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1. Define Gilman's terms sex-distinction and sex-attraction. Discuss how you feel (if you do) society today still overemphasizes both terms. Draw on your own experiences or a friend's experience to give support for your argument (page 207).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman defined sex distinction as the belief that biological differences made women ideally suited for childbearing and domestic tasks, while sex attraction was a cultural expectation that required young women to be physically appealing in order to obtain a husband. Gilman argued that most women's work was of an unpaid domestic nature, not because of biology but economics, since it provided men with household help at little or no cost. Wealthy women, especially those with rich husbands, could also pay lower class women to perform domestic duties. At the time, Gilman was correct that most women were little more than domestic slaves, and that they were almost being treated like horses and cattle, since they were socially and economically dependent on men. Women without husbands generally had a very low economic status, which is also true of young, single mothers today. Of course, women today have greater educational and employment opportunities than they ever did in the late-19th Century, and hence more chances to live independently and avoid domestic slavery. The majority of women are still trapped in low-status pink-collar work, however, and they are paid less than men with similar qualifications and experience. While the majority of married women today work outside the home—which was definitely not the case in Gilman's time—they still face the double burden of performing unpaid domestic labor after they return from their paying jobs. Of course, Hollywood and mass advertising also promote the

ideal of female beauty, youth and slimness that most women in real life can never match, and it causes diseases like anorexia nervosa and bulimia in young women, and feelings of inferiority in adult women who do not look like celebrities and fashion models.

2. Discuss Du Bois's concepts of the color line, the veil, and double consciousness using concrete examples. What theoretical issue/s do these concepts raise? (page 288)

For DuBois, the color line was the central question of the 20th Century, not only in the U. S. but everywhere in the world where nonwhites were being subjugated and exploited. At the time he was writing, most of Africa and Asia were under the control of colonial powers, which exploited them for raw materials and cheap labor. Even in the 19th Century, most white Americans also realized that they lived in a highly racist society that brutally oppressed nonwhites, and far more openly so than the present. Segregation and lynching were practiced openly then, and the state was openly hostile to nonwhites. All whites knew this perfectly well since it was obvious, but as DuBois noted “ they remain for the most part indifferent and unmoved” (Appelrouth and Edles, p, 288). It has been the same during most periods of U. S. history, including the present. DuBois was among the few black writers who attempted to lift the ‘ veil’ on all this suffering and oppression so that whites could never claim that they did not know what was really going on, particularly in the South, which is where 90% of blacks still lived before World War II. He believed that blacks also suffered from a double consciousness in that they had internalized the racism and prejudices of their oppressors. This led them to feel like strangers, outcasts and aliens in

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their own country. On the one hand, black music and spirituality were the “ true expression of a people’s sorrow, despair and hope” (Appelrouth and Edles, p, 288), and were the essence of black consciousness that still yearned for freedom and equality. The black church was one of the very few institutions that they controlled in 1900, and though it provided them with an island of refuge, DuBois regarded it as too timid and unwilling to improve the social and economic conditions of blacks.

3. Explain how Du Bois’s notion of a color line can be found in different quadrants within the author’s analytical framework for order and action (page 285).

For DuBois, racism and the color line always had both rational and non-rational (or irrational) aspects, although he tended to place it more in the non-rational category. Prejudice on the individual level could be both internalized and externalized, although it usually involved a set of non-rational beliefs, fears and myths about nonwhites. On the collective side, this was also the case with the symbolic status hierarchy based on color, and how lighter skin was always synonymous with higher social and economic status. There were no rational explanations for these views, which had existed since the days of slavery, although pseudo-scientists and Social Darwinists always attempted to justify them by ‘ proving’ that nonwhites were genetically inferior using bogus IQ tests and other such devices. DuBois also maintained that the color line had a rational purpose in both individual and collective forms of racial discrimination, such as segregation, Jim Crow laws, and denial of education and voting rights. For instance, these racist laws, customs and institutions maintained nonwhites as a source of cheap

labor, and also provided psychological and emotional benefits to the whites who subjugated them. DuBois was affiliated for many years with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was the oldest civil rights organization, founded in 1909, that won a number of important victories for civil rights in Supreme Court cases. During the period when he had just started his career, Supreme Court decisions like *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896) and *Williams v. Mississippi* (1897) had eliminated civil rights and voting rights for blacks in the U. S, and upheld segregation as constitutional. It took many decades of activism, and finally a Second Reconstruction in the 1950s and 1960s, before blacks finally received the rights they had first been promised after the Civil War.

4. Discuss the three central themes found in Mead's work: mind, symbols, and language. Define the role each plays for an individual in a society. Also discuss how the essence of meaning plays into these three central themes (page 319).

George Herbert Mead did not necessarily believe that individuals were rational, but they were pragmatic and cognitive, and able to manipulate language and symbols for the purpose of thinking and communication. Indeed, they could hardly have their personal and social needs met if they did not learn to use these skills. Mead thought that cultures and institutions were based on social habits, and that most individual behavior was also routine and habitual, based on the need to obtain approval from others and avoid disapproval. On the individual level, children developed the concepts of "I" and "me" only in their relationships with others, during the play and game stages. In this period of life, they learned that mind is " a process or

behavior that allows for the conscious control of one's actions", and that language and symbols were tools used by human beings to orient their behavior toward others and the larger society. Among other functions, they allowed people to "mentally rehearse lines of action without actually performing them" (Appelrouth and Edles, p, 319). Any meaning that might be ascribed to these thoughts, gestures and symbols came from society or the collective rather than the individual's consciousness. For example, asking for a pencil only has meaning if it "elicits the desired response from the person to whom it is directed", but it has none if the person hands over a book instead of a pencil (Appelrouth and Edles, p, 319). Mead's basic assumptions about the personality therefore reflected the behaviorist psychology that was in vogue at the time as well as the pragmatism of William James, holding that individuals were primarily shaped by responses to their environment.

5. Explain what the difference is between the play and game stages. How does the concept of the generalized other play into this distinction? (page 329)

Mead argued that no independent 'self' existed outside of social contexts and that all persons developed self-consciousness in childhood only in relation to others. Human beings found meaning only within the overall universe of possible social interactions and obtaining meaningful responses from others. Without these, growth and development would be impossible, given that "the experience of our self as an object becomes possible only by taking the attitudes of others toward our self" (Appelrouth and Edles, p, 329). The objectification of the self was what Mead termed the "me", in

which the self was a collective social product rather than some idealized independent individual. As they grew older, all people developed many different faces and multiple personalities to deal with the wide variety of possible social interactions that they faced, and maturity into adulthood depended on the ability of the individual to use these in the correct way. In the play stage, which is characteristic of children at age eight or younger, the self is still very limited and only able to “assume the attitude of one particular individual at a time” (Appelrouth and Edles, p, 329). Children might move very quickly from pretending to be their parents or authority figures or superheroes, but only one at a time and in a very unconnected and disjointed fashion. Only in the game stage would they be able to assume the roles of many others at the same time, and also begin to comprehend the abstract rules of social interactions, in which all participants became part of a generalized other.

REFERENCES

Appelrouth, S. and L. D. Edles (2011). Classical and Contemporary Sociological Theory: Text and Readings, 3rd Edition. SAGE Publications.