CHAPTER SIX

CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF EVERYDAY LIFE

In the preceding two chapters we have dealt with contemporary grand theories of large-scale changes in the social world. In this chapter we remain focused on contemporary theories, but this time those that are oriented to a variety of small-scale phenomena associated with everyday life. We begin with symbolic interactionism, a theory strongly influenced by the thinking of George Herbert Mead (see Chapter 3). This is followed by an examination of dramaturgy, which sees much of social life as analogous to a theatrical performance. We then address ethnomethodology, which is concerned with the methods we all use regularly to accomplish our lives on a daily basis. Next is exchange theory, which looks at social relationships in terms of rewards and costs and argues, among other things, that we are likely to continue in relationships that are rewarding and discontinue those that are costly. Finally, we discuss rational choice theory, which focuses on actors making choices that maximize the satisfaction of their needs and wants.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The focus of **symbolic interactionism**, like that of the other theories discussed in this chapter, is on everyday life. This theory's distinctive focus, as its name suggests,

symbolic interactionism The school of sociology that, following Mead, focuses on symbolic interaction, the distinctive human ability to relate to one another not only through gestures but also through significant symbols.

is on interaction (as well as action and people as agents) and the symbols (and their meanings) that are deeply implicated in it. We can best address this theory by first enumerating some of its most fundamental assumptions and principles.

First, people act toward things, but they do so on the basis of the meanings those things have for them. Thus, we act toward the American flag—say, by saluting it—based on the meaning that the flag has for us (our homeland) and not simply its physical characteristics. This also means that others can act toward it in other ways (say, by burning or defacing it) because it has other meanings (a symbol of U.S. imperialism) for them.

Second, these meanings stem from our interactions with other people. Thus, we may have learned about the flag as a positive symbol through interactions at school, while enemies of the United States may have learned their meanings through interactions with groups of revolutionaries.

Third, people do not simply internalize the meanings that they learn through social interaction; they are also able to modify those meanings through an interpretive process. Thus, while one may have learned to see the flag as a positive symbol, dissatisfaction with, say, America's foreign policies might lead one to reinterpret the flag and to feel a bit less positive toward, or even develop negative sentiments about, it and what it stands for. Conversely, those who develop negative views in a revolutionary cell may become more positive about the flag and what it symbolizes as a result of U.S. actions that satisfy some of the revolutionaries' demands.

Fourth, people, in contrast to other animals, are unique in their ability to use and rely on symbols. While other animals react directly or blindly to stimuli, people are able to give them meaning (turn them into symbols) and then act on the basis of that meaning. To put this another way, other animals react instinctively to objects, while we think through their meaning. Thus, a hungry animal might eat a poisonous mushroom, but we would be able to think through the fact that we had better not eat it because it might be poisonous.

Fifth, people become human through social interaction, especially in the early years with family members and then in school. We are born with the capacity to become human, but that potential can be realized only through human interaction. Thus, feral children—those raised in the wild by animals (e.g., wolves)—cannot become human, but they can begin to become human if they are rescued and have the opportunity to interact with other humans.

Sixth, as Mead made clear (see Chapter 3), people are conscious, capable of reflecting on themselves and what they do, and therefore capable of shaping their actions and interactions. In Mead's terms, then, people have both a "mind" and a "self." Particularly important is our ability to interact with ourselves in order to decide how to interact with objects in our world. This gives us a large measure of autonomy in our actions, but we certainly are not totally free to do as we wish—there are many external constraints on our actions.

Seventh, people have purposes when they act in, as well as toward, situations. We define situations, give them meaning, and then act toward them. We choose ends and then act toward them (although not always successfully or in a linear manner, since we may encounter all sorts of barriers and roadblocks).

KEY CONCEPTS

The Conceptual Contributions of Charles Horton Cooley

Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929) is best known for his concept of the **looking-glass self**. We form our sense of ourselves by looking in some sort of mirror. That mirror is the other people with whom we interact. We use others as a mirror to assess who we are and how we are doing. We look at their eyes and their body language, and we listen to their words. Looking in that mirror, we determine whether we are who we want to be and whether our actions are having the desired effect. If we see what we expect to see, if people evaluate us the way we hope, if they do what we want them to do, then the mirror confirms ourselves and we continue on as we have been thinking and acting. However, if the reverse occurs, then we may need to reassess our actions and even our sense of who we are. If the looking-glass continues to show us a reflection that is different from what we think we are, then we may need to reevaluate our sense of who we are—in other words, reevaluate our self-image. The looking-glass self reflects Cooley's interest, like that of others associated with symbolic interactionism, in the mind, self, and interaction.

Another key concept associated with Cooley is the **primary group**, an intimate face-to-face group that plays a crucial role in linking the individual to the larger society. Of special importance are the primary groups of the young, mainly the family and friendship groups, within which the individual grows into a social being. It is mainly within the primary group that the looking-glass self develops and the child makes the transition from thinking mainly about himself to taking others into consideration. As a result of this transformation, the child begins to develop the capabilities that will enable him to become a contributing member of society.

Cooley also made an important methodological contribution by arguing that sociologists need to put themselves in the places of the actors they are studying (usually in the real world) in order to better understand the operation of their mental processes. Cooley called this **sympathetic introspection**—putting oneself in the places and the minds of those being studied, doing so in a way that is sympathetic to who they are and what they are thinking, and trying to understand the meanings and the motives that lie at the base of their behavior. This method continues to be one of the cornerstones of the study of everyday life, at least for some sociologists.

looking-glass self The idea that we form our sense of ourselves by using others, and their reactions to us, as a mirror to assess who we are and how we are doing.

primary group An intimate face-to-face group that plays a crucial role in linking the individual to the larger society. Of special importance are the primary groups of the young, mainly the family and friendship groups.

sympathetic introspection The methodology of putting oneself in the places and the minds of those one is studying, doing so in a way that is sympathetic to who they are and what they are thinking, and trying to understand the meanings and the motives that lie at the base of their behavior.

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

Antidepressants: A Symbolic Interactionist View

Recent years have seen significant growth in the numbers of people using antidepressant medications such as Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Lexapro, and Cymbalta. Most people think of antidepressant medications as a wholly biological technology: they help people to overcome depression and anxiety by modifying brain chemistry. However, the symbolic interactionist David Karp argues that there is also a sociological dimension to antidepressant use. For many people the use of antidepressants is an occasion for the redefinition of the self. This is because, in contemporary society, antidepressants and mental illness have powerful symbolic meanings that have implications for the way people think about themselves and their psychological suffering. For example, people who are depressed sometimes blame themselves for their depression. They may think that they are failures because they cannot will their depression away. However, when people take antidepressants they learn that they are not to blame for their illness—rather, their depression is caused by an imbalance in brain chemistry. This not only gives them a feeling of relief but also allows them to think about themselves in new and sometimes empowering ways: I'm not to blame, it's an illness. The symbolic meaning associated with antidepressants can also be negative. Even though cultural understandings of mental illness have changed significantly over the past fifty years, there is still a stigma associated with mental illness. People may be afraid to take antidepressants because they know that doing so will place them in the stigmatized category of "mentally ill person." They will no longer be able to think of themselves as merely sad. Rather, the fact that they are taking psychiatric medications becomes proof to them that they have a real illness called depression. The power of the negative connotations of mental illness can be so strong that people will avoid or stop taking antidepressant medications. Whether the meanings that individuals ascribe to antidepressants are positive, negative, or a combination the two, what should be clear is that these medications have socially determined symbolic meanings that affect the construction of the self.

Eighth, we can see society as consisting of people engaging in social interaction. Thus, society is not some macro-level entity separable from people. People produce society; society is the joint action of people.

There is, of course, much more to symbolic interactionism than this, but this brief overview, as well as the earlier, more detailed discussion of Mead's ideas, should give a sense of this theoretical perspective.

However, we need to make one more basic point before we move on. Symbolic interactionists are inclined to do social research rather than to develop abstract theories. This means they often go out and study people and get at their meanings

from their point of view. To do this they must often venture into the real world and observe and interact with people.

A key figure in this tradition of social research in the real world is Robert E. Park (1864–1944). Park had been a reporter before becoming a sociologist, and as a reporter he was accustomed to collecting data on and observing whatever social reality he was writing about. When he became a sociologist, Park urged his students as well as colleagues to do much the same thing. In one sense, he was encouraging them to do what has come to be known as **fieldwork**—that is, venturing into the field to observe and collect relevant data. More specifically, as a result of the urging of Park (and others), the key method of symbolic interactionists became **observation**. The attraction of being observers is that researchers can both engage in sympathetic introspection and put themselves in the place of actors to try to understand their meanings and motives and observe the various actions that people take. Thus, observation is a perfect way for those associated with symbolic interactionism to study the thought processes, actions, and interactions of everyday life.

DRAMATURGY

The concept of self lies at the heart of symbolic interactionism. Herbert Blumer defined the self in extremely simple terms as the fact that people can be the objects of their own actions; that is, people have the ability to act not only toward others but also toward themselves (e.g., by admonishing themselves for saying foolish things). Both types of actions are based on the kinds of objects people are to themselves (e.g., whether they look upon themselves in a positive or negative light). Being able to do this, to act toward themselves, allows people to act in a conscious manner rather than merely react to external stimuli. People actually interact with themselves to point out the things toward which they are acting and the meanings of those things. They interpret the meanings of things and alter those interpretations on the basis of the situation they are in and what they hope to accomplish.

The most important work on the self in symbolic interactionism is *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, by Erving Goffman. Goffman's conception of the self is deeply indebted to Mead's (see Chapter 3) ideas, in particular his discussion of the tension between *I*, the spontaneous self, and *me*, social constraints within the self. This tension is mirrored in Goffman's work on what

fieldwork A methodology used by symbolic interactionists and other sociologists that involves venturing into the field (the day-to-day social world) to observe and collect relevant data.

observation A methodology closely related to fieldwork, in which symbolic interactionists (and other sociologists) study the social world by observing what is transpiring in it. In the case of symbolic interactionism, this enables researchers to engage in sympathetic introspection and put themselves in the place of actors in order to understand meanings and motives and to observe the various actions that people take.

to him was a critical discrepancy between our all-too-human selves on the one hand and our socialized selves on the other. The tension results from the difference between what we may want to do spontaneously and what people expect us to do. We are confronted with demands to do what is expected of us; moreover, we are not supposed to waver. In order to cope with this tension and to maintain a stable self-image, people perform for their social audiences. As a result of this interest in performance, Goffman focused on **dramaturgy**, or a view of social life as a series of dramatic performances akin to those that take place in the theater.

