Soc 1

Lecture 4

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Fall 2009
Being/Doing the Self

I. Announcements:

• Bring iClicker to class
• Register it: http://www.iclicker.com/registration/
• Extra Credit Options: Sunday night for Lerner ??s
• Lots of events next week for bonus points.
Being/Doing the Self

I. To recap:

A. Mauss-The self is an institution, like other institutions it varies time/place.

B. The self--the internal conversation.

C. The Clan--self is absorbed by role.

D. Rome--self has autonomy (of rights).
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I. To recap:

E. Christianity--self ordered around moral dilemmas, body/soul, grace/sin, etc.

F. Protestant Reformation--personal relation to God. (Member of “Chosen”)
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G. Max Weber: (1864-1920)
A consequence of Calvinism the conditions lead to the creation of a particular kind of self. More and more selves of this type leads to change in overall society (to Modern *Rational Capitalism*)
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1. John Calvin (Geneva, 1540’s)

• Against “Moral Bank Account”

• Predestination (creates anxiety)

• The “Chosen”

• A “Godly Life”
2. Traditional vs. Rational Capitalism

- Puritan Ethic (honesty, deny pleasures of the flesh, long, hard work, reinvest profits into business)

- Benjamin Franklin maxims:
  - “A penny Saved if a Penny earned”
  - “Waste not want not”
  - “Time is Money”
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H. Marcel Mauss: Overall Point

- From the Person to the Modern Self (managing Psychological Being)

- Enlightenment Philosophies broke from giveness of the soul, to the free calculus of the cognitive, calculating individual. Mind/body dualism
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The Enlightenment — from moral dilemmas of self to scientific dilemmas of the universe

Cogito Ergo Sum— I think therefore I am,
(René Descartes, 1596-1650)
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The French Revolution (1789): “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen”

Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.”
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The American Revolution

(1776): “The Declaration of Independence”

Rejects the Rights of a Monarch to govern “free men”

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it....
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H. Mauss: Evolution of The Western Self.

Main idea — Society creates conditions according to which room for us to sculpt our own identity.

(Limited → Extensive)
II. How is the Self Fashioned?

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931): American Philosopher (U. Chicago)

• Founder of Philosophy of “Pragmatism.”

• Especially important in development of understanding of the Self, as emergent from social interactions and language use.
A. How is the Self Fashioned?

• The "I" – the bundle of wants and desires present in the unsocialized infant. The creative agent.

• The "me" – How we see ourselves as we imagine others see us. Our picture of ourselves as a self in the social world.
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• Start with the “Me”: The Ability to Take the Self as Object to One's Self is what distinguishes humans from animals.

• Requires “Symbolic” thought (and thus requires Language).
B. How does Language create a self?

• Symbols vs. Signals.

• Symbol =df “Something that Stands for Something else.”

vs.

• Signal =df “…the cluck of a hen to the chickens, or the bark of a wolf to the pack....”
B. How does Language create a self?

• “The Me” then -- an abstract symbolic image of “self” as others may see me.

• But this requires others (e.g., social interaction):

• Need to “take the role of the other” and imagine what it would be like to be “the other” seeing “me.”
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• Imaginary Play is Critical: Play uses Imaginary Companions (“Taking the role of the other”).

• “(the child) plays that he is, for instance, offering himself something, and he buys it; he gives a letter to himself and takes it away. He addresses himself as a parent as a teacher, he arrests himself as a policeman.”
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Games also important—Need to be able to take the attitude of everyone else.

• Rules – Delineate relationships

• The “Generalized Other” = the attitude of the whole community (General values and moral rules of the culture)

• Abstract Thinking requires these abilities
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C. Self-consciousness:

1. "...it is the ability to take oneself as an object to one's self that is the fundamental social fact that distinguishes humans from other animals."

2. Self-consciousness occurs through "the conversation of gestures."

3. Thinking = inner conversation.
C. Self-consciousness:

- Reading for today, the dissecting of the internal conversations, the ways that we can distinguish what is the “I”, what is the “me” and how are they related?

