Symbolic Interactionism: Themes and Variations

Introduction

Of the theoretical orientations underlying work in social psychology, it is symbolic interactionism that has had its major development among sociologists and that has had major appeal to sociologists. In part, this reflects particulars of the history of the orientation: its early elaboration took place at the University of Chicago during the time that institution played a dominant role in the production of sociologists. In part, however, the appeal of symbolic interactionism to sociologists reflects the fundamental compatibility of this social-psychological perspective with the structural concerns of sociology proper. A theme of this chapter is its fit, sometimes neglected and only now being thoroughly exploited, between more general sociological theory and symbolic interactionism as social psychological theory.

This theme is present particularly in a later section of the chapter, where the link being forged between traditional symbolic interactionism and role theory is emphasized and where it is argued that the concept of role serves as the point of articulation—the bridge-between theories that have to do, respectively, with the social structure and with the social person. It is present as well in the section of the chapter that treats a version of current symbolic interactionism that eschews role concepts as too static, non-processual, and insufficiently attuned to the constructed character of social life, and uses the concepts of negotiation and negotiated order to link person and social organization.

As the foregoing suggests, there is considerable internal variation in the content of symbolic interactionism. While there is a core set of theoretical assumptions and concepts which most, if not all, working within this framework accept and use, there are other theoretical ideas relatively peculiar to one or another version. This is equally—perhaps more—true of methodological ideas; the methodological stances of symbolic
interactionists range from a thoroughgoing rejection of the ordinary conventions of science as commonly understood to a complete acceptance of these. Such internal variation is another theme of this discussion.

This chapter is concerned more with ongoing and future developments in symbolic interactionism than with history. Some critical sense of the history of this perspective is essential, however, if current emphases are to be understood; and sufficient history must be presented to permit that understanding. What follows this introduction is an abbreviated and selective history of symbolic interactionism that begins with the Scottish moral philosophers and carries the story to the very recent past. To the degree that symbolic interactionist theory in a technical sense exists, it does so in the form of small-scale explanations of relatively limited scope. Although a few such explanations will be briefly treated, the primary concern of this chapter is with symbolic interactionism as a theoretical orientation or as a conceptual framework. That is to say, this chapter is concerned with delineating an approach to the social-psychological world in general, a frame that suggests the terms of and the ways in which explanations of social-psychological events and processes can be formulated. The distinction between theory and theoretical orientation is fundamental; the latter can only be judged on the basis of logical coherence and fruitfulness in suggesting theories that withstand empirical test. Obviously, this assertion implies the belief that specification and test of theories are indispensable to continued adherence to and utilization of a framework or orientation. This chapter is written in the spirit of that belief.

Despite that belief, however, relatively little reference to concrete research will be made. In part, this is because a framework is logically prior to the formation of testable theory and thus to the research that tests theory. In part, it is because a choice had to be made: available space does not permit review and intensive critical evaluation of research; and to simply list researches or present findings uncritically does little justice to the complexities of relating findings of research of varying degrees of sophistication and relevance to theoretical issues. In part, it is because -although there is more good research done from a symbolic interactionist frame than its critics allow-a strong research tradition premised on a symbolic interactionist orientation is still emerging. Thus, the choice made was to concentrate on the framework itself. In the same vein, many of the applications of the symbolic interactionist framework have been in the substantive areas of deviance, of the family, of work (including the professions and occupations), and of collective behavior. Although brief recognition will be given such applications, by and large the focus of the chapter is on the framework abstracted from the substantive areas.

Some years ago, Mullins (1973) essentially wrote off symbolic interactionism as a viable perspective within sociology. His concern was with symbolic interactionism as broader, sociological theory, and he failed to appreciate the degree to which symbolic interactionist ideas have been absorbed into the sociological mainstream. Nevertheless, there have been periods in which symbolic interactionism has waxed, others when it has waned. It waned considerably during the ascendance of a "sociol-
emphasized habit relative to instinct, and understood the relation of habit to custom.

The link from the Scottish moral philosophers to contemporary symbolic interactionism proceeds through the American pragmatic philosophers: C. S. Pierce, Josiah Royce, William James, John Dewey, and—of special import—George Herbert Mead. In general terms, pragmatism echoed and elaborated themes already reviewed; it viewed mind as an instrument for adaptation, treated mind and mental activities as natural objects (that is, as open to scientific investigation), saw the organized and internally dynamic character of the human mind, and emphasized the relevance of the natural (including social) world for the emergence of the individual.

More particularly, William James (1890) argues the importance of society as a source of constraints on behavior, doing so through the concept of habit. Particularly relevant to current theoretical extensions of symbolic interactionism, he develops a conception of "self" as both multifaceted and the product of relations with others; and his analyses of the character and sources of self-esteem anticipate current efforts to model the impact on person as both multifaceted and the product of relations with others; and his analyses of the character and sources of self-esteem anticipate current efforts to model the impact on person.

John Dewey (1940), by seeing personality organization as primarily a matter of habit and social organization as primarily a matter of custom defined as collective habit, insisted on the intimate relation of person and society. While noting that asserting the priority of society to individual is "nonsensical metaphysics," he observed that nevertheless every person is born into a pre-existing association of human beings, and that habit will consequently reflect a prior social order. Custom and habit are the necessary bases for reflection, for thinking, and thinking occurs in the process of humans adjusting to their environment. Thinking is instrumental; it involves defining objects in one's world in the context of activity and rehearsing possible lines of action in ways instrumental to adaptation. In another influential vein, Dewey rejected a monolithic view of society, instead seeing society as a set of many differential associations.

Putting Mead aside for the moment, the ideas of the philosophers and psychologists reviewed enter sociology largely through Charles Horton Cooley. While Cooley's somewhat more affective orientation has long been neglected by symbolic interactionists relative to Mead's more cognitive emphasis, he still stands as a foremost contributor. Cooley (1902: 84-87) insisted upon the importance of the mental and the subjective in social life, going so far as to define society as a "relation among personal ideas," and "the imaginations which people have of one another (as) the solid facts of society." He called for "sympathetic introspection"—a process by which one uses sympathy to imagine things as others imagine them as the prime method of discovering these solid facts of society and of other persons as well, since, for Cooley, the individual and society are simply two sides of the same coin: no individual exists apart from society, and there can be no "self" apart from "others." In brief, for Cooley, there is no individuality outside of social order, personality develops from extant social life and the communication among those sharing that life, and others' expectations are central to this development.

A second sociologist, William Isaac Thomas, shares with Cooley preeminence in the early development of symbolic interactionism. Thomas held that accounts of human behavior must incorporate both the subjective and the objective facts of human experience. The objective facts are constituted by situations, circumstances calling for some adaptive response on the part of persons or groups. Intervening between situations and adaptive responses, however, are definitions of the situation, in Thomas's (1937:18) words, "an interpretation, or point of view, and eventually a policy and a behavior pattern." It was Thomas who provided the simple and powerful rationale for the significance of the subjective in social life, and in so doing, provided symbolic interactionism with its prime methodological rule: "...if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928:567).

But it is another philosopher, George Herbert Mead, who is the single most important influence shaping symbolic interactionism, in part because he gave more systematic treatment than did anyone preceding him to the ideas being reviewed. Mead's basic social psychological dictum, growing out of evolutionary principles that see mind and symbolic communication among humans as permitting the cooperation essential for survival, is: start with the ongoing social process. From that process, mind, self, and society derive and the relations among interaction (the ongoing social process), mind, self, and society become the subject matter of his social psychology.

