

SOCIAL BEHAVIORISM



George Herbert Mead

“Behaviorism in. . .[the] wider sense is simply an approach to the study of the experience of the individual from the point of view of his conduct, particularly, but not exclusively, the conduct as it is observable by others.” (Mead, 1934)

“Social psychology studies the activity or behavior of the individual as it lies within the social process.” Mead, 1934

“The behavior of an individual can be understood *only in terms of the behavior of the whole social group* of which he is a member, since his individual acts are involved in larger, social acts which go beyond himself and which implicate the other members of the group.” Mead (1934, p 6-7)

The group explains the parts, i.e., the behavior of the individuals that make up the group. Looking at the individual does not explain the group.

“The process out of which the self arises is a social process which implies interaction of individuals in the group, implies the pre-existence of the group.” p 164)

The Self

Separate from the body and developing from birth.

An object to itself

Reflexivity (the ability to put ourselves spontaneously without conscious intent into others' places)

SELF CONCEPT

Charles H. Cooley (1902): looking-glass self.

MEAD refined Cooley's concept noting that what matters for our self concept is not what others actually think of us, but what we **perceive** they think of us.

Cooley = Objective Mead = Subjective

A self concept is not singular but multifaceted, reflecting perceived attitudes of the various people who they related to

SELF CONSCIOUS

Mead: self-consciousness is “an awakening in ourselves of the group of attitudes which we [experience as being aroused]. . . in others, especially when it is an important set of responses which go to make up the members of the community.”

“SELVES CAN ONLY EXIST IN DEFINITE RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SELVES’

The “I” and the “ME”

Terms borrowed from James but given different meanings

The “**I**” is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others.

To Mead the “**me**” or “**mes**” are the organized set of attitudes of others which a person assumes. **A person’s spontaneous perception of another’s attitudes** toward him or her is part of one of their mes, a part of their self concept.

The **mes** make up the self concept

MEAD: Selves can only exist in definite relationships to other selves. No hard-and-fast line can be drawn between our own selves and the selves of others, since our own selves exist and enter as such into our experiences only in so far as the selves of others exist and enter as such into our experiences also.” (1934)

You have as many Mes in you as there are people to whom you relate.

“In attempting a new social organization, society has gained a new technique of control, since it has now implanted itself within its component parts, and so regulates, to the degree that this is successfully done, the behavior of the individual in terms of the effect on others of his contemplated action.”
Mead 1934

HOW THE SELF DEVELOP

STAGE OF PLAY (2 to 3 years)

ROLE PLAYING

LEARNING TO ADOPT THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GENERALIZED OTHER.

The self is more than a residues of past other evaluations. It is a process of continual evaluation in terms of continually changing perspectives

THE SELF IS MORE PROCESS THAN OBJECT

Mead explains a mental concept (the self) by stating that it is a produce of the social environment.