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## Chapter 1 : Functionalism, Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology

*Sociologists study social events, interactions, and patterns, and they develop a theory in an attempt to explain why things work as they do. In sociology, a theory is a way to explain different aspects of social interactions and to create a testable proposition, called a hypothesis, about society (Allan ).*

Literary and Cultural Theory 1. What Is Literary Theory? Literary theory refers to any principles derived from internal analysis of literary texts or from knowledge external to the text that can be applied in multiple interpretive situations. All critical practice regarding literature depends on an underlying structure of ideas in at least two ways: Critics that explain the climactic drowning of Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening* as a suicide generally call upon a supporting architecture of feminist and gender theory. The structure of ideas that enables criticism of a literary work may or may not be acknowledged by the critic, and the status of literary theory within the academic discipline of literary studies continues to evolve. Literary theory and the formal practice of literary interpretation runs a parallel but less well known course with the history of philosophy and is evident in the historical record at least as far back as Plato. Modern literary theory gradually emerges in Europe during the nineteenth century. In one of the earliest developments of literary theory, German "higher criticism" subjected biblical texts to a radical historicizing that broke with traditional scriptural interpretation. This dispute was taken up anew by the French theorist Roland Barthes in his famous declaration of the "Death of the Author. Attention to the etymology of the term "theory," from the Greek "theoria," alerts us to the partial nature of theoretical approaches to literature. This is precisely what literary theory offers, though specific theories often claim to present a complete system for understanding literature. The current state of theory is such that there are many overlapping areas of influence, and older schools of theory, though no longer enjoying their previous eminence, continue to exert an influence on the whole. The once widely-held conviction an implicit theory that literature is a repository of all that is meaningful and ennobling in the human experience, a view championed by the Leavis School in Britain, may no longer be acknowledged by name but remains an essential justification for the current structure of American universities and liberal arts curricula. The moment of "Deconstruction" may have passed, but its emphasis on the indeterminacy of signs that we are unable to establish exclusively what a word means when used in a given situation and thus of texts, remains significant. Many critics may not embrace the label "feminist," but the premise that gender is a social construct, one of theoretical feminisms distinguishing insights, is now axiomatic in a number of theoretical perspectives. While literary theory has always implied or directly expressed a conception of the world outside the text, in the twentieth century three movements—"Marxist theory" of the Frankfurt School, "Feminism," and "Postmodernism"—have opened the field of literary studies into a broader area of inquiry. Marxist approaches to literature require an understanding of the primary economic and social bases of culture since Marxist aesthetic theory sees the work of art as a product, directly or indirectly, of the base structure of society. Feminist thought and practice analyzes the production of literature and literary representation within the framework that includes all social and cultural formations as they pertain to the role of women in history. Postmodern thought consists of both aesthetic and epistemological strands. Postmodernism in art has included a move toward non-referential, non-linear, abstract forms; a heightened degree of self-referentiality; and the collapse of categories and conventions that had traditionally governed art. Postmodern thought has led to the serious questioning of the so-called metanarratives of history, science, philosophy, and economic and sexual reproduction. Under postmodernity, all knowledge comes to be seen as "constructed" within historical self-contained systems of understanding. Marxist, feminist, and postmodern thought have brought about the incorporation of all human discourses that is, interlocking fields of language and knowledge as a subject matter for analysis by the literary theorist. Using the various poststructuralist and postmodern theories that often draw on disciplines other than the literary—linguistic, anthropological, psychoanalytic, and philosophical—for their primary insights, literary theory has become an interdisciplinary body of cultural

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theory. Taking as its premise that human societies and knowledge consist of texts in one form or another, cultural theory for better or worse is now applied to the varieties of texts, ambitiously undertaking to become the preeminent model of inquiry into the human condition. Literary theory is a site of theories: The other schools of literary theory, to varying degrees, embrace a postmodern view of language and reality that calls into serious question the objective referent of literary studies. The following categories are certainly not exhaustive, nor are they mutually exclusive, but they represent the major trends in literary theory of this century. Traditional Literary Criticism Academic literary criticism prior to the rise of "New Criticism" in the United States tended to practice traditional literary history: Literary biography was and still is an important interpretive method in and out of the academy; versions of moral criticism, not unlike the Leavis School in Britain, and aesthetic e. Perhaps the key unifying feature of traditional literary criticism was the consensus within the academy as to the both the literary canon that is, the books all educated persons should read and the aims and purposes of literature. What literature was, and why we read literature, and what we read, were questions that subsequent movements in literary theory were to raise. Formalism and New Criticism "Formalism" is, as the name implies, an interpretive approach that emphasizes literary form and the study of literary devices within the text. The work of the Formalists had a general impact on later developments in "Structuralism" and other theories of narrative. The Formalists placed great importance on the literariness of texts, those qualities that distinguished the literary from other kinds of writing. Neither author nor context was essential for the Formalists; it was the narrative that spoke, the "hero-function," for example, that had meaning. Form was the content. A plot device or narrative strategy was examined for how it functioned and compared to how it had functioned in other literary works. The Formalist adage that the purpose of literature was "to make the stones stonier" nicely expresses their notion of literariness. Literary language, partly by calling attention to itself as language, estranged the reader from the familiar and made fresh the experience of daily life. The "New Criticism," so designated as to indicate a break with traditional methods, was a product of the American university in the 30s and 40s. Eliot, though not explicitly associated with the movement, expressed a similar critical-aesthetic philosophy in his essays on John Donne and the metaphysical poets, writers who Eliot believed experienced a complete integration of thought and feeling. Wimsatt placed a similar focus on the metaphysical poets and poetry in general, a genre well suited to New Critical practice. Perhaps the enduring legacy of "New Criticism" can be found in the college classroom, in which the verbal texture of the poem on the page remains a primary object of literary study. Marxism and Critical Theory Marxist literary theories tend to focus on the representation of class conflict as well as the reinforcement of class distinctions through the medium of literature. Marxist theorists use traditional techniques of literary analysis but subordinate aesthetic concerns to the final social and political meanings of literature. Marxist theorist often champion authors sympathetic to the working classes and authors whose work challenges economic equalities found in capitalist societies. In keeping with the totalizing spirit of Marxism, literary theories arising from the Marxist paradigm have not only sought new ways of understanding the relationship between economic production and literature, but all cultural production as well. Marxist analyses of society and history have had a profound effect on literary theory and practical criticism, most notably in the development of "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism. Walter Benjamin broke new ground in his work in his study of aesthetics and the reproduction of the work of art. The Frankfurt School of philosophers, including most notably Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuseâ€”after their emigration to the United Statesâ€”played a key role in introducing Marxist assessments of culture into the mainstream of American academic life. These thinkers became associated with what is known as "Critical theory," one of the constituent components of which was a critique of the instrumental use of reason in advanced capitalist culture. Eagleton is known both as a Marxist theorist and as a popularizer of theory by means of his widely read overview, *Literary Theory*. Lentricchia likewise became influential through his account of trends in theory, *After the New Criticism*. Jameson is a more diverse theorist, known both for his impact on Marxist theories of culture and for his position as one of the leading figures in theoretical postmodernism.