With Dewey, Mead argues that persons initiate activity relating them to their environments, that is, they do not simply respond to "stimuli" existing apart from ongoing activity. Objects become stimuli as they function in the contexts of acts and come to be defined as relevant to completing the act; they acquire meaning in the course of activity. The same principle holds for acts implicating other humans in their completion. Such social acts are the source of personality and of organized social behavior, outgrowths of the social process made possible by communication through language.

Communication involves conversations of gestures, the use by participants in social acts of early stages of one another's acts as indicators or predictors of later stages. From these gestures evolve significant symbols, gestures having the same meaning in the sense of indicating the same future phases of acting to participants. Meaning, for Mead, is thus behaviorally defined: "The meaning of what we are saying is the tendency to respond to it" (1934:67). Significant symbols make possible the anticipation of responses, one's own and others, and adjustment of those responses on the basis of anticipation. We "take the role of the other" through the use of significant symbols and through this process engage in cooperative activity. We come to have minds, to think, through being part of a social process in which significant symbols emerge. These symbols provide the meaning of objects, the meaning to which we are responsible as we incorporate objects into our activities.

The "self" develops through the same social process. Emergent from social interaction, the self -- that which can be an object to itself -- is a social structure existing in the activity of viewing oneself reflexively. Language permits using the standpoint of others to so view oneself.
Once developed, the self becomes critical to the understanding of behavior. Mead envisions two aspects of self: the "me," or the organized attitudes (expectations) of others incorporated into the self; and the "I," or the responses of the person to the organized attitudes of others. For Mead, the "I" represents the creative, spontaneous aspect of human behavior. Important here is the idea that creativity and spontaneity occur within the social process, not outside of it; behavior is the outcome of a dialectic in which the attitudes of others are responded to by the person are responded to by the attitudes of others, ad infinitum. Social control is a necessary condition for the emergence of self-control.

Obviously, for Mead, the development of self is of central importance. In general terms, as noted, the self develops as does any other object. More particularly, it does so through an early "play" stage and a later "game" stage. In play, the child takes the role of particular others. But social life is complex, and for it to proceed one must respond to an intricate pattern of related behaviors by multiple others; thus, Mead's metaphor of the game. To play a game, one takes the role of the "generalized other," the attitudes of the "organized community." One does so, of course, through the symbolic capabilities characterizing humans.

Selves arise out of interaction of persons in organized groups; the prior existence of organized groups is thus implied. But, according to Mead, as society shapes the self, so does the self shape society through the I-me dialectic. Society is through this process continuously being created and recreated; in contemporary language, social interaction is constructed. Social order and social change are aspects of the larger social process.

With Mead's (1934) synthesis, symbolic interactionism entered a period of exegesis, debate with respect to "proper" interpretation, application of the perspective to a variety of issues in sociology and social psychology, the working out of methodological positions, and -- to some extent -- conceptual development and research designed to examine and test fundamental assumptions. A discussion of the work of two persons, Herbert Blumer and Manford H. Kuhn, will serve both to characterize the period and to bring us closer to the point of contemporary developments.

Self-presented and commonly taken as a straightforward elaboration and specification of Mead, a view devastatingly challenged recently (McPhail and Rexroat 1979), the writings of Herbert Blumer have heavily influenced (particularly, perhaps, in methodological terms) the thought of many sociologists working within the symbolic interactionist frame. Since much of Blumer's writing has the character of a polemic against a sociology he defines in contradistinction to symbolic interactionism, an interpretive process occurs in which the actions of participants are constructed. He contrasts this view of society with the view held by conventional sociologists, for whom society is a structure or organization. According to Blumer, symbolic interactionism sees social organization as entering action only to the extent that it shapes situations and provides symbols used in interpreting situations. While profound in stable and settled societies, the influence of social organization is less in modern society where criss-crossing lines of action mean situations for which there are no prior standardized actions. From his point of view, seeking to link social behavior to role requirements, expectations, rules, attitudes, and so forth, is inconsistent with recognizing that the human is a defining, interpreting, and indicating creature; Blumer (1969a:1-60) argues that to do so is to have no place for people with selves through which their worlds are handled and action constructed. From his point of view, the articulation of individual lines of action constitutes the social organization of action. Failure to recognize this blinds analysts to the fact that established and repetitive forms of action have to be continuously renewed through interpretation and designation. Analysis in terms of concepts such as culture, social order, norms, values, rules misses the basic point that it is group life that creates and maintains rules, not the other way around.

Blumer's methodological principles are drawn from this vision of the person, organized action, and the environment as fluid, continuously constructed and reconstructed through definitional and interpretative processes; this vision represents the "nature of the empirical world" that Blumer instructs us to respect and to organize our methodological stance to reflect. It is in the name of this vision of the nature of the empirical world that Blumer abjures what he sees as the current, conventional methodology (1969:28-34): adhering to scientific protocol, engaging in replication of research, relying on the test of hypotheses and employing operational procedures. It is also in the name of this vision that he (1954; 1956) instructs sociology to abjure the use of "definitive concepts" and "variables."

Definitional concepts refer to what a class of objects have in common through a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks. They contrast with "sensitizing concepts," which, according to Blumer, "merely suggest directions along which to look" rather than "prescriptions of what to see." Blumer suggests that analysis in terms of variables, among other deficiencies, leads one to ignore the processes of interpretation and definition by assuming that an independent variable automatically affects a dependent variable. This assumption fails to recognize that anything that is defined (and everything that is of consequence in social life is, from this point of view) can be redefined, which implies that relationships among "variables" have no intrinsic fixity and that interpretations cannot be given the qualitative constancy required of a vari-
able. It is this same quality of interpretations that rules out the use of definitive concepts.

In place of the experiments, surveys, refined measurement instruments, census data, computer simulation, and "crucial empirical data to test hypotheses" he sees as dominating the methods of conventional sociology, Blumer calls for direct examination of the empirical world of everyday experience. But one must do more than look. Blumer recommends two modes of inquiry to us: exploration and inspection. By definition a flexible procedure not tied to particular techniques, exploration is guided by the maxim to get a clearer picture of what may be going on in an area of social life by any ethical procedure: observation, informal interviewing, listening to conversations, getting life-histories, using letters and diaries, arranging for group discussions, consulting public records, using a resource group of informed persons. In exploration, one constantly tests and revises images, beliefs, and conceptions of the social world being studied. Ultimately, one constructs a comprehensive and intimate account of what takes place in that empirical social world.

Having done so, one then turns to inspection in order to meet the requirements of scientific analysis for clear, discriminating analytic elements and the isolation of relationships among these elements. This involves casting a problem in a theoretical form, sharpening connotative referents of concepts, unearthing generic relations and formulating theoretical propositions. Again, the contrast Blumer draws is with his picture of conventional social research, which presumably starts with a theory or model framed in terms of relationships between concepts, uses the theory to select a problem, converts the problem into independent and dependent variables, uses precise techniques to obtain data, discovers relationships between variables, and uses the theory or model to explain these relations. Inspection is the antithesis of such methods; it is flexible, imaginative, creative, unroutinized. It involves looking at empirical instances of given analytic elements in a variety of different ways, viewing them from different angles and from the standpoint of many different questions.

