

# Essentials of Sociology

A DOWN-TO-EARTH APPROACH

SIXTH EDITION

James M. Henslin

Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville



Boston New York San Francisco 2006

Mexico City Montreal Toronto London Madrid Munich Paris

Hong Kong Singapore Tokyo Cape Town Sydney

Chapter

# 3

## Socialization



Jacob Lawrence, *Men Exist for the Sake of One Another, Teach Them Then or Bear With Them*, 1958

**t**he old man was horrified when he found out. Life had never been good since his daughter lost her hearing when she was just two years old. She couldn't even talk—just fluttered her hands around trying to tell him things. Over the years, he had gotten used to that. But now . . . he shuddered at the thought of her being pregnant. No one would be willing to marry her; he knew that. And the neighbors, their tongues would never stop wagging. Everywhere he went, he could hear people talking behind his back.

If only his wife were still alive, maybe she could come up with something. What should he do? He couldn't just kick his daughter out into the street.

After the baby was born, the old man tried to shake his feelings, but they wouldn't let loose. Isabelle was a pretty name, but every time he looked at the baby, he felt sick to his stomach.

He hated doing it, but there was no way out. His daughter and her baby would have to live in the attic.

**Her behavior toward strangers, especially men, was almost that of a wild animal, manifesting much fear and hostility.**

Unfortunately, this is a true story. Isabelle was discovered in Ohio in 1938 when she was about 6½ years old, living in a dark room with her deaf-mute mother. Isabelle couldn't talk, but she did use gestures to communicate with her mother. An inadequate diet and lack of sunshine had given Isabelle a disease called rickets. Her legs

were so bowed that as she stood erect the soles of her shoes came nearly flat together, and she got about with a skittering gait. Her behavior toward strangers, especially men, was almost that of a wild animal, manifesting much fear and hostility. In lieu of speech she made only a strange croaking sound. (Davis 1940/2005:138–139)

When the newspapers reported this case, sociologist Kingsley Davis decided to find out what had happened to Isabelle. We'll come back to that later, but first let's use the case of Isabelle to gain insight into what human nature is.

## Chapter Outline

### WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE?

- Feral Children
- Isolated Children
- Institutionalized Children
- Deprived Animals

### SOCIALIZATION INTO THE SELF, MIND, AND EMOTIONS

- Cooley and the Looking-Glass Self
- Mead and Role-Taking
- Piaget and the Development of Reasoning
- Global Aspects of the Self and Reasoning
- Freud and the Development of Personality
- Socialization and Emotions
- Society Within Us: The Self and Emotions as Social Control

### SOCIALIZATION INTO GENDER

- Gender Messages in the Family
- Gender Messages from Peers
- Gender Messages in the Mass Media

### AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

- The Family
- The Neighborhood
- Religion
- Day Care
- The School and Peer Groups
- The Workplace

### RESOCIALIZATION

- Total Institutions

### SOCIALIZATION THROUGH THE LIFE COURSE

- Childhood
- Adolescence
- Young Adulthood
- The Middle Years
- The Older Years

### ARE WE PRISONERS OF SOCIALIZATION?

## SUMMARY AND REVIEW

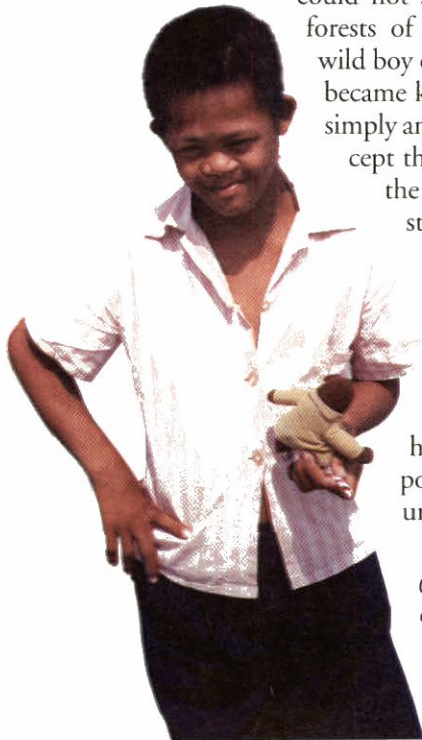
## What Is Human Nature?

**F**or centuries, people have been intrigued by the question of what is human about human nature. How much of people's characteristics comes from "nature" (heredity) and how much from "nurture" (the **social environment**, contact with others)? One way to answer this question is to study identical twins who have been reared apart. See the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page for a fascinating account of identical twins. Another way is to study children who have had little human contact. Let's consider such children.

### Feral Children

Over the centuries, people have occasionally found children living in the woods. Supposedly, these children could not speak; they bit, scratched, growled, and walked on all fours. They drank by lapping water, ate grass, tore ravenously at meat, and showed an insensitivity to pain and cold. These stories sound like exaggerations, and it is easy to dismiss them as a type of folk myth.

Because of what happened in 1798, however, we can't be so sure. In that year, a child who walked on all fours and could not speak was found in the forests of Aveyron, France. "The wild boy of Aveyron," as this child became known, would have been simply another of those stories, except that French scientists took the child to a laboratory and studied him. Like the earlier informal reports, this child, too, gave no indication of feeling the cold. Most startling, though, the boy would growl when he saw a small animal, pounce on it, and devour it uncooked. Even today, the



*One of the reasons I went to Cambodia was to interview a feral child—the boy shown here—who supposedly had been raised by monkeys. When I arrived at the remote location where the boy was living, I was disappointed to find that the story was only partially true. During its reign of terror, the Khmer Rouge had shot and killed the boy's parents, leaving him, at about the age of two, abandoned on an island. Some months later, villagers found him in the care of monkeys. They shot the female monkey who was carrying the boy. Not quite a feral child—but the closest I'll ever come to one.*

scientists' detailed reports make fascinating reading (Itard 1962).

Ever since I read Itard's account of this boy, I've been fascinated by feral children, especially the seemingly fantastic possibility that animals could rear human children. In 2002, I received a private report that a feral child had been found in the jungles of Cambodia. When I had the opportunity the following year to visit the child and interview his caregivers, I grabbed it. The boy's photo is on this page.

If animals really have raised children, the sociological question is: If we were untouched by society, would we be like feral children? By nature, would our behavior be like that of wild animals?

