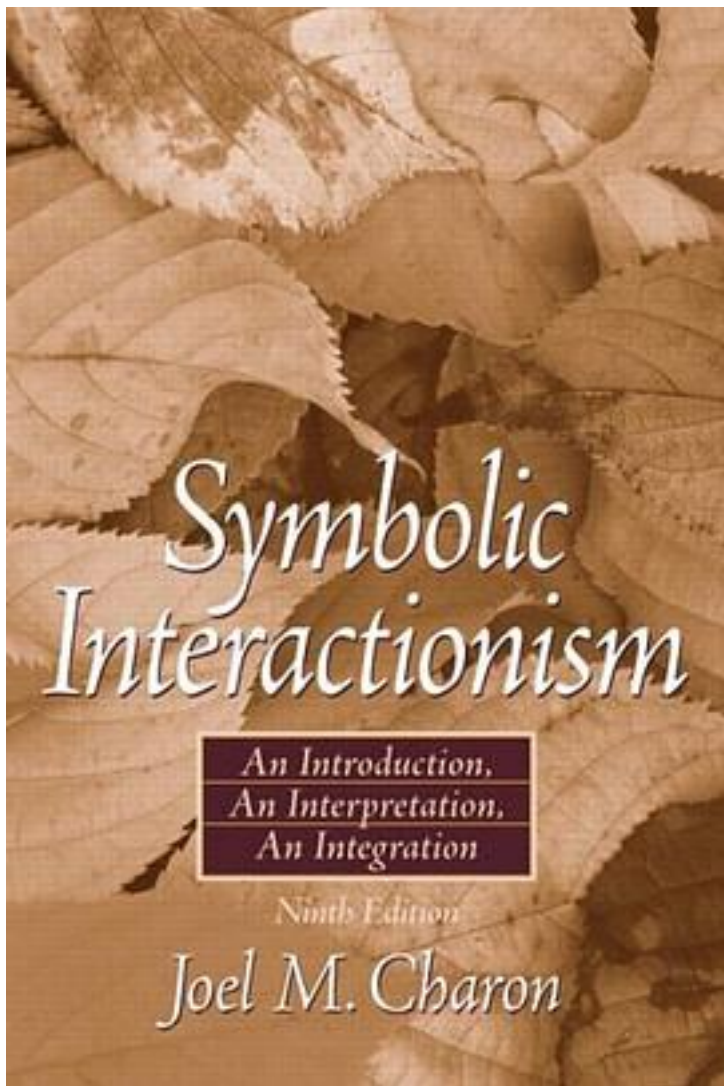


# Symbolic Interactionism



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## Book Description

Using a unique step-by-step, integrated approach, *Symbolic Interactionism: An Introduction*, an Interpretation organizes the basic concepts of symbolic interactionism in such a way that the reader clearly understands the concepts and is able to apply them to their own lives. It emphasizes the active side of human beings—humans as definers and users of the environment, humans as problem solvers and in control of their own actions—and it shows students how society makes us, and how we in turn shape society.

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Preface For many students a book entitled "symbolic interactionism" might be too academic, or too much like jargon, or a forbidding mystery. To me, however, it is exactly on the money. That is because this whole book is a description of a social psychology that focuses on the importance of interaction as the basis for what individuals and societies are made of, and that interaction is always symbolic. I like symbolic interactionism because it addresses so many of the issues that are important for those people who wrestle with what the human being is and why the human being acts. It is a unique perspective in that it is part of what we call social science, yet it is very probabilistic in its predictions. That is, it does not normally identify a single "cause" when it understands human action. Instead, its studies focus on the history of action, the many decisions and choices people make as they act. Interaction with others is almost always important, but interaction takes us one way, then the other. It treats the human being not as a passive responder to the environment, a being who is conditioned, who is pushed around by environment and biology. Instead, people are active in their environment, determining to a great extent what they do, think, and become. Symbolic interactionism is a context within which we can understand both the uniqueness of humankind and the ways human beings are similar to other animals. The first edition of this book attempted to fulfill a promise I made to myself in graduate school: to write a clear, organized, and interesting introduction to symbolic interaction, a perspective that seemed to have interesting ideas and studies, but did not seem to hold together. Integration of the ideas became central to this book. I hope you will find this perspective interesting, organized, and useful. This is the ninth edition. Each time I attempt to improve on what I have written before, it brings a certain humility to my work. Each time I revise I wonder how in the world I could ever have written what I had previously. The publisher this time chose excellent reviewers, and many of their suggestions were made. I try to update, correct errors and ambiguities, and reorganize chapters so that they make better sense. In this edition I have made changes in almost every chapter, and I have redone large parts of chapters 4 (The Meaning of Symbols), 6 (The Nature of the Self), 9 (Human Action) and 10 (Social Interaction). Because of a suggestion by a reviewer I decided to add interesting and relevant introductions to each chapter, highlighting the importance of what the chapter is. I believe this makes the book far more attractive to the student and is a good pedagogical tool. Always I try to appeal to students who think sociologically and students who are attracted to the world of ideas. This book is an attempt to contribute to the mystery of what human beings are, their essence. I dedicate this book to my wife, Susan, who continues to be my best friend and greatest supporter. Joel M. Charon Professor Emeritus Minnesota State University Moorhead

作者介绍:

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