One is indeed to test empirically the basic premises of symbolic interactionism, according to Blumer, but one cannot do so by the "alien criteria of an irrelevant methodology" (that is, by conventional methods). Rather, these premises "can be readily tested and validated merely by observing what goes on in social life under one's nose" (1969:49-50).

Given that the premises of symbolic interactionism are validated, suggests Blumer, certain methodological implications follow: see objects as people see them (since they act on the basis of the meaning the objects have for them) in order to understand their behavior; social interaction must not be compressed into pre-existing forms, rather the forms it takes must be empirically discovered; social action must be analyzed by observing the process of construction, noting how the situation is seen by the actor, what the actor takes into account and how this is interpreted, trying to follow the interpretation that leads to a selection of particular acts. From Blumer's point of view, the study of complex organization or complexly organized social life poses no methodological problem different from those posed when studying individual action.
trol made possible by that process. He also, as noted, sees some slippage between social structure and self-definition, thus opportunity for some volatility in self.

If there is some stability to self, then reliable measurement becomes possible. Kuhn is oriented to conventional science; he seeks general propositions from which specific hypotheses can be drawn and tested, resulting in theory useful in predicting and explaining human behavior and interaction. He sees the route to such theory in sound measurement of the concepts embodied in a tentative theoretical statement in the context of empirical research. To achieve sound measurement, one must start with clear and precise specification of concepts. Kuhn clearly sees no contradiction between the kind of concepts entailed in symbolic interaction theory-concepts that refer to meaning, to the internal and subjective, to symbolic processes-and meeting the requirements for sound measurement; and he sees the contribution he and his students have made to symbolic interactionism in these terms.14

While it is convenient to use Blumer and Kuhn as symbols for major themes in the development of symbolic interactionism, bridging the gap from the founding (American) fathers to the relatively recent past and the present, they did not alone fill that interval. It becomes more and more apparent, as symbolic interactionism seeks to develop its incorporation of social-structural concepts, that characterizing the “Chicago School” of symbolic interactionism solely by reference to Blumer's writings is a considerable oversimplification and even distortion.15 Thus, there is another wing of the school, in part independent of the Blumer wing and in part merging with it, that builds in particular from W. I. Thomas through Robert A. Park and Everett C. Hughes to more recent generations of students. Park's (1955:285-86) insistence on the link, through the concept of role, between self and social structure had major impact. This same insistence is contained in Hughes's (1945) work; and certainly Hughes must be credited with moving Chicago students to participant observation as a principal research form. While the relative neglect in the present context of these figures is justified in part by the fact that Blumer generally has been viewed as the spokesman for symbolic interactionism, in part by the strategic requirements of the themes being developed in this chapter, and in part by pragmatic considerations, their continuing influence should not be overlooked.

But there are others who contributed to the ongoing development of symbolic interactionism. Not every (or even many) of these others can be cited, and every person working within the symbolic interactionist frame would construct a somewhat different list of persons and works worthy of being singled out as significant. Nevertheless, and without attempting to locate persons within particular subtraditions, any comprehensive history of the framework would certainly have a place for those in the following account.

Ernest W. Burgess (1926) early adapted the framework deriving from Mead to focus on interactional patterns within marriage and the family, as did Willard Waller (1938).16 Edwin Sutherland (1939) developed in the differential association theory the implications of this general line of thinking to criminality, and others-for example, Alfred R. Lindesmith

(1947) with respect to opiate addiction; and Edwin M. Lemert (1951)17 with respect to deviance more generally-extended the application of symbolic interactionist ideas to a variety of forms of deviance.

At a slightly later time, the leads provided by these applications were followed by a "third generation" of students. Thus, Howard S. Becker (1963), Erving Goffman (1963a), and Thomas Schneff (1966) (among others) saw the shaping of the self-concepts or identities of those to whom “society” applied various stigmatizing labels as key to the production of deviance and deviants. In the context of the family, Leonard S. Cottrell (1948), Clifford Kirkpatrick (1955), Ruth Cavan (1953), Reuben Hill (Waller and Hill 1951), Ralph H. Turner (1970), and the present author (1956, 1964) (again, among others) applied and extended the framework in the analysis of husband-wife and parent-child relationships, emphasizing variously the dynamics of role relationships, the significance of role-taking and communicative processes, the importance of symbolic processes. Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian (1957) and Tamotsu Shibutani (1966) pursued yet another arena of application, collective behavior, basing their treatments to some extent on earlier work by Blumer (1951).

Nor were conceptual and theoretical issues neglected through this period. Perhaps the extremes in theoretical discourse are represented by, on the one hand, John W. Kinch's (1963) effort to formalize the theory of self-concept formation and behavioral impact, and, on the other, Erving Goffman's (1959) subtle portrayal of the processes by which the actor as subject shapes the behavior of others. Influential conceptual distinctions and elaborations are presented in C. Wright Mill's (1940) classic statement on motivation from the perspective of symbolic interaction, Nelson N. Foote's (1951) elaboration of a conception of motivation in terms of identification and identity processes, and Howard S. Becker's (1960) use of the concept of commitment in the interest of a satisfactory interactionist theory of motivation; Walter Coutu's (1951) attempt to clarify the confusion that had grown up around the concepts of role-taking and role-playing; Howard S. Becker and Anselm Strauss's (1956) reintroduction of a significant time dimension in symbolic interactionist thought through the concept of careers; Tamotsu Shibutani's (1955) assimilation of the concept of reference group to symbolic interactionism, and its clarification from the latter point of view; Ralph H. Turner's (1962) reinvigoration of sense of interaction as emergent and constructed through the concept of role-making; Gregory P. Stone's (1962) pregnant development of the conception of situated identity; Eugene A. Weinstein and Paul Deutschberger's (1963) specification of self-presentational processes employing the concept of altercasting; Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss's (1964) statement on awareness contexts, and Erving Goffman's (1964b) on role distance and role embracement, both seeking to advance our understandings of the impact of behavior of variable commitment to identities.

If there is a highly arbitrary, "personal" quality in the foregoing citations of symbolic interactionist applications and conceptual developments in the period under review, these qualities are necessarily accentuated in citations of research literature.18 Partly involved is what "counts" as research. If one includes all work that references the empirical world, however anecdotally,19 the "research literature" growing out
of a symbolic interactionist framework is enormous; if systematic and rigorous inquiry is required, the eligibles are relatively few. Further, if systematic and rigorous research that can be interpreted within a symbolic interactionist frame, as differentiated from that which self-consciously and explicitly stems from that frame, is included, the candidates for mention expand greatly. The attempt in the following is only to illustrate various research issues and genres, to make the point that, while the ratio of research to conceptual and theoretical discourse might well have been higher, there has been a continuous stream of research motivated by symbolic interactionism.

One part of that stream seeks to examine the basic premise of Mead's thought, by asking whether the responses of others do indeed shape the self; much of this literature utilizes a surveyor an experimental format.30 The complementary question, whether and how self-concepts do in fact affect further behavior, is studied in a variety of settings and uses a wide variety of research procedures, from informal interviewing to observational to schoolroom questionnaires. So, for example, Alfred R. Lindesmith (1947) uses informal interviewing and an analytic induction procedure to develop his theory of opiate addiction, in which self-concept as addict plays an important role. Donald R. Cressey (1953) uses similar methods and ideas to examine the processes by which persons become embezzlers, as does Howard S. Becker (1953) with respect to marijuana use. Walter Reckless and his associates (1956) focus on the ways in which self concepts as "good" and "bad" boys contribute to the making of delinquents, generating data through questionnaires, as do Michael Schwartz and Sheldon Stryker (1970). Becker (1951) ties the reactions of musicians to their audiences to their conceptions of themselves as musicians, basing his argument on participant observation and informal interviewing. And Schwartz, Fearn, and Stryker (1966) investigate the way in which stable self-conceptions as disturbed contribute to confirming children in emotionally disturbed roles, with data provided by structured instruments.

