

MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY

could have arisen, other than through the internalization by the individual of social processes of experience and behavior, that is, through this internalization of the conversation of significant gestures, as made possible by the individual's taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward what is being thought about. And if mind or thought has arisen in this way, then there neither can be nor could have been any mind or thought without language; and the early stages of the development of language must have been prior to the development of mind or thought.

25. THE "I" AND THE "ME" AS PHASES OF THE SELF¹⁹

We come now to the position of the self-conscious self or mind in the community. Such a self finds its expression in self-assertion, or in the devotion of itself to the cause of the community. The self appears as a new type of individual in the social whole. There is a new social whole because of the appearance of the type of individual mind I have described, and because of the self with its own assertion of itself or its own identification with the community. The self is the important phase in the development because it is in the possibility of the importation of this social attitude into the responses of the whole community that such a society could arise. The change that takes place through this importation of the conversation of gestures into the conduct of the individual is one that takes place in the experience of all of the component individuals.

These, of course, are not the only changes that take place in the community. In speech definite changes take place that nobody is aware of at all. It requires the investigation of scientists to discover that such processes have taken place. This is also true of other phases of human organization. They change, we say, unconsciously, as is illustrated in such a study of the myth as Wundt has carried out in his *Völkerpsychologie*. The myth

¹⁹ [See also "The Definition of the Psychical," *University of Chicago Decennial Publications*, 1903, pp. 104 ff.; "The Mechanism of Social Consciousness," *Journal of Philosophy*, IX (1912), 401 ff.; "The Social Self," *ibid.*, X (1913), 374 ff.]

THE SELF

carries an account of the way in which organization has taken place while largely without any conscious direction—and that sort of change is going on all the time. Take a person's attitude toward a new fashion. It may at first be one of objection. After a while he gets to the point of thinking of himself in this changed fashion, noticing the clothes in the window and seeing himself in them. The change has taken place in him without his being aware of it. There is, then, a process by means of which the individual in interaction with others inevitably becomes like others in doing the same thing, without that process appearing in what we term consciousness. We become conscious of the process when we do definitely take the attitude of the others, and this situation must be distinguished from the previous one. Perhaps one says that he does not care to dress in a certain fashion, but prefers to be different; then he is taking the attitude of others toward himself into his own conduct. When an ant from another nest is introduced into the nest of other forms, these turn on it and tear it to pieces. The attitude in the human community may be that of the individual himself, refusing to submit himself because he does take that common attitude. The ant case is an entirely external affair, but in the human individual it is a matter of taking the attitudes of the others and adjusting one's self or fighting it out. It is this recognition of the individual as a self in the process of using his self-consciousness which gives him the attitude of self-assertion or the attitude of devotion to the community. He has become, then, a definite self. In such a case of self-assertion there is an entirely different situation from that of the member of the pack who perhaps dominates it, and may turn savagely on different members of it. There an individual is just acting instinctively, we say, in a certain situation. In the human society we have an individual who not only takes his own attitude but takes the attitude in a certain sense of his subjects; in so far as he is dominating he knows what to expect. When that occurs in the experience of the individual a different response results with different emotional accompaniments, from that in the case of

MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY

the leader of the pack. In the latter case there is simple anger or hostility, and in the other case there is the experience of the self asserting itself consciously over against other selves, with the sense of power, of domination. In general, when the community reaction has been imported into the individual there is a new value in experience and a new order of response.

We have discussed the self from the point of view of the "I" and the "me," the "me" representing that group of attitudes which stands for others in the community, especially that organized group of responses which we have detailed in discussing the game on the one hand and social institutions on the other. In these situations there is a certain organized group of attitudes which answer to any social act on the part of the individual organism. In any co-operative process, such as the family, the individual calls out a response from the other members of the group. Now, to the extent that those responses can be called out in the individual so that he can answer to them, we have both those contents which go to make up the self, the "other" and the "I." The distinction expresses itself in our experience in what we call the recognition of others and the recognition of ourselves in the others. We cannot realize ourselves except in so far as we can recognize the other in his relationship to us. It is as he takes the attitude of the other that the individual is able to realize himself as a self.

We are referring, of course, to a social situation as distinct from such bare organic responses as reflexes of the organism, some of which we have already discussed, as in the case where a person adjusts himself unconsciously to those about him. In such an experience there is no self-consciousness. One attains self-consciousness only as he takes, or finds himself stimulated to take, the attitude of the other. Then he is in a position of reacting in himself to that attitude of the other. Suppose we find ourselves in an economic situation. It is when we take the attitude of the other in making an offer to us that we can express ourselves in accepting or declining such an offer. That is a different response of the self from a distinctly automatic offering

THE SELF

that can take place without self-consciousness. A small boy thrusts an advertising bill into our hand and we take it without any definite consciousness of him or of ourselves. Our thought may be elsewhere but the process still goes on. The same thing is true, of course, in the care of infants. Young children experience that which comes to them, they adjust themselves to it in an immediate fashion, without there being present in their experience a self.

