



Negotiating Identity: Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity

Susie Scott

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Identity is never just an individual matter; it is intricately shaped by our experiences of social life. Taking a Symbolic Interactionist approach, and drawing on Goffman's dramaturgical theory, Susie Scott explores the micro-social processes of interaction through which identities are created, maintained, challenged and reinvented. With a focus on empirical studies as illustrations, classic sociological theory is applied to contemporary examples.

Each chapter focuses on a key dimension of how identities are negotiated in the drama of everyday life, from politeness and face-saving rituals to secrecy, lies and deception. Goffman's ideas are explored in relation to self-presentation, role-making, group interaction and public behaviour, while language and discourse are shown to help people to give credible identity performances and to frame social situations. The book reveals how social selves change over the life course through stigma, labelling and deviant careers, and how life in a total institution can radically transform its members' identities. Through all of these processes, self and society are shown to be intertwined.

This insightful approach will appeal to students taking a range of courses in the sociology of the self, identity, interaction and everyday life

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