Since the shaping of the self, and self-concept change, is the heart of the problem of socialization from a symbolic interactionist standpoint, studies already cited are germane to that research topic. So, indeed, are perhaps most researches developing from the frame, particularly if socialization is recognized as a lifelong process. (It is an interesting fact that, until comparatively recently, symbolic interactionists did little with childhood socialization other than cite Cooley's early observations of the evolution of self in his own children and repeat Mead's dicta.) Illustrative researches with direct interest in socialization per se are those of Becker et al. (1961) dealing with medical school students, and Olesen and Whitaker (1968) dealing with nurses, works primarily based on observational and informal interviewing; Brim's (1958) statistical analysis of data relating family structure and the learning of sex roles by children; Norman K. Denzin's (1972, 1975) observational studies of the emergence of self in early childhood; and Thomas and Weigert's (1971) cross-national analysis of adolescent conformity to the expectations of significant others using data from questionnaires administered in classroom settings.

Central to the symbolic interactionist framework, along with the concept of self, is the concept of role-taking. While relatively few researches directly focus on role-taking behavior, some do, among them O'Toole and Dubin's (1968) behavioral demonstration of the reality of the phenomenon in a systematic observational study of mothers feeding their infant children and in an experimental study of body sway; Cottrell's (1971) experimental study of muscular tension in response to observing others' muscular tension; Thomas, Franks, and Calacci's (1972) questionnaire study of the relation between role-taking and power in families; and Stryker's (1956, 1957) work, using structured interviews, on the sources and consequences of accuracy in role-taking.

Finally, this review of research stimulated by a symbolic interactionist framework during the period between the work of the founding fathers and the relatively recent past would be seriously misleading without reference to what have been taken to be characteristic examples of the research style associated with symbolic interactionism (Lofland, 1970): qualitative case studies of interaction in diverse social contexts. Examples are Glaser and Strauss's (1964, 1968, 1971) study of the interactions of hospital personnel, family, and dying patients in a hospital setting; Julius Roth's (1963) study of the passage of patients through hospitals, Egon Bittner's (1967) examination of the ways in which police deal with the mentally ill, and perhaps epitomizing the genre for many,21 Goffman's (1963b, 1967, 1971) many reports on strategies of interaction.

Current Developments in Symbolic Interactionism

Having traced the history of the symbolic interactionist framework from the Scottish Moral Philosophers to the relatively recent past, it remains to discuss more or less current developments. As a prelude, it will be useful to summarize that framework and to present various criticisms of the framework as it has developed.

As previously remarked, there is no single symbolic interactionism whose tenets command universal acceptance; thus, it ought not surprise that no one summary statement will be acceptable to all. Stone and Farberman (1970:1) delimit the field of social psychology from the standpoint of symbolic interaction in terms of six questions: What is meaning? How does the personal life take on meaning? How does the meaning persist? How is the meaning transformed? How is the meaning lost? How is meaning regained? Manis and Meltzer (1978:5) suggest that the fundamental elements of symbolic interactionism include the meaning component in human conduct, the social sources of humanness, society as process, the voluntaristic component in human conduct, a dialectical conception of mind, the constructive and emergent nature of human conduct, and the necessity of sympathetic introspection. Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds (1975:54) assert that all varieties of symbolic interactionists take as basic premises that humans act toward things on the basis of the meaning those things have for them, that meanings emerge from social interaction, and that meanings are modified and dealt with through an interpretative process used by persons when responding to things en-
countered 22 Jonathan Turner (1978) characterizes the core of symbolic interactionism as consisting in the assertions that humans create, use, and communicate with symbols; they interact through role taking, which involves the reading of symbols used by others; they are unique as a species through having mind and self, which arise out of interaction, and which allow for the interactions that form the basis of society 23

The writer (1959) has characterized the common elements uniting symbolic-interactionist thinking in terms of a set of assumptions and a predilection. The assumptions are that human beings must be studied on their own level, and that reductionist efforts to infer principles of human behavior from the study of nonhuman forms are misguided; that the most fruitful approach to the study of human social behavior is through an analysis of society; that the human infant enters life neither social nor antisocial, with the potentialities for human development; and that the human being is an actor as well as a reactor. The predilection is to stay close to the world of everyday behavior, both in the development of the framework and in its application.

George J. McCall (1977) offers the following principles as underlying symbolic interactionism, and the set can be taken as his summarization of the framework:

1. Man is a planning animal, constructing plans out of bits and pieces supplied by culture.
2. Things take on meaning in relation to plans; the meaning of a thing is its implications for plans of action being constructed, so a thing may have different meanings relative to different plans.
3. We plan toward things in terms of their meanings; a plan of action is executed contingent on the meaning for that plan of things encountered.
4. Consequently, every thing encountered must be identified and its meaning discovered.
5. For social plans of action, meaning must be consensual; if meanings are not clear, they are hammered out through the rhetoric of interaction resulting in the creation of social objects.
6. The basic thing to be identified in any situation is the person himself; identities of actors in a situation must be consensually established.
7. Identity, meaning, and social acts are the stuff of drama; as drama involves parts to be played, roles implicit in the parts must be conceived and performed in ways expressive of the role. The construction of social conduct involves roles and characters, props and supporting casts, scenes and audiences.
8. Thus, identification of persons is most often in terms of roles and characters. We identify by placing things in systematically related categories of role systems, status systems, systems of social types, or contrastive sets of social categories.

Another generalized statement of one version of symbolic interactionism has been offered by the writer (1980:53-55). It has the advantage of being less terse and so perhaps more understandable as a summary description of the framework; and it has an advantage in that it incorporates important aspects of recent developments in the framework. Accepting the fundamental reciprocity of society and person, the statement arbitrarily begins with the impact of society on person.

I. Behavior is dependent upon a named or classified world. The names or class terms attached to aspects of the environment, both physical and social, carry meaning in the form of shared behavioral expectations that grow out of social interaction. From interaction with others, one learns how to classify objects one comes into contact with and in that process also learns how one is expected to behave with reference to those objects.

2. Among the class terms learned in interaction are the symbols that are used to designate ‘positions,’ which are the relatively stable, morphological components of social structure. It is these positions which carry the shared behavioral expectations that are conventionally labelled ‘roles.’
3. Persons who act in the context of organized patterns of behavior, i.e., in the context of social structure, name one another in the sense of recognizing one another as occupants of positions. When they name one another they invoke expectations with regard to each others’ behavior.
4. Persons acting in the context of organized behavior apply names to themselves as weU. These reflexively applied positional designations, which become part of the ‘self,’ create internalized expectations with regard to their own behavior.
5. When entering interactive situations, persons define the situation by applying names to it, to the other participants in the interaction, to themselves, and to particular features of the situation, and use the resulting definitions to organize their own behavior in the situation.
6. Social behavior is not, however, given by these definitions, though early definitions may constrain the possibilities for alternative definitions to emerge from interaction. Behavior is the product of a role-making process, initiated by expectations invoked in the process of defining situations but developing through a tentative, sometimes extremely subtle, probing interchange among actors that can reshape the form and content of the interaction.