Dramaturgy

Goffman's ideas about the self were shaped by his dramaturgical approach. To Goffman (and to most other symbolic interactionists), the self is not a possession of the actor but rather the product of the dramatic interaction between actor and audience. In other words, the **self** is a sense of who one is that is a dramatic effect emerging from the immediate scene being presented. Because the self is a product of dramatic interaction, it is vulnerable to disruption during the performance. Much of Goffman's dramaturgy is concerned with the processes by which such disturbances are prevented or dealt with. Although the bulk of his discussion focuses on these dramaturgical contingencies, Goffman pointed out that most performances are successful. The result is that in ordinary circumstances a firm self is accorded to performers, and it appears to emanate from the performers.

Goffman assumed that when individuals interact, they want to present a certain sense of self that will be accepted by others. However, even as they present that self, actors are aware that members of the audience can disturb their performance. For that reason actors are attuned to the need to control the audience, especially those members of it who might be disruptive. The actors hope that the sense of self that they present to the audience will be strong enough for the audience to define the actors as the actors want to be defined. The actors also hope that this will cause the audience to act voluntarily as the actors want them to. Goffman characterized this central interest as **impression management.** It involves techniques actors use to maintain certain impressions in the face of problems they are likely to encounter and methods they use to cope with these problems.

dramaturgy A view of social life as a series of dramatic performances akin to those that take place in the theater.

self To Goffman, a sense of who one is that is a dramatic effect emerging from the immediate dramaturgical scene being presented.

impression management The techniques actors use to maintain certain impressions in the face of problems they are likely to encounter and the methods they use to cope with these problems.

Front Stage. Following the theatrical analogy, Goffman spoke of a **front stage**, that part of the performance that generally functions in rather fixed and general ways to define the situation for those who observe the performance. A professor lecturing to a class may be said to be in her front stage, as would a student at a fraternity party. Within the front stage, Goffman further differentiated between the setting and the personal front. The **setting** is the physical scene that ordinarily must be there if the actors are to perform. Without it, the actors usually cannot perform. For example, a surgeon generally requires an operating room, a taxi driver a cab, and an ice-skater an ice rink. The **personal front** consists of those items of expressive equipment that the audience identifies with the performers and expects them to carry with them into the setting. A surgeon, for instance, is expected to dress in a medical gown, have certain instruments, and so on.

Goffman subdivided the personal front into appearance and manner. **Appearance** includes those items that tell the audience the performer's social status (e.g., the taxi driver's license). **Manner** (e.g., the expression of confidence on the surgeon's face) tells the audience what sort of role the performer expects to play in the situation. A brusque manner and a meek manner indicate quite different kinds of performances. In general, we expect appearance and manner to be consistent.

Although Goffman approached the front and other aspects of his system as a symbolic interactionist, he did discuss their structural character. He argued that fronts tend to become institutionalized, so collective representations arise about what is to go on in a certain front. Very often when actors take on established roles, they find particular fronts already established for such performances. The professor who appears before a class has a front that has been established by many professors and students who have come before her. The result, Goffman argued, is that fronts tend to be selected, not created. This idea conveys a much more structural image than we would receive from most symbolic interactionists.

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front stage That part of a dramaturgical performance that generally functions in rather fixed and general ways to define the situation for those who observe the performance.

setting The physical scene that ordinarily must be there if the actors are to engage in a dramaturgical performance.

personal front Those items of expressive equipment that the audience identifies with the performers and expects them to carry with them into the setting.

appearance The way the actor looks to the audience, especially those items that indicate the performer's social status.

manner The way an actor conducts him- or herself, which tells the audience what sort of role the actor expects to play in the situation.

KEY CONCEPT

Role Distance

Another of Goffman's interests was the degree to which an individual embraces a given role. In his view, because of the large number of roles, few people get completely involved in any given role. **Role distance** is the degree to which individuals separate themselves from the roles they are in. For example, if older children ride on a merry-go-round, they are likely to be aware that they are really too old to enjoy such an experience. One way they might cope with this feeling is by demonstrating distance from the role by performing seemingly dangerous acts in a careless, lackadaisical way while on the merry-go-round. In performing such acts, the older children are really explaining to the audience that they are not as immersed in the activity as small children might be or that if they are, it is because of the special things they are doing.

One of Goffman's key insights is that role distance is a function of social status. High-status and low-status people often manifest role distance for different reasons. For example, a high-status surgeon may manifest role distance in the operating room to relieve the tension of the operating team. People in low-status positions usually manifest more defensiveness in exhibiting role distance. For instance, people who clean toilets may do so in a careless and uninterested manner. They may be trying to tell their audience that they are too good for such work.

Despite such a structural view, Goffman's most interesting insights lie in the domain of interaction. He argued that because people generally try to present an idealized picture of themselves in their front-stage performances, inevitably they feel that they must hide things in their performances:

1. Actors may want to conceal secret pleasures they engaged in prior to the performance (e.g., the professor who consumed alcohol just before entering class) or in past lives (e.g., the physician who has overcome a drug addiction) that are incompatible with their performance.
2. Actors may want to conceal errors made in the preparation of the performance as well as steps taken to correct these errors. For example, a surgeon may seek to hide the fact that he prepared to do an appendectomy when, in fact, he was scheduled to do open heart surgery. A professor who brings the wrong notes to class may be forced to improvise during the class period in order to conceal that fact.

role distance The degree to which individuals separate themselves from the roles they are in.

3. Actors may find it necessary to show only end products and to conceal the process involved in producing them. For example, professors may spend several hours preparing their lectures, but they may want to act as if they have always known the material.

4. It may be necessary for actors to conceal from the audience that dirty work was involved in the making of the end products. Dirty work may include doing things that are immoral, illegal, or degrading. For example, a manufacturer of peanut butter may seek to conceal from government inspectors the fact that an inordinate number of rodent droppings and rodent hairs found their way into the finished product.

5. In giving a certain performance, actors may have to let other standards slide. For example, in order to keep up with a busy surgical schedule, the surgeon may not be able to find the time to do enough reading to keep up with recent developments in his field.

6. Finally, actors probably find it necessary to hide any insults, humiliations, or deals made so that the performance could go on. A surgeon may well want to hide the fact that he has been admonished by his superiors for not keeping up with recent developments and that he will be suspended if he does not demonstrate that he is reducing his surgical schedule so that he has time to do so.

Generally, actors have a vested interest in hiding all of the facts discussed above from their audience.

Another aspect of dramaturgy in the front stage is that actors often try to convey the impression that they are closer to the audience than they actually are. Actors may try to foster the impression that the performance in which they are engaged at the moment is their only performance or at least their most important one. Thus, a physician must try to convey the impression to every patient that he or she is *the* most important patient and the object of her undivided attention. To do this, actors have to be sure that their audiences are segregated, so that the falsity of the performance is not discovered. The physician's patients would be upset to learn that the doctor has purposely tried to make each one of them feel as if he or she is the most important patient. Even if the falsity is discovered, Goffman argued, the audiences themselves may try to cope with it to avoid shattering their idealized image of the actor. Thus, the patients may console themselves that this is just the way doctors are, and, in any case, the doctor does excellent work. This reveals the interactional character of performances. A successful performance depends on the involvement of all the parties.

Another example of this kind of impression management is an actor's attempt to convey the idea that there is something unique about this performance as well as about his or her relationship to the audience. Thus, a car salesperson may seek to convey the idea that he really likes a particular customer and is giving her a far

better deal than he would give anyone else. The audience, too, wants to feel that it is the recipient of a unique performance. The car buyer wants to feel that the salesperson is not giving her the same old spiel and that she has a special relationship with the salesperson.

Actors try to make sure that all the parts of any performance blend together. A priest might seek to ensure consistency and continuity among his Sunday sermons. In some cases, a single discordant aspect can disrupt a performance. However, performances vary in the amount of consistency required. A slip by a priest on a sacred occasion might be terribly disruptive, but if a taxi driver makes one wrong turn, the overall performance is not likely to be greatly damaged.

Another technique employed by performers is **mystification**. Actors often tend to confound their audience by restricting the contact between themselves and the audience. They do not want the audience to see the very mundane things that go into a performance. Thus, a professor may prepare a lecture by simply reading a textbook not being used in that particular class, but she will certainly conceal this fact and attempt to act as if she has known this material and much else for a long time. By generating social distance between themselves and the audience, actors try to create a sense of awe in the audience. Students are supposed to be awed by how much a professor knows and how effortlessly a mass of information can be brought to bear on a particular lecture. This awe, in turn, keeps the audience from questioning the performance. Goffman pointed out that the audience is involved in this process and often seeks to maintain the credibility of the performance by keeping its distance from the performer. In the case being discussed here, students would not want to know how the professor prepares for class because that would demystify the whole process.

Goffman also had an interest in teams. As a symbolic interactionist, he believed that a focus on individual actors obscures important facts about interaction. Thus, Goffman's basic unit of analysis was not the individual but the team. A **team** is any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single routine. The preceding discussion of the relationship between the performer and the audience is really about teams. Each member is reliant on the others, because all can disrupt the performance and all are aware that an act is being put on. Goffman concluded that a team is a kind of secret society. A class is such a secret society, and class members cooperate with the professor in making each class meeting a credible performance. Of course, at times a professor makes so many slips, or reveals so many weaknesses, that the students can no longer ignore them and the performance is disrupted, if not destroyed. However, this a rarity and something students and professors, audiences and performers, seek to avoid at all costs.

mystification An effort by actors to confound their audience by restricting the contact between themselves and the audience, concealing the mundane things that go into their performance.

team Any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single performance.

