Sociological perspective; Sociology as a science; Sociology and Common Sense; Sociology and other social sciences (only to understand Sociology’s distinctiveness); Practical significance of Sociology: Sociology and Social Work.

Sociology is broadly defined as the study of human society. Society is vast and complex phenomenon and therefore it is generally debatable that which part of society should be studied by sociology. There is a great degree of difference of opinion regarding the definitions, scope and subject matter of sociology.

Sociology is a social science that studies society and the individual in perspective of Society. The origins of Sociology lie in the 19th century but during the 1960-70s, it became a major social science subject, taught in universities and colleges, and schools. The scope of sociology has only become more scientific with time. "Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, having as its subject matter our own behaviour as social beings. The scope of sociology is extremely wide, ranging from the analysis of passing encounters between individuals in the street up to the investigation of world-wide social processes". Anthony Giddens ("Sociology", 1989).

According to Durkheim sociology has broadly three principal divisions which he terms as social morphology, social physiology and general sociology. Social morphology covers the geographical settings, the density of population and other preliminary data which is likely to influence the social aspects. Social physiology is concerned with such dynamics processes as religion, morals, law, economic and political aspects, each of which may be the subject matter of a special discipline. General sociology is an attempt to discover the general social laws which may be derived from the specialized social processes. This is considered by Durkheim as the philosophical part of sociology.

Sociology of Religion studies the church as a social institution inquiring into its origin, development and forms as well as into changes in its structure and function.

Sociology of Education studies the objectives of the school as a social institution, its curriculum and extracurricular activities and its relationship to the community and its other institutions.

Political sociology studies the social implications of various types of political movements and ideologies and the origin, development and functions of the government and the state.

Sociology of law concerns itself with formalized social control or with the processes whereby members of a group achieve uniformity in their behavior through the rules and regulations imposed upon them by society. It inquires into the factors that bring about the formation of regulatory systems as well as into the reasons for their adequacies and inadequacies as a means of control.

Social psychology seeks to understand human motivation and behavior as they are determined by society and its values. It studies the socialization process of the individual how he becomes a member of society- it also studies the public, crowd, the mob and various other social groupings and movements. Analysis of mass persuasion or propaganda and of public opinion has been one of its major interests.

Social psychiatry deals with the relationships between social and personal disorganization, its general hypothesis being that society through its excessive and conflicting demands upon the individual is to a large extent responsible for personal maladjustments such as various types of
mental disorder and antisocial behaviour. In its applied aspects it is concerned with remedying this situation.

Social disorganization deals with the problems of maladjustment and malfunctioning, including problems of crime and delinquency, poverty and dependency, population movements, physical and mental disease and vice. Of these sub-divisions crime and delinquency have received perhaps the greatest attention and have developed into the distinct fields of criminology.

Group relations is concerned with studying the problems arising out of the co-existence in a community of diverse racial and ethics groups. New areas and sub-areas of sociology are continuously evolving over the period of time.

The sociological perspective is a perspective on human behavior and its connection to society as a whole. It invites us to look for the connections between the behavior of individual people and the structures of the society in which they live.

Typically, we tend to think of our society as just natural. We think that it is just "there" the way the air is. We don't think about how it affects us and our behavior. The sociological perspective is one in which we do not do this. Instead, we look at our society and the way it is set up. We ask how that society affects us. In this way, the sociological perspective helps us to understand how society is important in shaping our everyday lives.

**Development of Sociology**

Sociology is the youngest of the recognized social sciences. Auguste Comte in France coined the word 'sociology' in his Positive Philosophy published in 1838. He believed that a science of sociology should be based on systematic observation and classification not on authority and speculation. This was a relatively new idea at that time. Herbert Spencer in England published his Principles of Sociology in 1876. He applied the theory of organic evolution to human society and developed a grand theory of social evolution.

Lester F Ward an American published his Dynamic Sociology in 1883 calling for social progress through intelligent social action which sociologists should guide. All these founders of sociology were basically social philosophers. They proclaimed that sociologists should collect, organize and classify factual data and derive sound social theories from these facts. While they called for scientific investigation they did relatively little of it themselves.

Emile Durkheim gave the most notable early demonstration of scientific methodology in sociology. In his Rules of sociological Method published in 1895, he outlined the methodology which he pursued in his study 'Suicide' published in 1897. Instead of speculating upon the causes of suicide, he first planned his research design and then collected a large mass of data on the characteristics of people who commit suicide and then derived a theory of suicide from these data.

Courses in sociology appeared in many universities in the 1890s. The American Journal of Sociology began publication in 1895 and the American Sociological Society was organized in 1905. Whereas most of the early European sociologists came from the fields of history, political economy or philosophy many of the early American sociologists had been social workers, ministers and nearly all were from rural backgrounds.

Urbanization and industrialization were creating grave social problems and these early sociologists were looking for scientific solutions. They saw sociology as a scientific guide to social progress. The early volumes of the American Journal of Sociology contained relatively
few articles devoted to scientific description or research but carried many sermons filled with advice etc.

By 1930s the several sociological journals were well filled with research articles and scientific descriptions. Sociology was becoming a body of scientific knowledge with its theories based upon scientific observation rather than upon impressionistic observation.

**Sociology And Science**

Science is a systemized body of knowledge. An essential feature of scientific knowledge is that it is base upon sensory observation of empirical data. The information acquired through sensory observation has to be made meaningful.

Science tries to arrive at law like explanatory generalizations. For the purpose of acquiring empirical data and for processing them into law like statements science relies on method.

It consists of a series of procedural steps for collection and analysis of data. The knowledge acquired with the help of the scientific method constitutes the scientific knowledge. An essential characteristic of scientific knowledge is that it is tentative in nature always subjected to empirical verification. The final test of the validity of scientific knowledge lies in its verifiability. The earliest sciences to grow were physical and natural sciences. Due to their success in exploring the physical and natural world and being able to arrive at near universal laws they came to be viewed as models for other sciences to emulate. These sciences followed methodology of observation which involved experimentation being the means for systematic and controlled observation. Comparison and classification by using the comparative method the observed data is systematically classified into different categories.

Sociology being a new subject on the horizon was also influenced and developed under the shadow of the positive sciences. The early sociologists, being under the spell of the reigning sciences of the day, took for granted that sociology was a science. According to Comte, society is created by natural laws that could be explained, just like the natural sciences. Besides, since society is an objective reality, it can be studied by applying the scientific methods, of observation, experimentation and comparison. Another 19th century sociologist, Herbert Spencer, treated sociology from the evolutionary viewpoint, that is, he was heavily indebted to the evolutionary theory of biology, a natural science. Emile Durkheim who clearly defined the field of sociology adopted a new approach. Society cannot be examined as individual entities, but as collectivities and their interactions, Social collectivity is a social fact and social facts must be regarded as things and they should be studied objectively just as in natural sciences. Moreover, Durkheim's study of society is based on statistical data, and from them he arrived at some sociological generalizations. Impressed by Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, a 20th century anthropologist freely advocated a natural science of society, having its own laws and explanations. It is also to be observed here that all the above thinkers adopted the evolutionary and organic analyses and concepts derived from biology.

**There are some of the limitations:** which come in the way of sociology being a positive science. Problem of experimentation: Experimentation is crucial in scientific observation to establish precise relationships between different variables. It is practically impossible to control human behaviour in a laboratory like situation.

**Problem of Quantification With Sociology**

Although some aspects of sociological phenomena can be quantified using statistical methods, yet a large part of its essentially qualitative in nature and hence are not amendable to quantitative techniques.
Problem of Generalization With Sociology

Sociologists have not being successful in arriving at law-like generalizations through their studies. Human behavior does not follow recurrent patterns like physical objects. At best sociologists can establish statistical correlations. Problem of objectivity: Objectivity refers to a frame of mind whereby the personal prejudices and predilections of the scientists do not affect the collection and analysis of data. However it has been found that objectivity is nearly impossible in sociological research. A sociologist can only minimize subjectivity.

