

needs and the behaviour of its members is shaped to meet these needs. Rather than creating the social world in which he lives, man is seen as a creation of the system. Thus David Walsh argues that Parsons treats human action 'as determined by the characteristics of the system per se'. By means of socialization man is programmed in terms of the norms and values of the social system. He is kept on the straight and narrow by mechanisms of social control which exist to fulfill the requirements of the system. His actions are structured in terms of social roles which are designed to meet the functional prerequisites of society. Man is pictured as an automaton, programmed, directed and controlled by the system. Walsh rejects this view of man. Arguing from a phenomenological perspective, he claims that man actively constructs his own social world rather than being shaped by a social system which is somehow external to his being. Walsh maintains that the concept of a social system represents a 'reification' of the social world. Functionalists have converted social reality into a natural system external to social actors. In doing so they have translated the social world into something that it is not. They have tended to portray the social system as the active agent whereas, in reality, only human beings act.

Critics of functionalism have argued that it tends to ignore coercion and conflict. For example, Alvin Gouldner states, 'While stressing the importance of the ends and values that men pursue, Parsons never asks whose ends and values these are. Are they pursuing their own ends or those imposed upon them by others?' Few functionalists give serious consideration to the possibility that some groups in society, acting in terms of their own particular interests, dominate others. From this point of view social order is imposed by the powerful and value consensus is merely a legitimation of the position of the dominant group. In his criticism of one of Parsons's major works - *The Social System* - David Lockwood argues that Parsons's approach is 'highly selective in its focus on the role of the normative order in the stabilization of social systems'. In focusing on the contribution of norms and values to social order Parsons largely fails to recognize the conflicts of interest which tend to produce instability and disorder. Lockwood argues that since all social systems involve competition for scarce resources, conflicts of interest are built into society. Conflict is not simply a minor strain in the system which is contained by value consensus. Instead it is a central and integral part of the system itself. Lockwood's view of society is strongly influenced by Marxian theory which forms the subject of the following section.

Marxism :

Marx regards man as both the producer and the product of society. Man makes society and himself by his own actions. History is therefore the process of man's self-creation. Yet man is also a product of society. He is shaped by the social relationships and systems of thought which he creates. An understanding of society therefore involves an historical perspective which examines the process whereby man both produces and is produced by social reality. A society forms a totality and can only be understood as such. The various parts of society are interconnected and influence each other. Thus economic, political, legal and religious institutions can only be understood in terms of their mutual effect. Economic factors, however, exert the primary influence and largely shape other

aspects of society. The history of history society is a process of tension and conflict. Social change is not a smooth, orderly progression which gradually unfolds in harmonious evolution. Instead it proceeds from contradictions built into society which are a source of tension and ultimately the source of open conflict and radical change.

It is often argued that Marx's view of history is based on the idea of the dialectic. From this viewpoint any process of change involves tension between incompatible forces. Dialectical movement therefore represents a struggle of opposites, a conflict of contradictions. Conflict provides the dynamic principle, the source of change. The struggle between incompatible forces grows in intensity until there is a final collision. The result is a sudden leap forward which creates a new set of forces on a higher level of development. The dialectical process then begins again as the contradictions between this new set of forces interact and conflict, and propel change. The idea of dialectical change was developed by the German philosopher Hegel. He applied it to the history of human society and in particular to the realm of ideas. Hegel saw historical change as a dialectical movement of men's ideas and thoughts. He believed that society is essentially an expression of these thoughts. Thus in terms of the dialectic, conflict between incompatible ideas produces new concepts which provide the basis for social change. Marx rejects the priority Hegel gives to thoughts and ideas. He argues that the source of change lies in contradictions in the economic system in particular and in society in general. As a result of the priority he gives to economic factors, to 'material life', Marx's view of history is often referred to as 'dialectical materialism'. Since men's ideas are primarily a reflection of the social relationships of economic production, they do not provide the main source of change. It is in contradictions and conflict in the economic system that the major dynamic for social change lies. Since all parts of society are interconnected, however, it is only through a process of interplay between these parts that change occurs.

History begins when men actually produce their means of subsistence, when they begin to control nature. At a minimum this involves the production of food and shelter. Marx argues that, 'The first historical act is, therefore, the production of material life'. Production is a social enterprise since it requires cooperation. Men must work together to produce the goods and services necessarily for life. From the social relationships involved in production develops a 'mode of life' which can be seen as an expression of these relationships. This mode of life shapes man's nature. In Marx's words, 'As individuals express their life so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, with what they produce and how they produce it'. Thus the nature of man and the nature of society as a whole derive primarily from the production of material life.