### Isolated Children

Reports of isolated children are more recent and well documented. What can they tell us about human nature? We can first conclude that humans have no natural language, for Isabelle and others like her are unable to speak.

But maybe Isabelle was mentally impaired. This is what people first thought, for she scored practically zero on an intelligence test. But after a few months of intensive language training, Isabelle was able to speak in short sentences. In about a year, she could write a few words, do simple addition, and retell stories after hearing them. Seven months later, she had a vocabulary of almost 2,000 words. It took only two years for Isabelle to reach the intellectual level that is normal for her age. She then went on to school, where she was "bright, cheerful, energetic . . . and participated in all school activities as normally as other children" (Davis 1940/2005:139).

### Institutionalized Children

Other than language, what else is required for a child to develop into what we consider a healthy, balanced, intelligent human being? We find part of the answer in an intriguing experiment from the 1930s. Back then, life was short, and orphanages dotted the United States. Children reared in orphanages often had difficulty establishing close bonds with others—and they tended to have lower IQs. "Common sense" (which we noted in Chapter 1 is

## DOWN-TO-EARTH SOCIOLOGY

## Heredity or Environment? The Case of Oskar and Jack, Identical Twins

IDENTICAL TWINS SHARE EXACT GENETIC heredity. One fertilized egg divides to produce two embryos. If heredity determines personality—or attitudes, temperament, skills, and intelligence—then identical twins should be identical not only in their looks but also in these characteristics.

The fascinating case of Jack and Oskar helps us to unravel this mystery. From their experience, we can see the far-reaching effects of the environment—how social experiences override biology.

Jack Yufe and Oskar Stohr are identical twins born in 1932 to a Jewish father and a Catholic mother. They were separated as babies after their parents divorced. Oskar was reared in Czechoslovakia by his mother's mother, who was a strict Catholic. When Oskar was a toddler, Hitler annexed this area of Czechoslovakia, and Oskar learned to love Hitler and to hate Jews. He joined the Hitler Youth (a sort of Boy Scout organization, except that this one was designed to instill the "virtues" of patriotism, loyalty, obedience—and hatred).

Jack's upbringing was in almost total contrast to Oskar's. Reared in Trinidad by his father, he learned loyalty to Jews and hatred of Hitler and the Nazis. After the war, Jack and his father moved to Israel. At the age of 17, Jack joined a kibbutz; he later served in the Israeli army.

In 1954, the two brothers met. It was a short meeting, and Jack had been warned not to tell Oskar that they were Jews. Twenty-five years later, in 1979,



*The question of the relative influence of heredity and the environment on human behavior has fascinated and plagued researchers. Identical twins reared apart provide an opportunity to examine this relationship. However, almost all identical twins, including these girls, are reared together, frustrating efforts to separate heredity and environment.*

when they were 47 years old, social scientists at the University of Minnesota brought them together again. These researchers figured that because Jack and Oskar had the same genes, any differences they showed would have to be due to the environment—to their different social experiences.

Not only did Oskar and Jack hold different attitudes toward the war, Hitler, and Jews, but also their basic orientations

to life were different. In their politics, Oskar was conservative, while Jack was more liberal. Oskar enjoyed leisure, while Jack was a workaholic. And as you can predict, Jack was very proud of being a Jew. Oskar, who by this time knew that he was a Jew, wouldn't even mention it.

That would seem to settle the matter. But there was another side. The researchers also found that Oskar and Jack had both excelled at sports as children but had difficulty with math. They also had the same rate of speech, and both liked sweet liqueur and spicy foods. Strangely, both flushed the toilet both before and after using it and enjoyed startling people by sneezing in crowded elevators.

### FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Heredity or environment? How much influence does each one have? The question is not yet settled, but at this point, it seems fair to conclude that the *limits* of certain physical and mental abilities are established by heredity (such as ability at sports and mathematics), while such basic orientations to life as attitudes are the result of the environment. We can put it this way: For some parts of life, the blueprint is drawn by heredity; but even here, the environment can redraw those lines. For other parts, the individual is a blank slate, and it is up to the environment to determine what is written on that slate.

Sources: Based on Begley 1979; Chen 1979; Wright 1995; Reed 2001.

unreliable) told everyone that the cause of mental retardation is biological ("They're just born that way"). Two psychologists, H. M. Skeels and H. B. Dye (1939), however, began to suspect another cause. For background on their experiment, Skeels (1966) provides this account of a

"good" orphanage in Iowa during the 1930s, where he and Dye were consultants:

*Until about six months, they were cared for in the infant nursery. The babies were kept in standard hospital cribs*

*that often had protective sheeting on the sides, thus effectively limiting visual stimulation; no toys or other objects were hung in the infants' line of vision. Human interactions were limited to busy nurses who, with the speed born of practice and necessity, changed diapers or bedding, bathed and medicated the infants, and fed them efficiently with propped bottles.*

Perhaps, thought Skeels and Dye, the absence of stimulating social interaction was the problem, not some biological incapacity on the part of the children. To test their controversial idea, they selected thirteen infants whose mental retardation was so obvious that no one wanted to adopt them. They placed them in an institution for the mentally retarded. Each infant, then about 19 months old, was assigned to a separate ward of women ranging in mental age from 5 to 12 and in chronological age from 18 to 50. The women were pleased with this arrangement. They not only did a good job taking care of the infants' basic physical needs—diapering, feeding, and so on—but also loved to play with the children, to cuddle them, and to shower them with attention. They even competed to see which ward would have “its baby” walking or talking first. Each child had one woman who became

*particularly attached to him [or her] and figuratively “adopted” him [or her]. As a consequence, an intense one-to-one adult-child relationship developed, which was supplemented by the less intense but frequent interactions with the other adults in the environment. Each child had some one person with whom he [or she] was identified and who was particularly interested in him [or her] and his [or her] achievements. (Skeels 1966)*

The researchers left a control group of twelve infants at the orphanage. These infants were also retarded but were higher in intelligence than the other thirteen. They received the usual care. Two and a half years later, Skeels and Dye tested all the children's intelligence. Their findings were startling: Those assigned to the retarded women had gained an average of 28 IQ points, while those who remained in the orphanage had lost 30 points.