However certain sociologists like Max Weber have questioned the very idea that sociology can ever be a positive science. He has contended that there cannot be an objective science of society since social action must be understood in terms of the meaning man gives to it. In other words, value judgments are inevitable in sociology and we can never have completely objective science of sociology. In the same manner the 19th century sociologist of Germany, George Simmel, has argued that a society is essentially a psychic interaction between human beings both as individuals and groups. Logically, sociologists should deal with the processes of happenings, but not with substances just like natural sciences.

Sociological Imagination

Sociologist Peter L. Berger, the first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem. He equates sociologists with curious observers walking the neighbourhood streets of a large city, fascinated with what they cannot see taking place behind the building walls. The wish to look inside and learn more is analogous to the sociological perspective.

Sociologists distinguish between troubles that can be resolved by changing the individual, and issues; can be resolved only by addressing the social forces that created them. Troubles are personal needs, problems, or difficulties that can be explained in terms of individual shortcomings in motivation, attitude, ability, character, or judgment. The resolution of a trouble lies in changing the individual in some way. By comparison, an issue is a matter that can be explained only by factors outside an individual's control and immediate environment. Issues can only be resolved by implementing solutions that change or offset the influence of underlying social forces.

Sociology emerged in part as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, an ongoing and evolving social force that transformed society, human behavior, and interactions in incalculable ways. The defining feature of the Industrial Revolution was mechanization. The Industrial Revolution changed the way in which goods were produced, the ways in which people negotiated time and space, the relationships between what were once geographically separated peoples, the ways in which people made their livings, the density of human populations, the relative importance and influence of the home in people's lives, access to formal education and the emergence of a consumption-oriented economy and culture. The accumulation of wealth became a valued and necessary pursuit.

Sociology and Common Sense

There are many ways in which sociology and common sense differ, starting with the basic fact that sociology is a formal field of academic study, whereas common sense refers to people's innate ability to understand and assess the things they see and hear on a regular basis. Sociology focuses on the study of human interaction and society, while common sense can apply to human interaction but can also apply to everything from managing one's money to making smart decisions about one's health. Common sense is not a formal program of study (one cannot major in common sense at a reputable university) and does not necessarily involve the use of research and statistical analysis in the way that sociology does.
There may be some aspects of sociology that some people find to be self-evident, but to assume that the entire academic field of sociology is the same plane as common sense is reductive and dismissive of the decades of research and other academic work that's been done in the field of sociology. Sociology involves a set program of study that trains students to think critically. Additionally, common sense can be subjective, but sociology is an academic field that requires a measure of objectivity in the form of statistical or research-based proof of theories.

Common sense is knowledge and awareness that is held communally (shared by majority of people). It does not depend on specialist education and in some respects states the obvious. Sociology is study of society and of people and their behaviour. Positivists claim that it produces scientific knowledge. Many people argue that sociology merely states the obvious by reporting what common sense already tells us. In other words, sociology is criticized for being merely common sense and stating the obvious but in more detail than what we already know. Many sociologists have responded that common sense is wrong and obvious truths are not so obvious. Common sense ideas and explanations represent a form of social perspective since they claim to represent the things that everyone knows about the social world and / or human behaviour.

**Sociology vs Other Science**

**Sociology & Political Science:** The two distinct disciplines of social science sociology and political sciences do converge often as the subject matter is men and the convergence is on the increase. A beginning was made with the works of Marx. According to him political institutions and behaviour are closely linked with the economic system and social classes. Provoked by this thinking some thinkers by the end of the 19th century pursued the matter in more detail like studies of political parties, elite, voting behaviour, bureaucracy and political ideologies as in the political sociology of Michels, Weber and Pareto.

**Sociology and Economics:** The battle as to which should be given precedence, sociology or economics, is present in these two disciplines also. However attempts have been made to link the two disciplines. One extreme position has been adopted by Marxists. According to them the understanding of the super structure consisting of various social institutions can never be complete unless seen in the context of economic substructure. Thus economic behaviour of man is viewed as a key to understand social behaviour of man or economics is given precedence over sociology. On the other hand sociologists have criticized the economic theory as being reductionist in nature and according to them the economist's conception of man ignores the role of various social factors which influence the economic behaviour. Thus various sociologists have tried to show that economics cannot be an entirely autonomous science.

**Sociology and History:** Both sociology and modern historiography had their origin in 19th century. The latter established the concept of historical periods and thus bequeathed to historiography theoretical ideas and concerns which were entirely absent from the work of earlier narrative historians and chroniclers. It bequeathed to modern sociology the notion of historical types of society and thus enabled the socialists to build classification of societies. The interaction between two disciplines can be found in their subject matter. Subject matter of sociology and history overlap to a considerable extent. The historian frequently provides the material which sociologist uses. In fact historical sociology depends upon the data which only a historian can supply. Even comparative method often requires historical data. But the dependence is two-fold. Sociological research also provides the information which the historian's need. In fact the subject matter of social history overlaps to a very great extent with sociology in general and historical sociology in particular.
The historian examines particular sequences of events; whereas a sociologist tests a generalization by examining the sequence of events. To word this particular difference between history and sociology in a very simple language: the historian is concerned with the inter-play between personality and social forces; whereas, the sociologist is largely concerned with the social forces themselves. History is primarily concerned with the past and essentially tries to account for the change over time while the main focus of sociology continues to be to search for recruitment patterns and to build generalizations.

Sociology & Philosophy: Sociology means the study of society on a generalized or abstract level. In an empirical science the generalizations concerning a specified field of inquiry are drawn from facts observed in that field or in closely related fields these generalizations are drawn. Without assuming any knowledge on a level of higher abstraction concerning reality as a whole all propositions that constitutes an empirical science from a self-sufficient system. No propositions are allowed to play a role in the system if it contains knowledge which is not empirical. In other words it is not formulated under the limitations just stated.

On the contrary philosophy is primarily an attempt to understand reality in its totality. From a multitude of observed facts the philosopher proceeds to certain ultimate principles which have taken together attempt to explain reality as a whole. Thus whereas the sociologist explains society in terms of acts observed in society and eventually in related fields of empirical knowledge, the social philosopher explains society in terms of the explanation he gives to total reality. The latter can speak of the first causes, supreme values and ultimate ends the sociologist is not entitled to do so. Modern philosophy and sociology came into existence during one time period to explain the social crisis of Europe in the 19th century.

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Social interaction; Communication—verbal/non-verbal; Interpretation and action; Understanding others: attributing meaning and interpretation; Social relationship: Primary and Secondary.

- A social interaction is an exchange between two or more individuals and is a building block of society. Social interaction can be studied between groups of two (dyads), three (triads) or larger social groups.

- By interacting with one another, people design rules, institutions and systems within which they seek to live. Symbols are used to communicate the expectations of a given society to those new to it.

- The empirical study of social interaction is one of the subjects of micro-sociology. Methods include symbolic interactionism and ethno-methodology as well as later academic sub-divisions and studies such as psychosocial studies, conversational analysis and human-computer interaction.

- With symbolic interactionism, reality is seen as social, developed interaction with others. Ethnomethodology questions how people's interactions can create the illusion of a shared social order despite not understanding each other fully and having differing perspectives.

Symbols of Interaction

Reality as it exists for human beings and people groups is composed of ‘objects’ or ‘symbols’. These symbols are the product of symbolic interaction. Symbols are anything that can be indicated, pointed to, or referred to, e.g., a book, a doctrine, a friend, a principle, language etc. Conversations are predominant symbols between social beings who are constantly interpreting their reality. Social beings attach meanings to symbols, each one making up their reality based on their subjective interpretation of these symbols.

Symbols are not static, they necessitate purpose and interpretation. Symbolic interactionists consider how social beings act and use symbols, and then seek to interpret the meanings of those actions and symbols for themselves and for others.
Every day we interact with social beings and their use of symbols. They share their stories via the use of symbols and we give meaning to the ‘thing’ behind their use of symbols—hence the ‘interactionism’ part. A pattern develops of communication, interpretation and the tweaking of meaning between people. Both verbal and body language responses are interpreted by those interacting—and even by those who don’t realise they are interacting. So all of life is like a game of charades with everyone going about interpreting their reality… and modifying their interpretations, or developing new interpretations, based on their interactions with others.