The major contradictions which propel change are found in the economic infrastructure of society. At the dawn of human history, when man supposedly lived in a state of primitive communism, those contradictions did not exist. The forces of production and the products of labour were communally owned. Since each member of society produced both for himself and for society as a whole, there were no conflicts of interest between individuals and groups. However, with the emergence of private property, and in particular, private ownership of the forces of production, the fundamental contradiction of human society was created. Through its ownership of the

forces of production, a minority is able to control command and enjoy the fruits of the labour of the majority. Since one group gains at the expense of the other, a conflict of interest exists between the minority who own the forces of production and the majority who perform productive labour. The tension and conflict generated by this contradiction is the major dynamic of social change.

For long periods of history, men are largely unaware of the contradictions which beset their societies. This is because man's consciousness, his view of reality, is largely shaped by the social relationships involved in the process of production. Marx maintains that, 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary their social being determines their consciousness'. The primary aspect of man's social being is the social relationships he enters into for the production of material life. Since these relationships are largely reproduced in terms of ideas, concepts, laws and religious beliefs, they are seen as normal and natural. Thus when the law legitimizes the rights of private property, when religious beliefs justify economic arrangements and the dominant concepts of the age define them as natural and inevitable, men will be largely unaware of the contradictions they contain. In this way the contradictions within the economic infrastructure are compounded by the contradiction between man's consciousness and objective reality. This consciousness is false. It presents a distorted picture of reality since it fails to reveal the basic conflicts of interest which exist in the world which man has created. For long periods of time man is at most vaguely aware of these contradictions, yet even a vague awareness produces tension. This tension will ultimately find full expression and be resolved in the process of dialectical change.

The course of human history involves a progressive development of the forces of production, a steady increase in man's control over nature. This is paralleled by a corresponding increase in man's alienation, an increase which reaches its height in capitalist society. Alienation is a situation in which the creations of man appear to him as alien objects. They are seen as independent from their creator and invested with the power to control him. Man creates his own society but will remain alienated until he recognizes himself within his creation. Until that time he will assign an independent existence to objects, ideas and institutions and be controlled by them. In the process he loses himself, he becomes a stranger in the world he has created, he becomes alienated. Religion provides an example of man's alienation. In Marx's view, 'Man makes religion, religion does not make man'. However, members of society fail to recognize that religion is of their own making. They assign to the gods an independent power, a power in religion, the more he loses himself. In Marx's words, 'The more man puts into God, the less he retains of himself'. In assigning his own powers to supernatural beings, man becomes alienated from himself. Religion appears as an external force controlling man's destiny whereas, in reality, it is man-made. Religion, though, is a reflection of a more fundamental source of alienation. It is essentially a projection of the social relationships involved in the process of production. If man is to find himself and abolish the illusions of religion, he must 'abandon a condition which requires illusions'. He must therefore eradicate the source of alienation in the economic infrastructure.

In Marx's view, productive labour is the primary, most vital human activity. In the production of objects man 'objectifies' himself, he expresses and externalizes his being. If the objects of man's creation come to control his being, then man loses himself in the object. The act of production then results in man's alienation. This occurs when man regards the products of his labour as commodities, as articles for sale in the market place. The objects of his creation are then seen to control his existence. They are seen to be subject to impersonal forces, such as the law of supply and demand, over which man has little or no control. In Marx's words, 'the object that labour produces, its product, confronts it as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer'. In this way man is estranged from the object he produces, he becomes alienated from the most vital human activity, productive labour.

Alienation reaches its height in capitalist society where labour is dominated by the requirements of capital, the most important of which is the demand for profit. These requirements determine levels of employment and wages, the nature and quantity of goods produced and their method of manufacture. The worker sees himself as a prisoner of market forces over which he has no control. He is subject to the impersonal mechanisms of the law of supply and demand. He is at the mercy of the periodic booms and slumps which characteristic capitalist economies. The worker therefore loses control over the objects he produces and becomes alienated from his product and the act of production. His work becomes a means to an end, a means of obtaining money to buy the goods and services necessary for his existence. Unable to fulfill his being in the products of his labour, the worker becomes alienated from himself in the act of production. Therefore the more the worker produces, the more he loses himself. In Marx's words, 'the greater this product the less he is himself'.