Back Stage and Outside. Goffman also discussed a **back stage**, where facts suppressed in the front stage or various kinds of informal actions may appear. A back stage is usually adjacent to the front stage, but it is also cut off from it. Performers can reliably expect no members of their front audience to appear in the back. Furthermore, they engage in various types of impression management to make sure of this. A performance is likely to become difficult when actors are unable to prevent the audience from entering the back stage. The doctors' lounge is the back stage relative to the office where physicians interact with patients. Safely in the back-stage lounge, doctors can say things about their patients, their expertise, or their performance that they would never say to patients in the front stage. A doctor would rarely, if ever, tell a patient that she dislikes him, or that she has no idea what ails him or what to do about it.

A third, residual domain is the **outside**, which is neither front nor back. For example, a brothel is (usually) outside, relative to the doctor's office and lounge.

KEY CONCEPT

Stigma

Goffman was interested in **stigma**, or the gap between what a person ought to be, **virtual social identity,** and what a person actually is, **actual social identity**. Goffman focused on the dramaturgical interaction between stigmatized people and "normals." The nature of that interaction depends on which of two types of stigma an individual has. In the case of **discredited stigma**, the actor assumes that the differences are known by the audience members or are evident to them (e.g., a paraplegic or someone who has lost a limb). A **discreditable stigma** is one in which

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back stage Where facts suppressed in the front stage or various kinds of informal actions may appear. A back stage is usually adjacent to the front stage, but it is also cut off from it. Performers can reliably expect no members of their front audience to appear in the back.

outside Neither front nor back; literally outside the realm of the performance.

stigma A gap between virtual and actual social identity.

virtual social identity What a person ought to be.

actual social identity What a person actually is.

discredited stigma A stigma that the actor assumes is known by the audience members or is evident to them.

discreditable stigma A stigma that is neither known by audience members nor discernible by them.

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the differences are neither known by audience members nor perceivable by them (e.g., a person who has had a colostomy or a homosexual passing as straight). For someone with a discredited stigma, the basic dramaturgical problem is managing the tension produced by the fact that people know of the problem. For someone with a discreditable stigma, the dramaturgical problem is managing information so that the stigma remains unknown to the audience.

Most of the text of Goffman's *Stigma* is devoted to people with obvious, often grotesque, stigmas (e.g., the loss of a nose). However, as the book unfolds, the reader realizes that Goffman is really saying that we are all stigmatized at some time or other, or in some setting or other. His examples include the Jew passing in a predominantly Christian community, the fat person in a group of people of average weight, and the individual who has lied about his past and constantly must be sure that the audience does not learn of this deception.

However, it is possible that a brothel could become a back stage if it is visited by doctors or patients who then bend the ear of the sex worker by complaining about each other.

The latter illustrates the idea that *no* area is *always* one of these three domains. Also, a given area can occupy all three domains at different times. A professor's office is front stage when a student visits, back stage when the student leaves, and outside when the professor is at a university basketball game.

Erving Goffman (1922–1982)

A Biographical Vignette

Erving Goffman died in 1982 at the peak of his fame. He had long been regarded as a cult figure in sociological theory. He achieved this status in spite of the fact that he had been professor in the prestigious sociology department at the University of California, Berkeley, and later held an endowed chair at the Ivy League's University of Pennsylvania.

By the 1980s he had emerged as a centrally important theorist. He had been elected president of the American Sociological Association in the year he died but was unable to give his presidential address because of advanced illness. Given Goffman's maverick status, Randall Collins says of his address: "Everyone wondered what he would do for his presidential address: a straight, traditional presentation seemed unthinkable for Goffman with his reputation as an iconoclast. . . . We got a far more dramatic message: presidential address cancelled, Goffman dying. It was an appropriately Goffmanian way to go out."

Impression Management

In general, impression management is oriented to guarding against a series of unexpected actions, such as unintended gestures, inopportune intrusions, and faux pas, as well as intended actions, such as making a scene. Goffman was interested in the various methods of dealing with such problems.

1. One set of methods involves actions aimed at producing dramaturgical loyalty by, for example, fostering high in-group loyalty, preventing team members from identifying with those outside the performance, and changing audiences periodically so that they do not become too knowledgeable about the performers.
2. Goffman suggested various forms of dramaturgical discipline, such as having the presence of mind to avoid slips, maintain self-control, and manage the facial expressions and verbal tone of one's performance.
3. He identified various types of dramaturgical circumspection, such as determining in advance how a performance should go, planning for emergencies, selecting loyal teammates, selecting good audiences, being involved in small teams where dissension is less likely, making only brief appearances, preventing audience access to private information, and settling on a complete agenda to prevent unforeseen occurrences.

The audience also has a stake in successful impression management by the actor or actors. The audience often acts to save the performance through such

CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

The Stigmatization of Muslims after September 11, 2001

Prior to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, relatively little hostility was aimed at Muslims in the United States. They were simply yet another group of immigrants who had integrated or were integrating into the United States. It was other groups—mainly African Americans and Mexican immigrants (especially those here illegally)—who were most often stigmatized; Muslims largely escaped this process. However, the heinous acts of September 11—planned and committed largely, if not exclusively, by Muslims associated with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda—changed all that. Since then there has been an increasing and palpable tendency for many Americans to stigmatize

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Muslims both within and outside the United States. The growth of the Islamic State in the Middle East and the heated, sometimes anti-immigrant, rhetoric during and after the 2016 American presidential campaign added to this stigmatization. Some Muslims have a discredited stigma since their physical appearance, accents, modes of dress, and so on make it clear to others (or seem to) that they are Muslims. Other Muslims whose appearance, accents, and ways of dressing are not dissimilar from those of most other Americans are more likely to confront the stresses and strains of a discreditable stigma. Because of this, non-Muslims who are mistakenly thought to be Muslim are also stigmatized.

One indicator of the increasing stigmatization of Muslims is the tendency for movies and television shows to depict Muslims as villains. This is the case, for example, in shows like 24 and *Homeland,* both of which have depicted groups of ruthless Muslims intent on spreading death and destruction in the United States by, for example, infiltrating security agencies, blowing up bombs on American soil, or causing the meltdown of nuclear reactors throughout the country. During the 2004–2005 season of *24,* the show's stigmatization of Muslims was so blatant that the network issued disclaimers. At one point, the show's star, Kiefer Sutherland, appeared in a spot in which he claimed that the stigmatization of Muslims was *not* the intent of the show and stated that many Muslims are good Americans. In one episode, two clearly Muslim shop owners were depicted allying themselves with Jack Bauer (Sutherland's character) and taking up arms against a private army employed by a ruthless defense contractor. Such disclaimers and actions did little to counter the stigmatization of Muslims on the show—and increasingly in the larger society.

devices as giving great interest and attention to it, avoiding emotional outbursts, not noticing slips, and giving special consideration to neophyte performers.

One thing that many critics of Goffman's thinking on dramaturgy have pointed out is his cynical view of actors. He believed that actors are putting on performances and they are well aware of that fact. They cynically manipulate their performances and the impressions they seek to make in order to accomplish their objectives. They are generally quite aware that some aspects of what they say and do are false, but they persevere nonetheless.

Emotion Management

Goffman briefly discussed the role that emotions, such as shame, play in the management of social performances. For example, he suggested that people attempt to "save face" in their performances to avoid the embarrassment of a "failed" performance. This said, for the most part, Goffman's theory prioritized

the symbolic or cognitive (thinking) aspects of social performance over emotional aspects of performance. Starting in the 1980s, as part of a more general sociological enthusiasm for the study of emotions, Arlie Hochschild began supplementing Goffman's dramaturgical theory by analyzing **emotion management**, the techniques that people use to express, and control, emotion in a social performance.

According to Hochschild, while emotions are connected to biological processes, such as changes in heart rate, blood flow, and hormone levels, they can also be manipulated through social processes. As with Goffman's concept of impression management, Hochschild says that the success of social performances requires the presentation of context-appropriate emotions. For example, when a friend tells you that she has had a very bad day, the appropriate response is a display of sympathy rather than laughter. These emotional performances do not occur naturally, but rather depend on a person's ability to conjure up and display the right kind of feeling at the right time.

To develop this idea, drawing on the writings of Russian theater actor Constantin Stanislavski, Hochschild distinguishes between surface acting and deep acting. In **surface acting**, a person manipulates surface appearances such as facial expression and tone of voice in order to convey an emotional expression to others. The politician, for example, smiles and warmly shakes a supporter's hand in order to communicate appreciation. Goffman is regarded as the master theorist of surface acting, and in fact a criticism of his work is that he reduced all of human behavior to strategic and cynical forms of surface acting.

To describe the concept of **deep acting**, Hochschild relies on Stanislavski's technique of method acting. Stanislavski advised actors to communicate emotion not only through the surface of the body but through the "soul" as well. In deep acting the performance of emotions comes from the actor's living through them. A deep actor does not simply perform the emotions but actually experiences them as part of the performance. To do this, the actor recalls memories of situations from her own past in which she experienced emotions similar to those required by the present social context. By bringing the personal emotional past into the present situation, the actor is able to perform emotion with realism and authenticity. Unlike the handshaking politician, the actor is not merely going through the motions. Rather, she is digging deep to actually feel the emotion in the present. Hochschild breaks the process down into several steps:

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emotion management The techniques that people use to express, and control, emotion in a social performance.

surface acting A performance in which a person manipulates surface appearances such as facial expression and tone of voice in order to convey an emotional expression to others.

deep acting A performance in which a person recalls personal emotional experiences in order to create an authentic emotional performance in the present.

- A person recognizes that she or he is expected to feel a particular way in a situation.
- The person then recalls an appropriate **emotion memory**, an autobiographical episode that carries within it strong feelings.
- The person then acts "as if" the feeling contained in the memory is relevant to the present moment.
- This allows the person to deeply feel the emotion appropriate to the situation.

Hochschild gives numerous examples of how this works in everyday life. A person is not as strongly affected by a friend's mental breakdown as would be expected, so he recalls a similar episode from his own past and uses that emotion memory to better sympathize with his friend. A young Catholic woman works hard to feel love for a man in order to justify having slept with him. In emotion management there is an intense use of memory and imagination in order to bring the body into alignment with the expectations of the moment.

