. This is not to say that pragmatism is not concerned with knowing. Rather, it conceives its epistemic and evaluative tasks as practical and critical; as pursued by inquirers who are intrinsically social, and who discern and delineate values and concepts in actual situations, and test them by their consequences—rather than by reducing them to facts or propositions about a presumed antecedent reality.

## Rortyean Pragmatism

Richard Rorty's considerable influence on contemporary American intellectual life may well be due to his advocacy of many of these reconstructed philosophical interests. That advocacy identifies, and even goes some distance toward justifying, his self-classification as a pragmatist. That affiliation also is substantiated by his adoption of Dewey's notion of "warranted assertibility": what warrants an assertion is neither confirmation by accepted doctrine nor fit with empirical evidence, but appropriateness when tested by the habits and practices of daily life. Thus, Rorty retains a fundamental feature of classical pragmatism: he emphasizes consequent possibilities rather than antecedent certainties. That emphasis does not mean that we exercise a deliberate or consistent focus on setting goals or postulating particular ends, and then delineating the means to achieve them. Rather, Rorty's (and Dewey's) emphasis on the consequent employs the art of imagining possible results of conceptions as they become engrained in a community as habits of conduct; as habitual ways of acting, thinking, feeling, believing, and knowing.

The idea that conduct should be oriented to future meaning, rather than toward past doctrine or present perception, is as much Darwinian as mainstream philosophy has been Cartesian. Beliefs evolve as they are put into practice by a community. Some aspects of a belief are shed when they no longer cohere with social experience, while other aspects may be retained. Hence pragmatism is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, in either the Kuhnian or Marxian senses. Rorty's work furthers our understanding and appreciation of this "naturalistic" dimension of pragmatism. Moreover, Rorty demonstrates that evolution in thinking, acting, and speaking is a function of how a particular community uses communicative strategies to link and justify habits of conduct. In this sense he follows James more than Peirce or Dewey, since he draws on the precepts of individualism to justify ethnocentrism. Our beliefs are true, he argues, to the extent that they can be justified according to procedures for justification extant in a community that is defined by a particular time, place, and accepted linguistic and communicative conventions.

Finally, Rorty follows Peirce as a fallibilist in that he recognizes that a belief may be justified within a particular set of conditions, but later turn out (under other conditions) to be wrong. Accordingly, communication is vital for the development and flourishing of new belief, and may even engender a (polyphonous) conversation of humankind.

Once we go beyond these decidedly brief notations of the affinities and continuity that we discern between Rortyean and classical pragmatism, conversation must give way to argumentation. For contemporary discussion among philosophers who identify themselves with the pragmatic tradition does divide rather sharply on the legitimacy of Rorty's claim to membership in the tradition. The postmodern context of Rorty's pragmatism surely supports, and perhaps even necessitates, his replacement of classical pragmatism's reliance upon the subject (however construed) as agent for reflection on and reconstruction of institutions (including philosophy). But our changed historical situation does not in itself ratify replacing the subject of modernity with an ethnocentric solidarity that uncritically conserves a long and limited conversation.

To many contemporary pragmatists, Rorty's disinterest in the practical consequences of intellectual discourse—his valuing of a discourse that makes no difference—disqualifies his claim to membership. To others, however, the affiliations we have noted are sufficient; insisting upon complete allegiance to a philosophy marked by issues of an earlier day would be nothing less than essentialism. Since several of our contributors address this issue as part of the general question of prag-

matism's contribution to the philosophy of communication, we turn now to a preview of the positions developed in the following chapters.

## Contemporary Voices of Pragmatism

C. S. Peirce's theory of signs is often conceived as a logic of classification bent on bringing all depictions of phenomena within its explanatory grasp. This foundational conception invites modernists such as Morris to appropriate Peirce's *semiotics* as a way of marking all communication practices as representational. Vincent Colapietro's essay, "Immediacy, Opposition, and Mediation: Peirce on the Irreducible Aspects of the Communicative Process" (chap. 2), takes issue with this distorted interpretation of Peirce's philosophy, and especially with Richard Rorty's attempt to "bury" Peirce because of it.

