Symbolic Interactionism –George Herbert Mead (Chapter 5)

Mead: University of Chicago, social constructionist, never published. His students published his theories in Mind, Self and Society

1. communication is the most human and humanizing activity in which people are engaged. Talking to each other

2. The three core principles of symbolic interactionism are concerned with meaning, language and thinking

3. These principles lead to conclusions about the formation of self and socialization into a larger society

Meaning: Humans act toward people or things on the basis of the meanings they assign to those people/things.

Language: meaning arises out of the social interaction that people have with each

other. Humans name things. And these symbols elicit responses.

Expectations Violations Theory - Judee Burgoon - (Chpt 6)

• A way to predict responses to nonverbal communication

• Burgoon defines personal space = the invisible, variable volume of space surrounding an individual that defines their preferred distance from others.

• The size and shape of our personal space depends upon cultural norms and individual preferences.

• Personal space is always a compromise between the conflicting approach- avoidance needs that we as humans have for affiliation and privacy.

• According to Burgoon’s early model, crossing over the “threat threshold” that forms the boundary of the intimate distance causes physical and psychological discomfort. Punishing power? Stand a little farther away.

Family Communication Patterns Theory of Ascan Koerner & Mary Anne Fitzpatrick (Chapter 7) Summary:

• Families’ repeated communication patterns orient family members toward a shared social reality.

• Conversation creates this shared reality through open discussion, whereas conformity orientation creates it through parental authority.

• The communication patterns experienced in childhood shape how people think, feel, and communicate throughout their lives.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 8 Social Penetration Theory of Irwin Altman & Dalmas Taylor (Chapter 8)

Summary

• Interpersonal closeness proceeds in a gradual and orderly fashion from superficial to intimate levels of exchange as a function of anticipated present and future outcomes.

• Lasting intimacy requires continual and mutual vulnerability through breadth and depth of self-disclosure.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 9 Uncertainty Reduction Theory of Charles Berger

• When strangers meet, their primary concern is to reduce uncertainty about each other and their relationship.

• As verbal output, nonverbal warmth, self-disclosure, similarity, and shared communication networks increase, uncertainty decreases—and vice versa.

• Information seeking and reciprocity are positively correlated with uncertainty. (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 10 Social Information Processing Theory of Joseph Walther

• Based solely on the information available via online communication, parties who meet online can develop relationships that are just as close as those formed face-to-face—though it takes longer.

• Because online senders select, receivers magnify, channels promote, and feedback enhances favorable impressions, online communication may create hyperpersonal relationships.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 11 Relational Dialectics Theory of Leslie Baxter & Mikhail Bakhtin

In a nutshell:

• Interpersonal relationships are created through the interplay of discourses.

• These discourses occur within the relationship and outside of it.

• Often, discourses struggle with each other—at the same time or at different times.

• Common discursive struggles include integration–separation, stability– change, and expression–non expression.

• (Socio-cultural and phenomenological traditions)

CHAPTER 12 Communication Privacy Management Theory of Sandra Petronio

Summary:

• People believe they own and have a right to control their private information; they do so by using personal privacy rules.

• When others are told, they become co-owners of the information.

• If co-owners don’t effectively negotiate mutually agreeable privacy rules about telling third parties, boundary turbulence is the likely result.

• (Socio-cultural and cybernetic traditions)

CHAPTER 13 Media Multiplexity Theory of Caroline Haythornwaite Summary:

• Strong ties use more media to communicate with each other than do weak ties.

• Communication content differs by tie strength rather than by medium.

• Which media we use for which ties depends, in part, on group norms.

• Changes in media availability most strongly influence the quality of weak ties.

• (Cybernetic and socio-psychological traditions)

CHAPTER 14 Social Judgment Theory (Sherif & Sherif) Summary:

• The larger the discrepancy between a speaker’s position and a listener’s point of view, the greater the change in attitude—as long as the message doesn’t fall within the hearer’s latitude of rejection.

• High ego-involvement usually indicates a wide latitude of rejection.

• Messages that fall there may have a boomerang effect.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 15 Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo)

• Message elaboration is the central route of persuasion that produces major positive attitude change.

• It occurs when unbiased listeners are motivated and able to scrutinize arguments they consider strong.