Types of Social Interaction

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Social interaction takes place in various forms. These forms of social interaction are conflict, cooperation, competition, exchange and coercion.

**Cooperation** is the process of two or more people working or acting together. Cooperation enables social reality by laying the groundwork for social institutions, organizations, and the entire social system. Without cooperation, no institution beyond the individual would develop; any group behaviour is an example of cooperation. Cooperation derives from an overlap in desires and is more likely if there is a relationship between the parties. This means that if two people know that they are going to encounter one another in the future or if they have memories of past cooperation, they are more likely to cooperate in the present.

There are three main types of cooperation: coerced, voluntary, and unintentional.

**Coerced cooperation** is when cooperation between individuals is forced. An example of coerced cooperation is the draft. Individuals are forced to enlist in the military and cooperate with one another and the government, regardless of whether they wish to.

**Voluntary cooperation** is cooperation to which all parties consent. An example of voluntary cooperation would be individuals opting to complete a group project for school when given the option of a group project or an individual project.

**Unintentional cooperation** is a form of cooperation in which individuals do not necessarily intend to cooperate but end up doing so because of aligning interests. The free hand of a capitalist economy is an example of unintentional cooperation, where individuals will take actions based on their own interests resulting sometimes in unintentional cooperation. Communication plays an essential role in cooperation. Communication enables simple acts of
cooperation by facilitating parties' recognition that they have mutual interests and large acts of cooperation by organizing the masses. Without communication, individuals would not be able to organize themselves.

**Competition** is a contest between people or groups of people for control over resources. In this definition, resources can have both literal and symbolic meaning. People can compete over tangible resources like land, food, and mates, but also over intangible resources, such as social capital. Competition is the opposite of cooperation and arises whenever two parties strive for a goal that cannot be shared. Competition can have both beneficial and detrimental effects. Positively, competition may serve as a form of recreation or a challenge provided that it is non-hostile. On the negative side, competition can cause injury and loss to the organisms involved and drain valuable resources and energy. Many evolutionary biologists view inter-species and intra-species competition as the driving force of adaptation, and, ultimately, of evolution. However, some biologists, most famously Richard Dawkins, prefer to think of evolution in terms of competition between single genes, which have the welfare of the organism "in mind" only insofar as that welfare furthers their own selfish drives for replication. Some Social Darwinists claim that competition also serves as a mechanism for determining the best-suited group—politically, economically, and ecologically.

Many philosophers and psychologists have identified a trait in most living organisms that can drive the particular organism to compete. This trait, unsurprisingly called "competitiveness," is viewed as an innate biological trait that coexists along with the urge for survival. Competitiveness, or the inclination to compete, has become synonymous with aggressiveness and ambition in the English language. Just as advanced civilizations integrate aggressiveness and competitiveness into their interactions, as a way to distribute resources and adapt, most plants compete for higher spots on trees to receive more sunlight. However, Stephen Jay Gould and others have argued that as one ascends the evolutionary hierarchy, competitiveness (the survival instinct) becomes less innate and more a learned behaviour.

**Social exchange** theory is a socio-psychological and sociological perspective that explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. The theory is fundamentally oriented around rational choice theory, or the idea that all human behaviour is guided by an individual's interpretation of what is in his best interest. Social exchange theory advances the idea that relationships are essential for life in society and that it is in one's interest to form relationships with others. Of course, whether or not it is in an individual's interest to form a relationship with a specific person is a calculation that both parties must perform. Nevertheless, social exchange theory argues that forming relationships is advantageous because of exchange. Each party to the relationship exchanges particular goods and perspectives, creating a richer life for both. Notably, while social exchange theory may reference the literal exchange of goods, it can also mean the exchange of more intangible elements. For example, it is in the interests of a dairy farmer and a vegetable farmer to form a relationship because they can exchange their material goods. The theory also applies to Jack and Jill who decide to get married for the emotional support they exchange with one another.

Social exchange theory is only comprehensible through the lens of rational choice theory. Rational choice theory supposes that every individual evaluates his/her behaviour by that behaviour's worth, which is a function of rewards minus costs. Rewards are the elements of relational life that have positive value for a person, while costs are the elements of relational life that have negative value for a person. Social exchange theory posits that individuals perform the calculus of worth when decided to form or maintain a relationship with another person.
**Social conflict** is the struggle for **agency** or **power** within a society. It occurs when two or **more** people oppose one another in social interactions, reciprocally exerting social power in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible **goals**, and prevent the opponent from attaining them. Conflict theory emphasizes interests deployed in conflict, rather than the **norms** and **values**. This perspective argues that the pursuit of interests is what motivates conflict. Resources are scarce and individuals naturally fight to gain control of them. Thus, the theory sees conflict as a normal part of social life, rather than an abnormal occurrence. The three tenets of conflict theory are as follows:

1. Society is composed of different groups that compete for resources.
2. While societies may portray a sense of cooperation, a continual power struggle exists between social groups as they pursue their own interests.
3. Social groups will use resources to their own advantage in the pursuit of their goals, frequently leading powerful groups to take advantage of less powerful groups.

**Coercion**

Coercion is the use of force to achieve a desired end. It may be physical or non-violent. It is the ultimate means of social control when all other means fail. Physical coercion may take the form of bodily injury, imprisonment and death penalty. Physical coercion is without doubt the lowest form of social control. Societies would least desire to use it. If a society has to depend on external force it shows its weakness rather than strength in social control.

Nonviolent coercion consists of strike; boycott and non-cooperation. The students may go on strike to ensure better hostel facilities. Boycott is the withholding of social or economic-interaction with others to express disapproval and to force acceptance of demands. Non cooperation is refusal to cooperate. The teachers may refuse to cooperate with the management over the payment of salaries. Non-violent coercion can be a successful way of effecting social control.

A **coercive organization** is one that uses force to create a strict environment of rules and regulations. Once you enter a coercive organization, you are not allowed to leave unless under special circumstances. Membership is usually involuntary. There are strict rules that you must follow once you enter, and individuals usually go through the process of **resocialization**, being stripped of their former status as an individual and given a new identity.

**Communication**

Webster dictionary defines the word "communication" as to convey, to communicate, to give, to transfer, to inform and to have conversation. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, is the first known scholar that for the first time, 2300 years ago spoke about communications. In the book of studying the meanings and expressions usually known as synonymous to communications, about the description of communication, Aristotle writes: communication means searching for all the facilities and available tools for persuading and convincing others.
Types of Communication

People communicate with each other in a number of ways that depend upon the message and its context in which it is being sent. Choice of communication channel and your style of communicating also affect communication. So, there are different types of communication.

Types of communication based on the communication channels used are:

1. Verbal Communication
2. Nonverbal Communication

1. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to the the form of communication in which message is transmitted verbally; communication is done by word of mouth and a piece of writing. Objective of every communication is to have people understand what we are trying to convey. **In verbal communication remember the acronym KISS** (keep it short and simple).

When we talk to others, we assume that others understand what we are saying because we know what we are saying. But this is not the case. usually people bring their own attitude, perception, emotions and thoughts about the topic and hence creates barrier in delivering the right meaning.

So in order to deliver the right message, you must put yourself on the other side of the table and think from your receiver’s point of view. Would he understand the message? how it would sound on the other side of the table?

**Verbal Communication** is further divided into:

- Oral Communication
- Written Communication

**Oral Communication**

In oral communication, Spoken words are used. It includes face-to-face conversations, speech, telephonic conversation, video, radio, television, voice over internet. In oral communication, communication is influence by pitch, volume, speed and clarity of speaking.
Advantages of Oral communication are:
It brings quick feedback. In a face-to-face conversation, by reading facial expression and body language one can guess whether he/she should trust what’s being said or not.

Disadvantage of oral communication:
In face-to-face discussion, user is unable to deeply think about what he is delivering, so this can be counted as a

*Written Communication*

In written communication, written signs or symbols are used to communicate. A written message may be printed or hand written. In written communication message can be transmitted via email, letter, report, memo etc. Message, in written communication, is influenced by the vocabulary & grammar used, writing style, precision and clarity of the language used.