In Marx's view, the market forces which are seen to control production are not impersonal mechanisms beyond the control of man, they are man-made. Alienation is therefore the result of human activity rather than external forces with an existence independent of man. If the products of labour are alien to the worker, they must therefore belong to somebody. Thus Marx argues that, 'The alien being to whom the labour and the product of the labour belongs, whom the labour serves and who enjoys its product, can only be man himself. If the product of labour does not belong to the worker but stands over against him as an alien power, this is only possible in that it belongs to another man apart from the worker'. This man is the capitalist who owns and controls the forces of production and the products of labour, who appropriates for himself the wealth that labour produces. Alienation therefore springs not from impersonal market forces but from relationships between men. An end to alienation thus involves a radical change in the pattern of these relationships. This will come when the contradiction between man's consciousness and objective reality is resolved. Then man will realize that the situation in which he finds himself is man-made and therefore subject to change by human action.

Given the priority Marx assigns to economic factors, an end to alienation involves a radical change in the economic infrastructure. In particular, it requires the abolition of private property and its replacement by communal ownership of the forces of production that is the replacement of capitalism by communism. Marx saw communism as 'the

positive abolition of private property and thus of human self-alienation and therefore the real re-appropriation of the human essence by and for man. This is communism as the complete and conscious return of man himself as a social that is human being'. In communist society conflicts of interest will disappear and antagonistic groups such as capitalists and workers will be a thing of the past. The products of labour will no longer be appropriated by some at the expense of others. With divisions in society eradicated; man will be at one with his fellows, a truly social being. As such he will not lose himself in the products of his labour. He will produce both for himself and others at one and the same time. In this situation 'each of us would have doubly affirmed himself and his fellow man'. Since he is at one with his fellows, the products of man's labour in which he objectifies himself will not result in the loss of self. In productive labour each member of society contributes to the well-being of all and so expresses both his individual and social being. The objects which he produces are owned and controlled at once by himself and his fellow man.

In Marx's view man is essentially a social being. He writes that, 'society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of inter-relations, the relations within which these individuals stand'. An understanding of human history therefore involves an examination of these relationships, the most important of which are the relations of production. Apart from the communities based on primitive communism at the dawn of history, all societies are divided into social groups known as classes. The relationship between classes is one of antagonism and conflict. Throughout history opposing classes have stood in 'constant opposition to one another, carried on an interrupted, now hidden, now open fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of contending classes'. Class conflict forms the basis of the dialectic of social change. In Marx's view, 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggle'.

Class divisions result from the differing relationships of members of society to the forces of production. The structure of all societies may be represented in terms of a simplified two class model consisting of a ruling and subject class. The ruling class owes its dominance and power to its ownership and control of the forces of production. The subjection and relative powerlessness of the subject class is due to its lack of ownership and therefore lack of control of the forces of production. The conflict of interest between the two classes stems from the fact that productive labour is performed by the subject class yet a large part of the wealth so produced is appropriated by the ruling class. Since one class gains at the expense of another, the interests of their members are incompatible. The classes stand opposed as exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed.

The labour of the subject class takes on the character of 'forced labour'. Since its members lack the necessary means to produce for themselves they are forced to work for others. Thus during the feudal era, landless serfs were forced to work for the landowning nobility in order to gain a livelihood. In the capitalist era, the means necessary to produce goods – tools, machinery, raw materials and so on – are owned by the capitalist class. In order to exist, members of the proletariat are forced to sell their labour power in

return for wages. Ownership of the forces of production therefore provides the basis for ruling class dominance and control of labour.

Members of both social classes are largely unaware of the true nature of their situation, of the reality of the relationship between ruling and subject classes. Members of the ruling class assume that their particular interests are those of society as a whole, members of the subject class accept this view of reality and regard their situation as part of the natural order of things. This false consciousness is due to the fact that the relationships of dominance and subordination in the economic infrastructure are largely reproduced in the superstructure of society. In Marx's words, the relations of production constitute 'the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life'. Ruling class dominance is confirmed and legitimated in legal statutes, religious proscriptions and political legislation. The consciousness of all members of society is infused with ruling class ideology which proclaims the essential rightness, normality and inevitability of the status quo.