Colapietro argues that Peirce's theory of signs and his "pragmaticism" go hand in hand as a heuristic for critical inquiry rather than as a system for explanation. Peirce radicalizes the notion of the "practical" to encompass the possible consequences of our conceptions—a notion that hinges on imagination rather than rationalization. He thus pushes beyond the limits of what we think we know about a phenomenon by virtue of the circumstances of its emergence. The significance of any expression (gesture, word, phrase, proposition, argument, or belief) understood as a form of conduct is, for Peirce, ill-conceived if practice is thought of as limited to nominal or atomistic formulations. To reach the intricacies and excesses of meaning necessary for gaining insight and developing an evolutionary approach to communication, pragmaticists should be critically self-conscious, according to Colapietro, which means they should be capable of working through otherness in radically different ways. Pragmaticism thus conceived is an imaginative and collaborative semiotics of consequence.

Colapietro presents Peirce's phenomenological categories of immediacy ("firstness"), opposition ("secondness") and mediation ("thirdness") as communication concepts that edify the self-other relationship. His discussion of otherness reveals how the radical conception of practice in fact hinges on a primordial tension and intercession of self and other. Indeed, it is only through a consideration of otherness that consequences of practice for oneself can be worked through. The other is radically other in that she or he is never a terminal point in which communication ends, but a condition of fluctuating significance through which "ever higher levels of self-consciousness, self-criticism, and self-control" become accessible. Colapietro draws a parallel

between Peirce and Derrida along these lines, especially with regard to speech, writing, and the process of codification. In the end the reader should see how Peirce, pace Rorty, is no more a metaphysician of presence than is Derrida.

In "From Enthymeme to Abduction: The Classical Law of Logic and the Postmodern Rule of Rhetoric" (chap. 3), Richard Lanigan depicts the semiotics of consequence operating as a rhetoric of communication practice that engenders both power and desire. Modernity is marked, argues Lanigan, by the power of the few to exclude the many by demarcating "correct" thought and translating this thought into symbolic discourse that abides by the laws of identity and noncontradiction. Postmodernity is marked, on the other hand, by the desire of the many to be included in discourse(s), and to transgress the laws of noncontradiction and identity through practices that reveal how something can, through signs, both be and not be at the same time. Lanigan shows how Peirce was pivotal in reconceptualizing the communicative import of "symbol" and "sign" from the "classical law of logic to the postmodern rule of rhetoric," respectively. Hence it would appear that Rorty's "conversation of [hu]mankind" is actually a debt paid to Peirce.

The notion of abduction and its corollary, "retroduction" or "adduction," are the pivots through which the radicalization of discourse—as practice—takes place. Since discourse in conversation functions rhetorically, the best way to grasp how abduction operates is, according to Lanigan, through a reconsideration of the enthymeme. He proceeds by criticizing the traditional approach to the enthymeme as a "logic of rhetoric"—an approach characteristic of modernity in which the enthymeme is thought to be formally valid but materially deficient. Since the definition is given in such a scheme, all that is required of the addressee is to fill in the deficiency with what is the correct, albeit suppressed, material. The postmodern conception of the enthymeme, on the other hand, is a "rhetoric of logic" in which the syllogism is both materially uncertain and formally deficient. The addressee fills in the gaps of discourse through a "formal (not material!)" process that coheres with "Peirce's notion of tone."

Abduction operates in communication, argues Lanigan, as "the embodied intentionality of speech," which is materially uncertain, "while the enthymeme is abduction's articulation as formal deficiency." Uncertainty and deficiency are in fact the sufficient conditions for insight and reciprocity. Lanigan shows how abduction (hypothesis formation) and adduction (hypothesis testing) are tropological acts practiced by speakers and listeners in everyday communication. This poetic conception contributes, in turn, to an appreciation of communication as

an art of rhetoric and a science of living in which self and other, and the same and the different, are continually actualized anew.