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Structuralism and Poststructuralism Like the "New Criticism," "Structuralism" sought to bring to literary studies a set of objective criteria for analysis and a new intellectual rigor. Like Plato, Saussure regarded the signifier words, marks, symbols as arbitrary and unrelated to the concept, the signified, to which it referred. Within the way a particular society uses language and signs, meaning was constituted by a system of "differences" between units of the language. Particular meanings were of less interest than the underlying structures of signification that made meaning itself possible, often expressed as an emphasis on "langue" rather than "parole. Greimas, Gerard Genette, and Barthes. The philosopher Roland Barthes proved to be a key figure on the divide between "Structuralism" and "Poststructuralism. The most important theorist of "Deconstruction," Jacques Derrida, has asserted, "There is no getting outside text," indicating a kind of free play of signification in which no fixed, stable meaning is possible. Other tendencies in the moment after "Deconstruction" that share some of the intellectual tendencies of "Poststructuralism" would included the "Reader response" theories of Stanley Fish, Jane Tompkins, and Wolfgang Iser. Lacanian psychoanalysis, an updating of the work of Sigmund Freud, extends "Postructuralism" to the human subject with further consequences for literary theory. According to Lacan, the fixed, stable self is a Romantic fiction; like the text in "Deconstruction," the self is a decentered mass of traces left by our encounter with signs, visual symbols, language, etc. Barthes applies these currents of thought in his famous declaration of the "death" of the Author: Foucault played a critical role in the development of the postmodern perspective that knowledge is constructed in concrete historical situations in the form of discourse; knowledge is not communicated by discourse but is discourse itself, can only be encountered textually. Following Nietzsche, Foucault performs what he calls "genealogies," attempts at deconstructing the unacknowledged operation of power and knowledge to reveal the ideologies that make domination of one group by another seem "natural. New Historicism and Cultural Materialism "New Historicism," a term coined by Stephen Greenblatt, designates a body of theoretical and interpretive practices that began largely with the study of early modern literature in the United States. According to "New Historicism," the circulation of literary and non-literary texts produces relations of social power within a culture. New Historicist thought differs from traditional historicism in literary studies in several crucial ways. According to "New Historicism," we can only know the textual history of the past because it is "embedded," a key term, in the textuality of the present and its concerns. Text and context are less clearly distinct in New Historicist practice. Traditional separations of literary and non-literary texts, "great" literature and popular literature, are also fundamentally challenged. For the "New Historicist," all acts of expression are embedded in the material conditions of a culture. Texts are examined with an eye for how they reveal the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion. Louis Montrose, another major innovator and exponent of "New Historicism," describes a fundamental axiom of the movement as an intellectual belief in "the textuality of history and the historicity of texts. The translation of the work of Mikhail Bakhtin on carnival coincided with the rise of the "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism" and left a legacy in work of other theorists of influence like Peter Stallybrass and Jonathan Dollimore. In its period of ascendancy during the s, "New Historicism" drew criticism from the political left for its depiction of counter-cultural expression as always co-opted by the dominant discourses. However, "New Historicism" continues to exercise a major influence in the humanities and in the extended conception of literary studies. Ethnic Studies and Postcolonial Criticism "Ethnic Studies," sometimes referred to as "Minority Studies," has an obvious historical relationship with "Postcolonial Criticism" in that Euro-American imperialism and colonization in the last four centuries, whether external empire or internal slavery has been directed at recognizable ethnic groups: Though the two fields are increasingly finding points of intersectionâ€”the work of bell hooks, for exampleâ€”and are both activist intellectual enterprises, "Ethnic Studies and "Postcolonial Criticism" have significant differences in their history and ideas. Dubois, we find an early attempt to theorize the position of African-Americans within dominant white culture through his concept of "double consciousness," a dual identity including both "American" and "Negro. Afro-Caribbean and African writersâ€”Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Chinua

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Achebe's have made significant early contributions to the theory and practice of ethnic criticism that explores the traditions, sometimes suppressed or underground, of ethnic literary activity while providing a critique of representations of ethnic identity as found within the majority culture. Ethnic and minority literary theory emphasizes the relationship of cultural identity to individual identity in historical circumstances of overt racial oppression. More recently, scholars and writers such as Henry Louis Gates, Toni Morrison, and Kwame Anthony Appiah have brought attention to the problems inherent in applying theoretical models derived from Euro-centric paradigms that is, structures of thought to minority works of literature while at the same time exploring new interpretive strategies for understanding the vernacular common speech traditions of racial groups that have been historically marginalized by dominant cultures. Said argues that the concept of "the Orient" was produced by the "imaginative geography" of Western scholarship and has been instrumental in the colonization and domination of non-Western societies. Moreover, theorists like Homi K. The work of Gayatri C. Spivak has focused attention on the question of who speaks for the colonial "Other" and the relation of the ownership of discourse and representation to the development of the postcolonial subjectivity. Like feminist and ethnic theory, "Postcolonial Criticism" pursues not merely the inclusion of the marginalized literature of colonial peoples into the dominant canon and discourse. In this respect, "Postcolonial Criticism" is activist and adversarial in its basic aims. Postcolonial theory has brought fresh perspectives to the role of colonial peoples' their wealth, labor, and culture in the development of modern European nation states. While "Postcolonial Criticism" emerged in the historical moment following the collapse of the modern colonial empires, the increasing globalization of culture, including the neo-colonialism of multinational capitalism, suggests a continued relevance for this field of inquiry. Gender Studies and Queer Theory Gender theory came to the forefront of the theoretical scene first as feminist theory but has subsequently come to include the investigation of all gender and sexual categories and identities. Feminist gender theory followed slightly behind the reemergence of political feminism in the United States and Western Europe during the s. These causes converged with early literary feminist practice, characterized by Elaine Showalter as "gynocriticism," which emphasized the study and canonical inclusion of works by female authors as well as the depiction of women in male-authored canonical texts. Feminist gender theory is postmodern in that it challenges the paradigms and intellectual premises of western thought, but also takes an activist stance by proposing frequent interventions and alternative epistemological positions meant to change the social order.

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## Chapter 2 : Literary Theory | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

*Theories are an essential part of the framework used to organize specific social phenomena within the social sciences. This lesson introduces the four major theoretical perspectives in sociology.*

His positivist approach was based on the principle of direct observation, which could be explained by theoretical statements based on establishing causal, law-like generalizations. The task of sociology, according to Comte, was to gain reliable knowledge of the social world in order to make predictions about it, and, on the basis of those predictions, to intervene and shape social life in progressive ways. Comte saw each science as passing through three stages: He argued that the history of the sciences demonstrated this pattern of movement, with social life being the last area to move into the positive stage and sociology the final discipline. Auguste Comte divided sociology into two major parts – static and dynamic sociology. The idea of this division is borrowed from biology that is in keeping with his notions of a hierarchy of sciences. Biology is a science that precedes sociology and thus shares common features with this science. The static sociology studies the conditions of the existence of society while the dynamic sociology studies the continuous movement or laws of the succession of individual stages in society. His laws of three stages have been more or less rejected by the contemporary sociologists. But the essential notion of stages of development in ideas and culture in a modified form has been accepted. This took the form of structural differentiation through which simple societies develop over time into more and more complex forms with an increasingly diverse array of separate social institutions; and functional adaptation the way that societies accommodate themselves to their environment. Spencer argued that it was through structural differentiation that societies became functionally better adapted, and the industrial societies of the nineteenth century were essentially demonstrating a form of social evolution, emerging out of the more static and hierarchical societies that preceded them. Spencer tried to apply in his investigation of all fields of knowledge his idea of social evolution. In comparing human society with an organism that is essentially what organic analogy means. He noted the differences between the biological organism and society. He maintained that a society as an entity is something more than and other than an organism even though human organisms are members of it. It is a total system of elements of social organization and their interdependent functions. It is a super –organic entity an organizational entity over and above the level of the organism. Spencer accepted the ideas that a society was more than a collective nature for a number of individuals. That is it is not a collection of several individuals but is a distinct entity. The whole is more than its parts. Thus a house is more than a mere collection of bricks, wood and stone. It involves a certain ordering of parts. He believed that unlike biological organisms where the parts exist for the benefit of the whole, in society it is the whole that exists for the benefit of the parts. Spencer told people through sociology that human beings should not interfere with the natural processes in societies. He had great faith in the innate instinct of freedom and believed any interference with this instinct to be harmful. His concept of society as a super –organic system had several problems. He was unable to see culture as part of an integrated whole. His explanation regarding the social evolution of societies from simple to compound and so on was also full of errors. However he formulated an integral theory of all reality. His law of evolution is a cosmic law and his theory is a philosophical theory rather than sociological. His ideas became popular because they served the need of his time the desire for unifying knowledge and the need to explain in a scientific manner the laissez faire principle. Functionalism holds that society is a complex system whose various parts work together to produce stability and solidarity. According to this approach, the discipline of sociology should investigate the relationship of parts of society to each other and to society as a whole. We can analyze the religious beliefs and customs of a society, for example, by showing how they relate to other institutions within it, for the different parts of a society develop in close relation to one another. To study the function of a social practice or institution is to analyze the contribution which that practice, or institution, makes to the continuation of society. Functionalists including Comte and Durkheim have often used an

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organic analogy to compare the operation of society to that of a living organism. They argue that the parts of society work together, just as the various parts of the human body do, for the benefit of society as a whole. To study a bodily organ like the heart, we need to show how it relates to other parts of the body. By pumping blood around the body, the heart plays a vital role in the continuation of the life of the organism. Similarly, analyzing the function of a social item means showing the part it plays in the continued existence and health of a society. Functionalism emphasizes the importance of moral consensus, in maintaining order and stability in society. Moral consensus exists when most people in a society share the same values. Functionalists regard order and balance as the normal state of society this social equilibrium is grounded in the existence of a moral consensus among the members of society. Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton drew extensively on Durkheim, were two of its most prominent adherents. Merton distinguished between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are those known to, and intended by, the participants in a specific type of social activity. Latent functions are consequences of that activity of which participants are unaware. Merton also distinguished between functions and dysfunctions. To look for the dysfunctional aspects of social behavior means focusing on features of social life that challenges the existing order of things.