When a self does appear it always involves an experience of another; there could not be an experience of a self simply by itself. The plant or the lower animal reacts to its environment, but there is no experience of a self. When a self does appear in experience it appears over against the other, and we have been delineating the condition under which this other does appear in the experience of the human animal, namely in the presence of that sort of stimulation in the co-operative activity which arouses in the individual himself the same response it arouses in the other. When the response of the other becomes an essential part in the experience or conduct of the individual; when taking the attitude of the other becomes an essential part in his behavior—then the individual appears in his own experience as a self; and until this happens he does not appear as a self.

Rational society, of course, is not limited to any specific set of individuals. Any person who is rational can become a part of it. The attitude of the community toward our own response is imported into ourselves in terms of the meaning of what we are doing. This occurs in its widest extent in universal discourse, in the reply which the rational world makes to our remark. The meaning is as universal as the community; it is necessarily involved in the rational character of that community; it is the response that the world made up of rational beings inevitably makes to our own statement. We both get the object and ourselves into experience in terms of such a process; the other appears in our own experience in so far as we do take such an organized and generalized attitude.

If one meets a person on the street whom he fails to recognize,

MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY

one's reaction toward him is that toward any other who is a member of the same community. He is the other, the organized, generalized other, if you like. One takes his attitude over against one's self. If he turns in one direction one is to go in another direction. One has his response as an attitude within himself. It is having that attitude within himself that makes it possible for one to be a self. That involves something beyond the mere turning to the right, as we say, instinctively, without self-consciousness. To have self-consciousness one must have the attitude of the other in one's own organism as controlling the thing that he is going to do. What appears in the immediate experience of one's self in taking that attitude is what we term the "me." It is that self which is able to maintain itself in the community, that is recognized in the community in so far as it recognizes the others. Such is the phase of the self which I have referred to as that of the "me."

Over against the "me" is the "I." The individual not only has rights, but he has duties; he is not only a citizen, a member of the community, but he is one who reacts to this community and in his reaction to it, as we have seen in the conversation of gestures, changes it. The "I" is the response of the individual to the attitude of the community as this appears in his own experience. His response to that organized attitude in turn changes it. As we have pointed out, this is a change which is not present in his own experience until after it takes place. The "I" appears in our experience in memory. It is only after we have acted that we know what we have done; it is only after we have spoken that we know what we have said. The adjustment to that organized world which is present in our own nature is one that represents the "me" and is constantly there. But if the response to it is a response which is of the nature of the conversation of gestures, if it creates a situation which is in some sense novel, if one puts up his side of the case, asserts himself over against others and insists that they take a different attitude toward himself, then there is something important occurring that is not previously present in experience.

THE SELF

The general conditions under which one is going to act may be present in one's experience, but he is as ignorant of just how he is going to respond as is the scientist of the particular hypothesis he will evolve out of the consideration of a problem. Such and such things are happening that are contrary to the theory that has been held. How are they to be explained? Take the discovery that a gram of radium would keep a pot of water boiling, and seemingly lead to no expenditure of energy. Here something is happening that runs contrary to the theory of physics up to the conception of radium activity. The scientist who has these facts before him has to pick out some explanation. He suggests that the radium atom is breaking down, and is consequently setting free energy. On the previous theory an atom was a permanent affair out of which one could not get energy. But now if it is assumed that the atom itself is a system involving an interrelationship of energies, then the breaking down of such a system sets free what is relatively an enormous amount of energy. The point I am making is that the idea of the scientist comes to him, it is not as yet there in his own mind. His mind, rather, is the process of the appearance of that idea. A person asserting his rights on a certain occasion has rehearsed the situation in his own mind; he has reacted toward the community and when the situation arises he arouses himself and says something already in his mind. But when he said it to himself in the first place he did not know what he was going to say. He then said something that was novel to himself, just as the scientist's hypothesis is a novelty when it flashes upon him.

Such a novel reply to the social situation involved in the organized set of attitudes constitutes the "I" as over against the "me." The "me" is a conventional, habitual individual. It is always there. It has to have those habits, those responses which everybody has; otherwise the individual could not be a member of the community. But an individual is constantly reacting to such an organized community in the way of expressing himself, not necessarily asserting himself in the offensive sense but expressing himself, being himself in such a co-operative process as

MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY

belongs to any community. The attitudes involved are gathered from the group, but the individual in whom they are organized has the opportunity of giving them an expression which perhaps has never taken place before.