This said, emotion work involves more than a person's relationship with her or his own emotion memory. Hochschild identifies many ways in which people use their immediate settings to conjure up deep feeling. For example, people may rely on *stage props* to help them bring up emotion memories. Or they may rely on friends and family—members of their *performance team*, to use Goffman's term—to help them feel the right emotions. Alternatively, people might leave particularly evocative settings in order to suppress unwanted emotions. Here we see that emotion work is used not only to evoke particular emotions but also to suppress particular emotions. If, for example, an individual starts to feel inappropriate joy at the failure of a friend or classmate, she might imagine a similar failure from her own past. If this emotion work is successful she will suppress the emotion of joy and evoke the more appropriate emotion of sympathy.

Feeling Rules. Hochschild also describes the many **feeling rules** that influence the way people manage their emotions in particular situations. Feeling rules are culturally determined standards for emotion management. For example, different cultures have different rules for the expression of grief at the death of a loved one. Some cultures expect a loud and joyous celebration of the deceased person's life, accompanied by alcohol and food consumption. Other cultures expect a solemn ceremony of commemoration. Feeling rules lay out the extent, direction, and duration of feeling in a particular situation. Extent refers to how strongly

emotion memory A memory of an autobiographical episode that carries within it strong feelings.

feeling rules Culturally determined standards for emotion management.

a particular emotion should be felt. Should I be very happy at the birth of my friend's child or just a little bit happy? Direction refers to the kind of emotion appropriate to a situation. Can I feel sad at the birth of my friend's child? Duration refers to the length of time that a particular feeling should be felt. Can I feel happy for my friend for days, weeks, months, a year?

More specifically, feeling rules influence everyday interactions by setting out guidelines for the interpersonal exchange of emotions. Here Hochschild likens emotional exchange to gift giving. Like the well-given gift, the appropriate exchange of feeling ensures the viability of the social bond. In everyday life, then, we expect to receive certain feelings from others and to give back certain feelings to others. These rules also bear upon the previous discussion of surface acting and deep acting. Hochschild notes that people are quite good at recognizing the difference between surface and deep acting. In some situations, where the feeling rules allow, we can exchange feelings through surface acting. We fully expect that the politician's expression of warmth for a supporter is, at least in part, a surface performance. We are usually content if the politician merely puts in the effort to keep up this performance. In other cases, such as a love affair, emotional exchange requires deep acting. If a person feels that his lover is only going through the motions rather than conjuring real feeling, this will generally be considered an inadequate exchange of feeling, and the relationship will be put at risk.

KEY CONCEPT

The Commercialization of Feeling

In addition to drawing on the ideas of Goffman and Stanislavski, Hochschild uses the ideas of Karl Marx to discuss emotion management. Hochschild first examined the **commercialization of feeling** in her famous 1983 book-length study of airline stewardesses, *The Managed Heart.* Studying economic production in the 18th and 19th centuries, Karl Marx argued that economic value was produced through manual labor. In contrast, Hochschild argues that in contemporary America economic value is increasingly produced through service work. A large component of service work involves emotional labor. For example, in the airline industry flight attendants are expected to maintain a happy face despite long hours and often challenging passengers (another example, familiar to many university students, is the emotion work conducted by servers in restaurants

(Continued)

commercialization of feeling The management of emotion to produce economic value in service industries. Examples include the work conducted by flight attendants and restaurant servers.

(Continued)

and bars). The emotional atmosphere that the flight attendant creates within the airplane cabin is one component of the product sold by the airline. Indeed, as Hochschild's work reveals, industry managers provide flight attendants with specific instructions on the kinds of feelings they are to project to customers and the techniques they can use to generate these feelings. Where manual labor exerts a toll on the body, service work exerts a toll on the emotional system. At one level, of course, this kind of emotional labor can be viewed as surface acting, and the individual can maintain some role distance from the performance. However, Hochschild worries that the increasing preponderance of corporately managed emotion work may affect people's capacity to feel and detect deeper forms of emotional expression in other areas of their lives.

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Given its Greek roots, the term *ethnomethodology* literally means the methods that people use on a daily basis to accomplish their everyday lives. To put it slightly differently, the world is seen as an ongoing practical accomplishment. People are viewed as rational, but they use practical reasoning, not formal logic, in accomplishing their everyday lives.

Defining Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is the study of ordinary members of society in the everyday situations in which they find themselves and the ways in which they use commonsense knowledge, procedures, and considerations to gain an understanding of, navigate in, and act on those situations. We can gain insight into the nature of ethnomethodology by examining efforts by its founder, Harold Garfinkel, to define it. Like Émile Durkheim (see Chapter 2), Garfinkel considers social facts to be the fundamental sociological phenomenon. However, Garfinkel's social facts are very different from Durkheim's social facts. For Durkheim, social facts are external to and coercive of individuals. Those who adopt such a focus tend to see actors as constrained or determined by social structures and institutions and able to exercise little or no independent judgment. In the acerbic terms of the ethnomethodologists, such sociologists tend to treat actors like judgmental dopes.

ethnomethodology The study of ordinary members of society in the everyday situations in which they find themselves and the ways in which they use commonsense knowledge, procedures, and considerations to gain an understanding of, navigate in, and act on those situations.

In contrast, ethnomethodology treats the objectivity of social facts as the accomplishment of members (see below)—as a product of members' methodological activities. In other words, ethnomethodology is concerned with the organization of everyday, ordinary life. To the ethnomethodologist, the ways in which we go about organizing our ordinary, day-to-day lives are extraordinary.

Ethnomethodology is certainly not a macrosociology in the sense intended by Durkheim and his concept of a social fact, but its adherents do not see it as a microsociology either. Thus, while ethnomethodologists refuse to treat actors as judgmental dopes, they do not believe that people are continually thinking about themselves and what they ought to do in every situation that presents itself. Rather, they recognize that, most often, action is routine and relatively unreflective. The problem is to understand how these routines are created and then recreated every time people get together. Ethnomethodologists focus not on actors or individuals but rather on members. And they view members not as individuals but rather as membership activities, or the artful practices through which people produce what are *for them* both large-scale structures (e.g., bureaucracy, society) and the structures of everyday life (e.g., patterns of day-to-day interaction). In sum, ethnomethodologists are interested in *neither* microstructures *nor* macrostructures; they are concerned with the artful practices that produce people's sense of *both* types of structures. What Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists have sought is a new way of getting at the traditional concern of sociology with objective structures, both small and large scale.

Accounts

One of Garfinkel's key points about ethnomethods is that they are reflexively accountable. **Accounts** are the ways in which actors explain (describe, criticize, and idealize) specific situations. **Accounting** is the process by which people offer accounts in order to make sense of the world. Ethnomethodologists devote a lot of attention to analyzing people's accounts, as well as to the ways in which accounts are offered and accepted (or rejected) by others. This is one of the reasons that ethnomethodologists are preoccupied with analyzing conversations. For example, when a student explains to her professor why she failed to take an examination, she is offering an account. The student is trying to make sense out of an event for her professor. Ethnomethodologists are interested in the nature of that account but also more generally in the **accounting practices** by which the student offers the account and the professor accepts or rejects it. In analyzing accounts, ethnomethodologists adopt a stance of ethnomethodological indifference. They

accounts The ways in which actors explain (describe, criticize, and idealize) specific situations.

accounting The process by which people offer accounts in order to make sense of the world.

accounting practices The ways in which one person offers an account and another person accepts or rejects that account.

do not judge the nature of the accounts but rather analyze them in terms of how they are used in practical action. They are concerned with the accounts as well as the methods needed by both speaker and listener to proffer, understand, and accept or reject accounts.

Extending the idea of accounts, ethnomethodologists take great pains to point out that sociologists, like everyone else, offer accounts. Reports of sociological studies can be seen as accounts, and ethnomethodologists can analyze them in the same way they can study all other accounts. This perspective on sociology serves to demystify the work of sociologists—indeed, of all scientists. A good deal of sociology (indeed, all sciences) involves commonsense interpretations. Ethnomethodologists can study the accounts of the sociologist in the same way that they can study the accounts of the layperson. Thus, the everyday practices of sociologists and all scientists come under the scrutiny of the ethnomethodologist.

We can say that accounts are reflexive in the sense that they enter into the constitution of the state of affairs they make observable and are intended to deal with. When we offer an account of a situation that we are in, we are in the process altering the nature of that situation. If you are interacting with someone, realize that you have just made a faux pas, and seek to explain (account for) that mistake, in doing so you are changing the nature of that interaction. This is as true for sociologists as it is for laypeople. In studying and reporting on social life, sociologists are, in the process, changing what they are studying; subjects alter their behavior as a result of being observed and in response to descriptions of that behavior.

Harold Garfinkel (1917–2011)

A Biographical Vignette

Harold Garfinkel was drafted in 1942 and entered the U.S. Air Force. Eventually he was given the task of training troops in tank warfare on a golf course in Miami Beach, in the complete absence of tanks. Garfinkel had only pictures of tanks from *Life* magazine. The real tanks were all being used in combat. The man who would insist on concrete empirical detail in lieu of theorized accounts was using imagined tanks to teach real troops who were about to enter live combat to fight against tanks in situations where things like the proximity of the troops to the tanks could make the difference between life and death. The impact of this on the development of Garfinkel's views can only be imagined. He had to train troops to throw explosives into the tracks of imaginary tanks and to keep imaginary tanks from seeing them by directing fire at imaginary tank ports. This task posed, in a new and very concrete way, the problems of the adequate description of action and accountability that Garfinkel would take up as theoretical issues.

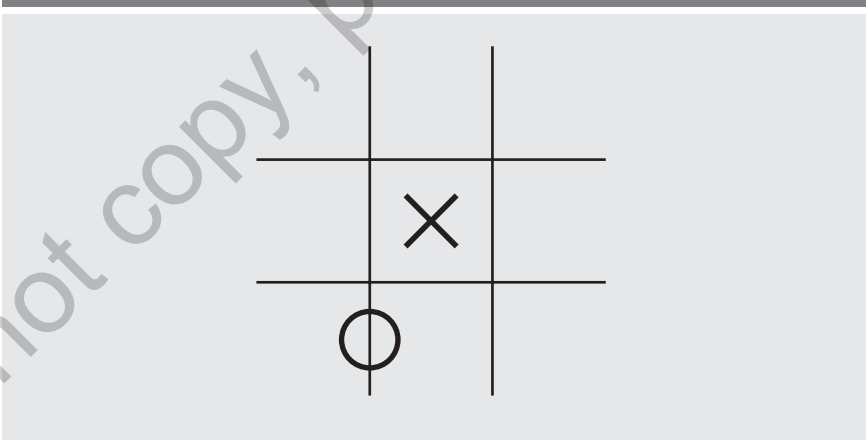
Some Examples

Ethnomethodology has gained much notoriety through its research.

