

The Isolated Individual and the Dyad (Simmel II)

Isolated Individual

- Social interactions between two elements → isolated individual paradox
- Isolation is still determined by sociation (interaction), even if it's negative.
 - o Isolation = interaction between two parties

Isolation

- Related **internally** and **externally** (group)
 - o Isolation is not limited to the individual
 - o It is a conscious feeling of the individual; specific relation to society

Freedom

- Free man forms unit with self, not others.
 - o When an individual has relationships to other individuals, freedom is more positive - freedom represents relation to environment.
- Two important aspects for structure of society:
 - o Freedom is a continuous process of liberation
 - o Man doesn't want to be free, but wants to use their freedom for some kind of purpose.
- Freedom is pointless for individuals who constantly interact with other people if it does not give them power/will over others.
- Freedom holds the process of liberation, but also the power relation to others in a given relationship.
 - o Freedom has two-fold significance, not just for the individual.

The Dyad

- Dyad = two person group
 - o The simplest sociological formation
 - o Person is able to retain their individuality.

- There is no other person to shift the balance of the group thereby allowing those within the dyad to maintain their individuality.
- Feel confronted only by the other, not a collective group.
 - Social structure relies on the one and on the other of the two.
- As soon as there is a sociation (interaction) of three, a group continues to exist even if one of the members drops out.
- Triad = three person group
 - Possibility of a dyad forming within the triad, therefore threatening the remaining individual's independence and causing them to become the subordinate of the group.
 - Essential part of society which becomes a structure.
 - Unfortunately as the group (structure) becomes increasingly greater the individual becomes separated and grows more alone, isolated, and segmented.
- The bigger the group → the better for the individual
 - In a larger group, it is harder to exert control on the individual
 - But, in a large group, there is a chance of the individual becoming distance and impersonal.
 - Therefore, in order for an individual to cope with being part of a larger group, they must become a part of a smaller group like family.

Characteristics of Dyad

- **Triviality** - dyads susceptible to coloration/discoloration
 - Represents a certain measure of frequency
 - "...the dyad is inseparable from the immediacy of interaction; for neither of its two elements is it the super-individual unit which elsewhere confronts the individual, while at the same time it makes him participate in it" (126).
- **Intimacy** - driven from individuality
 - Not based on the content of a relationship

- o The nature of intimacy makes it dangerous to have a close union between two people, like that of a *marriage*.
 - Spouses share intimacies
- o The larger the group is, the more easy it is for the members to become objective, thus leading to a reduction in intimacy.

Monogamous Marriage

- Represents the “primordial image of a dualism”
 - o Cold, alienated spouses don't want a child, this could unify them
 - o Passionate, intimate spouses don't want a child, could separate them
- Monogamous marriage doesn't seem to be an essential character of the dyad.
- Group unit from structure is facilitated (by marriage) by:
 - o Incomparable closeness; union
 - o Super-individual character of marriage forms
- Marriage allows only acceptance/rejection, not modification.
- Modern culture is individualizing the character of marriage.
 - o In marriage, all objective elements are really nothing but means for the subjective relation.

Delegation of Duties + Responsibilities to the Group

- With all larger groups, the delegation of duties, responsibilities, and tasks becomes impersonal in structure.
 - o The longer public opinion has ruled, the stronger authority of the majority becomes, the less likely minorities rise up, etc.
- Economic groups make egoistical demands
 - o Individual – embarrassed, blush
 - o Group Member – anonymous, feel protection through group membership; believes in representing the interests of that group.
 - Leads to decrease in practical personality values.