This brings out the general question as to whether anything novel can appear.²⁰ Practically, of course, the novel is constantly happening and the recognition of this gets its expression in more general terms in the concept of emergence. Emergence involves a reorganization, but the reorganization brings in something that was not there before. The first time oxygen and hydrogen come together, water appears. Now water is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, but water was not there before in the separate elements. The conception of emergence is a concept which recent philosophy has made much of. If you look at the world simply from the point of view of a mathematical equation in which there is absolute equality of the different sides, then, of course, there is no novelty. The world is simply a satisfaction of that equation. Put in any values for X and Y and the same equation holds. The equations do hold, it is true, but in their holding something else in fact arises that was not there before. For instance, there is a group of individuals that have to work together. In a society there must be a set of common organized habits of response found in all, but the way in which individuals act under specific circumstances gives rise to all of the individual differences which characterize the different persons. The fact that they have to act in a certain common fashion does not deprive them of originality. The common language is there, but a different use of it is made in every new contact between persons; the element of novelty in the reconstruction takes place through the reaction of the individuals to the group to which they belong. That reconstruction is no more given in advance than is the particular hypothesis which the scientist brings forward given in the statement of the problem. Now, it is that reaction of the individual to the organized "me," the "me" that is in a certain sense simply a member of the

²⁰ [Cf. *The Philosophy of the Act*, Part III.]

THE SELF

community, which represents the "I" in the experience of the self.

The relative values of the "me" and the "I" depend very much on the situation. If one is maintaining his property in the community, it is of primary importance that he is a member of that community, for it is his taking of the attitude of the others that guarantees to him the recognition of his own rights. To be a "me" under those circumstances is the important thing. It gives him his position, gives him the dignity of being a member in the community, it is the source of his emotional response to the values that belong to him as a member of the community. It is the basis for his entering into the experience of others.

At times it is the response of the ego or "I" to a situation, the way in which one expresses himself, that brings to one a feeling of prime importance. One now asserts himself against a certain situation, and the emphasis is on the response. The demand is freedom from conventions, from given laws. Of course, such a situation is only possible where the individual appeals, so to speak, from a narrow and restricted community to a larger one, that is, larger in the logical sense of having rights which are not so restricted. One appeals from fixed conventions which no longer have any meaning to a community in which the rights shall be publicly recognized, and one appeals to others on the assumption that there is a group of organized others that answer to one's own appeal—even if the appeal be made to posterity. In that case there is the attitude of the "I" as over against the "me."

Both aspects of the "I" and "me" are essential to the self in its full expression. One must take the attitude of the others in a group in order to belong to a community; he has to employ that outer social world taken within himself in order to carry on thought. It is through his relationship to others in that community, because of the rational social processes that obtain in that community, that he has being as a citizen. On the other hand, the individual is constantly reacting to the social attitudes, and changing in this co-operative process the very com-

MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY

munity to which he belongs. Those changes may be humble and trivial ones. One may not have anything to say, although he takes a long time to say it. And yet a certain amount of adjustment and readjustment takes place. We speak of a person as a conventional individual; his ideas are exactly the same as those of his neighbors; he is hardly more than a "me" under the circumstances; his adjustments are only the slight adjustments that take place, as we say, unconsciously. Over against that there is the person who has a definite personality, who replies to the organized attitude in a way which makes a significant difference. With such a person it is the "I" that is the more important phase of the experience. Those two constantly appearing phases are the important phases in the self.²¹

26. THE REALIZATION OF THE SELF IN THE SOCIAL SITUATION

There is still one phase in the development of the self that needs to be presented in more detail: the realization of the self in the social situation in which it arises.

I have argued that the self appears in experience essentially as a "me" with the organization of the community to which it belongs. This organization is, of course, expressed in the particular endowment and particular social situation of the individual. He is a member of the community, but he is a particular part of the community, with a particular heredity and position which distinguishes him from anybody else. He is what he is in so far as he is a member of this community, and the raw materials out of which this particular individual is born would not be a self but for his relationship to others in the community of which he is a part. Thus is he aware of himself as such, and

²¹ Psychologists deal as a rule with the processes which are involved in what we term perception," but have very largely left out of account the character of the self. It has been largely through the pathologist that the importance of the self has entered into psychology. Dissociations have centered attention on the self, and have shown how absolutely fundamental is this social character of the mind. That which constitutes the personality lies in this sort of give-and-take between members in a group that engage in a co-operative process. It is this activity that has led to the humanly intelligent animal.