Newness, however, is not always pleasant, especially when injustices occur as a result of conflicting versions of the truth of some matter. Andrew Smith and Leonard Shyles take up the issue of "Ethnocentric Truth and Pragmatic Justice" (chap. 4), as a way of examining how the classical pragmatism of Peirce (pragmaticism) and Dewey (instrumentalism) contribute to the modern-postmodern debate on the possibility of truth and justice. They address the semiotics of consequence in both Peirce and Dewey by first reviewing how this logic has been appropriated by Rorty in philosophy and Richard Shweder in cultural psychology. Both Rorty and Shweder accept the principles of fallibilism laid out by Peirce, and the idea that truth is manifested and pluralized through processes of communication. But whereas Rorty eschews much of Peirce's system formations and conceptions of "ideal ends," Shweder recognizes the significance of transcendental realities, and discusses how such realities are accessed abductively through communication. Smith and Shyles argue that such imaginative access is crucial for intercultural understanding—however tentative and fallible that understanding may be—and consider how problems of truth and justice can be addressed across cultural realities through idioms formed by communicative and metacommunicative engagement of differences—for example, race, gender, class, age, role, rank, discipline, and so on.

Abductive processes, Smith and Shyles suggest, operate in intercultural communication in much the same way that Peirce and Dewey conceived the operations of critical inquiry. They argue that developing the capability of imagining how something might be the case from another cultural point of view is part and parcel of recognizing its truth. The creation of this newness requires an ongoing collaborative recognition and rearrangement of cultural instruments. Smith and Shyles thus advance Dewey's critique of custom and his advocation of thinking progressively even though one may not be familiar with the ends one seeks. The discussion of ends in Peirce and Dewey is then reconceptualized as an imaginative process that is not determinate for insight and understanding, but conditional for organizing a progressive—that is, evolutionary—axiology through communication practice.

This collaborative project of negotiating ends-in-view imaginatively among a plurality of perspectives, according to Charleen Haddock Seigfried in "Devising Ends Worth Striving For: William James and the Reconstruction of Philosophy" (chap. 6), was James's principal interest throughout in his life's work. James' contribution to

the philosophy of communication is articulated most clearly in his struggle to work through the subjective-objective problematic. Seigfried shows how the notion of ends-in-view is developed as an evolving thematic in a struggle that began with a critique of the rationalist program of gaining insight into being.

Early in his career James believed that the encompassing ends that guide our proximate choices could be conceived as objective postulates to be invoked for deciding disputes among various subjectivities. But he later abandoned this idea (Seigfried points out) at the risk of becoming nihilistic, since such a conception could easily place subjective insight and belief in the hands of established religious and mystical doctrines. The purposeful nature of human conduct was one universal condition of truth that James was able to accept, but the complement to this condition was that human experience is inherently ambiguous or vague, and thus personal and singular. Any meaningful action is performed according to the purposes of that action as we define it for ourselves. This means, Seigfried argues, that the significance or "nature of an event can only be determined within a horizon of enacted meanings . . [that] are both cultural and personal, that is, bounded by socially constructed and individually appropriated ends-in-view."

For James, then, the definition of truth hinges on a phenomenological orientation to the world; on a way of describing events and the "living" processes of reasoning about events in as concrete a manner as possible. We should be concerned with emphasis and selection, with signifying and edifying, with the plurality of perspectives and partial truths that coordinate around an event, and with the human purposes brought to bear on description and interpretation. Seigfried argues that these concerns do not define or otherwise determine an epistemological problematic, but realign descriptions according to "intimacy" instead of "transparency." This intimacy involves an ethical dimension insofar as it assumes a cooperative association of people working, and it involves an aesthetic dimension insofar as that association conceives of some unity of purpose for their interpretations that is worth striving for.

One purpose worth rethinking for communication philosophy and pedagogy, according to Isaac Catt in "The 'Cash Value' of Communication: An Interpretation of William James" (chap. 5), is the notion of competence. The modern concern with "communication competence" is associated too readily and perhaps unwittingly, argues Catt, with an "ideological allegiance to careerism/consumerism in higher education." The "cash-value" of communication under this paradigm is determined according to dominant economic interests, and

this is definitely not what James had in mind when he invented the phrase. The original conception is actually more postmodern in that it focuses on the concrete singularity of an event and the interpretations developed out of an engagement with that event.

