

UNIT – III

Interaction, meaning and everyday order

Mead · Goffman · Becker · Phenomenology

Explanatory Lecture Slides

Recent Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology · Minor-II-3 · Semester III

RECENT THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY

Topics covered in this unit

01

State the interactionist question

02

Mead's self

03

Goffman's performance

04

Becker's labelling

05

Phenomenology / Schutz in outline

06

The courtroom as interaction

How this unit is organised

01

The question

02

Mead

03

Goffman

04

Labelling

05

Phenomenology

06

Courtroom

The interactionist question

How is meaning made in this encounter, here, today?

- Not the whole system, not the whole class — the situation.
- A cross-examination is an interaction system.

The interactionist question

UNIT OF ANALYSIS

- Encounter.
- Self.
- Label.

BLIND SPOT

- Structure that the encounter did not invent (caste, capital).

G.H. Mead

Self as I and Me; taking the role of the other; generalised other.

- A lawyer's professional self is a Me built in chambers and court.
- Socialisation paper-I returns in theoretical dress.

G.H. Mead

I

- Spontaneous.

ME

- The organised other inside you.

Goffman

Presentation of self; frontstage / backstage; stigma; total institutions (asylums, prisons).

- Sunil Batra's prison is a total institution. A trial is frontstage; the client conference is backstage.
- Stigma: Navtej, caste atrocity survivors, the acquitted who still cannot rent a house.

Goffman

FRONT

- The robe.
- The oath.

BACK

- The corridor deal.
- The panic.

Becker — labelling

Deviance is a successful application of a label by the audience, often the State.

- Primary / secondary deviance (Lemert).
- A 6-mark: the juvenile label, the 'history-sheeter', the 'terror' UAPA mark — use carefully, not as a manifesto.
- Legal: when a court quashes an FIR, it is fighting a label.

Becker — labelling

INSIGHT

- Audience makes the deviant.

LIMIT

- Some harms are not 'just labels' (homicide).

Phenomenology, in one paragraph

Schutz: the life-world of typifications. Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel): the seen-but-unnoticed methods of producing order.

- A 6-mark: do not over-write. India-exam rarely wants a Husserl essay.
- Use: how a 'reasonable man' is a typification, not a person.

Phenomenology, in one paragraph

KEEP

- Life-world.
- Typification.
- Reasonable man as a construct.

SKIP

- The whole of Husserl.

Courtroom ethnography as method

Who stands, who sits, who may speak, in which language, with which silence.

- A brilliant 16-mark closer: CPC/BNSS as a script of interaction, not only a statute.
- Language: Art. 348, official language, the accused who does not follow English — a justice problem.

Courtroom ethnography as method

SCRIPT

- Oath.
- Examination-in-chief.
- Cross.
- Judgment as a text.

BREAKS

- Unrepresented accused.
- Hostile witness.
- A judge's joke.

Becker — labelling

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Cases a KSLU answer should name

CASE

Navtej Singh Johar

(2018) 10 SCC 1

A legal label (s.377) as stigma — interactionist gold.

CASE

Sunil Batra

(1978) 4 SCC 494

Prison as total institution.

CASE

Hussainara Khatoon

(1980) 1 SCC 81

The 'undertrial' label as a life.

Provisions & materials to quote

JJA 2015

A statute against a scarring label.

Probation of Offenders

Avoiding the convict-Me.

BSA / BNSS (in-chief a

The interaction script.

Art. 21

Dignity against stigma.

Art. 348

The language of the frontstage.

10 / 16-mark frames from this unit

Q1

Explain the symbolic-interactionist perspective.

Q2

Write notes: Goffman's stigma; Becker's labelling; total institution.

Q3

How does an interactionist read a courtroom?

Q4

What is the 'generalised other'? Why does a professional need one?

Unit recap

- 1 Meaning is made in the encounter.
- 2 Mead: I and Me. Goffman: stage and stigma.
- 3 Labelling: the audience (often the State) makes a deviant.
- 4 Do not let interaction swallow caste and class.
- 5 A trial is a script — BNSS is its stage-direction.