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# Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM)

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# CMM: Social Reality construction

- Rules theory & practical theory that looks at how people construct their own reality or meaning in conversations
  - Rules are enmeshed into a conversation in which meaning is constantly being coordinated.
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# Some Readings on CMM

- Pearce, W. B. (1994). *Interpersonal Communication: Making social worlds.*
  - Pearce, W. B., & Cronen, V. (1980). *Communication, Action, and Meaning: The creation of social realities.*
  - Pearce, W. B., & Pearce, K. A. (2000b). Extending the theory of coordinated management of meaning (CMM) through a community dialogue process. *Communication Theory*, **10**, 405- 423
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# CMM Influenced by

- American pragmatists William James, John Dewey
  - Symbolic Interaction- George Herbert Mead
  - Gregory Bateson- pragmatism & systems theory
  - Ludwig Wittgenstein- “life as an art”, of creating possibilities for action (Wittgenstein, 1953).
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# CMM view of self

- Self is created in stories and that these stories are guidelines (scripts) for actions.
  - Self emerge from our culture
  - Our selves are part of the process by which we make our social worlds. Patterns of conversations with our parents, brothers and sisters, teachers and classmates, and government officials *produce* the “self” that we know ourselves to be”. (Pearce, 1994, p. 251)
  - CMM can help people enrich the scripts about the self to allow more possible actions.
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# CMM

- Multiple contextuality (the hierarchy model): all actions and stories exist in fluid, malleable relationships
  - tension between stories lived (interactions) and stories told (narratives).
  - Emotions are actions
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# The Hierarchy of Organized Meaning:

## Six levels of meaning

- Cultural Patterns
  - Life Scripts (the Self)
  - Relationship
  - Episodes
  - Speech act
  - Content
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# Culture

- the dominating context that persons bring into a relationship
  - “the context of the contexts in which we find ourselves and into which we act; it is the usually taken-for-granted background, or *frame*, of our actions” (Pearce, 1994 p.302).
  - Individualism or Collectivism (Martin & Nakayama, 2005)
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# Life Scripts

- Autobiographies
- Co-created



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# *Relationships*

- “the meaning of a particular relationship is determined by just those conversations that occur in it” (Pearce, 1994 p. 208).
  - Enmeshment- extent to which people identify themselves as part of the relationship
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# Episodes

- *Episodes* “function as frames that define some things as ‘inside and during’ the episode and others as ‘outside and before or after’ the episode” (Pearce, 1994 p.154).
  - “Episodes are made by a process called *punctuation*, in which conversants impose a set of distinctions on the ongoing stream of events” (Pearce, 1994, p. 154).
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## *Speech acts*

- *Speech acts* are defined as “actions that we perform by speaking”
  - Questions, promises, threats, and insults (Pearce, 1994 p. 104).
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# Coordination of Meaning

- Coordination is said to exist when two people come together and attempt to make sense out of the sequencing of messages in their conversation
  - Coordination has individuals concerned with a higher moral order (honor, dignity, and character).
  - Moral order is an opportunity for individuals to have an ethical stance in a conversation.
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# Rules

- Constitutive rules- how behavior should be interpreted
  - Regulative rules- what should come next in the conversation
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# Unwanted repetitive patterns (URPs)

- Unwanted repetitive patterns are sequential and recurring conflictual episodes that are viewed as undesirable