Breaching Experiments. In **breaching experiments**, researchers violate social reality in order to shed light on the methods by which people construct social reality. The assumption behind this research is not only that the methodical production of social life occurs all the time but also that the participants are unaware that they are engaging in such actions. The objective of the breaching experiment is to disrupt normal procedures so that the researcher can observe and study the processes by which the everyday world is constructed or reconstructed.

Michael Lynch offers an example of breaching, derived from earlier work by Garfinkel, that uses a game of tic-tac-toe (see Figure 6.1). The rules of the game allow participants to place marks *within* each of the cells, but the rules have been breached in this case, as player 1 has placed a mark *between* two cells. If this breach were to occur in a real game of tic-tac-toe, player 2 would likely insist that the mark be erased and placed correctly. If such a new placement did not occur, player 2 would try to explain (offer an account of) why player 1 had taken such an extraordinary action. The ethnomethodologist would study the actions of player 2 to see how the everyday world of tic-tac-toe is reconstructed.

Figure 6.1 Breaching in Tic-Tac-Toe



Source: Michael Lynch, 1991. "Pictures of Nothing? Visual Constructs in Social Theory," *Sociological Theory* 9: 15.

breaching experiments Experiments in which researchers violate social reality in order to shed light on the methods by which people construct social reality.

In another experiment, Garfinkel asked his students to spend between fifteen minutes and an hour in their own homes imagining that they were boarders and then acting on the basis of that assumption. They were told to behave in ways that are usually not found in a family situation. For example, they were instructed to be polite, cautious, impersonal, and formal; they were to speak only when family members spoke to them. In the vast majority of cases, family members were dumbfounded and outraged by such behavior. The students reported (offered accounts of) family members who expressed astonishment, bewilderment, shock, anxiety, embarrassment, and anger. Family members charged that the students who engaged in these behaviors were mean, inconsiderate, selfish, nasty, or impolite. These reactions indicate how important it is that people act in accord with commonsense assumptions about how they are supposed to behave.

What most interested Garfinkel was how the family members sought commonsense ways to cope with such a breach. They demanded explanations from the students for their behavior. In the questions they asked of students, they often implied explanations of the aberrant behavior. They asked whether the students were ill, had been fired, were out of their minds, or were just stupid.

Family members also sought to explain the behaviors to themselves in terms of previously understood motives. For example, a student was thought to be behaving oddly because she was working too hard or because she had had a fight with her fiancé. Such explanations are important to participants—the other family members, in this case—because the explanations help them feel that under normal circumstances interaction would occur as it always had.

If the student did not acknowledge the validity of such explanations, family members were likely to withdraw and to seek to isolate, denounce, or retaliate against the culprit. Deep emotions were aroused because the student rejected family members' efforts to restore order through explanation. The family members felt that more intense statements and actions were necessary to restore the equilibrium. In one case, the student was told that if he did not stop behaving in this way, he had better move out. In the end, the students explained the experiment to their families, and in most situations harmony was restored. However, in some instances hard feelings lingered.

Breaching experiments are undertaken to illustrate the way people order their everyday lives. These experiments reveal the resilience of social reality, since the subjects (or victims) move quickly to normalize the breach—that is, to render the situation accountable in familiar terms. It is assumed that the way people handle these breaches tells us much about how they handle their everyday lives. Although these experiments seem innocent enough, they often lead to highly emotional reactions. These extreme reactions reflect how important it is to people to engage in routine, commonsense activities. Reactions to breaches are sometimes so extreme that in recent years ethnomethodologists have been warned not to perform the kinds of breaching experiments performed by Garfinkel.

Accomplishing Gender

It seems incontrovertible that one's gender—male or female—is biologically based. People are seen as simply manifesting behaviors that are an outgrowth of their biological makeup. People are not usually thought of as accomplishing their gender. In contrast, sexiness is clearly an accomplishment; people need to speak and act in certain ways in order to be seen as sexy. However, it is generally assumed that one does not have to do or say *anything* to be seen as a man or a woman. Ethnomethodology has investigated the issue of gender, with some very challenging results.

The ethnomethodological view is traceable to one of Garfinkel's now-classic demonstrations of the utility of this orientation. In the 1950s, Garfinkel met a person named Agnes, who seemed unquestionably a woman. Not only did she have the figure of a woman, but it was virtually a perfect figure with an ideal set of measurements. She also had a pretty face, good complexion, no facial hair, and plucked eyebrows—and she wore lipstick. This was clearly a woman, or was it? Garfinkel discovered that Agnes had not always appeared to be a woman. In fact, at the time he met her, Agnes was trying, eventually successfully, to convince physicians that she needed an operation to remove her male genitalia and create a vagina.

Agnes was defined as a male at birth. In fact, she was by all accounts a boy until she was sixteen years of age. At that age, sensing something was awry, Agnes ran away from home and started to dress like a girl. She soon discovered that dressing like a woman was not enough; she had to *learn to act* like (to pass as) a woman if she was to be accepted as one. She did learn the accepted practices and as a result came to be defined, and to define herself, as a woman. Garfinkel was interested in the passing practices that allowed Agnes to function as a woman in society. The more general point here is that we are not simply born men or women; we all also learn and routinely use the commonplace practices that allow us to pass as men or women. Only in learning these practices do we come to be, in a sociological sense, men or women. Thus, even a category like gender, which is thought to be an ascribed status, can be understood as an accomplishment of a set of situated practices.

EXCHANGE THEORY

Another theory of everyday behavior is exchange theory. Although there are a number of varieties of exchange theory in sociology, the focus here is on the work of George Homans.

The Exchange Theory of George Homans

Although there are a variety of inputs into Homans's development of exchange theory, perhaps the most important is the psychological theory known as behaviorism. The behavioral sociologist is concerned with the relationship

between the effects of an actor's behavior on the environment and the impact on the actor's later behavior. This relationship is basic to **operant conditioning**, or the learning process by which the consequences of behavior serve to modify that behavior. One might almost think of this behavior, at least initially in the infant, as a random behavior. The environment in which the behavior exists, whether social or physical, is affected by the behavior and in turn acts back in various ways. That reaction—positive, negative, or neutral—affects the actor's later behavior. If the reaction has been rewarding to the actor, the same behavior is likely to be emitted in the future in similar situations. If the reaction has been painful or punishing, the behavior is less likely to occur in the future. The behavioral sociologist is interested in the relationship between the history of environmental reactions or consequences and the nature of present behavior. Past consequences of a given behavior govern its present state. By knowing what elicited a certain behavior in the past, we can predict whether an actor will produce the same behavior in the present situation.

The heart of Homans's exchange theory lies in a set of fundamental propositions powerfully influenced by behaviorism. Although some of his propositions deal with at least two interacting individuals, Homans was careful to point out that these propositions are based on psychological principles. According to Homans, they are psychological for two reasons: (1) they are usually the province of psychologists, and (2) they deal with individual behavior rather than large-scale structures like groups or societies. As a result of this position, Homans admitted to being a psychological reductionist. To Homans, reductionism involves showing that the propositions of one science (in this case, sociology) are derived from the more general propositions of another science (in this case, psychology).

Although Homans made the case for psychological principles, he did not think of individuals as isolated. He recognized that people are social and spend a considerable portion of their time interacting with other people. He attempted to explain social behavior with psychological principles. In other words, the principles that apply to the relationship between human beings and the physical environment are the same as those that relate to instances where the environment is made up of other human beings. Homans did not deny the Durkheimian position of emergence—that something new emerges from interaction. Instead, he argued that those emergent properties can be explained by psychological principles; there is no need for new sociological propositions to explain social facts. He used the basic sociological concept of a norm as illustration. Homans did not doubt that norms exist and that they lead to conformity. However, people do not conform automatically. They do so because they see it as an advantage to conform to those norms.

operant conditioning The learning process by which the consequences of behavior serve to modify that behavior.

Homans detailed a program to bring people back into sociology, but he also tried to develop a theory that focuses on psychology, people, and the elementary forms of social life. In terms of the latter, he focused on social behavior involving at least two people in the exchange of tangible and intangible activities. Such behavior would vary in terms of the degree to which it was rewarding or costly to the people involved.

For example, Homans sought to explain the development of power-driven machinery in the textile industry, and thereby the Industrial Revolution, through the psychological principle that people are likely to act in such a way as to increase their rewards. More generally, in his version of exchange theory, he sought to explain elementary social behavior in terms of rewards and costs. Homans set for himself the task of developing propositions that focus on the psychological level; these form the groundwork of exchange theory.

Roots in Behaviorism. In *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms*, Homans acknowledged that his exchange theory was derived, in large part, from behavioral psychology. In fact, he regretted that his theory was labeled exchange theory because he viewed it as behavioral psychology applied to specific situations. Homans began with a discussion of the work of the leading figure in psychological behaviorism, B. F. Skinner—in particular, Skinner's study of pigeons born with the ability to explore their environments by pecking at the things that confronted them. Placed in an experimental cage, pigeons begin to peck and eventually peck at a target placed there by the researcher. When the pigeon does so, it is rewarded with a bit of grain. Since the pigeon has been rewarded for pecking the target, the chances are good that it will do so again. In formal, behaviorist terms, the pecking at the target is the operant, that operant has been reinforced, and the reinforcer was the bit of grain. Thus, the pigeon has undergone a process of operant conditioning: it has learned to peck the target because it has been rewarded for doing so.

George Caspar Homans (1910–1989)

An Autobiographical Vignette

I had long known Professor Talcott Parsons and was now closely associated with him in the Department of Social Relations. The sociological profession looked upon him as its leading theorist. I decided that what he called theories were only conceptual schemes, and that a theory was not a theory unless it contained at least a few propositions. I became confident that this view was correct by reading several books on the philosophy of science.