What happened after these children were grown? Did these initial differences matter? Twenty-one years later, Skeels and Dye did a follow-up study. Those in the control group who had remained in the orphanage had, on average, less than a third grade education. Four still lived in state institutions, while the others held low-level jobs. Only two had married. In contrast, the average level of ed-

ucation for the thirteen individuals in the experimental group was twelve grades (about normal for that period). Five had completed one or more years of college. One had even gone to graduate school. Eleven had married. All thirteen were self-supporting or were homemakers (Skeels 1966). Apparently, then, one characteristic that we take for granted as being a basic “human” trait—high intelligence—depends on early close relations with other humans.

Let's consider one other case, the story of Genie:

*In 1970, California authorities found Genie, a 13-year-old girl who had been kept locked in a small room and tied to a chair since she was 20 months old. Apparently her 70-year-old father hated children, and had probably caused the death of two of Genie's siblings. Her 50-year-old mother was partially blind and was frightened of her husband. Genie could not speak, did not know how to chew, and was unable to stand upright. On intelligence tests, she scored at the level of a 1-year-old. After intensive training, Genie learned to walk and use simple sentences (although they were garbled). As she grew up, her language remained primitive, she took anyone's property if it appealed to her, and she went to the bathroom wherever she wanted. At the age of 21, Genie went to live in a home for adults who cannot live alone. (Pines 1981)*

From Genie's pathetic story, we can conclude that not only intelligence but also the ability to establish close bonds with others depends on early interaction. In addition, there is apparently a period prior to age 13 in which language and human bonding must occur for humans to develop high intelligence and the ability to be sociable and follow social norms.

## Deprived Animals

Finally, let's consider animals that have been deprived of normal interaction. In a series of experiments with rhesus monkeys, psychologists Harry and Margaret Harlow demonstrated the importance of early learning. The Harlows (1962) raised baby monkeys in isolation. They gave each monkey two artificial mothers, shown in the photograph on the next page. One “mother” was only a wire frame with a wooden head, but it did have a nipple from which the baby could nurse. The frame of the other “mother,” which had no bottle, was covered with soft terry-cloth. To obtain food, the baby monkeys nursed at the wire frame.



Like humans, monkeys need interaction to thrive. Those raised in isolation are unable to interact satisfactorily with other monkeys. In this photograph, we see one of the monkeys described in the text. Purposefully frightened by the experimenter, the monkey has taken refuge in the soft terrycloth draped over an artificial "mother."

When the Harlows (1965) frightened the babies with a mechanical bear or dog, the monkeys did not run to the wire frame "mother." Instead, they would cling pathetically to their terrycloth "mother." The Harlows concluded that infant-mother bonding is due not to feeding but, rather, to what they termed "intimate physical contact." To most of us, this phrase means cuddling.

In one of their many experiments, the Harlows isolated baby monkeys for different lengths of time. They found that when monkeys were isolated for shorter periods (about three months), they were able to overcome the effects of their isolation. Those isolated for six months or more, however, were unable to adjust to normal monkey life. They could not play or engage in pretend fights, and the other monkeys rejected them. In other words, the longer the isolation, the more difficult it is to overcome its effects. In addition, a critical learning stage may exist: If that stage is missed, it may be impossible to compensate for what has been lost. This may have been the case with Genie.

Because humans are not monkeys, we must be careful about extrapolating from animal studies to human behavior. The Harlow experiments, however, support what we know about children who are reared in isolation.

## IN SUM

Society makes us human. Apparently, babies do not "naturally" develop into human adults. Although their bodies grow, if children are reared in isolation, they become little more than big animals. Without the concepts that language provides, they can't experience or even grasp relationships between people (the "connections" we call brother, sister, parent, friend, teacher, and so on). And without warm, friendly interaction, they aren't "friendly" in the accepted sense of the term; nor do they cooperate with others. In short, it is through human contact that people learn to be members of the human community. This process by which we learn the ways of society (or of particular groups), called **socialization**, is what sociologists have in mind when they say "Society makes us human."

## Socialization into the Self, Mind, and Emotions

**A**t birth, we have no idea that we are a separate being. We don't even know that we are a he or a she. How do we develop a **self**, the picture that we have of how others see us, our image of who we are?

### Cooley and the Looking-Glass Self

Back in the 1800s, Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929), a symbolic interactionist who taught at the University of Michigan, concluded that this unique aspect of "humaneness" is socially created; that is, *our sense of self develops from interaction with others*. Cooley (1902) coined the term **looking-glass self** to describe the process by which our sense of self develops. He summarized this idea in the following couplet:

*Each to each a looking-glass  
Reflects the other that doth pass.*

The looking-glass self contains three elements:

1. *We imagine how we appear to those around us.* For example, we may think that others see us as witty or dull.

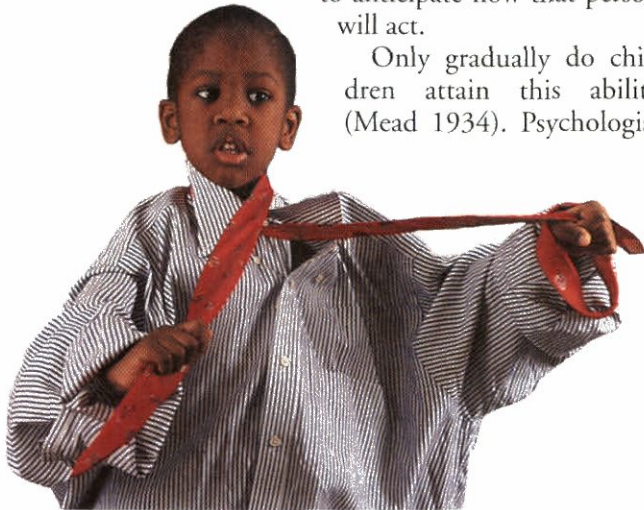
2. *We interpret others' reactions.* We come to conclusions about how others evaluate us. Do they like us for being witty? Do they dislike us for being dull?
3. *We develop a self-concept.* How we interpret others' reactions to us gives us feelings and ideas about ourselves. A favorable reflection in this *social mirror* leads to a positive self-concept; a negative reflection leads to a negative self-concept.

Note that the development of the self does *not* depend on accurate evaluations. Even if we grossly misinterpret how others think about us, those misjudgments become part of our self-concept. Note also *that although the self-concept begins in childhood, its development is an ongoing, life-long process.* The three steps of the looking-glass self are part of our everyday lives: As we monitor how other people react to us, we continually modify the self. The self, then, is never a finished product but is always in process, even into old age.