Written Communication is most common form of communication being used in business. So, it is considered core among business skills.

Memos, reports, bulletins, job descriptions, employee manuals, and electronic mail are the types of written communication used for internal communication. For communicating with external environment in writing, electronic mail, Internet Web sites, letters, proposals, telegrams, faxes, postcards, contracts, advertisements, brochures, and news releases are used.

Advantages of written communication includes:
Messages can be edited and revised many time before it is actually sent.
Written communication provides record for every message sent and can be saved for later study.
A written message enables receiver to fully understand it and send appropriate feedback.

Disadvantages of written communication includes:
Unlike oral communication, Written communication doesn’t bring instant feedback.
It take more time in composing a written message as compared to word-of-mouth and number of people struggles for writing ability.

2. *Nonverbal Communication*

Nonverbal communication is the sending or receiving of wordless messages. We can say that communication other than oral and written, such as **gesture, body language, posture, tone of voice** or **facial expressions**, is called nonverbal communication. **Nonverbal communication is all about the body language of speaker.**
Nonverbal communication helps receiver in interpreting the message received. Often, non-verbal signals reflect the situation more accurately than verbal messages. Sometimes non-verbal response contradicts verbal communication and hence affects the effectiveness of message.

Nonverbal communication has the following three elements:

**Appearance**
Speaker: clothing, hairstyle, neatness, use of cosmetics
Surrounding: room size, lighting, decorations, furnishings

**Body Language**
facial expressions, gestures, postures

**Sounds**
Voice Tone, Volume, Speech rate

**Interpretation**
Interpretation is a “process of communication” (MacFarlane, 1994: cited in Hall & McArthur, 1993). To understand communication we must describe firstly this process through a commonly used and simple communication model with its basic elements: the communication source, the encoder, the message, the channel, the decoder, the communication receiver (Berlo, 1960). In the following paragraphs I will define each of the elements of the communication process and make an analogy with the elements of interpretation. This analogy will show that there are three fundamental elements in interpretation which are: the setting, the visitor and the agency. Understanding the relationship of these three elements of interpretation will help define what interpretation is, and the importance interpretation has for recreation, tourism and conservation management. The communication source as Berlo (1960) says is "some person or group of persons with a purpose, a reason for engaging in communication". In terms of interpretation there are two sources when talking of nature interpretation: the natural setting (encountered by the visitor) and the agency (i.e. Department of Conservation in New Zealand). The agency is a group of people trying to inform, provoke an action in the visitor. In addition, the setting while it is not a person communicates and provokes an experience or feeling in the visitor. The importance of these two sources is that they have direct relationship with the visitor. The visitor experiences the setting directly, but interpretation by the agency can enhance this experience through a communication process with the agency.

**Action**

Max Weber defines social action: action is social in so far as by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by acting individual it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby
oriented in its course. It includes all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it.

According to Talcott Parsons a social action is a process in the actor-situation system which has motivational significance to the individual actor or in the case of collectivity, its component individuals.

According to Pareto sociology tries to study the logical and illogical aspects of actions. Every social action has two aspects one is its reality and other is its form. Reality involves the actual existence of the thing and the form is the way the phenomenon presents itself to the human mind. The first is called the objective and the other is called subjective aspects.

**Social Relationship**

Man is a social animal. He lives in social groups in communities and in society. Human life and society almost go together. Man cannot live without society. Man is biologically and psychologically equipped to live in groups, in society. Society has become an essential condition for human life to arise and to continue.

The relationship between individual and society is ultimately one of the profound of all the problems of social philosophy. It is more philosophical rather than sociological because it involves the question of values.

Man depends on society. It is in the society that an individual is surrounded and encompassed by culture, a societal force. It is in the society again that he has to conform to the norms, occupy statuses and become members of groups.

The question of the relationship between the individual and the society is the starting point of many discussions. It is closely connected with the question of the relationship of man and society. There is two main theories regarding the relationship of man and society. They are the social contract theory and the organic theory.

**Social Groups**

Social groups are everywhere and are a basic part of human life; everywhere you look there seems to be groups of people! A main focus of sociology is the study of these social groups. A social group consists of two or more people who regularly interact and share a sense of unity and common identity. In other words, it's a group of people who see each other frequently and consider themselves a part of the group. Except in rare cases, we all typically belong to many different types of social groups. For example, you could be a member of a sports team, club, church group, college class, workplace, and more.
Primary Groups

No two groups are created equal. Each typically has its own purpose, culture, norms, etc. Sociologists differentiate between several different types of social groups. In this lesson, we'll discuss primary groups, secondary groups, and reference groups. **Primary groups** are those that are close-knit. They are typically small scale, include intimate relationships, and are usually long lasting. The members of primary groups feel a strong personal identity with the group.

*The nuclear family is an example of a primary social group.*

**nuclear family**

Although the nuclear family is considered the ideal primary group by some sociologists, it is not the only example. Many people are also a member of a group of close friends. This group is usually small, and the relationships are still close-knit and enduring, so it is also a primary group. The term 'primary' is used with these groups because they are the primary source of relationships and socialization. The relationships in our primary groups give us love, security, and companionship. We also learn values and norms from our family and friends that stay with us for most, if not all, of our lives.

Secondary Groups

**Secondary groups** are another type of social group. They have the opposite characteristics of primary groups. They can be small or large and are mostly impersonal and usually short term. These groups are typically found at work and school. An example of a secondary group is a committee organized to plan a holiday party at work. Members of the committee meet infrequently and for only a short period of time. Although group members may have some similar interests, the purpose of the group is about the task instead of the relationships. Sometimes, secondary groups become pretty informal, and the members get to know each other fairly well. Even so, their friendships exist in a limited context; they won't necessarily remain close beyond the holiday party.
As Homo sapiens, evolved, several biological characteristics particularly favorable to the development of culture appeared in the species. These included erect posture; a favorable brain structure; stereoscopic vision; the structure of the hand, a flexible shoulder; and year round sexual receptivity on the part of the female. None of these biological characteristics alone, of course, accounts for the development of culture. Even in combination, all they guarantee is that human beings would be the most gifted members of the animal kingdom.

The distinctive human way of life that we call culture did not have a single definite beginning in time any more than human beings suddenly appearing on earth. Culture evolved slowly just as some anthropoids gradually took on more human form. Unmistakably, tools existed half a million years ago and might be considerably older. If, for convenience, we say that culture is 500,000 years old, it is still difficult day has appeared very recently.

The concept of culture was rigorously defined by E.B. Taylor in 1860s. According to him culture is the sum total of ideas, beliefs, values, material cultural equipments and non-material aspects which man makes as a member of society. Taylor's theme that culture is a result of human collectivity has been accepted by most anthropologists. Tyllarian idea can be discerned in a modern definition of culture - culture is the man-made part of environment (M.J. Herskovists).

From this, it follows that culture and society are separable only at the analytical level: at the actual existential level, they can be understood as the two sides of the same coin. Culture, on one hand, is an outcome of society and, on the other hand, society is able to survive and perpetuate itself because of the existence of culture. Culture is an ally of man in the sense that it enhances man's adaptability to nature. It is because of the adaptive value of culture that Herskovits states that culture is a screen between man and nature. Culture is an instrument by which man exploits the environment and shapes it accordingly.

In showing affection, the Maori rub noses; the Australians rub faces; the Chinese place nose to cheeks; the Westerners kiss; some groups practice spitting on the beloved. Or, consider this; American men are permitted to laugh in public but not to cry; Iroquois men are permitted to do neither in public; Italian men are permitted to do both. Since this is true, physiological factors have little to do with when men laugh and cry and when they do not do either. The variability of the human experience simply cannot be explained by making reference to human biology, or to the climate and geography. Instead, we must consider culture as the fabric of human society.