Nor was it enough that a theory should contain propositions. A theory of a phenomenon was an explanation of it. Explanation consisted in

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showing that one or more propositions of a low order of generality followed in logic from more general propositions applied to what were variously called given or boundary conditions or parameters. I stated my position on this issue in my little book *The Nature of Social Science* (1967).

I then asked myself what general propositions I could use in this way to explain the empirical propositions I had stated in *The Human Group* and other propositions brought to my attention by later reading of field and experimental studies in social psychology. The general propositions would have to meet only one condition: In accordance with my original insight, they should apply to individual human beings as members of a species.

Such propositions were already at hand—luckily, for I could not have invented them for myself. They were the propositions of behavioral psychology as stated by my old friend B. F. Skinner and others. They held good of persons both when acting alone in the physical environment and when in interaction with other persons. In the two editions of my book *Social Behavior* (1961 and revised in 1974), I used these propositions to try to explain how, under appropriate given conditions, relatively enduring social structures could arise from, and be maintained by, the actions of individuals, who need not have intended to create the structures. This I conceive to be the central intellectual problem of sociology.

Skinner was interested in this instance in pigeons; Homans's concern was humans. According to Homans, Skinner's pigeons are not engaged in a true exchange relationship with the psychologist. The pigeon is engaged in a one-sided exchange relationship, whereas human exchanges are at least two-sided. The pigeon is being reinforced by the grain, but the psychologist is not truly being reinforced by the pecks of the pigeon. The pigeon is carrying on the same sort of relationship with the psychologist as it would with the physical environment. Because there is no reciprocity, Homans defined this as individual behavior. He seemed to relegate the study of this sort of behavior to the psychologist, whereas he urged the sociologist to study social behavior in which the activities of two (or more) human beings reinforce (or punish) the activities of the other. In other words, Homans was interested in behavior in which each person influences the other. However, it is significant that, according to Homans, *no new propositions* are needed to explain social behavior as opposed to individual behavior. The laws of individual behavior as developed by Skinner in his study of pigeons explain social behavior as long as we take into account the complications of mutual reinforcement. Homans admitted that he might ultimately have to go beyond the principles derived by Skinner, but only reluctantly.

In his theoretical work, Homans restricted himself to everyday social interaction. It is clear, however, that he believed that a sociology built on his principles would ultimately be able to explain all social behavior. Homans used the case of

two office workers to exemplify the kind of exchange relationships in which he was interested. According to office rules, each person is to do his job on his own. If either worker needs help, he is to consult a supervisor. However, suppose one of the workers, worker A, has trouble completing his work from time to time, but he could do it better and more quickly with help. According to the rules, he should consult his supervisor, but to do so will make his incompetence clear to the supervisor and adversely affect his future with the organization. It is far safer for worker A to ask his colleague, worker B, for help, especially if worker B has more experience and greater capacity to do the work. It is also assumed that such a consultation will not come to the supervisor's attention. One worker gives the needed assistance and the other offers thanks and approval. In other words, an exchange has occurred between them—help in exchange for approval.

Basic Propositions

Focusing on this sort of situation, and basing his ideas on Skinner's findings, Homans developed several propositions:

1. The *success proposition* states that the more often a person is rewarded for a particular action, the more likely the person is to perform the rewarded action. In terms of the office situation example, this proposition means that worker A is more likely to ask others for advice if he has been rewarded in the past with useful advice. Furthermore, the more often a person has received useful advice in the past, the more often he or she will request advice in the future. Similarly, worker B will be more willing to give advice and give it more frequently if he has often been rewarded with approval in the past. Generally, behavior in accord with the success proposition involves three stages: first, a person's action; next, a rewarded result; and finally, a repetition of the original action or, at minimum, one similar in at least some respects.

   Homans specified a number of things about the success proposition. First, although it is generally true that increasingly frequent rewards lead to increasingly frequent actions, this reciprocation cannot go on indefinitely. At some point individuals simply cannot act that way as frequently. Second, the shorter the interval between behavior and reward, the more likely a person is to repeat the behavior. Conversely, long intervals between behavior and reward lower the likelihood of repeat behavior. Finally, it was Homans's view that intermittent rewards are more likely than regular rewards to elicit repeat behavior. Regular rewards lead to boredom and satiation, whereas rewards received at irregular intervals (as in gambling) are very likely to elicit repeat behaviors.

2. The *stimulus proposition* asserts that if in the past a person's action has been rewarded as a result of his or her responding to a particular stimulus, or set of stimuli, then the person is more likely to perform the same action

(or something similar) when stimuli are applied that are similar to those in the past. In the office worker example, if, in the past, the two workers in question found the giving and getting of advice rewarding, then they are likely to engage in similar actions in similar situations in the future. Homans offered an even more down-to-earth example when he argued that those who catch fish in dark pools are more likely to fish in such pools in the future.

Homans was interested in the process of **generalization**, the tendency to extend behavior to similar circumstances. In the fishing example, one aspect of generalization is to move from fishing in dark pools to fishing in any pool with any degree of shadiness. Similarly, success in catching fish is likely to lead from one kind of fishing to another (e.g., freshwater to saltwater) or even from fishing to hunting. However, the process of **discrimination** is also important. The actor may fish only under the specific circumstances that proved successful in the past. For one thing, if the conditions under which success occurred were too complicated, then similar conditions may not stimulate behavior. If the crucial stimulus occurs too long before behavior is required, then it may not actually stimulate that behavior. An actor can become oversensitized to stimuli, especially if they are very valuable to the actor. In fact, the actor could respond to irrelevant stimuli, at least until the situation is corrected by repeated failures. All this is affected by the individual's alertness or attentiveness to stimuli.

3. The *value proposition* states that the more valuable people find the results of their action, the more likely they are to perform that action. In the office worker example, if the rewards each worker offers to the other are considered valuable, the workers are more likely to perform the desired behaviors than if the rewards are not seen as valuable. At this point, Homans introduced the concepts of rewards and punishments. **Rewards** are actions with positive values; an increase in rewards is more likely to elicit the desired behavior. **Punishments** are actions with negative values; an increase in punishments means that the actor is less likely to manifest undesired behaviors. Homans found punishments to be an inefficient means of getting people to change their behavior, because people may

generalization The tendency to extend behavior to similar circumstances.

discrimination The tendency to manifest behavior only under the specific circumstances that proved successful in the past.

rewards Actions with positive values; an increase in such actions is more likely to elicit the desired behavior.

punishments Actions with negative values; an increase in such actions means that the actor is less likely to manifest undesired behaviors.

react to punishments in undesirable ways. It is preferable simply not to reward undesirable behavior (e.g., anger); then such behavior eventually becomes extinguished. Rewards are clearly to be preferred, but they may be in short supply. Homans did make it clear that his is not simply a hedonistic theory; rewards can be either materialistic (e.g., money) or altruistic (helping others).

4. The *deprivation-satiation proposition* contends that the more often in the recent past people have received a particular reward, the less valuable future rewards of that type will be. In the office example, the two workers may reward each other so often for giving and getting advice that they cease to find the rewards valuable. Time is crucial here; people are less likely to become satiated if particular rewards are stretched over a long period of time.

   At this point, Homans defined two other critical concepts: cost and profit. The **cost** of any behavior is defined as the rewards lost in forgoing alternative lines of action. **Profit** in social exchange is seen as the greater number of rewards gained over costs incurred. The latter led Homans to recast the deprivation-satiation proposition as follows: the greater the profits people receive as a result of particular actions, the more likely they are to perform those actions.

5. There are two *aggression-approval propositions*. In Proposition 5A, Homans argued that when people do not receive expected rewards for their actions, or they receive unanticipated punishment, they become angry, more likely to act aggressively, and more likely to find the results of such aggressive behavior valuable.

   In the office worker example, if worker A does not get the advice he expects and worker B does not receive the praise he anticipates, both are likely to be angry. We might be surprised to find the concepts of frustration and anger in Homans's work, because they would seem to refer to mental states. Purists in behaviorism would not deal with such states of mind. Homans went on to argue that frustration of such expectations need *not* refer only to an internal state. It can also refer to wholly external events, observable not just by worker A but also by outsiders.

   Proposition 5A on aggression-approval refers only to negative emotions, whereas Proposition 5B deals with more positive emotions and argues that people will be pleased when they receive an expected reward, especially one that is greater than expected; they will, as a result, be more

cost Rewards lost in adopting a specific action and, as a result, in forgoing alternative lines of action.

profit The greater number of rewards gained over costs incurred in social exchange.

likely to perform the behavior that has received approval, and the results of that behavior will become of increasing value. In the office worker example, when worker A gets the advice that he expects and worker B gets the praise that he expects, both are pleased and more likely to get or give advice. Advice and praise become more valuable to each.

6. In the *rationality proposition* people are seen as choosing from the available alternatives those actions for which, given the individuals' perceptions at the time, there are greater rewards and greater probability of getting those rewards. Although the earlier propositions rely heavily on behaviorism, the rationality proposition demonstrates most clearly the influence of rational choice theory (see the next section) on Homans's approach. In economic terms, actors who act in accord with the rationality proposition are maximizing their **utilities**.

   Basically, people examine and make calculations about the various alternative actions open to them. They compare the amounts of rewards associated with the different courses of action. They also calculate the likelihood that they will actually receive the rewards. Highly valued rewards are devalued if the actors think it unlikely that they will obtain them, and lesser-valued rewards are enhanced if they are seen as highly attainable. Thus, there is an interaction between the value of the reward and the likelihood of attainment. The most desirable rewards are those that are both very valuable and highly attainable. The least desirable rewards are those that are not very valuable and difficult to attain.

   Homans related the rationality proposition to the success, stimulus, and value propositions. The rationality proposition tells us that whether or not people perform an action depends on their perception of the probability of success. But what determines this perception? Homans argued that perceptions of whether chances of success are high or low are shaped by past successes and the similarity of the present situation to past successful situations. The rationality proposition also does not tell us why an actor values one reward more than another; for this we need the value proposition. In these ways, Homans linked his rationality principle to his more behavioristic propositions.