## Mead and Role-Taking

Another symbolic interactionist, George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), who taught at the University of Chicago, added that play is crucial to the development of the self. In play, children learn to **take the role of the other**, that is, to put themselves in someone else's shoes—to understand how someone else feels and thinks and to anticipate how that person will act.

Only gradually do children attain this ability (Mead 1934). Psychologist



*Mead analyzed taking the role of the other as an essential part of learning to be a full-fledged member of society. At first, we are able to take the role only of significant others, as this child is doing. Later we develop the capacity to take the role of the generalized other, which is essential not only for extended cooperation but also for the control of antisocial desires.*

John Flavel (1968) asked 8- and 14-year-olds to explain a board game to some children who were blindfolded and to others who were not. The 14-year-olds gave more detailed instructions to those who were blindfolded, but the 8-year-olds gave the same instructions to everyone. The younger children could not yet take the role of the other, while the older children could.

As they develop this ability, at first children are able to take only the role of **significant others**, individuals who significantly influence their lives, such as parents or siblings. By assuming their roles during play, such as by dressing up in their parents' clothing, children cultivate the ability to put themselves in the place of significant others.

As the self gradually develops, children internalize the expectations of more and more people. The ability to take roles eventually extends to being able to take the role of "the group as a whole." Mead used the term **generalized other** to refer to this, our perception of how people in general think of us.

To take the role of others is essential if we are to become cooperative members of human groups—whether they be our family, friends, or co-workers. This ability allows us to modify our behavior by anticipating how others will react—something Genie never learned.

Learning to take the role of the other goes through three stages (see Figure 3.1):

**Figure 3.1** How We Learn to Take the Role of the Other: Mead's Three Stages



1. *Imitation.* Children under age 3 can only mimic others. They do not yet have a sense of self separate from others, and they can only imitate people's gestures and words. (This stage is actually not role taking, but it prepares the child for it.)
2. *Play.* From the age of about 3 to 6, children pretend to take the roles of specific people. They might pretend that they are a firefighter, a wrestler, Supergirl, Xena, Spiderman, and so on. They also like costumes at this stage and enjoy dressing up in their parents'





To help his students understand the term generalized other, Mead used baseball as an illustration. Why are team sports and organized games such excellent examples to use in explaining this concept?

clothing or tying a towel around their neck to “become” Spiderman or Wonder Woman.

3. *Games.* This third stage, organized play, or team games, begins roughly with the early school years. The significance for the self is that to play these games, the individual must be able to take multiple roles. One of Mead’s favorite examples was that of a baseball game, in which each player must be able to take the role of all the other players. To play baseball, the child must not only know his or her own role but also be able to anticipate who will do what when the ball is hit or thrown.

Mead also said there were two parts to the self: the “I” and the “me.” The “I” is the self as subject, the active, spontaneous, creative part of the self. In contrast, the “me” is the self as object. It is made up of the attitudes we internalize from our interactions with others. Mead chose these pronouns because in English, “I” is the active agent, as in “I shoved him,” while “me” is the object of action, as in “He shoved me.” Mead stressed that we are not passive in the socialization process. We are not like robots, passively absorbing the responses of others. Rather, our “I” is active. It evaluates the reactions of others and organizes them into a unified whole.

Mead also drew a conclusion that some find startling: *Not only the self but also the human mind is a social product.* Mead stressed that we cannot think without symbols. But where do these symbols come from? Only from society,

which gives us our symbols by giving us language. If society did not provide the symbols, we would not be able to think and thus would not possess what we call the mind. Mind, then, like language, is a product of society.

## Piaget and the Development of Reasoning

An essential part of being human is our ability to reason. How do we learn this skill?

This question intrigued Jean Piaget (1896–1980), a Swiss psychologist, who noticed that young children give similar wrong answers on intelligence tests. He thought that younger children might be using some sort of incorrect rule to figure out their answers. Perhaps children go through a natural process as they learn how to reason (Piaget 1950, 1954; Flavel et al. 2002).

After years of testing, Piaget concluded that children go through four stages as they develop the ability to reason. (If you mentally substitute “reasoning skills” for the term *operational* in the following explanations, Piaget’s findings will be easier to understand.)

1. **The sensorimotor stage** (from birth to about age 2) During this stage, understanding is limited to direct contact with the environment—sucking, touching, listening, looking. Infants do not think, in any sense that we understand. For example, they cannot recognize cause and effect.
2. **The preoperational stage** (from about age 2 to age 7) During this stage, children *develop the ability to use symbols*. They do not yet understand common concepts, however, such as size, speed, or causation. Although they can count, they do not really understand what numbers mean. Nor do they yet have the ability to take the role of the other. Piaget asked preoperational children to describe a clay model of a mountain range. They did just fine. But when he asked them to describe how the mountain range looked from where another child was sitting, they couldn’t do it. They could only repeat what they saw from their view.
3. **The concrete operational stage** (from the age of about 7 to 12) Although reasoning abilities are more developed, they remain *concrete*. Children can now understand numbers, causation, and speed, and they are able to take the role of the other and to participate in team games. Without concrete examples, however, they are unable to talk about concepts such as truth, honesty, or justice. They can explain why Jane’s answer was a lie, but they cannot describe what truth itself is.

4. **The formal operational stage** (after the age of about 12) Children are now capable of abstract thinking. They can talk about concepts, come to conclusions based on general principles, and use rules to solve abstract problems. During this stage, children are likely to become young philosophers (Kagan 1984). If shown a photo of a slave, for example, a child at the concrete operational stage might have said, “That’s wrong!” However, a child at the formal operational stage is more likely to ask, “If our country was founded on equality, how could people have owned slaves?”

## Global Aspects of the Self and Reasoning

Cooley’s conclusions about the looking-glass self appear to be universal. So do Mead’s conclusions about role taking and the mind as a social product, although researchers are finding that the self may develop earlier than Mead indicated. The stages of reasoning that Piaget identified are also probably universal, but researchers have found that the ages at which individuals enter the stages differ from one person to another and that the stages are not as distinct from one another as Piaget concluded (Flavel et al. 2002). Even during the sensorimotor stage, children show early signs of reasoning, which may indicate an innate ability that is wired into the brain. Although Piaget’s theory is being refined, his contribution remains: *A basic structure underlies the way we develop reasoning, and children all over the world begin with the concrete and move to the abstract.*

Interestingly, some people seem to get stuck in the concreteness of the third stage and never reach the fourth stage of abstract thinking (Kohlberg and Gilligan 1971; Case and Okamoto 1996). College, for example, nurtures the fourth stage, and most people without this experience apparently have less ability for abstract thought. Social experiences, then, can modify these stages. Also, there is much that we don’t yet know about how culture influences the way we think, a topic explored in the Cultural Diversity box on the next page.