Catt contends that, in pushing back toward the original conception of "cash-value," we might also rethink the purposes of the human sciences, and the role of communication education in the university. Competency researchers are committed implicitly to an integrative approach to the human sciences which tends toward abstraction and hypostatization. James's approach is, indeed, more phenomenological. To study the concrete lived-experience of human conduct as communication phenomena requires that we push beyond the representationalist insistence on deliberate speech and eloquence, and toward a critical analysis of the social conditions and cultural myths out of which competency education is conceived. In this way we might radicalize the so-called empirical givens. These are the moves to make, Catt argues, if communication pedagogy is to contribute to an understanding of and negotiation within the postmodern world. The philosophy of communication, as conceived through a recovery of the semiotic and phenomenological emphases of classical pragmatism as espoused by James, is one way to radicalize the idea of competence and thus enrich human conscious experience. Such enrichment is, after all, the pragmatic—as opposed to conventionally practical—heart of a liberal arts education.

This radical notion of competency—the heart of a truly liberal and artful education—generates the kind of communication a democratic society is built on, according to Thomas Alexander in "John Dewey and the Roots of Democratic Imagination" (chap. 7). Rationality need not be abandoned in such a society, but pluralized in such a way that "diversity of outlooks, the cultivation of social imagination, and a pervasive context of mutual care are intrinsic features." Alexander develops these fundamental notions of pluralistic rationality in a defense of "community" conceived as a sustained and imaginatively coordinated democratic life. He discusses how Dewey was concerned with the process of communication as a pivotal and transformative force that ensures the evolution of such a community.

In developing a theory of democratic communication out of Dewey's philosophy, Alexander offers a critique of Enlightenment models of rationality—in which communication is conceived mechanically—and of postmodern conceptions of communication—in which the tendency toward anarchy predominates. Dewey's conception is aligned with neither of these extremes, Alexander argues, but offers a "reconstruction of reason" as a form of "social intelligence" in which an

organism and its environment impact one another dynamically and integratively. Learning is defined by this dynamic process, through which the "identification of `facts' and formation of `values' become functionally related phases of organizing the meaning of the situation." Rationality, argues Alexander, should be conceived as this type of learning, which is characterized by its communicative features.

One of the principal features of communication for both Dewey and Mead was the capability of individuals to see themselves from the "social standpoint." Alexander reviews how such a standpoint is embodied so that a situation can be conceived "in terms of its possibilities as well as its actualities." To do so, one must look to the connections of things and events—and this perception is made possible by a shared narrative, rather than by propositional communication. Narrative is progressive both temporally and socially, and it is only through this movement, Alexander argues, that selfhood makes sense and a pluralistic intelligence is possible.

It should be evident thus far that one voice of pragmatism worth recovering is the concern with consequences in inquiry. Consequences, as Rorty has pointed out, may never be actually known when a theory is conceived. Peirce, for example, probably had no idea that some day a group of philosophers and communication theorists would define a field of study by using his work as a primary inspiration. But this kind of specific result is not what the classical pragmatists were concerned with. Rather they were interested in how meanings took hold for the conceivable future of a social community, how art and aesthetic experience contributed to insight in critical inquiry, and how communication should be conceived if we hoped to pull ourselves out of the debilitating conditions that plague humankind. Frank Macke, in "Pragmatism Reconsidered: John Dewey and Michel Foucault on the Consequences of Inquiry" (chap. 8), poignantly focuses on these concerns.

Macke argues that "precisely because it is concerned with the consequences of critical and reflective activity, pragmatism cannot assume a neutral philosophical stance." We work for something; some interest, result, obligation, condition, and so on. And our work becomes something that can be perceived both as process and product—at times, self-consciously and critically. The pragmatic dimension of our work (as reflexive noun and verb) enters precisely at such a reflective moment, when we realize both what has already been accomplished as historical facticity, and what will have been done if we stay the course. Work then requires an imaginative element that is consistent with artistic endeavor. This, Macke argues, is a theme to which Dewey devoted a good deal of his work.