In the end, Homans's theory can be condensed to a view of the actor as a rational profit seeker. However, Homans's theory is weak on mental states and large-scale structures. For example, on the subject of consciousness Homans admitted the need for a more fully developed psychology.

Despite such weaknesses in his theory, Homans remained a behaviorist who worked resolutely at the level of individual behavior. He argued that we can

utilities An actor's preferences, or values.

understand large-scale structures if we adequately understand elementary social behavior. He contended that exchange processes are identical at the individual and societal levels, although he granted that at the societal level there is greater complexity to the ways in which fundamental processes are put together to form large-scale phenomena.

RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

Although it influenced the development of exchange theory, rational choice theory was generally marginal to mainstream sociological theory. Largely through the efforts of one man, James S. Coleman, rational choice theory has become one of the "hot" theories in contemporary sociology. For one thing, in 1989 Coleman founded a journal, *Rationality and Society*, devoted to the dissemination of work from a rational choice perspective. For another, Coleman published an enormously influential book, *Foundations of Social Theory*, based on this perspective. Finally, Coleman became president of the American Sociological Association in 1992 and used that forum to push rational choice theory and to present an address titled "The Rational Reconstruction of Society."

A Skeletal Model

The basic principles of rational choice theory are derived from neoclassical economics (as well as utilitarianism and game theory). Using a variety of different models, it is possible to piece together what can be described as a skeletal model of rational choice theory.

The focus in rational choice theory is on actors. Actors are seen as being purposive, or as having intentionality; that is, actors have ends or goals toward which their actions are aimed. Actors are also seen as having preferences (or values, utilities). Rational choice theory is unconcerned with what these preferences, or their sources, are. Of importance is the fact that actors undertake actions to achieve objectives consistent with their preference hierarchies.

Although rational choice theory starts with actors' purposes or intentions, it must take into consideration at least two major constraints on action. The first is the scarcity of resources. Actors have different resources as well as differential access to other resources. For those with lots of resources, the achievement of ends may be relatively easy. However, for those with few, if any, resources, the attainment of ends may be difficult or impossible.

Related to scarcity of resources is the idea of **opportunity costs**. In pursuing a given end, an actor must keep an eye on the costs of forgoing the next most attractive action. An actor may choose not to pursue the most highly valued end

opportunity costs The costs of forgoing the next most attractive action when an actor chooses an action aimed at achieving a given end.

if her resources are negligible, if, as a result, the chances of achieving that end are slim, and if in striving to achieve that end she jeopardizes her chances of achieving her next most valued end. Actors are seen as trying to maximize their benefits; that goal may involve an assessment of the relationship between the chances of achieving a primary end and what that achievement does for the chances of attaining the second most valuable objective.

A second source of constraints on individual action is social institutions. Such constraints occur throughout the life course and are manifest through schools and their rules, the policies of employing organizations, and the laws of society. These all serve to restrict the choices available to actors and, thereby, the outcomes of actions. These institutional constraints provide both positive and negative sanctions that serve to encourage certain actions and to discourage others.

It is possible to enumerate two other ideas that can be seen as basic to rational choice theory. The first is an aggregation mechanism whereby a variety of individual actions are combined to form a social outcome. The second is the importance of information in making rational choices. At one time, it was assumed that actors had perfect, or at least sufficient, information to make purposive choices among the alternative courses of action open to them. However, there is a growing recognition that the quantity and quality of available information are highly variable, and that variability has a profound effect on actors' choices.

In his introductory comments in the first issue of *Rationality and Society*, Coleman makes it clear that he gives allegiance to rational choice theory not only because of the strengths of the theory itself but also because it is the only theory capable of producing a more integrative sociological approach. He views rational choice theory as providing the micro-level base for the explanation of macro-level phenomena. Beyond such academic concerns, Coleman wants work done from a rational choice perspective to have practical relevance to our changing social world. For example, the issue of public policies aimed at the prevention of HIV/AIDS has been studied from a rational choice perspective.

Foundations of Social Theory

Coleman argues that sociology should focus on social systems, but that such macro phenomena must be explained by factors internal to them, ideally, individuals. He favors working at the individual level for several reasons, including the fact that data are usually gathered at that level and then aggregated or composed to yield the system level. Among his other reasons for favoring a focus on the individual level is that this is where interventions are ordinarily made to create social changes. Central to Coleman's perspective is the idea that social theory is not merely an academic exercise; the social world should be affected through such interventions.

Given his focus on the individual, Coleman recognizes that he is a methodological individualist, although he views his particular perspective as a special variant of that orientation. His view is special in the sense that it accepts the idea of emergence and that, while it focuses on factors internal to the system, those

factors are not necessarily individual actions and orientations. Micro-level phenomena other than individuals can be the focus of his analysis.

Coleman's rational choice orientation is clear in his basic ideas that people act toward goals in a purposive manner and that both goals and actions are shaped by values (or preferences). But Coleman then goes on to argue that for most theoretical purposes, a more precise conceptualization of the rational actor is needed, one derived from economics, that sees the actor as choosing those actions that will maximize utility, or the satisfaction of the actor's needs and wants.

The two key elements in his theory are actors and resources. Resources are those things over which actors have control and in which they have some interest. Given these two elements, Coleman details how their interaction leads to

James S. Coleman (1926–1995)

A Biographical Vignette

Looking back from the vantage point of the mid-1990s, Coleman found that his macro-level approach had changed. For example, with respect to his work on social simulation games at Johns Hopkins University in the 1960s, he said that it "led me to change my theoretical orientation from one in which properties of the system are not only determinants of action (à la Émile Durkheim's *Suicide* study), to one in which they are also consequences of actions sometimes intended, sometimes unintended." Coleman needed a theory of action, and he chose, in common with most economists,

> the simplest such foundation, that of rational, or if you prefer, purposive action. The most formidable task of sociology is the development of a theory that will move from the micro-level of action to the macro-level of norms, social values, status distribution, and social conflict.

This interest explains why Coleman is drawn to economics:

> What distinguishes economics from the other social sciences is not its use of rational choice but its use of a mode of analysis that allows moving between the level of individual action and the level of system functioning. By making two assumptions, that persons act rationally and that markets are perfect with full communication, economic analysis is able to link the macro-level of system functioning with the micro-level of individual actions.

Another aspect of Coleman's vision for sociology, consistent with his early work on schools, is that it be applicable to social policy. Of theory he says, "One of the criteria for judging work in social theory is its potential usefulness for informing social policy."

the system level. This is based on the fact that actors have resources and those resources are of interest to others. As a result, actors engage in actions that involve others, and a system of action, a structure, emerges among them. In other words, interdependent actors, all seeking to maximize their own interests, form a social system.

Given his orientation to individual rational action, it follows that Coleman's focus in terms of the micro-macro issue (see, especially, Chapter 7) is the micro-to-macro linkage, or how the combination of individual actions creates the larger system. While he accords priority to this issue, Coleman is also interested in the macro-to-micro linkage, or how the macro system constrains the orientations of actors. Finally, he is interested in the micro-micro aspect of the relationship, or the impact of individual behavior on the behavior of other individuals.

In spite of this seeming balance, there are at least three major weaknesses in Coleman's approach. First, he accords overwhelming priority to the micro-to-macro issue, thereby giving short shrift to the other relationships (macro-micro, micro-micro). Second, he ignores the macro-macro issue. Finally, his causal arrows go mainly in one direction (micro to macro); in other words, he ignores the ongoing reciprocal relationship among and between micro and macro phenomena.

Utilizing his rational choice approach and starting at the micro level of rational individual behavior, Coleman seeks to explain a series of macro-level phenomena, including collective behavior, norms, and the corporate actor.

Collective Behavior. Coleman (and other rational choice theorists) chooses to deal with collective behavior (of, for example, a crowd) because its often disorderly and unstable character is thought to be difficult to analyze from a rational choice perspective. But Coleman's view is that rational choice theory *can* explain all types of macro phenomena, not just those that are orderly and stable. In collective behavior, rational actors unilaterally transfer control over their actions to others (e.g., crowd organizers or leaders) in an attempt to maximize the actions' utility. Normally, such maximization involves a balancing of control among several actors; this balance produces equilibrium within society. However, in the case of collective behavior, because there is a unilateral transfer of control, individual maximization creates an imbalance and does not necessarily lead to system equilibrium. Instead, there is the disequilibrium characteristic of collective behavior, such as in the case of an unruly crowd.

Norms. Another macro-level phenomenon that comes under Coleman's scrutiny is the creation of norms. Unlike collective behavior, norms are not only quite stable, but they also serve to produce order in society. While most sociologists take norms as given and invoke them to explain individual behavior, they do not explain why and how norms come into existence. Coleman wonders how, in a group of rational actors, norms emerge and are maintained. He argues that norms are created and maintained by some people who see benefits resulting from norms that control group behavior and see harm stemming from the violation of those norms. Thus, norms against

smoking in public places have emerged because they protect nonsmokers (likely those who helped create the norms) from secondhand smoke, and violation of such norms would lead to higher rates of lung cancer among them. People are willing to give up some control over their own behavior (others decide whether smoking in public places is permissible) if in the process they gain some individual and collective control (through norms) over the behavior of others (preventing them from smoking in such settings). Once again, people are seen as maximizing their utility by partially surrendering rights of control over themselves and gaining some control over others. Because the transfer of control is mutual—*not* unilateral, as it is in the case of collective behavior—there is equilibrium in the case of norms.

Norms often act to the advantage of some people (e.g., nonsmokers) and the disadvantage of others (smokers). In some cases (including smoking in public places), actors surrender the right to control their own actions to those who initiate and maintain the norms. Such norms become effective when a consensus emerges that some people have the right to control (through norms) the actions of other people. Furthermore, the effectiveness of norms depends on the ability to enforce that consensus (e.g., forcing violators to extinguish their cigarettes in public places). This consensus and enforcement are other factors that prevent the kind of disequilibrium characteristic of collective behavior.