Culture can be conceived as a continuous, cumulative reservoir containing both material and non-material elements that are socially transmitted from generation to generation. Culture is continuous because cultural patterns transcend years, reappearing in successive generations. Culture is cumulative because each generation contributes to the reservoir.
An inherent paradox exists within the social heritage where culture tends to be both static and dynamic. Humans, once having internalized culture, attach positive value judgments to it and are more or less reluctant to change their established ways of life. Through most of recorded history men have apparently considered that change per se is undesirable and that the ideal condition is stability. The prospect of change can seem threatening, yet every human culture is subject to and does experience change. Those who speak of a generation gap portray two generations at odds with each other. According to this view, the parent generation embodied the dynamic dimension. We contend that if, in fact, a generation gap does exist in modern societies, and the differences are of degree and not of substance. Part of the social heritage of almost every modern society is the high value placed on progress. Parents encourage young people to seek progress, and progress is a form of social change. Debates between generations in modern societies are seldom about whether any change should occur. The debates are usually about how such change should occur, how fast it should occur, and which methods should be used for bringing about change.

**Elite culture**

Elite culture can be defined as those “high” cultural forms and institutions that were exclusive to, and a distinguishing characteristic of, modern social elites. It is a term that particularly references the cultural tastes of the established aristocracy, the commercial bourgeoisie, educated bureaucrats and political power brokers, and the professions in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century. Over most of this period such groups dominated those who consumed and supported such cultural styles as opera, symphony orchestras, ballet and dance companies, the decorative arts, fine art, museums and galleries, and the literary end of live theatre. While these forms all thrive in contemporary times, it is no longer clear that elite culture can be distinguished from popular culture in the way it was before the mid-twentieth century (Blau 1986, 1989). While sociologists still identify the power and significance of social elites and their relatively closed cultural domains, their exclusive grip on elite culture has relaxed while at the same time they have become more omnivorous in their taste and now consume widely and freely from all styles, from the lowbrow to the highbrow. At the same time, new styles that blur elite and popular cultural forms emerged from around the 1960s: the Beatles, for example, combined African American rhythm and blues with British working-class.

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has relaxed while at the same time they have become more omnivorous in their taste and now consume widely and freely from all styles, from the lowbrow to the highbrow. At the same time, new styles that blur elite and popular cultural forms emerged from around the 1960s: the Beatles, for example, combined African American rhythm and blues with British working class “brass band,” with western elite orchestral and strings, and, in places, with traditional Indian music. In turn, their audience base spanned the entire social spectrum. Artists such as Andy Warhol and Damian Hurst produced other such blurring or fusions and are credited with popularizing modern art.

According to Raymond Williams (1981: 97), the word elite does not emerge until the mid eighteenth century but was more commonly in use around the early nineteenth century. It was used to express social distinction by rank and Williams argues that its emergence can be attributed to a crisis over leadership. As he says: “there had been a breakdown in old ways of distinguishing those best fitted to govern or exercise influence by rank or heredity, and a failure to find new ways of distinguishing such persons by formal . . . election.” Secondly, in response to socialist arguments about rules by class and class political conflict generally, it was widely argued that elites were more effective than classes (for example, by the Italian sociologists Pareto and Mosca). It is no accident therefore that this elitism, and the elite culture it produced, soon drew a cultural drawbridge up to distinguish itself from and cut out the “others.” This is evident in Kant’s “principle of pure taste,” which identified absolute aesthetic value and valorized refinement, the attainment of virtuosity, and educated reflection over the popular, easygoing, immediate, simple, or traditional. But as Bourdieu argued, pure taste and its aesthetics were based on a refusal of the vulgar, simple, primitive, or popular and therefore constituted a social device or techniques of distinction. In the nineteenth century particularly, and long into the twentieth century, considerable energy was put into the creation of “high” cultural institutional development. At the same time, those low cultural forms which had hitherto been part of mainstream everyday culture were undermined and devalued as shallow and vulgar.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the possession of education (or what Bourdieu calls cultural capital) which distinguished the social elite became more commonplace through mass secondary education and the expansion of the universities. Hitherto the social elite had been a relatively closed and circumscribed social group, sharing not only culture in common but also background, schooling, social networks, and experience. However, from the 1960s many from non elite backgrounds were being recruited into elite positions and making it in the culture industries and professions. It was this generation that reclaimed the cultural value and aesthetic depth of popular culture and placed it on an equal footing with elite culture. Meanwhile radio,
television, and other media alongside new electronic technologies made elite culture more available to a wider audience and popular culture more popular with the elites. From the 1970s onwards, while it is still possible to identify elite culture, it has become more entwined in a broadening of popular, indeed globalized culture (DiMaggio 1997) and has now been identified in a new class formation, what Florida (2002) calls the creative class.

This is reflected in sociological surveys of consumer taste. Peterson and Kern (1996) looked at musical taste in the United States and found that highbrow consumers (those who mainly like opera and classical music) are increasingly consuming middlebrow (say, musicals) and “lowbrow” (country music, rock and pop). However, as with Bourdieu’s path-breaking book Distinction, a study of cultural taste in France, it is still possible to detect broad patterns of taste based on different combinations of cultural and economic capital and the ‘habitus’ in which they combine. In Australia, another survey modelled on Bourdieu’s (Bennett et al. 1999) found the cultural elite still cultivated a taste for highbrow cultural forms. So, while two thirds of those with minimal education could identify only two classical composers from a list of ten music works, almost half of those with higher degrees knew eight or more. In broad terms, Bourdieu’s distinction thesis was found to be true for Australia. However, an important caveat was that “the entire configuration of relations in our sample appears to have been skewed towards cultural forms which in Bourdieu’s terms are ‘popular,’ devalued, or of diminished aesthetic value. Moreover, class judgments of taste seldom display a logic that is separate from the confounding effects of age and gender.”

**Mass Culture**

“Mass culture” typically refers to that culture which emerges from the centralized production processes of the mass media. It should be noted, however, that the status of the term is the subject of ongoing challenges – as in Swingewood’s (1977) identification of it as a myth. When it is linked to the notion of mass society, then it becomes a specific variant of a more general theme; namely, the relation between social meanings and the allocation of life chances and social resources. Considered as a repository of social meaning, mass culture is one of a group of terms that also includes high (or elite) culture, avantgarde culture, folk culture, popular culture, and (subsequently) postmodern culture. The interpretation and boundaries of each of these categories are routinely the subject of debate and dispute. This becomes particularly evident in attempts at ostensive definition (i.e., the citation of examples of each term and the reasoning employed to justify their allocation to the category in question). In combination, these concepts constitute a system of differences, such that a change in the meaning of any one of its terms is
explicable through, and by, it’s changing relation to the others. Those same terms frequently function as evaluative categories that – either tacitly or explicitly – incorporate judgments about the quality of that which they affect to describe.

In his introduction to Rosenberg and White’s Mass Culture Revisited (1971) Paul Lazarsfeld suggested that in the US, controversy and debate with respect to mass culture had most clearly flourished between 1935 and 1955. It was a time when recognition of the mass media as a significant cultural force in democratic societies coincided with the development of totalitarian forms of control, associated with the regimes and media policies of Hitler and Stalin. The perceived affinities between these developments prompted concern about how best to defend the institutions of civil society, culture in general, and high culture in particular against the threats that they faced. Such preoccupations helped shape the pattern of the mass culture debate at that time. Certainly, what was evident among American social commentators and cultural critics was a widespread antipathy to mass culture that reached across the differences between conservative and critical thinkers. Even among the defenders of mass culture, the justifying tone was characteristically defensive and apologetic (Jacobs 1964).

For many of the critics, a typical strategy was to define mass culture negatively as high culture’s ‘‘other’’ (Huyssen 1986). This convergence in defining and understanding mass culture as being everything that high culture is not, occurred under circumstances where the conception of high culture that was valorized might be either (1) generally conservative and traditional, or (2) specifically modernist and avantgarde. For some conservatives, in a line of thought influenced by Ortega Y Gasset and T. S. Eliot, it took the form of an unabashed nostalgia for a more aristocratic and purportedly more orderly past. They therefore tended to see the threat posed by mass culture as generated from ‘‘below’’ (by ‘‘the masses’’ and their tastes). For critical theorists such as Theodor Adorno, mass culture served interests that derived from above (the owners of capital) and was an expression of the exploitative expansion of modes of rationality that had hitherto been associated with industrial organization. This critical group’s understanding of the attributes of a high modernist culture is that it is – or rather aspires to be – autonomous, experimental, adversarial, highly reflexive with respect to the media through which it is produced, and the product of individual genius. The corresponding perspective on mass culture is that it is thoroughly commodified, employs conventional and formulaic aesthetic codes, is culturally and ideologically conformist, and is collectively produced but centrally controlled in accordance with the economic imperatives, organizational routines, and technological requirements of its media of transmission. The emergence of such a mass culture – a culture that is perforce made for the populace rather than made by them – serves both to close off the
resistance associated with popular culture and folk art and that seriousness of purpose with which high culture is identified.