## Freud and the Development of Personality

Along with the development of our mind and the self comes the development of our personality. A theory of the origin of personality that has had a major impact on Western thought was developed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Freud was a physician in Vienna in the early 1900s who founded *psychoanalysis*, a technique for treating

emotional problems through long-term, intensive exploration of the subconscious mind. Let’s look at his theory.

Freud believed that personality consists of three elements. Each child is born with the first, an **id**, Freud’s term for inborn drives that cause us to seek self-gratification. The id of the newborn is evident in its cries of hunger or pain. The pleasure-seeking id operates throughout life. It demands the immediate fulfillment of basic needs: attention, safety, food, sex, and so on.

The id’s drive for immediate gratification, however, runs into a roadblock: primarily the needs of other people, especially those of the parents. To adapt to these constraints, a second component of the personality emerges, which Freud called the ego. The **ego** is the balancing force between the id and the demands of society that suppress it. The ego also serves to balance the id and the **superego**, the third component of the personality, more commonly called the *conscience*.

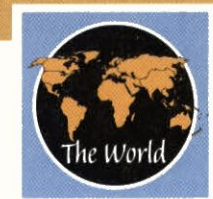
The superego represents *culture within us*, the norms and values we have internalized from our social groups. As the *moral* component of the personality, the superego provokes feelings of guilt or shame when we break social rules or pride and self-satisfaction when we follow them.

According to Freud, when the id gets out of hand, we follow our desires for pleasure and break society’s norms. When the superego gets out of hand, we become overly rigid in following those norms, finding ourselves bound in a straitjacket of rules that inhibit our lives. The ego, the balancing force, tries to prevent either the superego or the id from dominating. In the emotionally healthy individual, the ego succeeds in balancing these conflicting demands of the id and the superego. In the maladjusted individual, however, the ego cannot control the inherent conflict between the id and the superego, and the result is internal confusion and problem behaviors.

**Sociological Evaluation** Sociologists appreciate Freud’s emphasis on socialization—that the social group into which we are born transmits norms and values that restrain our biological drives. Sociologists, however, object to the view that inborn and subconscious motivations are the primary reasons for human behavior. *This denies the central principle of sociology:* that factors such as social class (income, education, and occupation) and people’s roles in groups underlie their behavior (Epstein 1988; Bush and Simmons 1990).

Feminist sociologists have been especially critical of Freud. Although what we just summarized applies to both females and males, Freud assumed that what is “male” is “normal.” He even said that females are inferior, castrated

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY around the WORLD



### Do You See What I See?: Eastern and Western Ways of Perceiving and Thinking

**W**hich two of these items go together: a panda, a monkey, and a banana? Please answer before you read further.

You probably said the panda and the monkey. Both are animals, while the banana is a fruit. This is logical. At least, this is the logic of Westerners, and it is difficult for us to see how the answer could be anything else. Someone from Japan, however, is likely to reply that the monkey and the banana go together.

Why? Whereas Westerners typically see categories (animals and fruit), Asians typically see relationships (monkeys eat bananas).

In one study, Japanese and U.S. students were shown a picture of an aquarium that contained one big, fast-moving fish and several smaller fish, along with plants, a rock, and bubbles. Later, when the students

were asked what they had seen, the Japanese students were 60 percent more likely to remember background elements. They also referred more to relationships, such as the "the little pink fish was in front of the blue rock."

The students were also shown ninety-six objects and asked which of them had been in the picture. The Japanese students did much better at remembering when the object was shown in its original surroundings. The U.S. students, by contrast, had never noticed the background.

Westerners pay more attention to the focal object, in this case the fish, while Asians are more attuned to the overall surroundings. The implications of this difference run deep: Easterners attribute less causation to actors and more to context, while Westerners minimize the context and place greater emphasis on individual actors.

Differences in how Westerners and Easterners perceive and think are just being uncovered. We know practically nothing about how these differences originate. Because these initial findings challenge basic assumptions that everyone around the world perceives and thinks alike, this should prove to be a fascinating area of research.

#### FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

In our global village, differences in perception and thinking can be crucial. Consider a crisis between the United States and North Korea. How might Easterners and Westerners see the matter differently? How might they attribute cause differently and, without knowing it, "talk past one another"?

Source: Based on Nisbett 2003.



males (Chodorow 1990; Gerhard 2000). It is obvious that sociologists need to research how we develop personality.

### Socialization and Emotions

Emotions, too, are essential for what we become, and sociologists have recently begun to research this area of our "humanness." They find that emotions are also not simply the results of biology but, like the mind, depend on socialization (Hochschild 1975, 1983; Reiser 1999; Turner 2000). This may sound strange. Don't all people get angry? Doesn't everyone cry? Don't we all feel guilt, shame, sadness, happiness, fear? What has socialization to do with emotions?

**Global Emotions** At first, it may look as though socialization is not relevant. Paul Ekman (1980), an anthro-

pologist, studied emotions in several countries. He concluded that everyone experiences six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise—and we all show the same facial expressions when we feel these emotions. A person from Zimbabwe, for example, could tell from just the look on an American's face that she is angry, disgusted, or fearful, and we could tell from the Zimbabwean's face that he is happy, sad, or surprised. Because we all show the same facial expressions when we experience these six emotions, Ekman concluded that they are built into us biologically, "a product of our genes."

**Expressing Emotions** The existence of universal facial expressions for these basic emotions does *not* mean that socialization has no effect on how we express them. Facial expressions are only one way in which we show emotions. Other ways vary with gender. For example, U.S.



Sports are a powerful agent of socialization. That sumo wrestling teaches a form of masculinity should be apparent from this photo. What else do you think these boys are learning?

women are allowed to express their emotions more freely, while U.S. men are expected to be more reserved. To express sudden happiness or a delightful surprise, for example, women are allowed to make “squeals of glee” in public places. Men are not. Such an expression would be a fundamental violation of their gender role.