• Message-irrelevant factors like source credibility hold sway on the peripheral path, a more common route that produces fragile shifts in attitude.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 16 Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger)

Stanford’s Leon Festinger:

Cognitive Dissonance: the distressing mental state that people feel when they “find themselves doing things that don’t fit with what they know, or having opinions that do not fit with other opinions they hold.”

The fox knows the grapes are tasty. By changing their taste to sour, he was able to provide an acceptable explanation for abandoning trying to reach them.

Festinger: the need to avoid dissonance is as basic as need for safety or need to eat when hungry

Tension of dissonance motivates us to change our behavior or our belief in an effort to avoid the distressing feeling.

CHAPTER 17 The Rhetoric (Aristotle)

• Rhetoric is the art of discovering all available means of persuasion.

• A speaker supports the probability of a message by logical, ethical, and emotional proofs.

• Accurate audience analysis results in effective invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and, presumably, memory.

• (Rhetorical tradition)

CHAPTER 18 Dramatism (Burke)

• Words are symbolic action, and rhetoric is the search for a scapegoat to take our guilt.

• Unless we identify with the drama portrayed by a speaker, persuasion won’t occur.

• The dramatistic pentad of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose is the critic’s tool for discovering how a speaker builds such identification.

• (Rhetorical tradition)

CHAPTER 19 Narrative Paradigm (Fisher)

• People are storytelling animals

• almost all forms of human communication are fundamentally narrative.

• Listeners judge a story by whether it hangs together and rings true with the values of an ideal audience.

• Thus, narrative rationality is a matter of coherence and fidelity.

• (Rhetorical tradition)

USC, Annenberg School of Communications Professor Walther Fisher: We are all storytelling animals.

We are narrative beings who “experience and comprehend life as a series of ongoing narratives, as conflicts, characters, beginnings, middles, and ends.”

CHAPTER 20 Functional Perspective on Group Decision Making (Randy Hirokawa & Dennis Gouran)

• Groups make high-quality decisions when members fulfill four requisite functions:

(1) problem analysis,

(2) goal setting,

(3) identification of alternatives, and (4) evaluation of positive and negative consequences.

• Much group communication disrupts progress toward accomplishing these functional tasks, but counteractive communication can bring people back to rational inquiry.

• (Socio-psychological and cybernetic traditions)

CHAPTER 21 Symbolic Convergence Theory (Ernest Bormann) Preview

• Dramatizing messages are group members’ expressed interpretations of events other than those in the here-and-now.

• Message content becomes a group fantasy theme when it spontaneously chains out among members.

• The sharing of group fantasies creates symbolic convergence— group consciousness and often cohesiveness.

• Fantasy theme analysis across groups can reveal a rhetorical vision.

• (Rhetorical and socio-psychological traditions)

CHAPTER 22 Cultural Approach to Organisations (Clifford Geertz & Michael Pacanowsky) PREVIEW

• Humans are animals suspended in webs of significance that they themselves have spun.

• An organization doesn’t have a culture, it is a culture—a unique system of shared meanings.

• A nonintrusive ethnographic approach interprets stories, rites, metaphors, and other symbolism to make sense of corporate culture.

• (Socio-cultural and semiotic tradition)

CHAPTER 23 Communicative Constitution of Organisations (Robert McPhee) PREVIEW

• Communication calls an organization into being.

• Such constitutive communication is patterned into four flows:

• membership negotiation

• self-structuring

• activity coordination

• and institutional positioning

• All four flows are necessary for organization to occur, although time and space often separate where each flow appears.

• (Socio-cultural tradition)

CHAPTER 24 Critical Theory of Communication in Organizations (Stanley Deetz) PREVIEW

• The naive notion that communication is merely the transmission of information perpetuates managerialism, discursive closure, and the corporate colonization of everyday life.

• Language is the principal medium through which social reality is produced and reproduced.

• Managers can further a company’s health and democratic values by coordinating stakeholder participation in corporate decisions.

• (Critical and phenomenological traditions)

CHAPTER 25 Communication Accommodation Theory of Howard Giles PREVIEW

• People in intercultural encounters who see themselves as unique individuals will adjust their speech style and content to mesh with others whose approval they seek.

• People who want to reinforce a strong group identification will interact with those outside the group in a way that accentuates their differences.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 26 Face-Negotiation Theory of Stella Ting-Toomey PREVIEW

• People who have an interdependent self-image in a collectivistic culture are concerned with giving other-face or mutual-face, so they adopt a conflict style of avoiding or integrating.