While the superstructure may stabilize society and contain its contradictions over long periods of time, this situation cannot be permanent. The fundamental contradictions of class societies will eventually find expression and will finally be resolved by the dialectic of historical change. A radical change in the structure of society occurs when a class is transformed from a 'class in itself' to a 'class for itself'. A class in itself refers to members of society who share the same objective relationships to the forces of production. Thus, as wage labourers, members of the proletariat form a class in itself. However, a class only becomes a class for itself when its members are fully conscious of the true nature of their situation, when they are fully aware of their common interests and common enemy, when they realize that only by concerted action can they overthrow their oppressors, and when they unite and take positive, practical steps to do so. When a class becomes a class for itself, the contradiction between the consciousness of its members and the reality of their situation is ended.

A class becomes a class for itself when the forces of production have developed to the point where they cannot be contained within the existing relations of production. In Marx's words, 'For an oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself, it is essential that the existing forces of production and the existing social relations should be incapable of standing side by side'. Revolutionary change requires that the forces of production on which the new order will be based have developed in the old society. Therefore the 'new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society'. This process may be illustrated by the transition from feudal to capitalist society. Industrial capitalism gradually developed within the framework of feudal society. In order to develop fully, it required, 'the free wage labourer who sells his labour-power to capital'. This provides a mobile labour force which can be hired and fired at will and so efficiently utilized as a commodity in the service of capital. However, the feudal relations of production, which involved 'landed property with serf labour chained to it', tended to prevent the

development of wage labourers. Eventually the forces of production of capitalism gained sufficient strength and impetus to lead to the destruction of the feudal system. At this point the rising class, the bourgeoisie, became a class for itself and its members united to overthrow the feudal relations of production. When they succeeded the contradiction between the new forces of production and the old relations of production was resolved.

Once a new economic order is established, the superstructure of the previous era is rapidly transformed. The contradiction between the new infrastructure and the old superstructure is now ended. Thus the political dominance of the feudal aristocracy was replaced by the power of the newly enfranchised bourgeoisie. The dominant concepts of feudalism such as loyalty and honour were replaced by the new concepts of freedom and equality. In terms of the new ideology the wage labourer of capitalist society is free to sell his labour power to the highest bidder. The relationship between employer and employee is defined as a relationship between equals, the exchange of labour for wages as an exchange of equivalents. But the resolution of old contradictions does not necessarily mean an end to contradictions in society. As in previous eras, the transition from feudalism to capitalism merely results in the replacement of an old set of contradictions by a new.

The predicted rise of the proletariat is not strictly analogous with the rise of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie formed a privileged minority of industrialists, merchants and financiers who forged new forces of production within feudal society. The proletariat forms an unprivileged majority which does not create new forces of production within capitalist society. Marx believed, however, that the contradictions of capitalism were sufficient to transform the proletariat into a class for itself and bring about the downfall of the bourgeoisie. He saw the magnitude of these contradictions and the intensity of class conflict steadily increasing as capitalism developed. Thus there is a steady polarization of the two major classes as the intermediate strata are submerged into the proletariat. As capital accumulates, it is concentrated more and more into fewer hands, a process accompanied by the relative pauperization of the proletariat. Production assumes an increasingly social and cooperative character as larger and larger groups of workers are concentrated in factories. At the same time the wealth produced by labour is appropriated by fewer and fewer individuals as greater competition drives all but the larger companies out of business. Such processes magnify and illuminate the contradictions of capitalism and increase the intensity of conflict. It is only a matter of time before members of the proletariat recognize that the reality of their situation is the alienation of labour. This awareness will lead the proletariat to 'a revolt to which it is forced by the contradiction between its humanity and its situation, which is an open, clear and absolute negation of its humanity'.

The communist society which Marx predicted would arise from the ruins of capitalism will begin with a transitional phase, 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. Once the communist system has been fully established, the reason for being of the dictatorship and therefore its existence will end. Bourgeois society represents 'the closing chapter of the prehistoric stage of human society'. The communist society of the new era is without

classes, without contradictions. The dialectical principle now ceases to operate. The contradictions of human history have now been negated in a final harmonious synthesis.

Judging from the constant reinterpretations, impassioned defenses and vehement criticisms of Marx's work, his ideas are as alive and relevant today as they ever were. Many of his critics have argued that history has failed to substantiate Marx's views on the direction of social change. Thus they claim that class conflict, far from growing in intensity, has become institutionalized in advanced capitalist society. They see little indication of the proletariat becoming a class for itself. Rather than a polarization of classes, they argue that the class structure of capitalist society has become increasingly complex and differentiated. In particular, a steadily growing middle class has emerged between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Turning to communist society, critics have argued that history has not borne out the promise of communism contained in Marx's writings. Significant social inequalities are present in communist regimes and there are few, if any, signs of a movement towards equality. The dictatorship of the proletariat cling stubbornly to power and there is little indication of its eventual disappearance. Particular criticism has been directed towards the priority that Marx assigns to economic factors in his explanation of social structure and social change.