Then there are culture, social class, and relationships. Consider culture. Two close Japanese friends who meet after a long separation don't shake hands or hug—they bow. Two Arab men will kiss. Social class is also significant, for it cuts across many other lines, even gender. Upon seeing a friend after a long absence, upper-class women and men are likely to be more reserved in expressing their delight than are lower-class women and men. Relationships also make a big difference. We express our emotions more openly if we are with close friends, more guardedly if we are at a staff meeting with the corporate CEO. A good part of childhood socialization centers on learning these “norms of emotion,” how to express our emotions in a variety of settings.

**What We Feel** The matter goes deeper than this. Socialization not only leads to different ways of expressing emotions but even affects *what* we feel (Clark 1997; Shields

2002). People in one culture may learn to experience feelings that are unknown in another culture. For example, the Ifaluk, who live on the Western Caroline Islands of Micronesia, use the word *fago* to refer to the feelings they have when they see someone suffer. This comes close to what we call *sympathy* or *compassion*. But the Ifaluk also use this term to refer to what they feel when they are with someone who has high status, someone they highly respect or admire (Kagan 1984). To us, these are two distinct emotions, and they require separate terms.

**Research Needed** Although Ekman identified only six basic emotions that are universal in feeling and facial expression, I suspect that other emotions are common to people around the world—and that everyone shows similar facial expressions when they experience them. I suggest that feelings of helplessness, despair, confusion, and shock are among these universal emotions. We need cross-cultural research to find out whether this is so. We also need research into how children learn to feel and express emotions.

## Society Within Us: The Self and Emotions as Social Control

Much of our socialization is intended to turn us into conforming members of society. Socialization into the self and emotions is an essential part of this process, for both the self and our emotions mold our behavior. Although we like to think that we are “free,” consider for a moment just some of the factors that influence how we act: the expectations of our friends and parents, neighbors and teachers; classroom norms and college rules; city, federal, and state laws. For example, if in a moment of intense frustration or out of a devilish desire to shock people, you wanted to tear off your clothes and run naked down the street, what would stop you?

The answer is your socialization—*society within you*. Your experiences in society have resulted in a self that thinks along certain lines and feels particular emotions. This helps to keep you in line. Thoughts such as “Would I get kicked out of school?” and “What would my friends (parents) think if they found out?” represent an awareness of the self in relationship to others. So does the desire to avoid feelings of shame and embarrassment. Our *social mirror*, then—the result of being socialized into a self and emotions—sets up effective controls over our behavior. In fact, socialization into self and emotions is so effective that some people feel embarrassed just thinking about running nude in public!

## IN SUM

Socialization is essential for our development as human beings. From interaction with others, we learn how to think, reason, and feel. The net result is to shape our behavior—including our thinking and emotions—according to cultural standards. This is what sociologists mean when they refer to *society within us*.

## Socialization into Gender

To channel our behavior, society also uses **gender socialization**. By expecting different attitudes and behaviors from us *because* we are male or female, the human group nudges boys and girls in separate directions in life. This foundation of contrasting attitudes and behaviors is so thorough that as adults, most of us act, think, and even feel according to our culture's guidelines of what is appropriate for our sex.

How do we learn gender messages? The significance of gender in social life is emphasized throughout this book, with a special focus in Chapter 10. For now, though, let's consider the influence of just the family and the mass media.

### Gender Messages in the Family

Our parents are the first significant others who teach us our part in this symbolic division of the world. Their own gender orientations have become so firmly embedded that they do most of this teaching without even being aware of what they are doing. This is illustrated by a classic study done by psychologists Susan Goldberg and Michael Lewis (1969), whose results have been confirmed by other researchers (Fagot et al. 1985; Connors 1996).

*Goldberg and Lewis asked mothers to bring their 6-month-old infants into their laboratory, supposedly to observe the infants' development. Covertly, however, these researchers also observed the mothers. They found that the mothers kept their daughters closer to them. They also touched their daughters more and spoke to them more frequently than they did to their sons.*

*By the time the children were 13 months old, the girls stayed closer to their mothers during play, and*

*they returned to their mothers sooner and more often than the boys did. When Goldberg and Lewis set up a barrier to separate the children from their mothers, who were holding toys, the girls were more likely to cry and motion for help; the boys were more likely to try to climb over the barrier. Goldberg and Lewis concluded that in our society mothers subconsciously reward their daughters for being passive and dependent, their sons for being active and independent.*

These lessons continue throughout childhood. On the basis of their sex, children are given different kinds of toys. Parents let their preschool sons roam farther from home than their preschool daughters, and they subtly encourage the boys to participate in more rough-and-tumble play—even to get dirtier and to be more defiant (Gilman 1911/1971; Henslin 2003).

Such experiences in socialization lie at the heart of the sociological explanation of male–female differences. We should note, however, that some sociologists consider biology to be a cause of these differences. For example, were the infants in the Goldberg-Lewis study demonstrating built-in biological predispositions, with the mothers merely reinforcing—not causing—those differences? We shall return to this controversial issue in Chapter 10.

### Gender Messages from Peers

Sociologists stress how this sorting process that begins in the family is reinforced as the child is exposed to other aspects of society. Of those other influences, one of the most powerful is the **peer group**, individuals of roughly the same age who are linked by common interests. Examples of peer groups are friends, classmates, and “the kids in the neighborhood.” Consider how girls and boys teach one another what it means to be a female or a male in U.S. society.

Let's eavesdrop on a conversation between two eighth-grade girls studied by sociologist Donna Eder (2003). You can see how these girls are reinforcing gender images of appearance and behavior:

**CINDY:** The only thing that makes her look anything is all the makeup . . .

**PENNY:** She had a picture, and she's standing like this. (Poses with one hand on her hip and one by her head)

**CINDY:** Her face is probably this skinny, but it looks that big 'cause of all the makeup she has on it.

**PENNY:** She's ugly, ugly, ugly.

The gender roles that we learn during childhood become part of our basic orientations to life. Although we refine these roles as we grow older, they remain built around the framework established during childhood.



Boys, of course, do the same thing. When sociologist Melissa Milkie (1994) studied junior high school boys, she found that much of their talk centered on movies and TV programs. Of the many images they saw, the boys would single out sex and violence. They would amuse one another by repeating lines, acting out parts, and joking and laughing at what they had seen.