• People who have an independent self-image in an individualistic culture are concerned with protecting self-face, so they adopt a conflict style of dominating.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 27 Co-Cultural Theory of Mark Orbe

OVERVIEW

• African American men, the LGBTQ community, and people with physical disabilities are at a distinct disadvantage when they interact with people in the dominant culture.

• Phenomenological research reveals they adopt a communication orientation based on their preferred outcome…:

• Assimilation

• Accommodation

• Separation

• …and their communication approach

• Nonassertive

• Assertive

• Aggressive).

• (Phenomenological tradition)

CHAPTER 28 Afrocentricity of Molefi Kete Asante OVERVIEW

• Afrocentricity rejects Eurocentrism’s dominance in communication theory.

• Communication phenomena should be studied using theories that share the cultural values of the phenomena being studied.

• Therefore, African communication phenomena should be analyzed using theories grounded in the beliefs, values, and assumptions of African culture.

• (Critical and rhetorical traditions)

CHAPTER 29 Feminist Standpoint Theory of Sandra Harding & Julia T. Wood

OVERVIEW

• Different locations within the social hierarchy affect what is seen.

• The standpoints of marginalized people provide less false views of the world than do the privileged perspectives of the powerful.

• Strong objectivity requires that scientific research start from the lives of women, the poor, the LGBTQ community, and people of color.

• (Critical tradition)

CHAPTER 30 Muted Group Theory of Cheris Kramarae

OVERVIEW

• Man-made language aids in defining, depreciating, and excluding women.

• Because men have primarily shaped language, women frequently struggle to make their voices heard in the public sphere.

• As women cease to be muted, men will no longer maintain their position of dominance in society.

• (Critical and phenomenological traditions)

CHAPTER 31 Media Ecology of Marshall McLuhan

• Communication media must be understood ecologically.

• Changes in communication technology alter the symbolic environment—the socially constructed, sensory world of meanings.

• We shaped our tools—the phonetic alphabet, printing press, and telegraph— and they shape our perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and behavior.

• Thus, the medium is the message.

• (Socio-cultural tradition)

CHAPTER 32 Context Collapse of Dana Boyd and Alice Marwick

OVERVIEW

• The affordances of technology flatten multiple audiences into one.

• This makes it difficult to perform identities in an acceptable way.

• Sometimes, people manage context collapse by tailoring performances to please audiences, such as through self-censorship.

• At other times, they seek to segment audiences, such as through the use of privacy settings. (Socio-cultural tradition)

CHAPTER 33 Semiotics of Roland Barthes

OVERVIEW

• The significant visual sign systems of a culture affirm the status quo by suggesting that the world as it is today is natural, inevitable, and eternal

• Mythmakers do this by co-opting neutral denotative signs to become signifiers without historical grounding in second-order connotative semiotic systems.

• (Semiotic tradition)

CHAPTER 34 Cultural Studies of Stuart Hall

OVERVIEW

• The mass media function to maintain the ideology of those who already have power.

• Producers encode the dominant ideology into media news that is decoded by consumers who:

• (1) operate within the dominant–hegemonic code

• (2) apply a negotiable code, or

• (3) substitute an oppositional code.

• (Critical tradition)

CHAPTER 35 Uses and Gratifications of Elihu Katz

OVERVIEW

• The media-effects tradition focuses on what media do to people.

• Uses & grats focuses on what people do with media.

• Media consumption is a deliberate choice designed to satisfy particular needs.

• Media don’t have uniform effects on the audience; effects vary according to the individual reasons for media use.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)

CHAPTER 36 Cultivation Theory of George Gerbner

OVERVIEW

• Television is society’s storyteller.

• Heavy television viewers see a vast quantity of dramatic violence, which cultivates an exaggerated belief in a mean and scary world.

• Mainstreaming and resonance are two of the processes that create a homogeneous and fearful populace.

• (Socio-psychological and socio-cultural traditions)

CHAPTER 37 Agenda Setting Theory of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw

OVERVIEW

• The media tell us:

(1) what to think about,

(2) how to think about it, and

(3) what issues go together.

• We especially pay attention to the media agenda when issues are relevant and uncertain.

• Agenda melding is the social process where we combine multiple agendas to fit our experiences and communities.

• (Socio-psychological tradition)