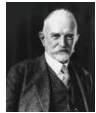
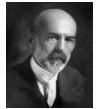


Key Thinkers



G.H. Mead

Herbert
BlumerCharles
CooleyErving
Goffman

Symbol Versus Instinct

Instinct means responding to stimulus in an automatic, pre-programmed way.

Symbol means the words, objects, expressions and gestures that an individual attaches meaning to.
For example: the shaking of a fist can mean many things.

Interpretive Phase means the process between experiencing the stimulus and reacting to it, where the situation is interpreted in order to choose the appropriate response.

Taking on the role of the other

Thinker: **GH Mead**

Taking on the role of others means putting oneself in the place of the other person and seeing ourselves as they see us.

How do we take on the role of the other?

Through the process of social interaction. Firstly as young children through imitative play where we start to see ourselves as our significant others see us. Then we start to see ourselves as the wider community do – Generalised Other

Key Principals of Symbolic Interactionism

Thinker: Herbert Blumer

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Our actions are based on the meanings we give to the situations, events and people. |
| 2 | These meanings are based on the interactions we have experienced and are not fixed but are negotiable and fluid to some extent. |
| 3 | The meanings we give to situations are the result of interpretive procedures we use such as taking on the role of others. |

Labelling Theory

Definition of the situation	W.I. Thomas – the definition of something is its label therefore people label situations, events and people which can have real world consequences. For example a teacher labels a student as troublesome and will therefore act differently towards that student.
Looking Glass Self	Cooley – the way that we develop our <i>self-concept</i> . "I am not who I think I am, I am not who you think I am, I am who I think you think I am." Self Fulfilling Prophecy – we become what others see us as.
Career	Becker and Lemert – the process of labelling, from identification, to the label being attached, acceptance or rejection of the label by the labelled, to the creation of a master status. Each stage has its own set of problems and issues.

Dramaturgical Model

Thinker: **Goffman**

Presentation of self	Front Stage Self – The act we put on for other people. The front stage is where we spend most of our lives. Back Stage – The private place where we can truly be ourselves and prepare to return to the front stage.
Impression Management	The use of language, gestures, body language and props to help us pass for the type of person that we want the audience to see. This process requires us to constantly read the audiences responses to us and adjust our performance accordingly.
Roles	There is a gap between who we really are and the roles we play - 'role distance'. Roles are loosely scripted by society so we have the freedom to choose how we play them.

Evaluation

1	2	3	4	5
Ethnomethodology argues that although it is correct to focus on interactions, Symbolic Interactionism fails to explain who the actors create the meanings.	Not all action is meaningful, especially Weber's idea of traditional actions which may hold little meaning for the actor.	Fails to explain the origin of labels or the consistent patterns that we see in peoples behaviour.	It is more a loose group of descriptive concepts than an explanatory theory.	Dramaturgical analogy has its limitation as everyone plays both roles of actor and audience and interactions are often improvised and unrehearsed.