Max Weber's study of ascetic Protestantism argued that religious beliefs provided the ethics, attitudes and motivations for the development of capitalism. Since ascetic Protestantism preceded the advent of capitalism, Webber maintained that at certain times and places aspects of the superstructure can play a primary role in directing change. The priority given to economic factors has also been criticized by elite theorists who have argued that control of the machinery of government rather than ownership of the forces of production provides the basis for power. They point to the example of communist societies where, despite the fact that the forces of production are communally owned, power is largely monopolized by political and bureaucratic elite.

Critics have often rejected Marxism on this basis though they admit that the charge of economic determination is more applicable to certain of Marx's followers than to Marx himself. It is possible to select numerous quotations from Marx's writings which support the views of his critics. In terms of these quotations, history can be presented as a mechanical process directed by economic forces which follow 'iron laws'. Man is compelled to act in terms of the constraints imposed by the economy and passively responds to impersonal forces rather than actively constructing his own history. Thus the proletariat is 'compelled' by its economic situation to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The contradictions in the capitalist infrastructure will inevitably result in its destruction. The superstructure is 'determined' by the infrastructure and man's consciousness is shaped by economic forces independent of his will and beyond his control. In this way Marx can be presented as a crude positivist who sees causation solely in terms of economic forces.

On closer examination, however, Marx's writings prove more subtle and less dogmatic than many of his critics have suggested. Marx rejects a simplistic, one:directional view of causation. Although he gives priority to economic factors, they form only one aspect of the dialectic of history. From this perspective the economy is the primary but not the sole determinant of social change. The idea of the dialectic involves

interplay between the various parts of society. It rejects the view of unidirectional causation proceeding solely from economic factors. Instead it argues that the various parts of society are interrelated in terms of their mutual effect. Marx described the economic infrastructure as the 'ultimately determinant element in history'. Yet he added that, 'if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract and senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructurealso exert their influence upon the course of the historical struggle and in many cases preponderate in determining their form'. Thus the various aspects of the superstructure have a certain degree of autonomy and parts to play in influencing the course of history. They are not automatically and mechanically determined by the infrastructure.

Marx consistently argued that 'man makes his own history'. The history of human society is not the product of impersonal forces; it is the result of man's purposive activity. In Marx's view, 'It is not "history" which uses men as a means of achieving - as if it were an individual person - its own ends. History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends'. Since men make society only men can change society. Radical change results from a combination of consciousness of reality and direct action. Thus members of the proletariat must be fully aware of their situation and take active steps in order to change it. Although a successful revolution depends ultimately on the economic situation, it requires human initiative. Men must make their own utopia.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism, usually referred to as interactionism in the main part of the text, is a distinctly American branch of sociology. It developed from the work of a group of American philosophers who included John Dewey, William I. Thomas and George Herbert Mead. It is sometimes described as a phenomenological perspective because of its emphasis on the actor's views and interpretations is concerned with 'the "inner" or phenomenological aspects of history behaviour'. However, it developed separately from the phenomenological tradition in European philosophy and differs in certain respects from sociological perspectives which are more closely linked to that tradition. Of the various philosophers who contributed to the growth of symbolic interactionism, George Herbert Mead is usually regarded as the major figure.

GEORGE HERBERT MEAD (1863:1931).

In Mead's view, human thought, experience and conduct are essentially social. They owe their nature to the fact that human beings interact in terms of symbols, the most important of which are contained in language. A symbol does not simply stand for an object or event: it defines them in a particular way and indicates a response to them. Thus the symbol 'chair' not only represents a class of objects and defines them as similar; it also indicates a line of action that is the action of sitting. Symbols impose particular meanings on objects and events and in doing so largely exclude other possible meanings. For example, chairs may be made out of metal, cane or wood on this basis be defined as very

different objects. However such differences are rendered insignificant by the fact that they are all categorized in terms of the symbol 'chair'. Similarly, chairs can be stood on, used as a source of fuel or as a means for assaulting another but the range of possible activities that could be associated with chairs is largely excluded by the course of action indicated by the symbol 'chair'. Symbols provide the means whereby man can interact meaningfully with his natural and social environment. They are man-made and refer not to the intrinsic nature of objects and events but to the ways in which men perceive them.