- The "me"—How we see ourselves as we imagine others see us. Our picture of ourselves as a self in the social world.
If we believe these arguments about the role of institutions, raises powerful questions about “feral persons” and the founding mythology of the individual centered perspective (the state of nature).
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-Baldwin LINK-
III. Erving Goffman (1922-1982):

- Heavily influenced by Mead
- "Dramaturgical Approach"
- How those internal conversations are played out as complex social dramas inside our heads.
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• We all try to control the meaning of the situation.
• "Impression Management" =df The conscious manipulation of scenery, props, costumes, and behavior to convey a particular role image to others:
  • Kindly Preedy
  • Ideal ...
  • Methodical/Sensible ...
  • Big Cat ...
  • Carefree ...
  • Local Fisherman ...
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- **Role** = socially defined expectations for behavior of a person in a given status or position.

- **Front-stage and Back-stage & Role Distance** = glimpses of ourselves or the individual "behind" or "inside" the role.

- Protective Practices or "Tact" such as "Studied Nonobservance." (Roseanne Roseannadanna)
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C. The Territories of the Self.

1. Personal Space:

- Space surrounding an individual within which an entering other causes the individual to feel encroached upon.
- Spatial demands in front > back
- A temporary situational reserve
- Elevator Behavior
2. The "Stall":

- Well bounded space, can make a temporary claim upon.
- chair, table, phone booth, towel on beach.
3. "Use Space"
• Territory defined by instrumental needs.
• Museum gallery, picture taking, persons in a conversation.

4. The "Turn":
• First come, first served
• Formalized (names at a restaurant, numbers at deli) or not.
5. The "Sheath":
- Skin, clothes (some body areas more private than others—elbows vs. orifices)

6. Possessional Territory:
- Hats, gloves, purses, knives & forks
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7. Informational Preserve:
• Set of facts about self, individual controls access to. The right not to be stared at.

8. Conversational Preserve:
• Right to control who to enter into conversations with and to own the privacy of one’s conversation.
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These vary by setting and especially by status, power, age, identity.

They also vary by context, some places have very different rule sets than others.
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III. The Close Talker.

A Close-Talker
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III. Studying the "Taken for Granted"—Ethnomethodology (Harold Garfinkel).

B. Key Problem:

Q: How do we define the meaning of situations?

A: Shared Institutional Conventions.
III. Studying the "Taken for Granted"—Ethnomethodology (Harold Garfinkel).

C. Key Goal:

1. What are they?

2. How do they work?

3. How to study them?
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C. Ethnomethodology =df The study of the "ethno-methods"—the folk or lay methods—that people use to make sense of what others do.

D. "Breaching Experiments":

1. Interactions rely upon willingness of others to help out by accepting the definition of the situation and what it implies.
S) Hi, Ray. How is your girlfriend feeling?

E) What do you mean, how is she feeling? Do you mean physical or mental?

S) I mean how is she feeling? What's the matter with you? (He looked peeved.)

E) Nothing. Just explain a little clearer what do you mean?

S) Skip it. How are your Med School applications coming along?

E) What do you mean, How are they?

S) You know what I mean.

E) I really don't.
Experiments on "Being Precise!"

On Friday night my husband and I were watching TV. My husband remarked that he was tired. I asked, "How are you tired? Physically, mentally, or just bored?"

S) I don't know, I guess physically mainly.

E) You mean your muscles ache, or your bones?

S) I guess so. Don't be so technical.

After More watching....
S) All these old movies have the same kind of old iron bedstead in them.

E) What do you mean? Do you mean all old movies, or some of them, or just the ones that you have seen?

S) What's the matter with you? You know what I mean.

E) I wish you would be more specific.

S) You know what I mean! Drop dead!
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3. Coercive Implications of Institutions:

A. Nose-Touch.

B. Boarders at Home.

C. Bargain to Buy.