The debate around this opposition between the culture of high modernism and mass culture was, for the most part, carried forward by scholars in the humanities. What proved to be a point of contact with social scientists was the latter’s related concern as to whether the development of modernity (understood as a social process) was associated with the emergence of mass society. Insofar as the notion of such a society is grounded in the contrast between the (organized) few and the (disorganized) many, Giner (1976) suggests that its lengthy prehistory in social and political thought stretches back to classical Greece. In like fashion, Theodor Adorno had seen the foundation of mass culture as reaching as far back as Homer’s account, in The Odyssey, of Odysseus’s encounter with the Sirens and the latter’s seductive, but deeply insidious, appeal.

A specifically sociological theory of mass society, however, with its antecedents in the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Mannheim, is altogether more recent. As formulated by such writers as William Kornhauser and Arnold Rose that theory was concerned to highlight selected social tendencies rather than offering a totalizing conception of modern society. The theory does nevertheless advance a set of claims about the social consequences of modernity, claims that are typically conveyed by way of a stylized contrast with the purportedly orderly characteristics of “traditional” society or, less frequently, those forms of solidarity, collectivity, and organized struggles that exemplify “class” society. In brief, social relationships are interpreted as having been transformed by the growth of, and movement into, cities, by developments in both the means and the speed of transportation, the mechanization of production processes, the expansion of democracy, the rise of bureaucratic forms of organization, and the emergence of the mass media. It is argued that as a consequence of such changes there is a waning of the primordial ties of primary group membership, kinship, community, and locality. In the absence of effective secondary associations that might serve as agencies of pluralism and function as buffers between citizens and centralized power, what emerges are insecure and atomized individuals. They are seen as constituting, in an influential image of the time, what David Reisman and his associates called “the lonely crowd.” The “other directed” conduct of such individuals is neither sanctified by tradition nor the product of inner conviction, but rather is shaped by the mass media and contemporary social fashion.

In C. Wright Mills’s (1956) version of the thesis the relevant (and media centered) contrast was not so much between past and present, as between an imagined possibility and an accelerating social tendency. The most significant difference was between the characteristics of a “mass”
and those of a “public,” with these two (ideal type) terms distinguished from one another by their dominant modes of communication. A “public” is consistent with the normative standards of classic democratic theory, in that (1) virtually as many people express opinions as receive them; (2) public communications are so organized that there is the opportunity promptly and effectively to answer back any expressed opinion; (3) opinion thus formed finds an outlet for effective action; and (4) authoritative institutions do not penetrate the public, which is thus more or less autonomous. In a “mass,” (1) far fewer people express opinions than receive them; (2) communications are so organized that it is difficult to answer back quickly or effectively; (3) authorities organize and control the channels through which opinion may be realized into action; and (4) the mass has no autonomy from institutions.

As these images imply, and as Stuart Hall was subsequently to suggest, what lay behind the debate about mass culture was the (not so) hidden subject of “the masses.” Yet this was a social category of whose very existence Raymond Williams had famously expressed doubts, wryly noting that it seemed invariably to consist of people other than ourselves. Such skepticism was shared by Daniel Bell (1962), an otherwise very different thinker from Williams. In critiquing the notion of America as a mass society, he indicated the often contradictory meanings and associations that had gathered around the word “mass.” It might be made to mean a heterogeneous and undifferentiated audience; or judgment by the incompetent; or the mechanized society; or the bureaucratized society; or the mob – or any combination of these. The term was simply being asked to do far too much explanatory work.

Moreover, during the 1960s, such a hollowing out of the formal, cognitive basis of the mass culture concept was increasingly complemented by altogether more direct empirical challenges. The emergence of a youth based counterculture, the Civil Rights Movement, opposition to the Vietnam War, the emergence of second wave feminism, and the contradictions and ambiguities of the media’s role in at once documenting and contributing to these developments, all served to bring the mass society thesis into question. In addition, both the control of the popular music industry by a handful of major companies (Peterson & Berger 1975) and of film production by the major studios were the subject of serious challenges from independent cultural producers with their own distinctive priorities (Biskind 1998). The result (for a decade at least, until the eventual reassertion of corporate control) was an altogether more diversified media culture. And in what was perhaps explicable as part reaction, part provocation vis-à-vis an earlier orthodoxy, what also emerged were instances of populist style academic support for the very notion of mass culture – as, for example, in the Journal of Popular Culture. If this latter tendency sometimes displayed an unreflective enthusiasm for ephemera and a neglect of institutional analysis, it
nevertheless presaged the more broadly based recognition of the diversity of mass culture that was evident during the 1970s (e.g., Gans 1974).

During the 1980s an emphasis on the cultural reception of popular cultural forms attracted innovative empirical work (Radway 1984; Morley 1986) at a time when the notion of the postmodern had become the subject of sustained critical attention. Postmodernism displayed none of high modernism’s antagonism towards mass culture. On the contrary, as evidence of the blurring of cultural boundaries multiplied, practitioners of postmodern ism either interrogated the very basis of such contrasts between “high” and “mass” and the hierarchical distinctions that sustained them (Huyssten 1986) or (somewhat matter of fact) proceeded to ignore them. For example, work on television soap operas subverted the convention of critical disdain for such texts by directing attention towards such structural complexities as multiple plot lines, absence of narrative closure, the problematizing of textual boundaries, and the genre’s engagement with the cultural circumstances of its audiences (Geraghty 1991).

In its “classic” forms the mass culture/mass society thesis has thus lost much of its power to persuade. Contemporary permutations of its claims are nevertheless discernible in, for example, the post Marxist writings of Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard, and in the contention of the erudite conservative critic George Steiner that it is disingenuous to argue that it is possible to have both cultural quality and democracy. Steiner insists on the necessity of choice. It is, however, refinements to the closely related concept of “culture industry” which may prove to be the most enduring and most promising legacy of the thesis (Hesmondhalgh 2002). Culture industry had been identified by Adorno and his colleague Max Horkheimer as a more acceptable term than “mass culture,” both because it foregrounded the process of commodification and because it identified the locus of determinacy as corporate power rather than the populace as a whole. Originally conceived it presented altogether too gloomy and too totalizing a conception of cultural control. An emphasis on the polysemy of media texts or on the resourcefulness of media audiences offered an important methodological corrective. But these approaches could also be overplayed, and the globalization of media production and a resurgence of institutional analysis and political economy among media scholars during the last decade have revived interest in the culture industry concept.

**Popular Culture**

The word “popular” denotes “of the people,” “by the people,” and “for the people.” In other words, it is made up of them as subjects, whom it textualizes via drama, sport, and information;
workers, who undertake that textualization through performances and recording; and audiences, who receive the ensuing texts.

Three discourses determine the direction sociologists have taken towards this topic. A discourse about art sees it elevating people above ordinary life, transcending body, time, and place. Conversely, a discourse about folk life expects it to settle us into society through the wellsprings of community, as part of daily existence. And a discourse about pop idealizes fun, offering transcendence through joy but doing so by referring to the everyday (Frith 1991). “The popular” circles across these discourses.