Macke links Dewey's phenomenology of artistic experience with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and Foucault by showing that pragmatism is a philosophy of the body par excellence: "The sensation and vitality of the body within the space and movement of a gesture," he proposes, "finds its energy in artistic form." Conceived as a feeling manifest in its own expression as gesture or tone, this artistic form is irreducible to any other elemental functions of human experience. It is passionate and eminently coherent experience. Thus to postulate consequences is not a matter of conceiving a grid of possibilities, but of orienting action to artistic experience. The ends are in the body of thought.

This sense of aesthetic life, Macke argues, is consistent with Foucault's reflection on the works of Michel Leiris and Raymond Roussel. Here and elsewhere one comes face to face with "existential limits (as opposed to uses) of language." When the limits of language are conceived in terms of "presence, finitude, and capacity of its forms," we might imagine a sense of what is possible beyond conventional ways of conceiving, much as the surrealists are able to transfigure the customary perception of art and the world through their experimental play. Macke suggests that the experimental heart of Deweyian pragmatism encourages similar artistic orientations to critical inquiry and to the formation of everyday life. Hence the human scientist becomes a creative artist (and vice versa) through transgressive practices of communication.

Imagining the possible consequences of conduct through feeling is more a function of poiesis than praxis. Peirce continually returns to feeling in the large sense as that which orients the kinds of questions we ask about what should or could be the case. He also challenges our self-control in following those questions out. Along these lines Lenore Langsdorf takes issue with the neopragmatic emphasis on language as praxis and directs attention to the pioneering efforts of the classical pragmatists toward enunciating the creative productive forces of communicative poiesis in social life. Her essay (chap. 10) focuses particularly on Dewey's and Mead's developments of this voice of pragmatism as integral to a philosophy of communication concerned with the pushing and pulling of issues in political and pedagogical life. It may appear that an overarching concern with poiesis would mean that either action is avoided or ethical concerns are abrogated. Langsdorf proposes that this was not the case for Dewey and Mead. They neither restricted their philosophies to "the good" nor advocated practical action at any cost; their concern was in doing the good without imposing ethical systems on policy development or taking action purely for action's sake.

Langsdorf provides an overview of traditional philosophical investigations of language as the part of the intellectual context in which classical pragmatism worked. She argues that the pragmatists' contribution forms around both implicit and explicit concern with communication. Hence instead of working through structures of action displayed by language—a concern of praxis—Dewey and Mead were interested in the communicative functions that transform social life—a concern with poiesis. The historical antagonism between philosophy and rhetoric, Langsdorf proposes, is the larger context of this bifurcation of linguistic product and communicative practice. She shows how classical pragmatism's orientation toward the creative productivity of communication allows the "flux of mundane experience" to be addressed contextually, and without divorcing philosophical theory from communicative practice. As an exemplar of this change of view, Langsdorf reflects upon her writing as both an invention and discovery of the event she is describing. The process and product of empirical work is thus made problematic, and an experimental attitude is fostered that conceives the art of communication as a "blend of poetic and praxial functions," through which thought emerges.

This blend reconfigures the idea of progress as a "an essential feature of emancipatory discourse," as Mitchell Aboulafia discusses in "Mead and the Many Voices of Universality" (chap. 9). He engages the modern-postmodern debate by offering a view of progress that does not succumb to metanarrative explanation, and a conception of local and individual experience that recommends itself as a universal concern of pragmatism, especially of the pragmatism of George Herbert Mead.

