

Call for Papers

Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research: 26th Annual Qualitative Analysis Conference

April 30-May 3, 2009

University of Waterloo

Waterloo, Ontario

Symbolic interaction rests in the last analysis on three simple premises. The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they have for them... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, 1969:2)

Although this conference is focused most explicitly on Blumerian or Chicago-style symbolic interaction and ethnographic research, we also recognize the considerable affinities of this approach with Iowa interactionism, social constructionism (Schutz, Berger and Luckmann), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel), grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss), dramaturgy (Goffman), more traditional (realist) anthropological ethnography, and pragmatist scholarship more generally. Thus, we welcome submissions from those whose works fall within these related academic traditions.

Mindful of the tradition associated with Herbert Blumer, Anslem Strauss, Gregory Stone, Carl Couch, and others in the interactionist community, *this conference seeks to extend our understanding of human knowing and acting by encouraging ethnographic research and using comparative analysis to examine, assess, and extend the theoretical, methodological, and conceptual dimensions of the sociological venture.*

We invite submissions from students and faculty who may be new to this tradition as well as more established scholars in the field. Likewise, envisioning scholarship as an ongoing process, we are receptive to statements on projects in varying stages (including more tentative formulations) of development.

Further, one of the objectives we would especially like to pursue at this conference is a stronger set of linkages, not only between people working on a broad array of interactionist projects, but also between junior and more established scholars as well as between scholars and scholars in the making. *To this end, we will be striving for an exceptionally high level of interchange between the participants so that people may be able to benefit more directly from longer-term relations and the resources that we have to offer as a scholarly community with a coherent theoretical and methodological focus.*

This conference is organized around four sets of sessions

- * *The Pragmatist / Interpretivist Heritage*
- * *Theoretical and Methodological Issues*
- * *Ethnographic Research, Social processes, and Comparative Analysis*
- * *Revisiting our Ethnographic Heritage*

The Pragmatist / Interpretivist Heritage

The papers for these sessions would review the works of scholars whose works are related to the development of pragmatist and interpretivist scholarship.

- *Historical Developments of Pragmatist, Interactionist, and Constructionist Thought
- *Pragmatist Motifs in Greek and Latin Scholarship
- *European Influences, American Pragmatism, and Symbolic Interaction
- *American Pragmatism: Peirce, James, Dewey, Cooley, Mead
- *Robert Park, Everett Hughes, and Symbolic Interaction
- *Social Reform Movements, Ethnography, and Chicago Sociology
- *Social Darwinism and Early Chicago Sociology
- *Historical Development of the Chicago School
- *George Herbert Mead, Herbert Blumer and the Pragmatist Tradition
- *Herbert Blumer and The Chicago Tradition
- *Anselm Strauss and Interactionist Analysis
- *The Pragmatist Legacy of Erving Goffman
- *Gregory Stone, Carl Couch, and Social Process
- *Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology and Symbolic Interaction

Theoretical and Methodological Sessions

These sessions consider the conceptual, methodological, and analytic features of the interactionist study of human knowing and acting

- *Examining the Theoretical Foundations of Human Group Life
- *Methodological Directions and Ethnographic Implications
- *Reflections on Building Theory and Developing Concepts in the Field

- *Reflexivity in Ethnographic Research and Writing
- *Symbolic Interaction and Contemporary Theoretical Developments
- *Grounded Theory, Comparative Analysis and Generic Social Processes
- *Questing for Intersubjectivity in Theory and Methods
- *Positivism, Postmodernism, and Symbolic Interactionism: Affinities and Resistances
- *Setting up Ethnographic Research Projects – Theory and Methods
- *Encountering Ethics Committees and Pursuing Funding for Ethnographic Inquiry
- *Limitations, Obstacles, and Potentialities of Interactionist Research
- *Processes and Problematics of Sustaining Ethnographic Inquiry in the Field
- *Applying Interactionist Research and Analysis to Practical Problems of Living
- *Doing Ethnographic Research: Experiences in the Field
- *Sustaining Scholarly Emphases in Moralistic Climates

Ethnographic Ventures, Social Process, and Comparative Analysis

The papers in these sessions would centrally address one of the following processes *through interactionist informed ethnographic research and/or comparative analysis*. In addition to providing detailed examinations of particular life worlds, a major objective of this conference is to indicate what we have learned about the more generic or fundamental aspects of human group life and to suggest ways that we might be better able to more adequately conceptualize and study these matters from an interactionist standpoint.

Relatedly, people organizing these sessions would encourage comparative analysis of human life-worlds on the part of presenters in their sessions. In the words of Glaser and Strauss, this means to strive for conceptual, process-oriented comparisons within and across studies (rather than pile up little isolated islands of research).