7. The degree to which roles are ‘made’ rather than simply ‘played,’ as well as the constituent elements entering the constructions of roles will depend on the larger social structures in which interactive situations are embedded. Some structures are ‘open,’ others relatively ‘closed’ with respect to novelty in roles and in role enactments or performances. All structures impose some limits on the kinds of definitions which may be called into play and thus the possibilities for interaction.
8. To the degree that roles are made rather than only played as given, changes in the character of definitions, the names and the class terms utilized in those definitions, in the possibilities for interaction can occur; and such changes can in turn lead to changes in the larger social structures within which interactions take place.

This version of the symbolic interactionist framework obviously gives greater weight to social structure than do some alternative versions, and does so in a way that permits the elaboration of structural concepts to reflect the complexities of the social world in which humans exist. It also, perhaps not quite so apparently, leaves more room for the routine, habitual, and customary in human behavior than is generally true of contemporary symbolic interactionists despite the importance of such phenomena for their forebears. It opens the door to serious theorizing about the reciprocity of self and society, a basic theme of all symbolic interactionism, but one which—because of the way in which it traditionally has been formulated—has not moved much beyond the level of truism to specification of linkages.

In part, recent developments in symbolic interactionism have occurred in reaction to critical appraisals of the framework.24 Given the internal variations, a portion of these appraisals represent critiques of proponents of one version by proponents of another. Given that internal variation, as well, critiques addressed to one version mayor may not be applicable to another,25 a fact not altogether appreciated by persons evaluating the
framework. Too, the worth of critical appraisals must be estimated against the claims made by a theory or theoretical framework: a frame intended to be general is properly subject to criticisms that a frame addressed to a narrow range of issues may not be.

There are basically five kinds of criticisms of symbolic interactionism that recur in the literature, ignoring more or less subtle variations:26 key concepts are confused, imprecise, and do not lend themselves to sound theory; its concepts are difficult, if not impossible, to operationalize, thus few testable propositions can be formulated, and scientific explanation is rejected in favor of intuitive insight or understanding; emphasizing reflexive thought, symbolic interactionism underplays the import of emotions and the unconscious in social life; the emphasis on actors' definitions, on the immediate situation of action, and on the emergent character of organized behavior deny or minimize the facts of social structure and the importance of large-scale features of society, and leave the perspective incapable of dealing adequately with those large-scale features; and the neglect of social structure constitutes an ideological bias.

While no adequate defense of these assertions can be offered here,27 and however well they may apply to particular statements by symbolic interactionists, there is nothing in the framework that in principle requires conceptual vagueness or imprecision, the rejection of scientific explanation, and so forth; and the fact that testable propositions have been formulated using the framework belies the universal applicability of the first two criticisms. Symbolic interactionism, at least in degree, does neglect the emotions28 in its emphasis on reflexivity, thinking, and self-consciousness; it also, as noted earlier, neglects habit and custom. Insofar as symbolic interactionism seeks to be a general social psychological framework, such neglect leaves it open to legitimate criticism.

The last two criticisms are closely related, and their validity is a function of two fundamental issues: the extent to which symbolic interactionism is viewed as a general framework for sociological analysis, and the extent to which social structural concepts have been or can be successfully incorporated into symbolic interactionism.29

While some make the claim of general sociological utility for the symbolic interactionist framework, others do not.30 If one does not, the important question becomes whether the framework can incorporate social structural concepts, and whether by doing so it can articulate reasonably to sociological orientations that do attend to such features of broad social organization as status, class, and power.

It is in light of this last question that many recent developments in symbolic interactionism can be viewed. It has been argued (Maines 1977) that symbolic interactionism—that of Blumer as well as of others—has always had more to say about social organization and social structure than its critics contend. However that may be,31 it is clear that recent work extending the notion of negotiation and that seeking to make use of a modified role theory are attempts to give symbolic interactionism a more adequate sense of social structure, more useful structural concepts, and more reasonable ways of relating interpersonal interaction to large-scale organizational phenomena.32 The writings of two persons, Anselm...
point) leaves relatively undeveloped the conceptualization of the structural context within which negotiations take place, and because the frame seems more oriented to developing understandings of specific negotiations than explanations couched in theoretical terms. A more likely means by which this articulation can proceed is through role theory; and Ralph H. Turner has, over recent years, been concerned precisely with that articulation.

Turner (n.d.c) is working toward the synthesis of symbolic interactionist and role theoretic elements in "something akin to axiomatic theory." His starting point is with criticisms of role theory: the theory offers an overly structured view of human behavior as the enactment of normative scripts; it neglects normal processes of social interaction in its focus on role strain and role conflict; it fails to make adequate use of the concept of role-taking. He seeks to provide role theory with a proper appreciation for the role-taking concept, and so to correct role-theory's overly structured and conformist quality, seeing this core concept as key to the development of theory that can handle both stable, structured forms of social organization and less structured, fluid forms as well.

Human beings act as if others they meet are playing identifiable roles, role-taking to identify these roles. But cultural cues to roles are often vague and contradictory, and so provide only a general outline within which lines of action can be constructed. Under this circumstance, actors make their roles and communicate what roles they are playing in order to permit and to facilitate interaction (Turner n.d. a; n.d. b). Actors will behave as though they and others with whom they interact are in particular roles as long as the assumption works by providing a stable and effective framework for interaction. They test the assumption by continuously assessing one another's behavior, checking whether that behavior verifies or validates the occupancy of a position by corresponding to expectations and by demonstrating consistency.

In addition to this emphasis on the concept of role in modified form, Turner retains the symbolic interactionist's emphasis on self. Self-responses emerge from interaction with others, and we present ourselves to others via our self-conceptions. Seeking to infer the roles of others, we seek to inform others through gestures of the role being played, and whether the roles being played are consistent with and invested with self - in brief, we seek to inform others of the degree to which self and role "merge" (Turner 1978).

Unsatisfied with role theory's disparate and unrelated propositions, Turner offers a strategy for theory building: begin with sensitizing concepts, narrow propositions and hypotheses drawn from the research literature, and move to precise definitions and to general, formal theoretical propositions linking empirical regularities and expressing major tendencies of those regularities. Then look for determinants of variation in the regularities, and group-related regularities. Finally, seek common principles to explain why the groupings of regularities should occur. He offers two general explanatory propositions: roles are used to achieve ends efficiently; the playing of roles is a means of achieving personal reward in the form of validation of self, self-esteem, and reinforcement from others.

This strategy is illustrated in his (1978) discussion of role-person merger. Conceptualizing persons as consisting of a hierarchical ordering of all roles in their repertoires, and noting that doing so relates the person meaningfully to social structure, he suggests three criteria of role-person merger: playing a role in situations in which the role does not apply; resisting abandonment of a role despite advantageous alternatives; and acquisition of attitudes and behaviors appropriate to a role. Delineating two types of determinants of mergers, interactive and individual, he then asks: what functions are served for those interacting by viewing one another as persons (that is, as playing roles)? And he concludes that the concept of person is related to the requirements of social control, since effective and lasting social control requires a more stable object than an actor who simply plays a particular role.

