

Recorded by Sam Goldberg  
SOC 0150  
Dr. Brush made some minor additions

## Notes for Tuesday, March 4th

-We are now moving from macro theorists to more micro theorists; our theorists are becoming more focused  
-Mead's Big Idea= How we get the 'selves' we get; the process

### I. How is Mead a micro sociologist?

- Unit of Analysis= the individual
  - Compare to our previous macro theorists who had a collective unit of analysis
- Concept of 'self' and its construction in social relations
  - Construction in the social keeps it in the study of sociology rather than psychology
- Process of the development of the self
- \*\*-Durkheim is characteristically micro in that he is concerned with the individual; Marx in his concern with workers' consciousness; Weber in that ethics and morals influence action. **However, although they have their "micro" moments, these three are ordinarily presented as "macro" theorists.**

### II. What is Mead arguing?

-Says humans have language, which is different than other animals, and is essential for the development of the self [p. 240]

-Symbolic interaction= the notion that what organizes us at the social level are our symbols/symbolic interaction

-*"Symbolic"*= Humans communicate and act through symbols; we have both the capacity for and the need for symbols

-The self in the social is distinct from the physical (Mead makes the distinction between the self and the body); gestures don't mean anything in and of themselves, only in a particular context

-*"Interaction"*= other/self interaction

-Roles= developmentally, "play" comes first and is the process of taking on a role [p. 245]; people "play" at being someone/something else.

-Communication= interaction calls forward different parts of the self (Mead discusses the link between language and social interaction, p. 244)

-You can't have a self that's raised in isolation, you NEED that interaction; the self is social because it's based on interaction

-Mead defines the self as an entity AND an experience

-Reflexivity= the ability of the subject to be an object to herself; we can tell we have a self because a self is an object in itself (this makes us uniquely human)

-Through language we are able to treat our self as an object

-Mead makes the distinction between "I" and "Me" [p. 250]

-*"I"*= the subject; the actor

-*"Me"*= the object; the observed

### III. Dr. Brush discussed a few FAQ

a. What is the difference between "consciousness" and "selfhood"?

-*"Consciousness"*= awareness of the external environment **or of internal states such as cognitions, emotions, kinesthetic/body sense, agency**

-*"Selfhood"*= as a human, awareness of yourself (cognitions, emotions, etc.); agency

-The connection= if you are aware of yourself and treating yourself as an object, you are self-

conscious; you can be aware of things separate from yourself AND as yourself as an object (the "I" and "Me" distinction)

- "Me" = formulates a plan and is then acted UPON; the things that we perceive afterwards; the object of the forces of the external world; the object of expectations in communication and interaction

- "I" = DOES the action; is in the moment

- The self is "Me" and being conscious of it is the "I"

b. How can the self be both reflexive AND unified?

- The distinction between "Me" and "I" is comparable to the "split-subject" of psychoanalysis, which we will discuss when we have read Freud

- Reflexivity is only possible through social conduct AND when we are interacting we are creating the social order

- What Mead proposes is dialectical because the 2 things call one another into being

- This is similar to Hegel and Marx in that 2 things are related in a dialectical relationship

c. More on the "role"

- The "role" has 2 main applications in Social Science

1. Dramaturgical = based on the metaphor of society as theater

- Social organization comes about when people learn their boundaries

- This limits people's actions and the outcome of social processes

2. Structural = based on the metaphor of society as architecture, complete with foundations and glass ceilings

- Where you are relative to others; "are you on the top of the pyramid or the bottom?"

- Structural location determines who you are and what you're doing (very Marxist!); roles are the sets of behaviors and attitudes associated with different functional positions in society