

Symbolic Interactionism

Sociology

Blumer's three premises and the concepts that build society out of encounters.

Society as an ongoing accomplishment of small encounters.

Blumer's premises

People act toward things by their meaning.

Meaning arises out of social interaction.

Meaning is handled and revised interpretively.

Structure is a pattern of repeated interaction.

Method follows: observe the setting closely.

Working concepts

Looking-glass self: seeing self through others.

Mead: the I, the me, and the generalised other.

Goffman: front stage and back stage.

Impression management and face-work.

Definition of the situation; Thomas theorem.

Career: the sequence of a labelled identity.

Criticised for thin treatment of power and structure: the encounter is watched closely, the field it sits in less so.