Social Interaction
Question

• “Who are we without society?”
Answer

• NOT MUCH>>>>>>WITHOUT SOCIETY, WE ARE SUBHUMAN

• See Victor of Aveyron
Nurture over nature

- FOR EXAMPLE: George Herbert Mead’s work on the “Looking Glass Self,” talks about how we become who we believe others think we are.
To Mead, the Symbolic Interactionist…

• **We define** and build ourselves through our **perceptions of others’ assessments of us**, he says.
1799

• **Victor of Aveyron** (also **The Wild Boy of Aveyron**) was a *feral child* who apparently lived his entire childhood naked and alone in the woods.

• He was caught but escaped
• The **case of Victor of Avelon** demonstrates that without those **assessments** it is difficult to build a self or become appropriately socialized.
The story of **Victor** shows the importance of **socialization** in human society.
The Structure of Social Interaction

• Social interaction: Involves people communicating face to face or via computer and acting and reacting in relation to other people

➢ Is structured around statuses, roles, and norms
The Structure of Social Interaction

• **Status**: Refers to a recognized social position an individual can occupy (each person occupies many statuses)

  ➢ There are two types of status:

  ➢ **Achieved status**: Is a voluntary status
  ➢ **Ascribed status**: Is an involuntary status
The Structure of Social Interaction

- **Status set**: Entire ensemble of statuses occupied by an individual

- **Master status**: A person’s overriding public identity, and the status that is most influential in shaping that person’s life at a given time
For Social Interaction to occur: Humans must be Socialized

- **Socialization** is a central process in social life.
- **Its importance** has been noted by sociologists for a long time, but their image of it has shifted over the last hundred years.
• In the early years of American sociology, socialization was **equated with civilization**.

• The issue was one of **taming fierce individualists** so they would willingly cooperate with others on common endeavors.
• An unruly **human nature** was assumed to exist prior to an individual's encounter with society.

• This nature had to be **shaped to conform** to socially acceptable ways of behaving.
• Socialization came to be seen more and more as the end result-- that is, as internalization.

• Internalization means taking social norms, roles, and values into one's own mind.

• Society was seen as the primary factor responsible for how individuals learned to think and behave.
• Talcott Parsons, gave no hint that the result of socialization might be uncertain or might vary from person to person.
T. Parsons

• If people **failed to play their expected roles** or behaved strangely...

• functionalists explained this in terms of incomplete or **inadequate socialization**.
• Such people were said to be "unsocialized"--they had not yet learned what was expected of them.
• The trouble is, they might very well know what was expected but simply be rejecting
Gender Socialization

- IS CRITICAL
- IS SOCIETAL
- IS CONSTRUCTED
- IS NEGOTIATED
- IS A KEY SOCIETAL PROCESS
Social Interaction

Four Principles
Four Principles

1. Pleasure
2. Rationality
3. Reciprocity
4. Personality
Pleasure

• **Pleasure vs Pain**—we seek out those who make us feel good.
Rationality

• People *change their behaviour* based upon reward. Will they be better off or worse off if I enter in interaction

• *Cost/Benefits*, needs for satisfaction
Reciprocity

- **Reciprocity** - the most familiar principle of interaction, if every time I pay the bill, and you don’t, the behaviour will be stopped.
- We have the **principle of fairness**, rules should apply equally.
- I.e. Laws of supply and demand??
Personality

• We value civility, fairness
• Fairness-understanding…
Four principles of interaction

- Four principles of interaction are balanced
- They balance behaviour over time
- They are The Human Condition
- Collectively the four principles of interaction, shape group structure.
Interaction as Symbolic

• Symbolic interactionists regard people as active, creative, and self-reflective

• According to Blumer (1969) symbolic interactionism is based upon three principles
The Three principles:

1. “Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning which these things have for them”

2. “The meaning of a thing” emerges from the process of social interaction”

3. “The use of meanings by the actors occurs through a process of interpretation”
Ethnomethodology

- Is study of methods that ordinary people use - often unconsciously - to make sense of what others do and say

- Stresses that everyday interactions could not occur without pre-existing shared norms and understandings
Example: Awareness that “How are you?” is a greeting, and not a question (Garfinkel [1966] experiment)

Demonstrates that social interaction requires tacit agreement between actors about what is normal and expected
• In “Girls and Boys Together but Mostly Apart” by Barry Thorne

• **Girls Language** (girls talk) more intense exclusive friendships, keeping and telling secrets, shifting alliances,
Some Interactionist Questions:

a. How and when does gender enter into group formation?
b. In a given situation, how is gender more or less salient or infused with particular meaning?
c. How are these processes affected by the organization of institutions (schools, neighbourhoods, or summer camps)
d. How are the processes affected by varied settings-playgrounds, classrooms, waterfountain?
Method and Sources
Barry Thorne

- 1976/77 –classrooms working class elementary school in Calif. 8% Black, 12% Chicano..3 months of participant observation-naturalistic..

