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Q1(c)

Do you think T and Me are central terms in Mead's work

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- Do you think 'I' and 'Me' are central terms in Mead's work?
- Keep the answer within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

- **Yes:** I and Me are central in Mead.

Me is the organised attitudes of others, the self as object.

I is the unpredictable response that allows novelty.

Play, game, and **generalised other** form the Me.

Blumer's interactionism inherits the pair.

Introduction

Yes. George Herbert Mead's 'I' and 'Me' are central because they name how the self is both a social object and a spontaneous actor. Without them, his social behaviourism collapses into a one-way mirror of society.

Body**The Me**

- The Me is the organised set of attitudes of others that the individual assumes.
- It is the self as object, formed in play, the game, and the **generalised other**.
- Charles Horton Cooley's looking-glass is a cousin, but Mead stresses taking the role of the other in interaction.

The I

- **The I** is the response of the organism to the Me, never fully predictable.
- It is the source of novelty, impulse, and moral innovation.

Why they are central

- Mind, self, and society are one process. Language is the medium.
- **Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism rests on this duality:** structure in the Me, agency in **the I**.

Limit

- The pair underplays material class and unconscious desire. It remains central for interactionist sociology.

Flow diagram

Generalised other -> Me social object
Me social object -> I novel response novel response
I novel response -> Interaction
Interaction -> Generalised other

Conclusion

'I' and 'Me' are central terms. They explain how society enters the self and how the self can still surprise. Mead's work is unintelligible without that pair.

Facts & figures

Mind, Self and Society

Posthumous Mead lectures where I and Me are systematically stated.

Generalised other

The organised community whose attitudes become the Me.

The I

The novel response to the Me; source of emergence.

Blumer

Named symbolic interactionism on Mead's foundations.

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