If you know boys in their early teens, you've probably seen behavior like this. You may have been amused or even have shaken your head in disapproval. As a sociologist, however, Milkie peered beneath the surface. She concluded that the boys were using media images to discover who they are as males. They had gotten the message: To be a "real" male is to be obsessed with sex and violence. Not to joke and laugh about murder and promiscuous sex would have marked a boy as a "weenie," a label to be avoided at all costs.

## Gender Messages in the Mass Media

Sociologists stress how this sorting process that begins in the family is reinforced as the child is exposed to other aspects of society. Especially important are the **mass media**, forms of communication that are directed to large audiences. Let's look at how images on television and movies and in video games reinforce society's expectations of gender.

**Television and Movies** Television and movies reinforce stereotypes of the sexes. In movies and on prime-time television, male characters outnumber female characters. Male characters on television are also more likely to be portrayed in higher-status positions (Vande Berg and Streckfuss 1992). Viewers get the message, for the more television people watch, the more they tend to have restrictive ideas about women's role in society (Signorielli 1989, 1990).

The times, though, they are a-changin'. Stereotype-breaking characters, such as the evil-fighting females on television who help to make the world right, are bound to produce changed ideas of the sexes. The path-breaking pro-

gram *Xena, Warrior Princess*, a television series imported from New Zealand, portrayed Xena as super dominant. The powers of the teenager *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, were also remarkable. On *Alias*, Sydney Bristow exhibits extraordinary strength. In cartoons, Kim Possible divides her time between cheerleading practice and saving the world from evil, while, also with tongue in cheek, the Powerpuff Girls are touted as "the most elite kindergarten crime-fighting force ever assembled."

**Video Games** Many youths spend countless hours playing video games in arcades and at home. Even college students, especially men, relieve stress by escaping into video games (Jones 2003). Although sociologists have begun to study how the sexes are portrayed in these games, how the games affect their players' ideas of gender is unknown (Dietz 2000; Sellers 2000). Because these games are on the cutting edge of society, they sometimes also reflect cutting-edge changes in sex roles, as examined in the Mass Media in Social Life box on the next page.

## IN SUM

All of us are born into a society in which "male" and "female" are significant symbols. Sorted into separate groups from childhood, girls and boys learn sharply different ideas of what to expect of themselves and of one another. These images begin in the family and later are reinforced by other social institutions. Each of us learns the meaning that our society associates with the sexes. These images become integrated into our views of the world, forming a picture of "how" males and females "are," and forcing an interpretation of the world in terms of gender. Because gender serves as a primary basis for **social inequality**—giving privileges and obligations to one group of people while denying them to another—gender images are especially important to understand.

# massMEDIA

## in Social Life

### From Xena, Warrior Princess, to Lara Croft, Tomb Raider: Changing Images of Women in the Mass Media

**T**he mass media reflect women's changing role in society. Portrayals of women as passive, as subordinate, or as mere background objects remain, but a new image has broken through. Although this new image exaggerates changes, it does illustrate a fundamental change in social relations. As is mentioned in the text, Xena, the Warrior Princess, is an outstanding example of this change.

Although it is unusual to call video games a form of the mass media, like books and magazines they are made available to a mass audience. And with digital advances, they have crossed the line from what is traditionally thought of as games to something that more closely resembles interactive movies.

Sociologically, what is significant is that the *content* of video games socializes their users. As they play, gamers are exposed not only to action but also to ideas and images. The gender images of video games communicate powerful messages, just as they do in other forms of the mass media.

Lara Croft, an adventure-seeking archeologist and star of *Tomb Raider* and its many sequels, is the essence of the new gender image. Lara is smart, strong, and able to utterly vanquish foes. With both guns blazing, she is the cowboy of the twenty-first century, the term *cowboy* being purposefully chosen, as Lara breaks stereotypical gender roles and assumes what previously was the domain of men. She was the first female protagonist in a field of muscle-rippling, gun-toting macho caricatures (Taylor 1999).

Yet the old remains powerfully encapsulated in the new. As the photo on this page makes evident, Lara is a fantasy girl for young men of the digital generation. No matter her foe, no matter her predicament, Lara oozes sex. Her form-fitting outfits, which flatter her voluptuous physique, reflect the mental



*The mass media not only reflect gender stereotypes but also they play a role in changing them. Sometimes they do both simultaneously. The images of Xena, Warrior Princess, and of Lara Croft not only reflect women's changing role in society, but also, by exaggerating the change, they mold new stereotypes.*

images of the men who fashioned this digital character. Lara has caught young men's fancy to such an extent that they have bombarded corporate headquarters with questions about her personal life. Lara is the star of two movies and a comic book. There is even a Lara Croft candy bar.

#### FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

A sociologist who reviewed this text said, "It seems that for women to be defined as equal, we have to become symbolic males—warriors with breasts." Why is gender change mostly one-way—females adopting traditional male characteristics? To see why men get to keep

their gender roles, these two questions should help: Who is moving into the traditional territory of the other? Do people prefer to imitate power or powerlessness?

Finally, consider just how far stereotypes have actually been left behind. The ultimate goal of the video game, after foes are vanquished, is to see Lara in a nightie.



## Agents of Socialization

**P**eople and groups that influence our orientations to life—our self-concept, emotions, attitudes, and behavior—are called **agents of socialization**. We have already considered how three of these agents, the family, our peers, and the mass media, influence our ideas of gender. Now we'll look more closely at how agents of socialization prepare us to take our place in society. We shall first consider the family, and then the neighborhood, religion, day care, school and peers, and the workplace.

### The Family

One of the main findings of sociologists is how socialization depends on a family's social class. Let's compare how working-class and middle-class parents rear their children. Sociologist Melvin Kohn (1959, 1963, 1976, 1977; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn et al. 1986) found that working-class parents are mainly concerned about their children's outward conformity. They want their children to be obedient, neat, and clean; to follow the rules; and to stay out of trouble. To make their children obey, they tend to use physical punishment. In contrast, middle-class parents focus more on developing their children's curiosity, self-expression, and self-control. They are more concerned about the motivations for their children's behavior, and they are more likely to reason with their children than to use physical punishment.

These findings were a sociological puzzle. Just why would working-class and middle-class parents rear their children so differently? Kohn knew that life experiences of some sort held the key, and he found that key in the world of work. Bosses usually tell blue-collar workers exactly what to do. Since they expect their children's lives to be like theirs, blue-collar parents stress obedience. At their work, in contrast, middle-class parents take more initiative. Expecting their children to work at similar jobs, middle-class parents socialize them into the qualities they have found valuable.