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### Chapter 3 : Theories Used in Social Work Practice | calendrierdelascience.com

*Theoretical perspectives are important elements in research because they help people to organize their thoughts and ideas so that they can be clearer to others. Many sociologists use more than one theoretical perspective simultaneously in research.*

Page 53 Share Cite Suggested Citation: Learning Science in Informal Environments: People, Places, and Pursuits. The National Academies Press. Yet a narrow focus on traditional academic activities and learning outcomes is fundamentally at odds with the ways in which individuals learn across various social settings: Adults faced with medical conditions typically learn what they can do to manage them from a wide variety of information sources. Families spend leisure time at science centers, zoos, and museums engaged in exploration and sense-making. Communities defined by linguistic and cultural ties maintain science-related practices and socialize their children into their routines, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and value systems as a part of their daily activities and rituals. For all these pursuits, the range of learning outcomes far exceeds the typical academic emphasis on conceptual knowledge. Across informal settings, learners may develop awareness, interest, motivation, social competencies, and practices. They may develop incremental knowledge, habits of mind, and identities that set them on a trajectory to learn more. The fundamental influence of early childhood experiences is increasingly recognized as providing the foundation for discipline-specific learning National Research Council, As the population ages, demographic shifts heighten the need to understand the ongoing role that science learning has in the lives of adults, including the elderly. The idea of lifelong, life-wide, and life-deep learning has been influential in efforts to develop a broad notion of learning, incorporating how people learn over the life course, across social settings, and in relation to prevailing cultural influences Banks et al. Lifelong learning is a familiar notion. It refers to the acquisition of fundamental competencies and attitudes and a facility with effectively using information over the life course, recognizing that developmental needs and interests vary at different life stages. Generally, learners prefer to seek out information and acquire ways of doing things because they are motivated to do so by their interests, needs, curiosity, pleasure, and sense that they have talents that align with certain kinds of tasks and challenges. Learning derives, in both opportunistic and patterned ways, from this breadth of human experience and the related supports and occasions for learning that are available to an individual or group. Learners need to learn how to navigate the different underlying assumptions and goals associated with education and development across the settings and pursuits they encounter. Life-deep learning refers to beliefs, ideologies, and values associated with living life and participating in the cultural workings of both communities and the broader society. Such learning reflects the moral, ethical, religious, and social values that guide what people believe, how they act, and how they judge themselves and others. This focus on life-deep learning emphasizes how learning is never a culture-free endeavor. Taken together, these concepts of lifelong, life-wide, and life-deep learning help bring into view the breadth of human learning and emphasize the broad reach of informal settings. Figure is a conceptual diagram that depicts the prevalence of lifelong and life-wide learning in formal and informal learning environments. Although there is significant variation for individuals, the diagram gives a rough estimation of the amount of time people routinely spend in informal nonschool learning environments over the life course. Thus, we explore a wide variety of places and social settings, which we refer to as venues and configurations. We defined a broad set of valued learning outcomes and examined the evidence related to each. Finally, we examined research on learners of all ages from very young children to the elderly. This diagram shows the relative percentage of their waking hours that people across the life span spend in formal educational environments and other activities. The calculations were made on the best available statistics on how much time people at different points across the life span spend in formal instructional environments. Graphic design, documentation, and calculations were conducted by Reed Stevens, with key assistance from Anne Stevens graphic design and Nathan Parham calculations. In this chapter we begin by discussing some

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general theoretical perspectives of learning and exploring how some prominent frameworks used in research on learning in informal environments build on them. We then describe an ecological model of learning that provides multiple lenses for synthesizing how people learn science across informal environments. Building from the ecological perspective, we define the venues and configurations for learning and science learning strands that frame the remainder of this volume. Over a century ago, scientists began to study thinking and learning in a more systematic way, taking early steps toward what are now called the cognitive sciences. During the first few decades of the 20th century, researchers focused on such matters as the nature of general intellectual ability and its distribution in the population. In the 1950s, they started emphasizing such 30 Learning Science in Informal Environments issues as the laws governing stimulus-response associations in learning. Beginning in the 1960s, advances in fields as diverse as linguistics, computer science, and neuroscience offered provocative new perspectives on human development and powerful new technologies for observing behavior and brain functions. With richer and more varied evidence in hand, researchers have refined earlier theories or developed new ones to explain the nature of knowing and learning. Three theoretical perspectives of the nature of the human mind have been particularly influential in the study of learning and consequently in education: The relative influence of these perspectives over time has changed. Each emphasizes different aspects of knowing and learning with differing implications for educational practice and research see, e. Behaviorism describes knowledge as the organized accumulation of stimulus-response associations that serve as components of skills Thorndike, People learn by acquiring simple skills which combine to produce more complex behaviors. Rewards, punishments, and other mainly extrinsic factors orient people to attend to relevant aspects of a situation and support the formation of new associations and skills. Cognitive theories, in contrast, focus on how people develop, transform, and apply structures of knowledge in relation to lived experience, including the concepts associated with a subject matter discipline or domain of knowledge and procedures for reasoning and solving problems. One major tenet of cognitive theory is that learners actively construct their understanding by trying to connect new information with their prior knowledge. This theoretical approach generally focuses on individual thinking and learning. Sociocultural theory builds on cognitive perspectives, but emphasizes the cultural origins of human development and explores how individuals develop through their involvement in cultural practices e. In this view, individuals develop specific skills, commitments, knowledge, and identity as they become proficient in practices that are valued in specific communities. From the perspective of educational practice, there are complementarities between cognitive and sociocultural accounts. This can be important for gauging where and how to initially engage a learner and what aspects of understanding require instructional support. Meanwhile, the sociocultural perspective can orient educators to patterns of participation and associated value systems that are important to learning. These may include analyses of expert practice in a particular domain such as how scientists communicate ideas to one another or forms of participation that are comfortable Theoretical Perspectives 31 or culturally important to learners e. For example, individuals learn to reason in science by crafting and using forms of notation or inscription that help represent the natural world. All three theoretical perspectives have had some influence on the design of informal environments that support science learning. As a result, a number of theoretical views are in play in the research and they are not particularly well integrated. This limits the degree to which the study of learning science in informal environments functions as a field. In Box we describe a few examples of perspectives on learning science in informal environments. We note that most draw on the cognitive and sociocultural traditions rather than behaviorism. Also, the list in Box is intended to illustrate the range of perspectives and is not exhaustive. An Ecological Framework for Understanding Learning Across Places and Pursuits A broad theory, or set of complementary perspectives, which could be refined through empirical testing, could help integrate the range of theories and frames currently in use as represented in Box and help generate core questions. The framework draws mainly from cognitive and sociocultural theories. Our proposal is consonant with other calls for using an ecological perspective for accounts of human development and learning that can accommodate a range of disciplinary perspectives as