Without symbols there would be no human interaction and no human sociology. Symbolic interaction is necessary since man has no instincts to direct his behaviour. He is not genetically programmed to react automatically to particular stimuli. In order to survive he must therefore construct and live within a world of meaning. For example he must classify the natural environment into categories of food and non-food in order to meet basic nutritional requirements. In this way men both define stimuli and their response to them. Thus when hunters on the African savannah categorize antelope as a source of food, they define what is significant in the natural environment and their response to it. Via symbols, meaning is imposed on the world of nature and human interaction with that world is thereby made possible.

Social life can only proceed if the meanings of symbols are largely shared by members of society. If this were not the case meaningful communication would be impossible. However, common symbols provide only the means by which human interaction can be accomplished. In order for interaction to proceed each person involved must interpret the meanings and intentions of others. This is made possible by the existence of common symbols, but actually accomplished by means of a process which Mead terms 'role-taking'. The process of role-taking involves the individual taking on the role of another by imaginatively placing himself in the position of the person with whom he is interacting. For example, if he observes another smiling, crying waving his hand or shaking his fist, he will put himself in that person's position in order to interpret his intention and meaning. On the basis of this interpretation he will make his response to the action of the other. Thus if he observes someone shaking his fist, he may interpret this gesture as an indication of aggression but his interpretation will not automatically lead to a particular response. He may ignore the gesture, respond in kind, and attempt to defuse the situation with a joke and so on. The person with whom he is interacting will then take his role, interpret his response and either continue or close the interaction on the basis of this interpretation. In this respect human interaction can be seen as a continuous process of interpretation with each taking the role of the other.

Mead argues that through the process of role-taking the individual develops a concept of 'self'. By placing himself in the position of others he is able to look back upon himself. Mead claims that the idea of a self can only develop if the individual can 'get outside himself (experientially) in such a way as to become an object to himself'. To do this he must observe himself from the standpoint of others. Therefore the origin and development of a concept of self lies in the ability to take the role of another. The notion of self is not inborn, it is learned during childhood. Mead sees two main stages in its development. The first, known as the 'play stage', involves the child playing roles which

are not his own. For example the child may play at being mother or father, a doctor or a nurse. In doing so he becomes aware that there is a difference between himself and the role that he is playing. Thus the idea of a self is developed as the child takes the role of make-believe other. The second stage in the development of self is known as the 'game stage'. In playing a game, the child comes to see himself from the perspective of the various participants. In order to play a game such as football or cricket, the child must become aware of his relationship to the other players. He must place himself in their roles in order to appreciate his particular role in the game. In doing so he sees himself in terms of the collective viewpoint of the other players. In Mead's terminology he sees himself from the perspective of 'the generalized other'.

In Mead's view, the development of a consciousness of self is an essential part of the process of becoming a human being. It provides the basis for thought and action and the foundation for human society. Without an awareness of self, the individual could not direct action or respond to the actions of others. Only by acquiring a concept of self can the individual take the role of self. In this way thought is possible since in Mead's view, the process of thinking is simply an 'inner conversation'. Thus unless the individual is aware of a self, he would be unable to converse with himself and thought would be impossible. By becoming 'self-conscious', he can direct his own action by thought and deliberation. He can set goals for himself, plan future action and consider the consequences of alternative courses of action. With an awareness of self, the individual is able to see himself as others see him. When he takes the role of others, he observes himself from that standpoint and becomes aware of the views of himself that others hold. This provides the basis for cooperative action in society. The individual will become aware of what is expected of him and will tend to modify his actions accordingly. He will be conscious of the general attitudes of the community and judge and evaluate himself in terms of this generalized other. From this perspective thought becomes 'an inner conversation going on between this generalized other and the individual'. Thus a person is constantly asking what will people think and expect when he reflects upon himself. In this way conduct is regulated in terms of the expectations and attitudes of others. Mead argues that, 'It is in the form of the generalized other that the social process influences the behaviour of the individuals involved in it....that the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members'.

Mead's view of human interaction sees man as both actively creating the social environment and being shaped by it. The individual initiates and directs his own action while at the same time being influenced by the attitudes and expectations of others in the form of the generalized other. The individual and society are regarded as inseparable for the individual can only become a human being in a social context. In this context he develops a sense of self which is a prerequisite for thought. He learns to take the roles of others which is essential both for the development of self and for cooperative action. Without communication in terms of symbols whose meanings are shared, these processes would not be possible. Man therefore lives in a world of symbols which give meaning and significance to life and provide the basis for human interaction.