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Q2(a)

According to Mead, "We play a key role in our own socialization."

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 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

- According to **Mead**, "We play a key role in our own socialization."
- Keep the discussion within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

- **Mead**: the self arises in communication; play and the game build the **generalised other**.

The "I" and the "Me" make socialisation two-sided.

Cooley and Goffman support the active looking-glass and performance.

Oakley shows gender scripts that are still negotiated.

Class, caste, and media limit equal role-taking.

Introduction

George Herbert **Mead** treated the self as a social process, not as a ready soul. Socialisation is not a stamp on clay. The person takes the role of the other, answers, and so helps to make the self that society also makes. That is the key role.

Body**Self as process**

- In Mind, Self and Society, the self arises in communication. Gestures become significant symbols when they mean the same to self and other.
- The "I" is the spontaneous response. The "Me" is the organised set of attitudes of others that one assumes.
- **Play and the game are stages**: first one role, then the organised team. The **generalised other** is the community's standpoint.

Why we are not only products

- Charles Horton **Cooley**'s looking-glass self already made imagination of others' view central. **Mead** made it a theory of action.
- The child does not merely copy. She tries roles, fails, and adjusts. Agency sits inside the "I".
- Erving Goffman later showed performance and saving face. That is still **Mead**'s active participant, now on a staged encounter.

Socialisation as joint work

- Family, school, and peer group supply the others. The person selects, resists, and recombines those voices.

- Ann **Oakley** showed gender is taught as work and identity. Girls and boys still negotiate the script, which is **Mead**'s point against a pure mould.
- Indian illustrations include the bilingual child who switches caste-polite and school-English selves, and NFHS talk on decision-making inside households.

Limits

- **Mead** underplayed class, caste, and the state as unequal others. Pierre Bourdieu's habitus is heavier than an equal conversation.
- Sigmund Freud's unconscious is not **Mead**'s "I". Structural constraint can drown role-taking.
- Media and algorithms now supply generalised others that no neighbourhood assembled.

Assessment of the sentence

- The sentence is right against a one-way filling of the child.
- It is incomplete if "we" means a free chooser outside institutions.

Flow diagram

Significant others -> Me
I spontaneous spontaneous -> Self
Me -> Self
Game generalised other -> Me
Self -> Socialisation as joint

Conclusion

Mead's claim is that socialisation is role-taking in which the "I" answers the "Me". We help to write the self that others also write. **Oakley** and Goffman extend the activity. Class and caste show that not every player holds the same script.

Facts & figures

Mead

Self as process of taking the role of the other; I and Me in internal conversation.

Generalised other

The organised community whose attitudes the person assumes in the game stage.

Cooley

Looking-glass self: we imagine how we appear to others and feel accordingly.

Oakley

Gender socialisation as taught work and identity, not a natural unfolding.