- *Ethnography, Comparative Analysis, and Generic Social Processes
- *Acquiring Perspectives and Defining Reality
- *Encountering Ambiguity and Questioning Reality
- *Achieving Identity
- *Questing for Popularity
- *Doing Activity
- *Generating Performances
- *Striving for Success, Living with Failure
- *Managing Impressions and Dealing with Deception
- *Pursuing and Experiencing Influence Work
- *Engaging Relationships
- *Managing Intimacy and Distancing
- *Experiencing Emotionality
- *Developing Communicative Fluency
- *Participating in Collective Events
- *Experiencing Religion and Spirituality
- *Teaching and Learning
- *Developing, Sustaining, and Adjusting Character
- *Generating, Perpetuating, and Challenging Memory
- *Engaging Science and Technology
- *Providing and Consuming Entertainment
- *Experiencing the Media

- *Producing and Consuming Texts
- *Living on the Internet
- *Attending to Tourist and Recreational Ventures
- *Engaging the Marketplace
- *Processes and Problematics of Achieving Teamwork
- *Forming and Coordinating Associations
- *Managing and Being Managed in Organizational Contexts
- *Experiencing Organizational Routines
- *Pursuing and Holding Political Office
- *Developing, Assessing, and Transforming Policy
- *Managing Morality
- *Regulating Deviance
- *Experiencing Deviance
- *Dealing with Change and Continuity
- *Experiencing Migration and Relocation
- *Experiencing Social Class
- *Living with Racial and Ethnic Identities
- *Attending to Gender as a Social Process
- *Dealing with the Embodied and Imaged Self
- *Defining and Managing Illness
- *Facing Disaster and Loss
- *Attending to the Environment
- *Shaping and Reshaping Cities

Revisiting our Ethnographic Heritage

The papers for these sessions would review the works of particular scholars engaging in pragmatist / interactionist oriented ethnography. In addition to developing a synoptic overview of the particular ethnography(ies) considered in the paper, authors consider the ways that these studies contribute to the more generic or enduring understanding of human group life as represented (variously) in people's perspectives, identities, activities, relationships, commitments, collective ventures, and the like. This allows us to reengage literature from the past in more comparative analytic (transcontextual and transhistorical) terms and fosters a stronger cumulative conceptual dimension to interactionist scholarship.

- *Early Ethnographic Studies (Before 1950): Contexts, Practices, Contributions
- *20th Century Ethnographic Studies 1950-1999: Contexts, Practices, Contributions
- *Anthropology and the Development of Sociological Ethnography
- *Transhistorical/Ethnohistorical Comparative Analysis: Instances, Problematics, and Potentialities

Note: The particular sessions featured in the final conference program will vary depending on people's activities and interests. Thus, some categories may be collapsed or extended, with ensuing adjustments, as we move toward the final program.

Submission Format Guidelines: *Deadline Nov. 30, 2008*

Please Submit your Paper Proposals by E-Mail to

SIERconference@yahoo.ca

[**Note:** You may block, cut, insert, and paste the guidelines material in your email.]

Late proposals will be considered but it may not be possible to formally list these in the Final Program. Likewise, earlier submissions will be given priority in programming considerations.

Name: _____

Email address: _____

University Affiliation _____

Address (University or Residence) _____

Phone Work () _____ Home or Cell () _____

Are you Full-Time Faculty _____ Part-Time Faculty _____

Graduate Student _____ Other _____

Title (working title) for your paper

Abstract (300 word limit; can be revised later)

Note: While we can study virtually anything that people do, *be sure to establish* a clear theoretical / methodological connection with the broader interactionist (also pragmatist, constructionist, ethnomethodological, conventional ethnography) emphasis of this conference.¹

This is important because the more coherence we can achieve at the outset, the more viable our exchanges regarding the matters of human knowing and acting.

Papers will be accepted mindful of this overall conference emphasis.

¹ **More central sources include**

Blumer, Herbert *Symbolic Interactionism*

Mead, George Herbert *Mind, Self and Society*

Lofland, John *Doing Social Life*

Becker, Howard... *Sociological Work.*

Strauss, Anselm *Continual Permutations of Action*

Prus, Robert *Subcultural Mosaics and Intersubjective Realities*

Prus, Robert *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research*

Grills, Scott... *Doing Ethnographic Research: Fieldwork Settings.*

Lofland, John and Lyn Lofland... *Analyzing Social Settings.*

Schutz, Alfred *Collected Papers I: the Problem of Social Reality.*

Schutz, Alfred *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory*

Berger, Peter, and Thomas Luckmann *The Social Construction of Reality*

Garfinkel, Harold *Studies in Ethnomethodology*

Conference Fees [Register after your paper has been accepted]

Full-time Faculty *Presenting papers...* \$100Canadian

Part-Time or Retired Faculty and Students *Presenting papers...* \$40 Canadian

After **March 31, 2009** Registration fees will be increased by \$20 and \$10, respectively for those presenting papers.

Others attending the conference... \$20 (or \$10 for a day). Register anytime

Getting to Waterloo....

(1 km = .6miles; 1mile = 1.6km)

Airports.... Distance.... Driving time

Toronto (Lester B. Pearson International) airport 100Kms (about 80 minutes)

Buffalo Niagara International Airport 120 miles about 2.3 hours

Hamilton (John C Munro Hamilton International Airport) about 75Kms about 70 minutes

Detroit Metropolitan Airport 210 miles about 3.5 hours

Waterloo-Wellington (region of Waterloo international) 14kms about 20 minutes

For those flying to the conference, who may like to rent an automobile, it may be noted that driving conditions are comparatively more relaxed once outside the major metropolitan areas of Toronto, Buffalo, and Detroit.

The Conference will be held at Renison College at the University of Waterloo

We think you will be very pleased with the bright, pleasant, newly constructed and renovated conference facilities and (residence) accommodations that Renison College has to offer.

[a campus map will be provided]

Hotels /Motels [List to be provided...]

Kitchener-Waterloo

May also consider nearby Cambridge and Guelph (if driving)

Conference Organizers

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Thank you for joining us in this venture. With your participation and that of like-minded others, it will be a very worthwhile assembly of scholars...
