

A Sociological Study of Herbert Blumer's Symbolic Interactionist Views on "Joint Action" in David Hare's Historio-Political Play Fanshen

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Abstract

Herbert Blumer, the contemporary American sociologist, is one of the influential figures in the field of sociology on the micro level of individuals' relations. Blumer's theories on "symbolic interactionism" and "collective action" are his most important contribution to sociological studies. To him, human society consists of acting people, and the life of the society is derived from their joint action. Such relations not only determine many of the large-scale features of a society, but also are not coercive and external to it. Rather, they are created and controlled by actors and their actions. David Hare, the contemporary British playwright, is a writer who has a critical-political view on macro-level issues of human society in his works. Fanshen, a play by Hare, is the story of a Chinese village whose inhabitants, under the leadership of a communist movement viewed by Blumer as a large-scale structure, move gradually from individual action to a social-revolutionary event. The present paper aims to study this social act based on Blumer's theories of "symbolic interactionism" and "collective action", and renders a sociological reading of a Marxian dramatist's reformist view in depicting a populist revolution.

Keywords: David Hare, Fanshen, Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, Collective Action.