This interactive function of role-person merger leads to three interactive principles: in the absence of contradictory cues, people tend to accept others as they appear (the appearance principle); the disposition to see people in terms of their role behavior will vary with the potential effect of the role on interaction (the effect principle); and people will accept the least complicated view of the person that facilitates interaction (the consistency principle). Propositions are then derived from these principles: for example, the more inflexible the allocation of actors to roles, the greater the tendency to conceive the person as revealed by the role; the greater the potential power vested in a role, the greater the tendency to conceive the person as revealed by the role.

A similar analysis of individual functions of role-person merger (to facilitate understanding, predicting, and controlling others by becoming more understandable and predictable to them, to economize effort when playing many roles, to facilitate control and autonomy, to make possible the playing of roles providing gratification, to allow the individual to obtain rewards commensurate with investment) leads again to guiding principles consistent with these functions: people tend to merge their persons into roles by which significant others identify them (the consensual frame of reference principle); selective merger will occur to maximize autonomy and self-evaluation (the autonomy and favorable evaluation principle); and individuals will merge into person those roles in which greatest investment is made or for which return on investment is still to come. Again, propositions are inferred from principles; for example, the more intensely and consistently significant others identify individuals on the basis of a certain role, the more likely will those individuals merge that role and their persons; individuals tend to merge positively evaluated roles with their persons.

Role-person merger speaks to the link between self and social structure. The implications of that link are developed by Turner (1976) in an essay on the "real self": the subjectively held sense that people have of who and what they really are. The link between real selves and social structure should be significant in the functioning of and change in societies, he suggests. To the degree that self has an "institutional" focus, people will see their real selves in feelings, attitudes, and actions that are anchored in institutions, they will recognize their real selves in action when accepting group obligations. To the degree that self has an "impulse" emphasis,
The importance of the foregoing lies, not in whether the substantive theory either stated or implied is correct, but in the ways in which social structure is introduced into social psychological theorizing. Turner uses the concepts of position and normative expectations, albeit cautiously, in order to avoid an overly structured stance. He views larger social structure as both constraint on self and social interaction and as product of self and social interaction. The larger structure organizes relationships, bringing some social circles together and keeping others apart. The articulation of real selves with social structure is a major link in the functioning and change of societies.

A complementary vision of the relation of person and social structure is contained in an essay by Eugene A. Weinstein and Judith M. Tanur (1976). Visualizing the strength of the symbolic interactionism in its sensitivity to the emergent properties of interaction, these authors see this strength as the source of the excesses of one wing of symbolic interactionism. Among the excesses remarked is neglect of the connectedness of the interactive episodes in which social structure finds its concrete expression. Weinstein and Tanur suggest that it is the aggregated outcomes of many prior episodes of interaction in the form of informal understandings, shared meanings, codified rules, and material resources that serve as frameworks for interactions and so link episodes of interaction; it is these aggregated outcomes that give meaning to social structure. Agreeing that the concept of role as it has been used in structural-functional analyses carries too great a theoretical burden, and that the degree to which a social encounter exhibits "role-ness" is variable and problematic, they nevertheless assert that norms and roles are part of the meanings accessible to participants in interaction and usable as resources in that interaction. In brief, the extent, conditions, and means by which social structure is introduced into interaction are to be subject to investigation, but social structure is not to be ignored.

A discussion by the writer (1980) reinforces these themes. Whatever their creative potential, most interactions tend to be with the same or slowly changing casts of others doing the same things on a repetitive basis. Structural concepts like group, organization, community refer to patterns of social life tying particular subsets of persons together and separating others. Structural concepts like class structure, power structure, age structure, and so forth refer to the more abstract social boundaries that operate in similar fashion. The important implication of the generic concept of social structure is that societies are differentiated entities whose differentiation has the consequence that only certain persons interact with one another in certain ways with certain resources in certain settings. Persons do not relate randomly, and the opportunities for and circumstances of social relationships are not randomly distributed.

The person is shaped by interaction, but social structure shapes the person. Conversely, when persons creatively alter patterns of interaction, ultimately social structure can change. These obverse assertions define the tasks of a sociologically oriented social psychology and (in part) of sociology, and require the bridging of social person and social structure. It is to meet this latter requirement that aspects of role theory are being drawn into symbolic interactionism.

A root idea of symbolic interactionism from its very beginnings has been the reciprocity of self and society. One way of expressing the criticism of the framework to which the attempt to draw in social structure responds is to say that it failed to respect the complexities of "society" in its conceptualization; and one way to describe sociology's treatment of "society" over recent years is to say that it has incorporated these complexities by imaging society as a multifaceted mosaic of interdependent but highly differentiated parts—groups, institutions, strata—whose relationships run from cooperation through conflict. If society is highly differentiated, and if self reflects society, self, too, must be highly differentiated. It is this insight that underlies another major development of symbolic interactionism, the emergence of identity theory.

Identity theory capitalizes on William James's contention that people have as many selves as there are others who react to them. While Mead shared this sense of the human being with multiple selves, his philosophic premises and hopes led to an emphasis on self as a global, undifferentiated unity. But such an approach to self does not square with the basic symbolic interactionist dictum that self reflects society when the society at issue is complex, as it certainly is. A complex, differentiated society requires a parallel view of self on theoretical grounds.

Empirically, there are issues whose resolution calls for a conception of self as complex and differentiated, yet organized. In particular, there are issues of both behavioral consistency and inconsistency across situations, of explaining the choices that are made when persons are faced with conflicting role expectations, of dealing with the greater or lesser resistance to change exhibited by persons in the face of changing social circumstances.

To meet both theoretical and empirical needs, the concepts of identity, identity salience, and commitment are introduced. Identities are "parts" of the self, internalized positional designations that exist insofar as the person participates in structured role relationships, the consequence of being placed as a social object and appropriating the terms of placement for oneself. Persons may have many identities, limited only by the structured relationships in which they are implicated.

"Identity salience" is one theoretically important way in which discrete identities making up the self can be organized. That is, identities are conceptualized as being organized into a hierarchy of salience
defined by the probability of the various identities being invoked in a given situation or over many situations. Directly implied in this definition is the general proposition that an identity's location in a salience hierarchy will raise or lower its threshold of invocation, in interaction with other defining characteristics of situations and (in all probability) other self characteristics as well, for example, self-esteem. Situations that are structurally isolated-through independence of personnel, by virtue of calendar or clock, and so forth-will likely call up only a single identity; conversely, situations that overlap structurally will call up more than one identity, and then the relative salience of those called up becomes a potentially important predictor of behavior.

The underlying symbolic interactionist premise that self reflects society can be made more precise and powerful through this specification of the concept of self. Greater precision and analytic power in specifying society-person linkages is also made possible through the concept of "commitment," defined as the degree to which the individual's relationships to specified sets of other persons depends on his or her being a particular kind of person. By this usage, one is committed to the role of "husband" to the degree that the extensiveness and intensiveness of one's social relationships require that role. So conceived, commitment provides a way of conceptualizing "society's" relevance for interaction, doing so by pointing to social networks-the number of others to whom one relates through the occupancy of a given position, the importance of those others, the multiplexity of linkages, and so on. The general theoretical proposition, one which gives promise of considerably more explanatory potential than its predecessor, is that commitment affects identity salience which, in turn, affects behavioral choices.