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well as the diversity of life experiences in a global society Barron, ; Lee, It builds on a tradition of scholarship on the ecological nature of human development. Within the ecological framework, we describe three cross-cutting aspects of learning that are evident in all learning processes: Most of these perspectives have attempted to provide a broader frame for learning outcomes yet are compatible with the nature of learning in informal environments. These frameworks are based on or framed in terms of cognitive and sociocultural theories. The model focuses on 12 key personal, sociocultural, and physical dimensions of learning. The model stresses visitor agenda, personal motivation, the sociocultural nature of learning, the importance of physical context, and long-term outcomes. It has been used to examine women negotiating the worlds of science and engineering, as well as race and gender in workplace settings Tate and Linn, ; Packard, Third spaces are outside the two typical spheres of existence: For telecommuters, for example, a coffee shop where they spend the work day could be construed as a third space. This framework is based on a large body of literature that considers the entry narrative of the visitor as a key factor in understanding motivation and learning from an informal learning experience. Family learning approaches are grounded in sociocultural theories and are currently transforming the way some museums and science centers are reorienting their missions, educational strategies, and experiences. Other perspectives have been used to inform evaluation studies of learning in informal environments. They are grounded in sociocultural theory and address the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to traditional deficit-based models that focus solely on youth problems, such as substance abuse, conduct disorders, delinquent and antisocial behavior, academic failure, and teenage pregnancy. Positive Youth Development describes six characteristics of positively developing young people that successful youth programs foster: Using each as a lens to examine learning environments enables us to tease out various factors at play in the learning process and better identify potential leverage points for improving learning. People-Centered Lens This lens sheds light on the intrapsychological phenomena that are relevant to the purposes and outcomes of science learning in informal environments including: Some of the relevant principles for the people-centered frame are encapsulated in How People Learn National Research Council, These principles include the influence of prior knowledge on learning, how experts differ from novices, and the importance of metacognition. Other principles highlight the learning benefits of having experiences that provide one with a positive affect and that help identify personal interests, motives, and identities that can be pursued. From early childhood onward, humans develop intuitive ideas about the world, bringing prior knowledge to nearly all learning endeavors. Children and adults explain and hear explanations from others about why the moon is sometimes invisible, how the seasons work, why things fall, bounce, break, or bend. Interestingly, these ideas develop without tutoring and are often tacit individuals may remain unaware of their own ideas. Yet these ideas often influence behavior and come into play during intentional acts of learning and education. Thus, a major implication for thinking about informal science learning is that what learners understand about the world is perhaps as important as what we wish for them to learn through a particular experience. Accordingly, efforts to teach should not merely be about abstractions derived in knowledge systems like science, but should also focus on helping learners become aware of and express their own ideas, giving them new information and models that can build on or challenge their intuitive ideas. Experts in a particular domain are people who have deep, richly interconnected ideas about the world. They are not just good thinkers or really smart. Nor are novices poor thinkers or not smart. Their ability to identify problems and generate solutions is closely connected to the things that they know, much more so than once believed National Research Council, Research has documented how expertise development can begin in childhood through informal interaction with family members, media sources, and unique educational experiences Crowley and Jacobs, ; Reeve and Bell, in press. One way that experts work with their knowledge is through metacognition or monitoring their own thinking. Much of this work is done in the head.

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### Chapter 4 : Mental Illness (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

*Disciplines and theoretical perspectives are the same thing. Psychology is only used to study phenomena at the micro level. Status, according to FUNCTIONALISTS, is a description of a set.*

What is Mental Illness? While there is debate over how to define mental illness, it is generally accepted that mental illnesses are real and involve disturbances of thought, experience, and emotion serious enough to cause functional impairment in people, making it more difficult for them to sustain interpersonal relationships and carry on their jobs, and sometimes leading to self-destructive behavior and even suicide. The most serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, and schizoaffective disorder are often chronic and can cause serious disability. What we now call mental illness was not always treated as a medical problem. Descriptions of the behaviors now labeled as symptomatic of mental illness or disorder were sometimes framed in quite different terms, such as possession by supernatural forces. Anthropological work in non-Western cultures suggests that there are many cases of behavior that Western psychiatry would classify as symptomatic of mental disorder, which are not seen within their own cultures as signs of mental illness Warner, , p. One may even raise the question whether all other cultures even have a concept of mental illness that corresponds even approximately to the Western concept, although, as Kleinman points out, this question is closely tied to that of adequately translating from other languages, and in societies without equivalent medical technology to the west, it will be hard to settle what counts as a concept of disease. The mainstream view in the West is that the changes in our description and treatment of mental illness are a result of our increasing knowledge and greater conceptual sophistication. On this view, we have conquered our former ignorance and now know that mental illness exists, even though there is a great deal of further research to be done on the causes and treatment of mental illness. Evidence from anthropological studies makes it clear that some mental illnesses are expressed differently in different cultures and it is also clear that non-Western cultures often have a different way of thinking about mental illness. For example, some cultures may see trance-like states as a form of possession. This has led some to argue that Western psychiatry also needs to change its approach to mental illness. Kleinman, , Simons and Hughes, However, the anthropological research is not set in the same conceptual terms as philosophy, and so it is unclear to what extent it implies that mental illness is primarily a Western concept. A more extreme view, most closely associated with the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, is that there is no such thing as mental illness because the very notion is based on a fundamental set of mistakes. He has also argued that the concept of mental illness is based on a confusion. More recent critics of psychiatry have been more focused on particular purported mental illnesses. The most heated controversies about the existence of particular mental illnesses are often over ones that seem to involve culturally-specific or moral judgments, such as homosexuality, pedophilia, antisocial personality disorder, and premenstrual dysphoric disorder. Other controversies exist over disorders that are milder in character and are on the borderline between normality and pathology, such as dysthymia, a low level chronic form of depression Radden, To reiterate, however, the dominant view is that mental illness exists and there is a variety of ways to understand it. Modern psychiatry has primarily embraced a scientific approach, looking for causes such as traumatic experiences or genetic vulnerabilities, establishing the typical course of different illnesses, gaining an understanding of the changes in the brain and nervous system that underlie the illnesses, and investigating which treatments are effective at alleviating symptoms and ending the illness. One of the central issues within this scientific framework is how different kinds of theory relate to each other Ghaemi, ; Perring, As alternatives to reductionist approaches there is also the first-person phenomenology and narrative understanding of mental illness. These focus on the personal experience of living and struggling with mental illness, and give careful descriptions of the associated symptoms. Some see a careful phenomenology as essential to scientific psychiatry e. The work in this phenomenological tradition is especially important in pressing the question of what it is to understand or explain mental illness, and how a phenomenological

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approach can relate to scientific approaches. See for example, Ratcliffe, and Gallagher, 2. There has been considerable discussion of how to draw a distinction between the two. Given the current debate, the prospects of finding a principled way of drawing the distinction that matches our current practices may be slim. The main practical reason for trying to draw distinctions between physical and mental illnesses comes from demarcating boundaries between professional competencies, and, in particular, from distinguishing the domain of neurology from that of psychiatry. However, this boundary is not sharply drawn and has moved over time. It is likely that as neuroscience progresses, the domains of neurology and psychiatry will start to merge. Most agree that the distinction between mental and physical illness cannot be drawn purely in terms of the causes of the condition, with mental illnesses having psychological causes and physical illnesses having non-psychological causes. Conversely, psychological factors such as stress are reliably associated with increased susceptibility to physical illness, which strongly suggests that those psychological factors are, directly or indirectly, part of the cause of the illness. First, it is often unclear whether to categorize symptoms as mental or physical. For example, intuitions are mixed as to whether pain is a physical or mental symptom. It is also unclear whether we would want to classify insomnia and fatigue as physical or mental symptoms. However we classify fatigue, it is a symptom of illnesses normally characterized as physical such as influenza and those characterized as mental such as depression. Furthermore, distinguishing between physical and mental illness in terms of symptoms may give counterintuitive results. A person who suffers a stroke can have emotional lability, and a person who has experienced a brain injury may become disinhibited; both may suffer memory loss. Yet stroke and brain injury would generally be classified as physical rather than mental disorders. In the light of these problems, some recommend doing away with any principled distinction between physical and mental disorder. First, certain researchers with a strong reductionist inclination argue that mental disorders are ultimately brain disorders; mental disorders are best explored through neuroscience. Others defend retaining the distinction between physical and mental disorders, but to non-traditional ends. Murphy, for instance, argues that it is important to have a distinction between physical and mental disorder so that it is possible to have a distinctive science of psychiatry. He argues for an expansive definition that includes problems in all psychological mechanisms. While this would entail that forms of blindness due to neural dysfunction count as mental disorders, which goes against our normal usage, his goal is not to completely capture our intuitions, but rather to have an adequate set of definitions to accommodate a theory of psychiatric explanation within the field of cognitive neuroscience. Thus we see that there are few defenders of the traditional distinction between mental and physical illnesses. Some theorists advocate refiguring the distinction so that it becomes that between brain-based and non-brain-based disorders. Others who take a more holistic view are skeptical that even this distinction is a useful way to separate illnesses into two groups.