- Sex Segregation: Daily Processes

  Deliberate activity, dramatically visible…What are the situations? What are the processes?
Gender happens/Age Happens

• Gender happens with no mention of gender
  - Implicit in the contours of friendship
  - **Full of Processes** Including:
    a. planning of activities
    b. invitations
    c. seeking access
    d. saving of places
    e. denials of entry
Gender Segregation

• When gender is explicitly provoked by teachers and by students it is usually for the purpose of separation.
The Symbolic Interactionist’s View of Gender

- Throughout elementary school-separated by sex.. (girls line, boys line)
- Same sex clusters - sit together, eat together
- Playground-gendered turf..
- Two worlds - two identities
Gender was a **physical marker** in the adult organized school day. Such as:

- a. addressing **clusters of children**-girls don’t do that
- b. **sorting and organizing** activities
- c. **marking off territories**-girls close to the school, boys further away

**Notice** Thorne’s: Symbolic Interactionist Approach
Ageist and Gendered Society

• **Gender** should be conceptualized as a system of relationships rather than an **immutable and dichotomous given**.

• **Girls Social Relations**-private sphere, smaller groups friendship pairs..
Girls communities

• Girls communities, sub-cluster-contextual understanding of gender relations...boundaried collectivities

• While gender is less central to the organization and meaning of some situations, in others it is crucial.
Family and Gender

The Impact of the Forces of Production-Feminist Conflict Theory
F. Engels

1. The **nuclear family** is the product of dialectical social change.

2. As **private property** and the division of labour increases, women’s role and status is increasingly alienated.

3. The **privatized nuclear family** is patriarchal and bourgeois.
In the Nineteenth Century

1. More equality between men and women
2. b. The **division of labour** provided more equal relations between genders
3. c. The **institutions** were less compartmentalized-school, work, family
4. d. The old were valued-gerontocracy
5. E. **Intensive interaction**, family and community less oppressive, less alienating.
Family & Capitalism

• The forces of production are designed around the nuclear family....

• The ideal typical nuclear family produces and reproduces both consumers and future producers.
Conflict Theory on Ideology

• Marx and Engels - ideas are social creations, but the economic power of the appropriating class gives dominance in the ideological as well as the economic sphere.
Natural Nuclear Family?

• **Embedded** in Natural Family are notions of gender difference including the acceptance of male superiority

• Capitalism provides the **NORMATIVE** foundations for family violence…..

• And for **gender inequality**…
19th vs 20th Century Family

1. **Separation** of home and work
2. **Women’s work** - the domestic sphere
3. **Ideology** `The Cult of True Womanhood’
   and
4. `Cult of Domesticity=bourgeois
   **Ideology**-Man’s home is his castle!!
Family and Industrialization:

- 1. Early Industrialization—early 19th century in Europe,
- Later 19th century in United States, early 20th century Canada

*Family life* rooted in class differences and economic survival, men, women and children in factories. Leads to Reform Movement—children in school, women in the private sphere.
Advancing Industrialism

• 2. (Early 20th century)
• rationalization, assembly lines, commodity fetishism.
• Class difference intensify, women are seen as second class citizens, women fight for the right to vote, a split between public and private, the Age of the Expert.
Mid 20th Century-

- Women used as tools for industrial economy. Women’s work is invisible labour: in peace-time they are “slaves of the household”, during War-time they are “productive, wage earning patriots”. I.e. Rosie the Riveter
Return to cult of domesticity

• 4. Post World War Two- 1950’s women pushed back into the home, suburban middle class glorifies nuclear family, gives rise to Baby Boom- 1948-1963.
• 1950s = `The Making of the 60’s’
Post War to 1980s

5. Economic stability 1950 gives rise to 1960’s,

- Introduction of the Pill, rejection of authority-governmental and parental, radical rejection of traditional nuclear family.

1990 to 2008

- 7. 1980’s economic downturn, Soviet Threat give rise to
- The New Right, Pro-Family Movement under Reagan and Thatcher.

Stages in Family Patterns

• 1900 –1914 Domestic family
• 1914-1918 WW1 – women in factories
• 1919-1929 Return to domesticity
Mid 20thc to Now

- 1929-1939  Depression and survival
- 1945-1960  Cult of domesticity Nuclear
- 1960-1980  Second Wave Feminism
- 1980-1990  New Right vs Third Wave Feminism
- 1990-2008-Global economy.
Changes in the Family include:

1. a. **Increasing isolation** of older people

2. b. **Erosion of the instrumental** view (productive) of the family

3. c. **More emphasis on a sentimental** that might not be there

4. d. **Preoccupation with childrearing** - Dr. Spock

5. E. The **transfer to outside agencies** of many family functions