For its part, the concept of culture derives from tending and developing agriculture. With the emergence of capitalism, culture came both to embody instrumentalism and to abjure it, via the industrialization of farming, on the one hand, and the cultivation of individual taste, on the other (Benhabib 2002: 2). Culture has usually been understood in two registers, via the social sciences and the humanities – truth versus beauty. This was a heuristic distinction in the sixteenth century (Williams 1983: 38), but it became substantive as time passed. Culture is now a marker of differences and similarities in taste and status within groups, as explored interpretively or methodically. In today’s humanities, theater, film, television, radio, art, craft, writing, music, dance, and electronic gaming are judged by criteria of quality, as framed by practices of cultural criticism and history. For their part, the social sciences focus on the languages, religions, customs, times, and spaces of different groups, as explored ethnographically or statistically. So whereas the humanities articulate differences within populations, through symbolic norms (e.g., which class has the cultural capital to appreciate high culture, and which does not), the social sciences articulate differences between populations, through social norms (e.g., which people play militaristic electronic games and which do not) (Wallerstein 1989; Bourdieu 1984).

What happens when we put “popular” and “culture” back together, with the commercial world binding them? “Popular culture” clearly relates to markets. Neoclassical economics assumes that expressions of the desire and capacity to pay for services stimulate the provision of entertainment and hence – when the result is publicly accepted – determine what is “popular.” Value is decided through competition between providers to obtain the favor of consumers, with the conflictual rationality of the parties producing value to society. The connection of market entertainment to new identities leads to a variety of sociological reactions. During the Industrial Revolution, anxieties about a suddenly urbanized and educated population raised the prospect of a long feared “ochlocracy” of “the worthless mob” (Pufendorf 2000: 144). Theorists from both right and left argued that newly literate publics would be vulnerable to manipulation by
demagogues. The subsequent emergence of public schooling in the West took as its project empowering, and hence disciplining, the working class.

This notion of the suddenly enfranchised being bamboozled by the unscrupulously fluent has recurred throughout the modern period. It inevitably leads to a primary emphasis on the number and conduct of audiences to popular culture: where they came from, how many there were, and what they did as a consequence of being present. These audiences are conceived as empirical entities that can be known via research instruments derived from sociology, demography, psychology, and marketing. Such concerns are coupled with a secondary concentration on content: what were audiences watching when they . . . And so texts, too, are conceived as empirical entities that can be known, via research instruments derived from sociology, psychology, and literary criticism. So classical Marxism views the popular as a means to false consciousness that diverts the working class from recognizing its economic oppression; feminist approaches have varied between a condemnation of the popular as a similar diversion from gendered consciousness and its celebration as a distinctive part of women’s culture; and cultural studies has regarded the popular as a key location for symbolic resistance of class and gender oppression alike (Smith 1987; Hall & Jefferson 1976).

The foremost theorist of popular culture in the sociological literature is Antonio Gramsci, whose activism against Mussolini in the 1920s and 1930s has become an ethical exemplar for progressive intellectuals. Gramsci maintains that each social group creates “organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields”: the industrial technology, law, economy, and culture of each group. The “‘organic’ intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development” assist in the emergence of that class, for example via military expertise. Intellectuals operate in “‘civil society,’” which denotes “‘the ensemble of organism commonly called ‘private,’ that of ‘political society’ or ‘the State.’” They comprise the “‘hegemony’ which the dominant group exercises throughout society” as well as the “‘direct domination’ or command exercised through the State and ‘juridical’ government.” Ordinary people give “‘spontaneous’ consent” to the “‘general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group’” (Gramsci 1978: 5–7, 12). In other words, popular culture legitimizes sociopolitical arrangements in the public mind and can be the site of struggle as well as domination.

The counter idea, that the cultural industries “‘impress . . . the same stamp on everything,’” derives from Adorno and Horkheimer (1977) of the Frankfurt School, an anti Nazi group of
scholars writing around the same time as Gramsci. After migrating to the US, they found a quietude reminiscent of pre war Germany. Their explanation for the replication of this attitude in the US lies in the mass production line organization of entertainment, where businesses use systems of reproduction that ensure identical offerings. Adorno and Horkheimer see consumers as manipulated by those at the economic apex of production. “Domination” masquerades as choice in a “society alienated from itself.” Coercion is mistaken for free will, and culture becomes just one more industrial process, subordinated to dominant economic forces within society that insist on standardization.

While much of this dismay is shared by conservatives, for some functionalist sociologists, popular culture represents the apex of modernity. Rather than encouraging alienation, it stands for the expansion of civil society, the moment in history when the state becomes receptive to, and part of, the general community. The population is now part of the social, rather than excluded from the means and politics of political calculation, along with a lessening of authority, the promulgation of individual rights and respect, and the intensely interpersonal, large scale human interaction necessitated by industrialization and aided by systems of mass communication. The spread of advertising is taken as a model for the breakdown of social barriers, exemplified in the triumph of the popular (Shils 1966).

These approaches have produced a wide array of topics and methods for researching the popular. Cultural studies has perhaps been the most productive. Historical and contemporary analyses of slaves, crowds, pirates, bandits, minorities, women, and the working class have utilized archival, ethnographic, and statistical methods to emphasize day to day non compliance with authority, via practices of consumption that frequently turn into practices of production. For example, UK research on the contemporary has lit upon Teddy Boys, Mods, bikers, skinheads, punks, school students, teen girls, Rastas, truants, dropouts, and magazine readers as its magical agents of history: groups who deviated from the norms of schooling and the transition to work by generating moral panics. Scholar activists examine the structural underpinnings to collective style, investigating how bricolage subverts the achievement oriented, materialistic, educationally driven values and appearance of the middle class. The working assumption has often been that subordinate groups adopt and adapt signs and objects of the dominant culture, reorganizing them to manufacture new meanings. Consumption is thought to be the epicenter of such subcultures. Paradoxically, it has also reversed their members’ status as consumers. The oppressed become producers of new fashions, inscribing alienation, difference, and powerlessness on their bodies (Hall & Jefferson 1976).
Of course, popular culture leaves its mark on those who create it as well as its audiences. This insight leads us towards a consideration of the popular as itself an industry, whose products encourage agreement with prevailing social relations and whose work practices reflect such agreement. Today, rather than being a series of entirely nation based industries, either ideologically or productively, popular culture is internationalized, in terms of the export and import of texts, attendant fears of cultural imperialism, and a New International Division of Cultural Labor. That division sees European football teams composed of players from across the globe, and Hollywood films shot wherever talent is cheap, incentives plentiful, and scenery sufficiently malleable to look like the US (Miller et al. 2001a, 2001b).

This relates to other significant changes in popular culture. The canons of aesthetic judgment and social distinction that once flowed from the humanities and social science approaches to culture, keeping aesthetic tropes somewhat distinct from social norms, have collapsed in on each other. Art and custom are now resources for markets and nations (Yudice 2002) – reactions to the crisis of belonging and economic necessity occasioned by capitalist globalization. As a consequence, popular culture is more than textual signs or everyday practices (Martin Barbero 2003). It is also crucial to both advanced and developing economies, and provides the legitimizing ground on which particular groups (e.g., African Americans, gays and lesbians, the hearing impaired, or evangelical Protestants) claim resources and seek inclusion in national and international narratives (Yudice 1990). This intermingling has implications for both aesthetic and social hierarchies, which “regulate and structure . . . individual and collective lives” (Parekh 2000: 143) in competitive ways that harness art and collective meaning for social and commercial purposes. To understand and intervene in this environment, sociologists need to be nimble in their use of textual, economic, ethnographic, and political approaches to popular culture.

**Postmodern Culture**

Postmodern culture is a far reaching term describing a range of activities, events, and perspectives relating to art, architecture, the humanities, and the social sciences beginning in the second half of the twentieth century. In contrast to modern culture, with its emphasis on social progress, coherence, and universality, postmodern culture represents instances of dramatic historical and ideological change in which modernist narratives of progress and social holism are viewed as incomplete, elastic, and contradictory. In conjunction with the end of modernist progress narratives, an insistence on coherence gives way to diversity and the dominance of universality is subverted by difference within a postmodern condition. Additionally, postmodern
culture stands for more than the current state of society. Postmodern culture is characterized by
the valuing of activities, events, and perspectives that emphasize the particular over the global or
the fragment over the whole. This reversal of a modernist ideology necessitates a valuation of
variation and flexibility in the cultural sphere. Primarily through the writings of Jean Francois
remains the definitive exposition of the term and its significance to society, postmodern culture
has come to be identified with a radical critique of the relationship between the particular and the
universal in art, culture, and politics.