**Classification of Mental Illness** There is ongoing debate concerning the way that mental illnesses should be classified. There are two aspects to this: Controversial diagnostic categories have historically included homosexuality, personality disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dysthymia, and pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder. For example, in 1994, the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from its diagnostic manual, after much internal argument and intensive lobbying from activist groups. For both autism and schizophrenia, it has been suggested that these are not unitary conditions but rather collections of quite different disorders lumped together in one category. These kinds of debates span both empirical and philosophical issues, and it is the former aspect, and the distinction between normality and psychopathology, that has gained the most philosophical scrutiny. The primary questions of concern are: Will it be possible in the future to classify mental illnesses according to their causes, as we do in much of the rest of medicine? Given that we currently classify most mental illnesses according to their symptoms rather than their causes, is there any reason to think that our current diagnostic categories are? Is it possible for any classification scheme of mental illnesses to be purely scientific, and is it possible for a classification scheme to be independent of values or to ask the reverse, do our classification schemes in psychiatry always rest on some non-scientific conception, normative of what should count as a normal life? This last question can be extended

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to all illnesses, not just those with a psychiatric classification. Many have urged, though, that it is in psychiatry that there is most reason to believe that values enter into the classification scheme, and that there is concern that the profession might be medicalizing what should be seen as normal conditions. Fulford, , Horwitz, The concepts of disease, illness, abnormality, malady, disorder and malfunction are closely related, but they are not the same. Much careful work has been done trying to find if one of these is more basic than any of the others, or if some of these concepts can be completely analyzed in terms of the others. For our purposes here, we shall gloss over the differences between these concepts. For the most part, we will simply refer to the concept of illness. The best-known defender of such an approach is Christopher Boorse, in a series of influential papers , , . At the other end of the spectrum are theories that psychiatric classification depends solely on the whim or values of those doing the classification, that there is nothing objective about it at all, and that there are no facts about what is normal. These subjective theories are generally proposed in a spirit of criticizing or undermining psychiatry, and are often very sympathetic to the Szaszian view that there is really no such thing as mental illness, and so there could not be a legitimate objective classification of different kinds of mental illness. Accompanying these theories, often, is the at least implicit suggestion that classification schemes suit the needs of those in power see, for instance, the work of sociological theorists Peter Sedwick and Thomas Scheff. See Reznek, , Chapters 6 and 7. Michel Foucault argued in a similar vein that the growth of psychiatry as a supposedly scientific discipline was really a way to impose bourgeois morality on people who did not accept it. Gutting, As for its plausibility, the view that the classification is totally subjective or arbitrary stands or falls with antirealism about mental illness, and it has not received much support in the last twenty years. It would be highly implausible for a defender of the medical model to insist that values have never in fact entered into the psychiatric taxonomyâ€”a brief study of the history of various categories show that empirical research and neutral scientific facts are certainly not the only things that have been played a role in the formation of classification schemes. Sadler, ; Bayer, ; Potter, ; Thomas and Sillen, The medical model claims a that it is possible to have a value-neutral classification scheme and b it is best to use a value-neutral classification scheme. In justifying part b of their claim, some defenders of the medical model might claim we can discover a conceptual truth of the form: They are either too broad, too narrow, or both. See Wakefield, An alternative approach to defending b is to argue that medicine, and psychiatry especially, should be value-neutral and so its classification scheme should be value-neutral. Of course, there are obvious ways in which we want medicine to not be neutral: We can distinguish different forms of neutrality of diagnostic categories. The ones that are dominant in the psychiatric and psychological literature concern validity and reliability of diagnostic criteria. The validity of a category is a measure of how well it measures what it is intended to measure, while the reliability concerns how well the criteria enable those using them to consistently diagnose people with the condition. Validity and reliability are certainly virtues of diagnostic categories, although there are debates on exactly how objective they are Sadler, ; Thornton, At the same time, there are ways in which theorists embrace the values behind psychiatric categorizing, and argue that they should simply be made public. See Fulford et al, Those who argue that psychiatry and the rest of medicine are inevitably normative do not infer from this that medicine is always biased; instead, their view is that the nature of psychiatric classification requires that some normative rather than purely scientific assumptions be made about what counts as health and what counts as illness. They generally then suggest that, since medicine and psychiatry have to make such assumptions, they should be as open and honest about it as possible so that debates about certain categories of psychopathology are not based on a misunderstanding of the kind of enterprise involved. Such theorists often add the suggestion that in a democracy, there should be public debate about what values should be at the heart of medicine and psychiatry. Sadler, ; Fulford, Those who argue that psychiatric classification is necessarily value-laden rarely rest their argument on the claim that all of science is value-laden, or even more controversially, that all of science is subjective. For the sake of argument, it is possible for all sides of the debate to concede that we can know facts about the causes and consequences of the conditions we label as illnesses, and that these facts are entirely value-neutral. There are of course some who would dispute the

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possibility of there being, or our knowing, any value-neutral facts, but this is an extreme view, and it does not single out medical classification as an interesting and unusual case of value-ladenness. So we will set it aside. We now can ask why those who think that psychiatric classification must be value-laden think so, and how those who think it can be value-neutral propose to find such a classification. If a theory can, by itself, provide us with a way of demarcating human health from pathology, then the theory must, on its own, have some account of what healthy function is, and what should count as a malfunction of a human being. Thus Boorse, who argues for the value-neutral view of classification, suggests that evolutionary theory can tell us what conditions are healthy. In one paper, he gives the following definition of health: An organism is healthy at any moment in proportion as it is not diseased; and a disease is a type of internal state of the organism which: Boorse, , page Those in opposition mount three kinds of claims: C1 In much of medicine, and especially psychiatry, we do not know with any certainty what is evolutionarily natural, because our scientific studies are still in their early stages or highly programmatic, and it can be very difficult to find data that will settle scientific controversies.

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### Chapter 5 : Postmodernism - Wikipedia

*The ecological perspective takes into account many constraints or systems that exist both in the body - like "cardiovascular, muscular" and out-side the body - like ecosystem, cultural" - when observing.*

Martin Heidegger[ edit ] Martin Heidegger rejected the philosophical basis of the concepts of "subjectivity" and "objectivity" and asserted that similar grounding oppositions in logic ultimately refer to one another. Instead of resisting the admission of this paradox in the search for understanding, Heidegger requires that we embrace it through an active process of elucidation he called the " hermeneutic circle ". He stressed the historicity and cultural construction of concepts while simultaneously advocating the necessity of an atemporal and immanent apprehension of them. In this vein, he asserted that it was the task of contemporary philosophy to recover the original question of or "openness to" Dasein translated as Being or Being-there present in the Presocratic philosophers but normalized, neutered, and standardized since Plato. To do this, however, a non-historical and, to a degree, self-referential engagement with whatever set of ideas, feelings or practices would permit both the non-fixed concept and reality of such a continuity was requiredâ€”a continuity permitting the possible experience, possible existence indeed not only of beings but of all differences as they appeared and tended to develop. Such a conclusion led Heidegger to depart from the phenomenology of his teacher Husserl and prompt instead an ironically anachronistic return to the yet-unasked questions of Ontology , a return that in general did not acknowledge an intrinsic distinction between phenomena and noumena or between things in themselves de re and things as they appear see qualia: In this latter premise, Heidegger shares an affinity with the late Romantic philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche , another principal forerunner of post-structuralist and postmodernist thought. In direct contradiction to what have been typified as modernist perspectives on epistemology , Foucault asserted that rational judgment, social practice, and what he called " biopower " are not only inseparable but co-determinant. Instead, Foucault focused on the ways in which such constructs can foster cultural hegemony , violence, and exclusion. His writings have had a major influence on the larger body of postmodern academic literature. This crisis, insofar as it pertains to academia, concerns both the motivations and justification procedures for making research claims: As formal conjecture about real-world issues becomes inextricably linked to automated calculation, information storage, and retrieval, such knowledge becomes increasingly "exteriorised" from its knowers in the form of information. Knowledge thus becomes materialized and made into a commodity exchanged between producers and consumers; it ceases to be either an idealistic end-in-itself or a tool capable of bringing about liberty or social benefit; it is stripped of its humanistic and spiritual associations, its connection with education, teaching, and human development, being simply rendered as "data"â€”omnipresent, material, unending, and without any contexts or pre-requisites. The value-premises upholding academic research have been maintained by what Lyotard considers to be quasi-mythological beliefs about human purpose, human reason, and human progressâ€”large, background constructs he calls " metanarratives ". These metanarratives still remain in Western society but are now being undermined by rapid Informatization and the commercialization of the university and its functions. We are now controlled not by binding extra-linguistic value paradigms defining notions of collective identity and ultimate purpose, but rather by our automatic responses to different species of "language games" a concept Lyotard imports from J. Richard Rorty[ edit ] Richard Rorty argues in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature that contemporary analytic philosophy mistakenly imitates scientific methods. In addition, he denounces the traditional epistemological perspectives of representationalism and correspondence theory that rely upon the independence of knowers and observers from phenomena and the passivity of natural phenomena in relation to consciousness. As a proponent of anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism within a pragmatist framework, he echoes the postmodern strain of conventionalism and relativism , but opposes much of postmodern thinking with his commitment to social liberalism. Jean Baudrillard[ edit ] Jean Baudrillard , in Simulacra and Simulation , introduced the concept that reality or the principle of " The Real " is short-circuited by the