Aboulafia reviews Mead's conception of the intimate relation between science and social progress, and probes the common progressive assumption that science exploits whatever it touches. Science, Mead argued, should be meliorative but not determinative. Once it becomes teleological, it loses its capacity as a instrument of human choice in a democratic society. Perhaps its greatest contribution to the world is its capacity to transcend particular interest and foster an international and cosmopolitan life. Notwithstanding the romantic and enlightened sound of these views, Aboulafia argues that "in Mead we have a secularized (left) Hegelian alternative to postmodernism. It tells us that difference and novelty can be respected while some form of historical continuity is maintained." The ironic turn in this orientation, for Mead and Aboulafia, is that the singularity of an event or particular case cannot be seen or understood unless a more generalized sense of the other and "an ensuing denunciation of prejudice" is developed.

Mead's philosophy of communication hinges on the notion of global interdependence that promotes the welfare of workers. However, his examples for this possibility come from everyday communication situations, particularly those in which gestures are transformed into symbols with normative content. In addressing Mead's view of communication out of which the "generalized other" takes form, Aboulafia takes issue with Habermas's critical appropriation of Mead's philosophy. He develops the relation between self, roles, social groups, and the evolutionary potential of human experience that attempts to live by thinking according to others. Moving toward the singularity of the other creates the conditions for "more inclusive, universalistic, selves (or self)," which is, in turn, "intimately bound up with [Mead's] vision of ethical progress." Aboulafia extends this notion of universality to a study of texts in which the "deconstructivist paradigm" is inverted while the plurality of operative textual voices is still recognized, albeit demarcated heuristically.

Throughout his discussion Aboulafia emphasizes the primacy of oral communication in Mead's thinking. Recognizing the orality of written texts, he holds, is an extension of pragmatic theory that actually coheres with some voices of neopragmatism. The essays in the final portion of this volume, in taking up the expressly rhetorical dimensions of scientific practice and relating Richard Rorty's views to a consideration of speech communication and textual criticism, demonstrate that extension.

In "Talking-With as a Model for Writing-About: Implications of Rortian Pragmatism" (chap. 11), Arthur Bochner and Joanne Waugh take issue with traditional assumptions about communication as a research object and contemporary appropriations of writing as a model for speaking. They review Rorty's criticism of the "scientist as moral exemplar" and show how this exemplary status hinges on how writing fixes language into an object out of which meaning can be found. The authors trace this tendency of finding truth to Plato and show how philosophical speech became parasitic on writing that claimed a power external to ourselves. Nature can be known because this power provides ways of inscribing itself as an object, and the history of philosophy became a debate on the veracity (truth/falsity), modality (subjective/objective), and valences (strength/weakness) of various inscriptions. Bochner and Waugh propose that the linkages between language, experience, and the world developed by philosophers of science such as Sellars, Quine, and Kuhn have influenced Rorty's conceptions of communication practice. They adopt the Davidsonian notion of a "passing theory" in explicating how interpretation works with "a par-

ticular utterance on a particular occasion." The "construction of a pass-
ing theory entails just those aspects of the communication situation,"
they argue, "that are lost or ignored when it is assumed that writing can
preserve the communicative act by transmitting 'meanings' or a propo-
sitional core in an unmediated manner."

In the final section of their essay Bochner and Waugh "formulate
some goals for a human science of communication that takes talking-
with as the model for writing-about, and provide a few exemplars that
blur the narrative genres dividing literature and social science." These
exemplars are practical, not ontological, and demonstrate how the con-
versational rather than the causal can become primary. The significance
of the conversational is not to be taken lightly, since researchers in the
formal, physical, and social/human sciences situate their subject mat-
ters through rhetorical dimensions of communication. Thus "talking-
with" should become a conscious model of "writing-about," in which
the distinctions between customary genres are blurred and stories are
told that reach into the heart of communication in unexpected and edi-
fying ways.

Janet Horne would agree with this orientation to human science
research since it upholds her basic thesis about language and rhetorical
theory. In "Changing the Subject: Rorty and Contemporary Rhetorical
Theory" (chap. 12), Horne discusses the influence of "rhetoric of
inquiry," "epistemic rhetoric," and "critical rhetoric" on thinking about
research in the human sciences. She argues that the rhetorical turn
enables a shift away from epistemology toward more edifying ways of
thinking about inquiry.