This general theoretical proposition leads to a number of testable hypotheses that, collectively, approximate a theory in a technical sense:45

- The greater the commitment premised on an identity, the higher that identity will be in the salience hierarchy.
- The greater the commitment premised on an identity, the more positive the evaluation of that identity will be and the higher the identity in the salience hierarchy.
- The more a given network of commitment is premised on a particular identity, as against other identities that may enter that network, the higher that identity will be in the salience hierarchy.
- The more congruent the role expectations of those to whom one is committed by virtue of an identity, the higher that identity will be in the salience hierarchy.
- The larger the number of persons included in a network of commitment premised on a given identity for whom that identity or a counter-identity is high in their own salience hierarchies, the higher that identity will be in the salience hierarchy.
- The higher an identity in the salience hierarchy, the more likely role performances will be consistent with the expectations attached to that identity.
- The higher an identity in the salience hierarchy, the more likely a person will perceive a given situation as an opportunity to perform in terms of that identity.
- The higher an identity in the salience hierarchy, the more likely a person will actively seek out opportunities to perform in terms of that identity.
- The greater the commitment, the higher the identity salience, the greater the impact of role performance on self-esteem will be.

While its significance is not narrowly limited, Peter J. Burke's work points toward adequate measures of role-identities, thus-among other things-strongly arguing that concepts important to a symbolic interactionist frame are amenable to sophisticated measurement procedures. Schwartz and Stryker (1970) suggest that Osgood's semantic differential technique is a theoretically justified measurement procedure from the point of view of symbolic interactionism; Burke (1980) extends that suggestion by taking seriously the position that measurement processes must be based on theoretical understandings of the phenomena to be measured and by using the semantic differential as the basis of his own procedures (Burke and Tully 1977).

The theoretical properties of the concept of identity, or role/identity in Burke's terms, are that an adequate measure must reflect the ideas that identities are meanings attributed to and by the person to the self as an object in a social situation or social role; that identities are relational; that identities are reflexive; that identities operate indirectly; and that identities are a source of motivation. That one's acts develop meaning through others' reactions and come to call up in the person the responses of others requires a procedure that captures the multiple dimensions of meaning composing the self. Burke conceptualizes the dimensions as a multidimensional semantic space, and develops measurement procedures that use the responses of persons to map that space and to locate persons' role/identities within that space. The relational character of identities implies that identities must be defined (and thus measured) in terms of their relations to counter-identities; Burke's procedures translate this theoretical requirement by measuring identities in terms of commonalities among similarly situated persons and differences from persons in counter-positions.

More programmatic than actualized at this time are Burke's suggestions for meeting the remaining requirements for theoretically adequate measurement procedures. The self is reflexive, implying that although identities influence performances, performances are assessed by the self for their identity implications. The meaning of a performance is compared with the meaning that defines an identity initially. This aspect of self, Burke notes, can be measured by assessing the strength of corrective responses when a performance is off-target and by assessing what it is the person corrects.

The issue of self as process versus self as having temporal stability underlies the conceptualization of identities as operating indirectly. Burke suggests that identities are relatively stable, that we construct self-images as current working copies of identities, and that it is images that have direct influence on performances. Images have the flexibility required by situations and can accommodate role-making as well as role-taking, role construction as well as role enactment. The measurement implication is clear: we must get at both identity and image and
find ways to deal with the dynamics of the relations between the two, and among them and performances.

Finally, Burke refines the idea that identities motivate through defining behavior and through the action implications of their meanings. If identities as meanings located in semantic space have action implications, identities close to one another in that space ought to have similar action implications. Further, acts have meanings, and those in the same semantic locations as identities ought to carry implications for those identities. Implied is a measurement procedure that measures both identities and actions in common terms, specifically by locating them in the same semantic space.

Conclusion

It ought to be clear from the preceding pages that symbolic interactionism is alive and at least reasonably well, and that it is pursuing a course in its development that serves to integrate within its general stance a reasonable conceptualization of social structure. In doing so, it is fulfilling both its early promise and the promise of a sociologically oriented social psychology. It is certainly as true today as it was during the height of the Blumer-Kuhn "debate" that there is no symbolic interactionist orthodoxy, no single vision of what the framework "means." In particular, perhaps, the divisions are methodological in the broadest sense of that term. Let us hope, however, that there is more tolerance for alternative styles of work and greater appreciation of the virtues (as well as the limitations) of the various styles. If that is true, it is indeed a hopeful sign, for it implies that less time will be spent in sterile argument addressed to the unwashed both inside symbolic interactionism and outside; that more effort will be expended in the research enterprise on which the framework ultimately rises or falls; that we will exhibit greater willingness to let that research tell us what is and is not useful in the framework; and that there is growing understanding that others-even others writing from the perspectives of alternative frameworks-may have something of value to say. And, if these implications hold, we can look forward to the continued influence and continuing development of the symbolic interactionist framework.

NOTES

1. This theme is also the motif of my more extended treatment (Stryker, 1980) of particular versions of symbolic interactionism, which treatment is used throughout this chapter. See also Handel (1979).

Symbolic Interactionism: Themes and Variations

2. For more thorough treatments of the historical development of symbolic interactionism, see Stryker (1980) and Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds (1975).

3. A theory, in a technical sense, is a set of propositions about some part of the empirical world specifying how this part presumably works, emerging from a set of assumptions or postulates and from a set of concepts used to describe the part of the world the theory purports to explain, and open to checking against empirical observations of that world.

4. I am indebted to Ralph H. Turner (personal communication) for these insights into the relative decline in the influence of symbolic interactionism as a perspective in sociology. Turner sees part of the more recent increased interest in symbolic interactionism as reflecting its role as an alternative to polarization between functionalism and conflict theories.

5. The reference here is to a relatively new Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, and its publication Symbolic Interaction, as well as to a revived Section on Social Psychology in the American Sociological Association which over the past few years has served to showcase panels on symbolic interactionist themes and topics.

6. Herbert Blumer is responsible for the term, initially using it in a chapter in Emerson P. Schmitt (1937). For some, Blumer's theoretical writings are taken to define symbolic interactionism. For others, the label represents a tradition of thought to which Mead, Cooley, and Thomas are the preeminent early "sociological" contributors, in which Blumer takes his place as an important but not necessarily decisive figure, and which contains a number of contemporary versions methodologically and theoretically distant from Blumer. It is obvious that this chapter is the product of one who holds the latter view.

7. For a detailed argument developing the import of the Scottish Moral Philosophers to American sociology and social psychology, see Bryson (1945).

8. This passage, emphasizing the dependence of conceptions of self on others, anticipates Cooley's discussion of the looking-glass self.

9. See also Dewey (1896, 1920).

10. To use the title of Mead's (1934) influential work, which is actually a compilation of his lecture notes published posthumously.

II. See also the common assumption that Blumer's work epitomizes the tradition of Mead implicit in Stryker (1980). Blumer (1980) has written a rejoinder to McPhail and Rexroat, and has in turn been answered (McPhail and Rexroat, 1980).

12. Blumer's views as presented here are taken from essays written relatively late in his career. While these are not always consistent with essays written earlier (or, indeed, internally consistent), their characteristic emphases seem to me to represent accurately the nature of Blumer's influence. Many of his earlier essays reappear in Blumer (1969).