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interchangeability of signs in an era whose communicative and semantic acts are dominated by electronic media and digital technologies. Baudrillard proposes the notion that, in such a state, where subjects are detached from the outcomes of events political, literary, artistic, personal, or otherwise, events no longer hold any particular sway on the subject nor have any identifiable context; they therefore have the effect of producing widespread indifference, detachment, and passivity in industrialized populations. He claimed that a constant stream of appearances and references without any direct consequences to viewers or readers could eventually render the division between appearance and object indiscernible, resulting, ironically, in the "disappearance" of mankind in what is, in effect, a virtual or holographic state, composed only of appearances. For Baudrillard, "simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or a reality: Eclectic in his methodology, Jameson has continued a sustained examination of the role that periodization continues to play as a grounding assumption of critical methodologies in humanities disciplines. He has contributed extensive effort to explicating the importance of concepts of Utopia and Utopianism as driving forces in the cultural and intellectual movements of modernity, and outlining the political and existential uncertainties that may result from the decline or suspension of this trend in the theorized state of postmodernity. Like Susan Sontag, Jameson served to introduce a wide audience of American readers to key figures of the 20th century continental European intellectual left, particularly those associated with the Frankfurt School, structuralism, and post-structuralism. Thus, his importance as a "translator" of their ideas to the common vocabularies of a variety of disciplines in the Anglo-American academic complex is equally as important as his own critical engagement with them. Douglas Kellner [edit] In *Analysis of the Journey*, a journal birthed from postmodernism, Douglas Kellner insists that the "assumptions and procedures of modern theory" must be forgotten. His terms defined in the depth of postmodernism are based on advancement, innovation, and adaptation. Extensively, Kellner analyzes the terms of this theory in real-life experiences and examples. Kellner used science and technology studies as a major part of his analysis; he urged that the theory is incomplete without it. The scale was larger than just postmodernism alone; it must be interpreted through cultural studies where science and technology studies play a huge role. The reality of the September 11 attacks on the United States of America is the catalyst for his explanation. This catalyst is used as a great representation due to the mere fact of the planned ambush and destruction of "symbols of globalization", insinuating the World Trade Center. One of the numerous yet appropriate definitions of postmodernism and the qualm aspect aids this attribute to seem perfectly accurate. He questions if the attacks are only able to be understood in a limited form of postmodern theory due to the level of irony. Similar to the act of September 11 and the symbols that were interpreted through this postmodern ideal, he continues to even describe this as "semiotic systems" that people use to make sense of their lives and the events that occur in them. He finds strength in theorist Baudrillard and his idea of Marxism. The conclusion he depicts is simple:

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## Chapter 6 : Why Do We Sleep, Anyway? | Healthy Sleep

*Please feel free to email me and we can set up a deal that works for you and your school's budget. How Your Body Transforms On A Vegan Diet - Duration: Theoretical Perspectives.*

Theories Used in Social Work Practice Theories Used in Social Work Practice For people who want to dedicate their life to helping others in a practical way, social work can be a fulfilling career. Direct social services usually address the problems of individuals, helping them enhance their capacity to meet social obligations. Social development work is aimed at correcting long-term problems in communities. In short, social work is about empowering people. A theory is a logical system of concepts that helps to explain why something happens in a particular way and to predict outcomes. By grounding their practice in theory, social workers can better understand his or her own task, orient goal setting, and anticipate outcomes. Describe and explain behavior, particularly when it comes to how problems develop. A particular way of viewing and thinking about the practice of social work. Provide guidance and expectations for improving outcomes for children, youth, and families. Orienting Theories Orienting theories describe and explain behavior, particularly when it comes to how problems develop. Various theories draw from other disciplines, including biology, psychology, and economics, and are related to all aspects of social work, including human development, personality, family systems, and political power. Orienting theories also attempt to explain large-scale societal problems such as poverty, mental illness, crime, and racial discrimination. Psychodynamic theory is informed by ego psychology and focuses on how inner energies interact with external forces to impact emotional development. That is, this theory assumes that emotions play a key role in human behavior and is thus concerned with how these internal needs, drives, and emotions motivate human behavior. It assumes that both conscious and unconscious mental activity motivate human behavior, and that internalized experiences—such as childhood experiences—shape personality development and functioning. This theory is what social workers usually employ when dealing with a client who has suffered past trauma or abuse. Social learning theory, also called behaviorism or behavior theory, is based on the psychology of learning. By focusing on how individuals develop cognitive functioning, social workers can understand how those cognitive structures enable adaptation and organization. So in dealing with problem behavior, social workers who employ this theory focus on changing the reinforcement that perpetuates that behavior. Power is unequally divided in every society, and all societies perpetuate various forms of oppression and injustice through structural inequality—from the wealth gap to racial discrimination. In short, groups and individuals advance their own interest over the interests of others. Dominant groups maintain social order through manipulation and control. But social change can be achieved through conflict—that is, interrupting periods of stability. In this theory, life is characterized by conflict either open or through exploitation instead of consensus. By addressing these asymmetric power relationships, social workers therefore aim to even the scales and reduce grievances between persons or groups. Practice Perspectives Practice perspectives are a particular way of viewing and thinking about the practice of social work. By offering a conceptual lens of social functioning, these frameworks focus on particular, recognizable features of a situation in order to offer guidance on what might be important considerations. Two in particular are noteworthy in their common use to assess relationships between people and their environment: Just as ecology seeks to explain the reciprocal relationship between organisms, the ecosystems perspective assumes that human needs and problems are generated by the transactions between people and their environments. The individual exists within families, Families exist within communities and neighborhoods, Individuals, families, and neighborhoods exist in a political, economic, and cultural environment, and it follows that The environment impacts the actions, beliefs, and choices of the individual. Unlike systems theory, which takes a broad perspective on equilibrium within a system, this model emphasizes active participation with the environment. The second primary perspective, the strengths perspective assumes that every individual, family, group, organization, and community has

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identifiable strengths. By focusing on these strengths, clients can grow and overcome difficulties. Given the internal nature of strength, clients are usually the best experts about what types of helping strategies will be effective or ineffective; as such, the social worker in this situation is more of a facilitator. The third primary perspective, the feminist perspective takes into account the role of gender and the historical lack of power experienced by women in society. Social workers who employ a feminist perspective emphasize the need for equality and empowerment of women in our society. Practice models While theories help explain why a problem is occurring, dozens of social work practice models are used to address the problems themselves. Based on these theories and others, these models are step-by-step guides for client sessions, much like a recipe or a blueprint for how to effect change. A few common practice models include: The social worker helps the client understand the problem, brainstorm possible solutions, pick a solution, try it out, and evaluate effectiveness. The social worker helps the client break down the problem into achievable tasks, using rehearsals, deadlines, and contracts to maintain drive and motivation. The social worker and client first identify the solution—the desired future—then work together to establish the steps that will lead to the solution. The social worker and client work to reduce the impact of an immediate crisis, learn to more effectively respond to the impact of a stressful event by employing both internal and external resources, and restore the individual to a pre-crisis level of functioning. What are the educational requirements for a social worker? Is the program accredited? Will the program prepare you for licensure and other exams? Does the program offer online or hybrid courses for working and non-traditional students?

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### Chapter 7 : Theory and Why It is Important - Social and Behavioral Theories - e-Source Book - OBSSR e-S

*Functionalism. Auguste Comte saw the science of society as essentially similar to natural science. His positivist approach was based on the principle of direct observation, which could be explained by theoretical statements based on establishing causal, law-like generalizations.*