Horne offers a cogent account of Rorty's influence on rhetorical
theory, his suggestions for redefining inquiry as a rhetorical enterprise,
and the disdain Rorty has encountered with regard to his political
views. Is it inconsistent with the tenets of critical rhetoric, for example,
to hold liberal bourgeois views and advocate mixing in the "bazaar"
during the day but retiring to the comforts of one's club at night? We
should not be distracted by these more or less personal preferences,
argues Horne, when taking into account Rorty's considerable contribu-
tions to the theorizing of inquiry. With regard to the classical pragmat-
ic tradition, it is clear that Rorty selectively and painstakingly develops
Dewey's work. As a corollary Horne offers an account of Rorty's con-
tributions to communication inquiry as linked in an evolutionary man-
ner to James's work, and especially to the view "that the purpose of
inquiry is production of a means of determining conduct." The means
of production for this effort should be based principally on a guarantee,
above all else, of "free and open encounter."

Horne goes on to depict Rorty's influence in relation to recent advances in rhetorical theory. She argues that Rorty's views on contingency, for example, are actually more radical than those that most rhetorical theorists, and especially advocates of epistemic rhetoric still tied to the notion of consensus, are prepared to adopt. Rorty, in the end, would appear to be a collaborator in the project of developing a critical rhetoric "without foundations," concerned with demystifying discourses of power. Demystification is, of course, a traditional province of rhetorical criticism—but with important qualifications, as Mick Presnell discusses in the final chapter of the volume.

In "Icons, Fragments, and Ironists:  Richard Rorty and Contemporary Rhetorical Criticism" (chap. 13), Presnell invokes the oral tradition of interest to so much of postmodern philosophy. Although "public address" would seem to be quite an odd form of communication in which to work if one is a postmodernist, he points out that the meaning of "public address" has changed significantly as a result of contemporary theorizing. It now includes not only mass media and other forms of popular culture, but also the deceptively mute presences of architecture, clothing, food, and other forms of semiotic expression. Hence in the past decade concern with what, exactly, constitutes a text has become a topic of debate among scholars in philosophy and literature. Presnell shows how the debate concerning textuality has developed and seemingly come to fruition for rhetorical critics around the differences between public address conceived as text, and as event.

Rorty, argues Presnell, contributes to this debate in ways that might get us beyond the tendency toward dichotomous distinctions. The nub of the debate concerns how an event becomes textualized, and how a text becomes eventful. Presnell reviews Michael Leff and Andrew Sach's discussion of the tension between content and form (*res* and *verba*) in relation to the latter concern. Content and form, they argue, should be thought of in light of their "iconic" relations. In contrast, Michael Calvin McGee holds that events take on textual form as fragments that should be linked indexically to larger historical and ideological contexts. Fragmentation is definitive of the human condition: the "apparent coherence" of nations, for example, should not distract us from their actual patchwork constitution. The same is true of public discourse; it is a fragment in itself, and it consists of fragments of other discourses.

Presnell sees this contrast between McGee on fragmentation, and Leff and Sachs on iconic relations, as a precursor to Rorty's changing the topic of conversation in order to keep it (the conversation) going.

This debate of text and event is really a language game, says Rorty, whose stakes are not very clear. In his comparisons of Rorty and Leff on one hand, and Rorty and McGee on the other, Presnell defines these stakes in terms of the communicative conditions for creating a just and equitable society—a concern that has actually motivated the study of public address since antiquity. It should be no surprise, then, that communication theorists are interested in the consequences of discourse, its poetic forms and praxial conditions, its ways of situating inquiry as well as our perceptions of the significance of events and texts, and the prospects discourse offers for a society in which people speaking and writing do so with hope for and charity toward others.

The philosophy of communication develops those interests as basic questions of the nature and function of communication. At the core of that inquiry are questions concerning the conditions for, and consequences of, diverse communicative activity. Argumentation and conversation, debate and dialogue, demonstration and interpretation, proof and performance—all give their distinctive tones to the evolution of society and self, as well as to our inquiry into that evolution. The voice of pragmatism sings in these tones. And this, the contributors to this book believe, is a song worth recovering.