Coleman recognizes that norms become interrelated (bans on smoking on airplanes and in airports), but he sees such a macro-macro (norm-norm) issue as beyond the scope of his work on the foundations of social systems. However, he is willing to take on the macro-to-micro issue of the internalization of norms. He sees the internalization of norms as the establishment of an internal sanctioning system; people sanction themselves when they violate a norm. Coleman looks at this in terms of the idea of one actor or set of actors endeavoring to control others by having norms internalized in them. Thus, it is in the interests of one set of actors to have another set of people internalize norms and be controlled by them.

The Corporate Actor. Within such a collectivity as a corporation or a state, individual actors may not make choices among actions in terms of their self-interest but often must choose on the basis of the interest of the collectivity. Thus, a U.S. president might choose not to run for a second term even though it would be in his self-interest to do so. Rather, he chooses that option because it is in the interest of his political party, the nation, and its citizens.

There are various rules and mechanisms for moving from individual choice to collective (social) choice. The simplest is the case of voting and the procedures for tabulating the individual votes and coming up with a collective decision. This is the micro-to-macro dimension, while such things as the slate of candidates proposed by the collectivity involve the macro-to-micro linkage.

Coleman argues that both corporate actors and human actors have purposes. Furthermore, within a corporate structure such as an organization, human actors may pursue purposes of their own that are at variance with corporate purposes. This conflict of interest helps us understand the sources of revolts against

corporate authority. The micro-to-macro linkage here involves the ways in which people divest authority from the corporate structure and vest legitimacy in those engaged in the revolt. But there is also a macro-to-micro linkage in that certain macro-level conditions lead people to such acts of divestment and investment.

As a rational choice theorist, Coleman starts with the individual and with the idea that the individual is where all rights and resources exist. It is the interests of individuals that should determine the course of events. However, this is often not the case, especially in modern society, where many rights, significant resources, and even sovereignty reside in corporate actors. In the modern world corporate actors have taken on increasing importance. The corporate actor may act to the benefit or the harm of the individual. How are we to judge the corporate actor in this regard? Coleman contends that we need to do this on the basis of the assumption that it is individual persons who are sovereign, and the social system must be evaluated on the basis of how well it serves individual sovereignty.

Coleman differentiates between traditional structures based on the family, such as neighborhoods and religious groups, and purposive structures, such as economic organizations and the government. There have always been corporate actors, but the traditional ones, such as the family, are steadily being replaced by new, purposively constructed, freestanding corporate actors. He sees a progressive "unbundling" of the activities that once were tied together within, for example, the family. Such traditional structures are "unraveling" as their functions are dispersed and taken over by a range of corporate actors (e.g., child-care centers in the case of the family). Coleman is concerned about this unraveling as well as about the fact that we are now forced to deal with positions in purposive structures (e.g., managers) rather than with the people who populated traditional structures. The existence of these new corporate actors raises the issue of how to ensure that they are socially responsible. Coleman suggests that we can do this by instituting internal reforms or by changing the external structure, such as the laws affecting such corporate actors or the agencies that regulate them.

The ultimate goal of Coleman's work is the creation of a new social structure as the traditional one on which people have depended disappears. With the passing of traditional structures and their replacement by purposive structures, a series of voids have been left that have not been filled adequately by the new social organizations. Social theory and the social sciences more generally are made necessary by the need to reconstruct a new society. The goal is not to destroy purposive structures but rather to realize the possibilities, and to avoid the problems, of such structures.

An overview of the field confirms Coleman's views on rational choice theory. Work continues on many of the macro issues Coleman has identified (e.g., collective behavior), but it has also expanded not only into other macro areas (e.g., social stratification) but also into micro areas (e.g., emotions) that one would not immediately think of as being amenable to rational choice analysis.

Although he has faith in rational choice theory, Coleman does not believe that this perspective has all the answers—at least not yet. But it is clear that he

believes that it can move in that direction. His hope is that work in rational choice theory will, over time, reduce the number of issues that cannot be dealt with by that theory.

Coleman recognizes that in the real world people do not always behave rationally, but he believes that this makes little difference in his theory; the same theoretical predictions would be made whether or not people behave rationally.

SUMMARY

1. Symbolic interactionism, like the other theories discussed in this chapter, focuses on everyday life, especially interaction (as well as action and people as agents) and the symbols (and their meanings) that are deeply implicated in it.
2. Symbolic interactionism is defined by a set of fundamental assumptions:
    a. People act toward things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them, and these meanings stem from their interactions with other people.
    b. People do not simply internalize the meanings that they learn through social interaction; they are also able to modify those meanings through an interpretive process.
    c. People, in contrast to other animals, are unique in their ability to use and rely on symbols.
    d. People become human through social interaction, especially in the early years with family members and then in school.
    e. People are conscious, capable of reflecting on themselves and what they do, and therefore capable of shaping their actions and interactions.
    f. People have purposes when they act in, as well as toward, situations.
    g. Society consists of people engaging in social interaction.
3. Erving Goffman's concept of dramaturgy is a view of social life as a series of dramatic performances akin to those performed in the theater.
4. From a dramaturgical perspective, the self is a sense of who one is that is a dramatic effect that emerges from the immediate scene being presented.
5. Impression management involves techniques that actors use to maintain certain impressions in the face of problems they are likely to encounter and methods they use to cope with these problems.
6. The front stage is that part of dramaturgical performance that generally functions in rather fixed and general ways to define the situation for those who observe the performance.

7. The back stage is where facts suppressed in the front stage or various kinds of informal actions may appear.
8. Role distance is the degree to which individuals separate themselves from the roles they are in.
9. Stigma involves a gap between virtual social identity (what a person ought to be) and actual social identity (what a person actually is).
10. A discredited stigma occurs when the actor assumes that the differences are known by the audience members, or are evident to them, while a discreditable stigma is one in which the differences are neither known by audience members nor perceivable by them.
11. Arlie Hochschild has extended Goffman's concept of dramaturgy by studying the role that emotions play in social performances.
12. Emotion management consists of the techniques people use to display emotions appropriate to particular performances.
13. Emotion management relies on both surface acting and deep acting.
14. Emotion management is shaped by the feeling rules of a particular culture.
15. Ethnomethodology is the study of ordinary members of society in the everyday situations in which they find themselves and the ways in which they use commonsense knowledge, procedures, and considerations to gain an understanding of, navigate in, and act on those situations.
16. Ethnomethodologists are concerned with accounts, accounting, and accounting practices.
17. In breaching experiments, ethnomethodologists violate social reality in order to shed light on the methods by which people construct social reality.
18. George Homans's exchange theory is based primarily on behaviorist principles.
19. The heart of Homans's exchange theory lies in the following propositions:
    a. The more often a person is rewarded for a particular action, the more likely the person is to perform the rewarded action.
    b. If in the past a person's action has been rewarded as a result of responding to a particular stimulus, or set of stimuli, then the person is more likely to perform the same action (or something similar) when stimuli are applied that are similar to those in the past.
    c. The more valuable people find the results of their action, the more likely they are to perform that action.
    d. The more often in the recent past people have received a particular reward, the less valuable future rewards of that type will be.

e. When people do not receive expected rewards for their actions, or they receive unanticipated punishment, they become angry and are more likely to act aggressively and to find the results of such aggressive behavior more valuable.

f. People are pleased when they receive an expected reward, especially one that is greater than anticipated; as a result, they will be more likely to perform the behavior that has received approval, and the results of that behavior will become of increasing value.

g. People choose from the available alternatives those actions for which, given the individuals' perceptions at the time, there are greater rewards and greater probability of getting those rewards.

20. The focus in rational choice theory is on actors.

21. In rational choice theory, actors are seen as being purposive, or as having intentionality; that is, actors have ends or goals toward which their actions are aimed.

22. Actors are also seen as having preferences (or values, utilities). Rational choice theory is unconcerned with what these preferences, or their sources, are. Of importance is the fact that actors undertake actions to achieve objectives consistent with their preference hierarchies.

23. In addition, rational choice theory must take into account scarcity of resources and opportunity costs, or the costs of forgoing the next most attractive action, as well as the constraints imposed by social institutions.

24. Utilizing a rational choice approach and starting at the micro level of rational individual behavior, Coleman seeks to explain a series of macro-level phenomena, including collective behavior, norms, and the corporate actor.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Jon Clark, ed. *James S. Coleman*. London: Falmer Press, 1996. Excellent collection of essays on Coleman's contributions to sociology and sociological theory.

Erving Goffman *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1959. Goffman's works tend to be quite readable. This is the best source on dramaturgy.

Erving Goffman *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963. One of Goffman's most interesting and insightful works.

Tim Hallett "Emotion Work." In George Ritzer, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 2 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005, pp. 248–249. An overview of

Hochschild's main concepts as well as their connections to Goffman's work and subsequent research.

Douglas Heckathorn "Rational Choice." In George Ritzer, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 2 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005, pp. 620–624. Overview of the varieties of rational choice theory authored by one of the important contributors to that theory.

Richard Hilbert "Ethnomethodology." In George Ritzer, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 2 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005, pp. 253–257. Informative look at some of the background of ethnomethodology, its relationship to the social sciences, its terminology, and some of its basic studies. Also includes a brief discussion of conversation analysis.

Arlie Hochschild *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Updated ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. The latest edition of Hochschild's groundbreaking study of emotion management.

George Homans *Coming to My Senses: The Autobiography of a Sociologist*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984. The title is self-explanatory.

Philip Manning "Dramaturgy." In George Ritzer, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 2 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005, pp. 210–213. A look at dramaturgy focusing on Goffman's contributions, although it also includes a look at the perspective after Goffman as well as some of the basic criticisms of it.

Anne Rawls "Conversation Analysis." In George Ritzer, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 2 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005, pp. 145–149. Detailed examination of conversation analysis, including its ties to ethnomethodology.

Anne Rawls "Harold Garfinkel." In George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky, eds., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists*, vol. 2, *Contemporary Social Theorists*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 89–124. Rare personal glimpse into Garfinkel's life and work.

Kent Sandstrom and Sherryl Kleinman "Symbolic Interaction." In George Ritzer, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 2 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005, pp. 821–826. Nice overview of the basic principles of symbolic interactionism as well as of current trends and future directions.

Greg Smith "Erving Goffman." In George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky, eds., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists*, vol. 2, *Contemporary Social Theorists*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 125–154. Comprehensive overview of Goffman's life and major theoretical contributions.