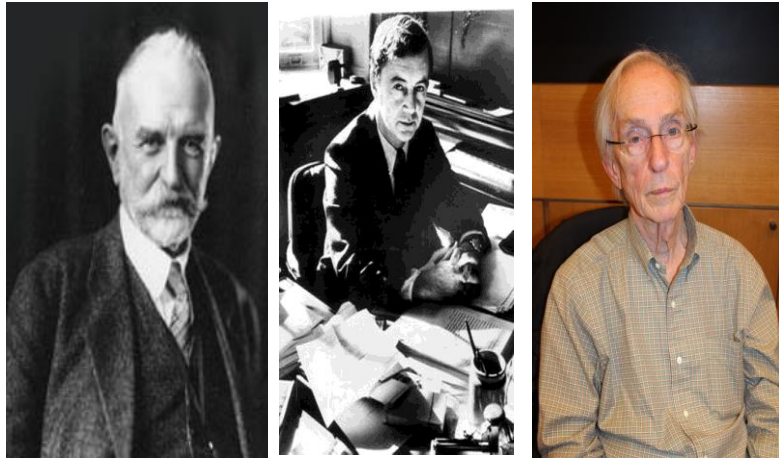


Interactionism

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Key interactionist sociologists include:
G.H. Mead, Erving Goffman and Howard
Becker



Unlike structural theories,
Interactionism is concerned with **social
action** and how individuals **interpret
their interactions** with others in society.
It looks at the **self** rather than society

Becker suggested that people are **labelled** by others and that these labels are internalised by individuals and become part of a **self-fulfilling prophecy**, one that becomes true because the person labelled believes it.



In society, often people are given a **master status** because of a certain aspect of their lives. This master status, such as a thief or criminal, then over-rides all other characteristics of that person, so we see the label not the person behind it.

Goffman suggested that individuals are like actors on a stage, taking on different **roles** in different **social contexts**. This was referred to as the **Dramaturgical Model**, and suggest we have different behaviours in different social contexts and around different people.



Interactionists look at the use of **symbols, language and gestures** and argue that we learn these in order to **negotiate** living in wider society so we can understand what is expected of us in a certain situation.