Chapter 2

A Pragmatic Ethos

After viewing images of Distance Education (DE) in chapter 1, this chapter begins to construct a theory for examining those images: control of nature (and the natural body), gendered experience, transactions of bodies and tools, loss of bodies, and organic holism. I now begin using a weaving metaphor and will therefore call those issues named above the warp threads of my textual weaving. Those images run through my entire work and help maintain continuity while the rest of the chapters form the weft, running across the warp and adding strength, support, color, and variety to the weft. This is no ordinary weaving, no simple twill or herringbone. It is complex and variable. This part of the weft is composed of pragmatism and feminism and is an open weave with a hopefully welcoming and porous appeal, sometimes allowing the warp to show through and sometimes covering it. Much of the weft color and variety appears in chapter 3 where I place my personalized and embodied stories of feminism and pragmatism. Here, as I begin constructing the weft of pragmatism, I must ensure that it is porous enough to allow threads of feminism into the weave. I start the weft by describing pragmatism as an ethos. In chapter 3, I find openings in the fabric of this ethos for feminism's colors and tints. This chapter does not directly allude to Distance Education (DE) or to Instructional Technology (IT). I save that for chapters 3-5.

Ethos, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is character. Thus, a pragmatic ethos is a characterization of pragmatism. What is the character of pragmatism and can I explore its character in a pragmatic way? I will enter this circle by beginning with a very general description of my approach to pragmatism and then use that approach to describe the pragmatic ethos. This exploration is circular. However, the circle of the pragmatic ethos is virtuous rather than vicious. If I am successful, I will be doubly successful for I will depict the pragmatic ethos while using the pragmatic ethos, which as we shall see, is a very pragmatic thing to do.