The most visible signs of postmodern culture appear in art, architecture, film, music, and
literature after the 1950s. The most prominent stylistic features that unite these diverse forums
are pastiche, non representationalism, and non linearity. In the art and architecture of
postmodern culture, collage and historical eclecticism are emphasized. The American painter
Mark Tansey depicts historical scenes and figures in anachronistic situations. His 1982 painting
Purity Test positions a group of “traditional” Native Americans on horseback over looking
Smithson’s 1970 Spiral Jetty, a temporal impossibility. In architecture, Robert Venturi combines
classical and modern architectural features, juxtaposing distinct historical styles. Art and
architecture within postmodern culture celebrate collage and do not symbolize historical,
themetic, or organic unity. Their postmodern quality can be found in the artist’s or architect’s
desire to abandon the constraints of temporal, stylistic, and historical continuity.

In film, literature, and music representative of postmodern culture there is an emphasis on non
linearity, parody, and pastiche. Post modern film, such as the Coen brothers’ Blood Simple or
Fargo, disrupt narrative timelines and emphasize the work of parody. Quentin Tarantino’s Pulp
Fiction, for instance, “begins” at the end and continually recycles crime scene cliches
throughout the plot. Similar aesthetic principles are at play in postmodern literature in which the
“realist mode” is thwarted in favor of the seemingly nonsensical. The Canadian writer Douglas
Coupland epitomizes this departure from realism. All Families Are Psychotic (2001) depicts the
surreal life of the Drummond family – a disparate familial group brought together by the
daughter’s impending launch into space and the financial woes of the father. In film and fiction
the everydayness of life is shown to be complex, parodic, and undetermined. The division
between the so called “real” and “unreal” is collapsed and vast excesses of postmodern society
are allowed to spiral out of control. Postmodern culture “adopts a dedifferentiating approach
that will fully subverts boundaries between high and low art, artist and spectator and among
different artistic forms and genres” (Best & Kellner 1997: 132).
Music in postmodern culture shares a great deal with the previous artistic forms. The discontinuity that one associates with John Cage’s atonal compositions is taken to another level. Contemporary postmodern musicians mix and match different musical styles and traditions, adding a cultural pastiche to Cage’s theory of improvisation. Bubba Sparxxx’s (a.k.a. Warren Anderson Mathis) “Dirty South,” “Southern Hip Hop,” or “Hip Hop Country” style mixes the sound and theme of traditional hip hop music with a Country nuance. His lyrics, especially in his 2001 song “Ugly,” address issues of identity and the hybridity and similarity that one finds among urban and rural youth as they attempt to attain stardom within the entertainment industry. Along the same lines, rapper Kanye West combines hip hop music with Caribbean styles, including the reggae sound and motifs one would associate with Ziggy Marley. West, in addition to his political and cultural messages, offers a “Christian Rap” testimony in his music. His 2004 “Jesus Walks” integrates a heavy, military urban sound with gospel themes drawn from direct references to biblical passages. In popular music, figures such as Paul Simon and Sting utilize non Western (primarily African and Middle Eastern) sounds and style in their recent albums. Music in postmodern culture is heterogeneous, stylistically mixed, and international in influence.

While postmodern culture can be illuminated by reference to specific cultural products, it is important to keep in mind the underlying philosophical logic driving the phenomenon. Postmodernity as a reaction against a modernity, as Lyotard observes, is grounded in the Enlightenment, with its confidence in the faculty of reason to ascertain philosophical “truths” and its dedication to the progress of science and technology to enhance and improve the human situation. Taken together, this confidence and dedication to a particular intellectual framework produces monolithic accounts of the nature of reality and human kind’s place within it. The “postmodern condition,” therefore, is a disruption in the claim of totality found in these Enlightenment generated accounts. According to postmodernists, the western worldview, with its commitment to universality in all things related to being human, gives way under the weight of its own contradictions and repressions. The comprehensive grand theories or grand narratives, as Lyotard describes them, subsequently fail in a postmodern era insofar as the plurality of human existence emerges within a wider cultural space. Postmodern knowledge of the world, as Lyotard explains, must take into account the multiplicity of experience or “phrasings” and the possibility of new, unanticipated experiences or phrasings that will assist in making sense of reality in ways either not permitted or not imagined by a modernist ideology. The content of knowledge we presently possess is continually being transformed by technology and “the nature of knowledge cannot survive unchanged within this context of general transformation” (Lyotard 1984: 4). Culture, as it pertains to postmodernism, is more than a repository of data; it is the activity that shapes and gives meaning to the world, constructing reality rather than presenting it.
Postmodern culture, as a valorization of the multiplicity found in ‘‘little narratives,’’ exhibits anti modernist tendencies, with art and politics rejecting calls to narrative totalization. Jameson (1984), referring to the social theorist Jurgen Habermas, states that ‘‘postmodernism involves the explicit repudiation of the modernist tradition – the return of the middle class philistine or Spiessburger (bourgeois) rejection of modernist forms and values – and as such the expression of a new social conservatism.’’ While an emphasis on the particular over the universal captures the revolutionary impulse found in the political and aesthetic sentiments of Lyotardian postmodernism, it runs counter to a lengthy critique of postmodernism by social theorists, mainly Marxists, who view this turn to the particularity of ‘‘little narratives’’ as a symptom of late capitalism, with its valuation on proliferating commodities and flexible corporate organizational models. The characteristics of multiplicity, pastiche, and non linearity, while viewed as offering new aesthetic, epistemological, and political possibilities by postmodern artists, architects, writers, filmmakers, and theorists, are understood by those who reject postmodernism as examples of the ‘‘logic of late capitalism’’ (Jameson 1984) in which commodities and consumers enter into rapid, undifferentiated exchange in ever increasing and diversified markets.

Harvey (1989) argues that postmodernism is the ideological ally of global capitalism, which is characterized in part by decentered organizational modes, intersecting markets, and hyper consumerism. While social theorists such as Daniel Bell, Philip Cooke, Edward Soja, and Scott Lash see postmodern culture as a symptom of global capitalist ideology, others view it as an extension or completion of the modernist project. Bauman (1992) notes that ‘‘the post modern condition can be therefore described . . . as modernity emancipated from false consciousness [and] as a new type of social condition marked by the overt institutionalization of characteristics which modernity – in its designs and managerial practices – set about to eliminate and, failing that, tried to conceal.’’ In this account, postmodern culture is viewed as having a continuity with modernism and not necessarily an affiliation with a late capitalist mode of production. Although the features of post modern culture are similarly described and agreed upon by social and literary theorists from across the ideological spectrum, the meaning of postmodern culture remains largely in dispute, with its advocates seeing it as a new condition and its detractors seeing it as an accomplice to late capitalism and conservative ideology.

In the few decades since its inception as a critical concept in the arts, architecture, humanities, and social sciences, postmodern culture remains controversial. Artists, architects, writers, philosophers, social theorists, and film makers continue to explore its vast possibilities, however. Whether it is a new condition, an emancipation from modernist false consciousness, a subsidiary
of late capitalism, or a indefinable Zeitgeist, the debate over postmodern culture will be a central feature of intellectual life for years to come.

**Folk Culture**

Folk culture is the unifying expressive components of everyday life as enacted by localized, tradition-bound groups. Earlier conceptualizations of folk culture focused primarily on traditions practiced by small foot, homogeneous, rural groups living in relative isolation from other groups. (please look through [http://bibliotekforlandbokulturogsoefart.dk/filer/George%20M.%20Foster%20-%20What%20is%20folk%20culture%20(1953)%20-20%20ogs%C3%A5%20under%20teori%20og%20metode.pdf](http://bibliotekforlandbokulturogsoefart.dk/filer/George%20M.%20Foster%20-%20What%20is%20folk%20culture%20(1953)%20-20%20ogs%C3%A5%20under%20teori%20og%20metode.pdf))

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