Why Do We Sleep, Anyway? At a Glance Our bodies regulate sleep in much the same way that they regulate eating, drinking, and breathing. This suggests that sleep serves a similar critical role in our health and well-being. Although it is difficult to answer the question, "Why do we sleep? Understanding these theories can help deepen our appreciation of the function of sleep in our lives. Hunger and Eating; Sleepiness and Sleep As with eating well, good sleep is a staple of optimal health. While we may not often think about why we sleep, most of us acknowledge at some level that sleep makes us feel better. We feel more alert, more energetic, happier, and better able to function following a good night of sleep. However, the fact that sleep makes us feel better and that going without sleep makes us feel worse only begins to explain why sleep might be necessary. One way to think about the function of sleep is to compare it to another of our life-sustaining activities: Hunger is a protective mechanism that has evolved to ensure that we consume the nutrients our bodies require to grow, repair tissues, and function properly. And although it is relatively easy to grasp the role that eating servesâ€”given that it involves physically consuming the substances our bodies needâ€”eating and sleeping are not as different as they might seem. Both eating and sleeping are regulated by powerful internal drives. Going without food produces the uncomfortable sensation of hunger, while going without sleep makes us feel overwhelmingly sleepy. And just as eating relieves hunger and ensures that we obtain the nutrients we need, sleeping relieves sleepiness and ensures that we obtain the sleep we need. Still, the question remains: Why do we need sleep at all? Is there a single primary function of sleep, or does sleep serve many functions? Scientists have explored the question of why we sleep from many different angles. They have examined, for example, what happens when humans or other animals are deprived of sleep. Yet, despite decades of research and many discoveries about other aspects of sleep, the question of why we sleep has been difficult to answer. The lack of a clear answer to this challenging question does not mean that this research has been a waste of time. In fact, we now know much more about the function of sleep, and scientists have developed several promising theories to explain why we sleep. In light of the evidence they have gathered, it seems likely that no single theory will ever be proven correct. Instead, we may find that sleep is explained by two or more of these explanations. This essay outlines several current theories of why we sleep. To learn more about them, be sure to check out the "Bookshelf" feature at the end of this essay. The theory suggests that animals that were able to stay still and quiet during these periods of vulnerability had an advantage over other animals that remained active. These animals did not have accidents during activities in the dark, for example, and were not killed by predators. Through natural selection, this behavioral strategy presumably evolved to become what we now recognize as sleep. A simple counter-argument to this theory is that it is always safer to remain conscious in order to be able to react to an emergency even if lying still in the dark at night. Thus, there does not seem to be any advantage of being unconscious and asleep if safety is paramount. Energy Conservation Theory Although it may be less apparent to people living in societies in which food sources are plentiful, one of the strongest factors in natural selection is competition for and effective utilization of energy resources. Lions conserving energy after a meal. Research has shown that energy metabolism is significantly reduced during sleep by as much as 10 percent in humans and even more in other species. For example, both body temperature and caloric demand decrease during sleep, as compared to wakefulness. Such evidence supports the proposition that one of the primary functions of sleep is to help organisms conserve their energy resources. Many scientists consider this theory to be related to, and part of, the inactivity theory. Restorative Theories Another explanation for why we sleep is based on the long-held belief that sleep in some way serves to "restore" what is lost in the body while we are awake. Sleep provides an opportunity for the body to repair

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and rejuvenate itself. In recent years, these ideas have gained support from empirical evidence collected in human and animal studies. The most striking of these is that animals deprived entirely of sleep lose all immune function and die in just a matter of weeks. This is further supported by findings that many of the major restorative functions in the body like muscle growth, tissue repair, protein synthesis, and growth hormone release occur mostly, or in some cases only, during sleep. Other rejuvenating aspects of sleep are specific to the brain and cognitive function. The build-up of adenosine in the brain is thought to be one factor that leads to our perception of being tired. Incidentally, this feeling is counteracted by the use of caffeine, which blocks the actions of adenosine in the brain and keeps us alert. Scientists think that this build-up of adenosine during wakefulness may promote the "drive to sleep. During sleep, the body has a chance to clear adenosine from the system, and, as a result, we feel more alert when we wake. One of the most recent and compelling explanations for why we sleep is based on findings that sleep is correlated to changes in the structure and organization of the brain. This phenomenon, known as brain plasticity, is not entirely understood, but its connection to sleep has several critical implications. It is becoming clear, for example, that sleep plays a critical role in brain development in infants and young children. Infants spend about 13 to 14 hours per day sleeping, and about half of that time is spent in REM sleep, the stage in which most dreams occur. A link between sleep and brain plasticity is becoming clear in adults as well. Clues to the functions of mammalian sleep. Adenosine in sleep and wakefulness. The mystery of sleep function: Reviews in the Neurosciences. This theory and the role of sleep in learning are covered in greater detail in Sleep, Learning, and Memory. Although these theories remain unproven, science has made tremendous strides in discovering what happens during sleep and what mechanisms in the body control the cycles of sleep and wakefulness that help define our lives. While this research does not directly answer the question, "Why do we sleep?"

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## Chapter 8 : Three Major Perspectives in Sociology

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Views of social problems

**Functionalism** Social stability is necessary for a strong society, and adequate socialization and social integration are necessary for social stability. Slow social change is desirable, but rapid social change threatens social order. Solutions to social problems should take the form of gradual social reform rather than sudden and far-reaching change. Despite their negative effects, social problems often also serve important functions for society.

**Conflict theory** Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on social class, race, gender, and other factors. Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality and to create an egalitarian society. Social problems arise from fundamental faults in the structure of a society and both reflect and reinforce inequalities based on social class, race, gender, and other dimensions. Successful solutions to social problems must involve far-reaching change in the structure of society.

**Symbolic interactionism** People construct their roles as they interact; they do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them. As this interaction occurs, individuals negotiate their definitions of the situations in which they find themselves and socially construct the reality of these situations. In so doing, they rely heavily on symbols such as words and gestures to reach a shared understanding of their interaction. Social problems arise from the interaction of individuals. People who engage in socially problematic behaviors often learn these behaviors from other people. Individuals also learn their perceptions of social problems from other people.

**Functionalism** Functionalism The view that social institutions are important for their contributions to social stability. The first was the French Revolution of 1789, whose intense violence and bloody terror shook Europe to its core. The aristocracy throughout Europe feared that revolution would spread to their own lands, and intellectuals feared that social order was crumbling. The Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century reinforced these concerns. Starting first in Europe and then in the United States, the Industrial Revolution led to many changes, including the rise and growth of cities as people left their farms to live near factories. As the cities grew, people lived in increasingly poor, crowded, and decrepit conditions, and crime was rampant. Here was additional evidence, if European intellectuals needed it, of the breakdown of social order. In response, the intellectuals began to write that a strong society, as exemplified by strong social bonds and rules and effective socialization, was needed to prevent social order from disintegrating. Without a strong society and effective socialization, they warned, social order breaks down, and violence and other signs of social disorder result.

Original work published It does so, he wrote, through two related social mechanisms: It uses the human body as a model for understanding society. In the human body, our various organs and other body parts serve important functions for the ongoing health and stability of our body. Our eyes help us see, our ears help us hear, our heart circulates our blood, and so forth. Just as we can understand the body by describing and understanding the functions that its parts serve for its health and stability, so can we understand society by describing and understanding the functions that its parts—or, more accurately, its social institutions—serve for the ongoing health and stability of society. Thus functionalism emphasizes the importance of social institutions such as the family, religion, and education for producing a stable society. Similar to the view of the conservative intellectuals from which it grew, functionalism is skeptical of rapid social change and other major social upheaval. The analogy to the human body helps us understand this skepticism. In our bodies, any sudden, rapid change is a sign of danger to our health. If we break a bone in one of our legs, we have trouble walking; if we lose sight in both our eyes, we can no longer see. Slow changes, such as the growth of our hair and our nails, are fine and even normal, but sudden changes like those just described are obviously troublesome. By analogy, sudden and rapid changes in society and its social institutions are troublesome according to the functionalist perspective. If the human body evolved to its present form and functions because these made sense from an evolutionary perspective, so did society evolve to its present form and functions because these made sense. Any sudden change in society thus threatens its stability and future. Accordingly,

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gradual social reform should be all that is needed to address the social problem. Functionalism even suggests that social problems must be functional in some ways for society, because otherwise these problems would not continue. This is certainly a controversial suggestion, but it is true that many social problems do serve important functions for our society. For example, crime is a major social problem, but it is also good for the economy because it creates hundreds of thousands of jobs in law enforcement, courts and corrections, home security, and other sectors of the economy whose major role is to deal with crime. If crime disappeared, many people would be out of work! Similarly, poverty is also a major social problem, but one function that poverty serves is that poor people do jobs that otherwise might not get done because other people would not want to do them Gans, The positive functions of poverty. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1973. Like crime, poverty also provides employment for people across the nation, such as those who work in social service agencies that help poor people.

**Conflict Theory** In many ways, conflict theory The view that society is composed of groups with different interests arising from their placement in the social structure. Whereas conservative intellectuals feared the mass violence resulting from industrialization, Marx and Engels deplored the conditions they felt were responsible for the mass violence and the capitalist society they felt was responsible for these conditions. Original work published ; Marx, K. In *Marx and Engels: Foreign Language Publishing House*. Original work published According to Marx and Engels, every society is divided into two classes based on the ownership of the means of production tools, factories, and the like. In a capitalist society, the bourgeoisie, or ruling class, owns the means of production, while the proletariat, or working class, does not own the means of production and instead is oppressed and exploited by the bourgeoisie. This difference creates an automatic conflict of interests between the two groups. In a capitalist society, Marx and Engels wrote, revolution is inevitable because of structural contradictions arising from the very nature of capitalism. To do so, capitalists try to keep wages as low as possible and to spend as little money as possible on working conditions. Their class consciousness in turn leads them to revolt against the bourgeoisie to eliminate the oppression and exploitation they suffer. This theory emphasizes that different groups in society have different interests stemming from their different social positions. These different interests in turn lead to different views on important social issues. Some versions of the theory root conflict in divisions based on race and ethnicity, gender, and other such differences, while other versions follow Marx and Engels in seeing conflict arising out of different positions in the economic structure. In general, however, conflict theory emphasizes that the various parts of society contribute to ongoing inequality, whereas functionalist theory, as we have seen, stresses that they contribute to the ongoing stability of society. Thus while functionalist theory emphasizes the benefits of the various parts of society for ongoing social stability, conflict theory favors social change to reduce inequality.

**Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels** were intense critics of capitalism. Their work inspired the later development of conflict theory in sociology. In this case, the conflict concerns gender inequality rather than the class inequality emphasized by Marx and Engels. Although many variations of feminist theory exist, they all emphasize that society is filled with gender inequality such that women are the subordinate sex in many dimensions of social, political, and economic life Lorber, *Feminist Theories and Politics*. Liberal feminists view gender inequality as arising out of gender differences in socialization, while Marxist feminists say that this inequality is a result of the rise of capitalism, which made women dependent on men for economic support. On the other hand, radical feminists view gender inequality as present in all societies, not just capitalist ones. Several chapters in this book emphasize the perspectives of feminist sociologists and other social scientists.

**Symbolic Interactionism** Symbolic interactionism A perspective in sociology that focuses on the meanings people gain from social interaction. Its roots lie in the work of early s American sociologists, social psychologists, and philosophers who were interested in human consciousness and action. Herbert Blumer ,Blumer, H. As they interact, they negotiate their definitions of the situations in which they find themselves and socially construct the reality of these situations. In doing so, they rely heavily on symbols such as words and gestures to reach a shared understanding of their interaction. Symbolic interactionism focuses on individuals, such as the people conversing here. Sociologists favoring this approach examine how and why

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individuals interact and interpret the meanings of their interaction. In the United States and many other societies, shaking hands is a symbol of greeting and friendship. This simple act indicates that you are a nice, polite person with whom someone should feel comfortable. This action is usually intended as a sign of dislike or as an insult, and the other person interprets it as such. Their understanding of the situation and subsequent interaction will be very different from those arising from the more typical shaking of hands. As the term symbolic interactionism implies, their understanding of this encounter arises from what they do when they interact and from their use and interpretation of the various symbols included in their interaction. According to symbolic interactionists, social order is possible because people learn what various symbols such as shaking hands mean and apply these meanings to different kinds of situations. If you visited a society where sticking your right hand out to greet someone was interpreted as a threatening gesture, you would quickly learn the value of common understandings of symbols. Symbolic interactionism views social problems as arising from the interaction of individuals. This interaction matters in two important respects. First, socially problematic behaviors such as crime and drug use are often learned from our interaction with people who engage in these behaviors; we adopt their attitudes that justify committing these behaviors, and we learn any special techniques that might be needed to commit these behaviors. Second, we also learn our perceptions of a social problem from our interaction with other people, whose perceptions and beliefs influence our own perceptions and beliefs. Because symbolic interactionism emphasizes the perception of social problems, it is closely aligned with the social constructionist view discussed earlier. Both perspectives emphasize the subjective nature of social problems. By doing so, they remind us that perceptions often matter at least as much as objective reality in determining whether a given condition or behavior rises to the level of a social problem and in the types of possible solutions that various parties might favor for a particular social problem. Applying the Three Perspectives To explain armed robbery, symbolic interactionists focus on how armed robbers decide when and where to rob a victim and on how their interactions with other criminals reinforce their own criminal tendencies. A functionalist approach might suggest that armed robbery actually serves positive functions for society, such as the job-creating function mentioned earlier for crime in general. It would still think that efforts should be made to reduce armed robbery, but it would also assume that far-reaching changes in our society would be neither wise nor necessary as part of the effort to reduce crime. Conflict theory would take a very different approach to understanding armed robbery. It might note that most street criminals are poor and thus emphasize that armed robbery is the result of the despair and frustration of living in poverty and facing a lack of jobs and other opportunities for economic and social success. The roots of street crime, from the perspective of conflict theory, thus lie in society at least as much as they lie in the individuals committing such crime. To reduce armed robbery and other street crime, conflict theory would advocate far-reaching changes in the economic structure of society.

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## Chapter 9 : Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

*A theory is a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that explains or predicts events or situations by specifying relations among variables. The notion of generality, or broad application, is important.*

Social Movements Three Major Perspectives in Sociology Sociologists analyze social phenomena at different levels and from different perspectives. The pioneering European sociologists, however, also offered a broad conceptualization of the fundamentals of society and its workings. Sociologists today employ three primary theoretical perspectives: These perspectives offer sociologists theoretical paradigms for explaining how society influences people, and vice versa. Each perspective uniquely conceptualizes society, social forces, and human behavior see Table 1. The symbolic interactionist perspective The symbolic interactionist perspective, also known as symbolic interactionism, directs sociologists to consider the symbols and details of everyday life, what these symbols mean, and how people interact with each other. Mead introduced this perspective to American sociology in the s. According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, people attach meanings to symbols, and then they act according to their subjective interpretation of these symbols. Verbal conversations, in which spoken words serve as the predominant symbols, make this subjective interpretation especially evident. Conversation is an interaction of symbols between individuals who constantly interpret the world around them. Of course, anything can serve as a symbol as long as it refers to something beyond itself. Written music serves as an example. The black dots and lines become more than mere marks on the page; they refer to notes organized in such a way as to make musical sense. Thus, symbolic interactionists give serious thought to how people act, and then seek to determine what meanings individuals assign to their own actions and symbols, as well as to those of others. Consider applying symbolic interactionism to the American institution of marriage. American society attaches general meanings to these symbols, but individuals also maintain their own perceptions of what these and other symbols mean. Much faulty communication can result from differences in the perception of the same events and symbols. The perspective also receives criticism for slighting the influence of social forces and institutions on individual interactions. The government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. That is, the family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and support their own families. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. For example, during a financial recession with its high rates of unemployment and inflation, social programs are trimmed or cut. Schools offer fewer programs. Families tighten their budgets. And a new social order, stability, and productivity occur. Functionalists believe that society is held together by social consensus, or cohesion, in which members of the society agree upon, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole. Emile Durkheim suggested that social consensus takes one of two forms: Mechanical solidarity is a form of social cohesion that arises when people in a society maintain similar values and beliefs and engage in similar types of work. Mechanical solidarity most commonly occurs in traditional, simple societies such as those in which everyone herds cattle or farms. Amish society exemplifies mechanical solidarity. In contrast, organic solidarity is a form of social cohesion that arises when the people in a society are interdependent, but hold to varying values and beliefs and engage in varying types of work. Organic solidarity most commonly occurs in industrialized, complex societies such those in large American cities like New York in the s. The functionalist perspective achieved its greatest popularity among American sociologists in the s and s. While European functionalists originally focused on explaining the inner workings of social order, American functionalists focused on discovering the functions of human behavior. Among these American functionalist sociologists is Robert Merton b. The manifest function of attending a church or synagogue, for instance, is to worship as part of a religious community, but its latent function may be to help members learn to discern personal from institutional values. With common sense, manifest functions become

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easily apparent. Yet this is not necessarily the case for latent functions, which often demand a sociological approach to be revealed. A sociological approach in functionalism is the consideration of the relationship between the functions of smaller parts and the functions of the whole. Functionalism has received criticism for neglecting the negative functions of an event such as divorce. Functionalism does not encourage people to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when such change may benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees active social change as undesirable because the various parts of society will compensate naturally for any problems that may arise. Unlike functionalists who defend the status quo, avoid social change, and believe people cooperate to effect social order, conflict theorists challenge the status quo, encourage social change even when this means social revolution, and believe rich and powerful people force social order on the poor and the weak. Whereas American sociologists in the 1920s and 1930s generally ignored the conflict perspective in favor of the functionalist, the tumultuous 1960s saw American sociologists gain considerable interest in conflict theory. Today, conflict theorists find social conflict between any groups in which the potential for inequality exists: Conflict theorists note that unequal groups usually have conflicting values and agendas, causing them to compete against one another. Critics of the conflict perspective point to its overly negative view of society. The theory ultimately attributes humanitarian efforts, altruism, democracy, civil rights, and other positive aspects of society to capitalistic designs to control the masses, not to inherent interests in preserving society and social order.