13. Neither label referring to the locales-for much of their careers-one of those two symbols of contrasting views fits precisely in the intellectual pedigrees of persons tending to the respective labels and the labels are intended to describe. Further, there is a large set of persons whose work is in a symbolic interactionist vein who cannot easily be fitted into either camp. Finally, as will be suggested later, one way of characterizing present developments in symbolic interactionism is to suggest that the divisions implied by the "Chicago" and "Iowa" labels are being bypassed. Too much intellectual energy has been expended in argument that seems to view one or another version of symbolic interactionism more in social movement terms than as a social psychological framework per se.

14. Kuhn and his students were responsible for the development of the Twenty Statements Test, an attempt to achieve a standardized test identifying and measuring self-attitudes. While some equate that specific test and Kuhn's methodology -see Tucker (1966)- and discredit the latter by noting problems of the former, Kuhn's methodological stance does not depend on the success of any particular measurement device.

15. Why the relative neglect of others, some of whom are cited in this chapter, is an interesting question. Perhaps, as with Park, the messages were ones that Blumer tended to deny in his polemical writings; thus, insofar as Blumer is identified with symbolic interactionism, it became "inappropriate" to incorporate
these others. Perhaps it was because Blumer was something of a charismatic figure, at least some of whose students tended to be "disciples."

16. I do not mean to imply, in asserting that Waller adopted Mead's framework, that Mead was the only influence at work on Waller. An identical caveat holds for every other citation in this section.

17. For an interesting and telling response to critics of the "societal reaction" theory of deviance, in which he calls for a much more subtle, structural analysis of society than labeling theorists typically provide, see Lemert (1974).

18. And, indeed, the distinction between this literature, the applications literature, and the conceptual developments literature is itself highly arbitrary.

19. There is a problem here that grows out of style of research and researchreporting. Goffman's research may well be systematic and rigorous in the extreme; yet the style of reporting is such that his work looks more like an art form than science. A fair proportion of the symbolic interactionist literature has this characteristic.

20. See, for example, Miyamoto and Dornbusch (1956); Couch (1958); Reeder, Donohue, and Biblarz (1960); Videbeck (1960); Quarantelli and Cooper (1966); Sherwood (1965).

21. Perhaps not entirely fairly. Thus, Glaser and Strauss (1967) draw a strong distinction between the apparently undisciplined approach underlying Goffman's work and their own careful use of what they call the constant comparative method of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) has become something of a bible -- and the term, grounded theory, something of a shibboleth and battle cry -- for those whose predilections are toward qualitative research; the book was written in the attempt to undergird qualitative work with the discipline and rigor its detractors have typically denied it.

22. These premises are taken from Blumer's (1969:2-6) characterization of symbolic interactionism.

23. Symbolic interactionists have traditionally asserted the uniqueness of the human species, premises their argument on the presumably unique capacities of humans and the emergence of self. That these presumably unique aspects of humans are indeed unique is severely challenged by recent work with chimpanzees. Apart from undergirding an extreme form of denial of the relevance of work on nonhuman animals for understanding human behavior, however, it is difficult to see what is gained from the assertion of human uniqueness.

24. Space limitations preclude a full review of these critical appraisals. For more complete reviews, together with references to the critical literature, see Stryker (1980) and Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds (1975).

25. It must be more than apparent by now that criticisms directed at Blumer, will not, in general, hold for other versions, and vice versa.

26. These five are reviewed in detail in Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds (1975).

27. See Stryker (1980: chapter 5) for such a defense.

28. The neglect is relative, not total. See for example the discussion of interactionists' treatment of emotion in Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds (1975:92), Kirkpatrick's (1963) and Turner's (1970) formulations of an interactionist theory of love, and Shibutani's (1961) discussion of emotion as response to blocked lines of action. See also the suggestion in Stryker (1968) that the self be treated as having conative and cathetic modalities as well as the cognitive modality typically emphasized. There is some indication that more serious work on the emotions is an upcoming item on symbolic interactionism's agenda.

29. This is not true of Huber's (1973) claim of bias in symbolic interactionism based on the argument that an unwillingness to be explicit in its theory leaves symbolic interactionism in the position of tacitly accepting the existing (power) structure of society. Not all symbolic interactionists are unwilling to be explicit in their theorizing.

30. Blumer would fit the first category; the writer, the second.

31. I think Maines overstates the case by ignoring the questions of the depth and adequacy of the treatment of these matters by Blumer and others.

32. Persons seeking to defend symbolic interactionism against the claim that it precludes a concern with macro-social structure cite the work of Hall (1972), Farberman (1975), and Denzin (1977) as counter-instances. These studies do indeed incorporate both traditional concepts of symbolic interactionism and concepts referring to macro-structure. Whether, however, they resolve theoretically the issues involved in linking the two is moot.

33. See, for example, Bucher and Strauss (1961); Bucher (1962); Strauss, Schatzman, Ehrlich, Bucher, and Sabshin (1963); Glaser (1968); Glaser and Strauss (1965); Glaser and Strauss (1971); Strauss (1971).

34. This is the explicit starting point in Strauss, et al. (1963), which refers to Mead (1936:360-61).

35. While Strauss clearly thinks these aspects of negotiation contexts are reasonably general, the basic approach is to make such matters open and dependent on emergence from the specific situation(s) being researched.

36. My reading of the negotiated order literature leads me to conclude that conventional sociological concepts, such as position, role, role relationship, status, norm, and so forth, are implicitly incorporated into what is said about the social person, interaction, and social structure, but are not explicitly recognized in ways that would be useful in the task of articulating symbolic interactionism and more general sociological theory.

37. I arrive at this judgment in spite of the explicit claims to the contrary to be found in Strauss (1978), through my sense of the basic focus of attention in relevant works. 38. This articulation is also the point of my own efforts, most recently in Stryker (1980). See also Stryker (1964, 1973) and Handel (1979).

39. Turner has another criticism of role theory, that its propositions have little connection with one another, which is less relevant in the present context.

40. Turner uses the terms "social circles" to mean what some others mean by groups, and "social networks," or "role set." His usage stems from Znaniecki (1965) and focuses on those persons involved with the person in the carrying out of her or his role.

41. The other is the injunction against quantitative research as a matter of faith rather than style, and the consequences of that injunction.

42. The outlines of identity theory appear in a paper I presented in 1966 at a meeting of the American Sociological Association which was subsequently published (Stryker, 1968). The same fundamental ideas are elaborated by McCall and Simmons (1966), although with some shifts in terminology and emphasis. The "invention" was entirely independent. I choose to present the theory in my own terms here.

43. The contemporary call for an elaborated conception of self derives only in part from the requirements of the symbolic interactionist framework. For an excellent and compatible vision of the complexities of the self-concept that stems fundamentally from the attempt to deal with empirical puzzles, see Rosenberg (1979).

44. McCall and Simmons (1978) as well as Burke and Tully (1977) use the term role-identity in an equivalent way, thus stressing the intimate linkage of self and role.

45. This usage derives from Kornhauser (1962).

46. That potential is now being examined in a research program under way at Indiana University under the writer's direction; preliminary results are highly encouraging.

47. These are taken from Stryker (1980); this statement is based on Stryker (1968).
48. The concept of counter-identity is the analogue of the concept of counter-role as conventionally used by symbolic interactionists. Thus “husband” is a counter-identity to “wife.”

49. For an impressive, integrative, theoretical tour de force giving symbolic interactionist ideas central position, based on a research program using semantic differential procedures, see Heise (1977).