Kohn still felt puzzled, however, for some working-class parents act more like middle-class parents, and vice versa. As Kohn probed this puzzle, the pieces fell into place. The key was the parents' type of job. Middle-class office workers, for example, have little freedom and are closely supervised. Kohn found that they follow the working-class pattern of child rearing, putting stress on outward con-

formity. And some blue-collar workers, such as those who do home repairs, have a good deal of freedom. These workers follow the middle-class model in rearing their children (Pearlin and Kohn 1966; Kohn and Schooler 1969).

### The Neighborhood

As all parents know, some neighborhoods are better for their children than others. Parents try to move to those neighborhoods—if they can afford them. Their common-sense observations are borne out by sociological research. Children from poor neighborhoods are more likely to get in trouble with the law, to get pregnant, to drop out of school, and to end up facing a disadvantaged life (Wilson 1987; Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997; Sampson et al. 2001).

Sociologists have also documented that the residents of more affluent neighborhoods watch out for the children more than do the residents of poor neighborhoods (Sampson et al. 1999). This isn't because the adults in poor neighborhoods care less about children. Rather, because the more affluent neighborhoods have less transition, the adults are more likely to know the local children and their parents. This better equips them to help keep the children safe and out of trouble.

### Religion

By influencing values, religion becomes a key component in people's ideas of right and wrong. Religion is so important to Americans that 65 percent belong to a local congregation, and during a typical week, two of every five Americans attend a religious service (*Statistical Abstract* 2003:Table 80). Religion is significant even for people who are reared in nonreligious homes; religious ideas pervade U.S. society, providing basic ideas of morality for us all.

The influence of religion extends to many areas of our lives. For example, participation in religious services teaches us not only beliefs about the hereafter but also ideas about what kinds of dress, speech, and manners are appropriate for formal occasions. Religion is so significant that we shall examine its influence in a separate chapter (Chapter 13).

### Day Care

It is rare for social science research to make national news, but occasionally it does. This is what happened when researchers who had followed 1,300 children in ten cities from infancy into kindergarten reported their findings. They had observed the children at home and at day care. (*Day care* was defined as any care other than by the mother, including care by other relatives and the father.) The re-



searchers had also videotaped and made detailed notes on the children's interaction with their mothers (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development 1999; Guensburg 2001). What caught the media's attention? Children who spend more hours in day care have weaker bonds with their mothers. In addition, they are more likely to fight, to be cruel, and to be "mean." In contrast, children who spend less time in day care are more cooperative and more affectionate to their mothers. This holds true regardless of the quality of the day care, the family's social class, or whether the child is a girl or a boy.

This study was designed well, and its findings are without dispute. But how do we explain these findings? The cause could be time spent in day care. The researchers suggest that mothers who spend less time with their children are less responsive to their children's emotional needs because they are less familiar with their children's "signaling systems." But maybe the cause isn't day care. Perhaps mothers who put their children in day care for more hours are less sensitive to their children in the first place. Or perhaps employed mothers are less likely to meet their children's emotional needs because they are more tired and stressed than mothers who stay at home. From this study, we can't determine the cause of the weaker bonding and the behavioral problems.

These researchers also uncovered a positive side to day care. They found that children who spend more hours in day care score higher on language tests (Guensburg 2001). Other researchers have found similar improvement in language skills, especially for children from low-income homes, as well as those from dysfunctional families—those with alcoholic, inept, or abusive parents (Scarr and Eisenberg 1993). As is obvious, we need more studies to be able to tease out the consequences of day care. Although this longitudinal study is far from encouraging, it gives us no reason to conclude that day care is producing a generation of "mean but smart" children.

## The School and Peer Groups

As a child's experiences with agents of socialization broaden, the influence of the family lessens. Entry into school is one of those significant steps in this transfer of allegiance and learning of new values. The new ways of looking at the world can even replace those the child learns at home, the topic of the Cultural Diversity box on the next page.

When sociologists Patricia and Peter Adler (1992, 1998), a husband and wife team, observed children at two elemen-

tary schools in Colorado, they saw how children separate themselves by sex and develop their own worlds with unique norms. The norms that made boys popular were athletic ability, coolness, and toughness. For girls, popularity was based on family background, physical appearance (clothing and use of makeup), and the ability to attract popular boys. In this children's subculture, academic achievement pulled in opposite directions: For boys, high grades lowered their popularity, but for girls, good grades increased their standing among peers.

You know from your own experience how compelling peer groups are. It is almost impossible to go against a peer group, whose cardinal rule seems to be "conformity or rejection." Anyone who doesn't do what the others want becomes an "outsider," a "nonmember," an "outcast." For preteens and teens just learning their way around in the world, it is not surprising that the peer group rules.

As a result, the standards of our peer groups tend to dominate our lives. If your peers, for example, listen to rap, heavy metal, rock and roll, country, or gospel, it is almost inevitable that you also prefer that kind of music. It is the same for other kinds of music, clothing styles, and dating standards. Peer influences also extend to behaviors that violate social norms. If your peers are college-bound and upwardly striving, that is most likely what you will be; but if they use drugs, cheat, and steal, you are likely to do so, too.

## The Workplace

Another agent of socialization that comes into play somewhat later in life is the workplace. Those initial part-time jobs that we get in high school and college are much more than just a way to earn a few dollars. From the people we rub shoulders with at work, we learn not only a set of skills but also perspectives on the world.

Most of us eventually become committed to some particular line of work, often after trying out various jobs. This may involve **anticipatory socialization**; learning to play a role before entering it. Anticipatory socialization is a sort of rehearsal for some future activity. We may talk to people who work in a career, read novels about them, or take a summer internship. This allows us to identify gradually with the role, to become aware of what would be expected of us. Sometimes this helps people avoid committing themselves to an unrewarding career, as with some of my students who tried student teaching, found that they couldn't stand it, and then moved on to other fields that were more to their liking.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY in the UNITED STATES



### Caught Between Two Worlds

**I**t is a struggle to learn a new culture, for its behaviors and ways of thinking contrast with the ones that have already been learned. This can lead to inner turmoil. One way to handle the conflict is to cut ties with one's first culture. This, however, can create a sense of loss, perhaps one that is recognized only later in life.

Richard Rodriguez, a literature professor and essayist, was born to working-class Mexican immigrants. Wanting their son to be successful in their adopted land, his parents named him Richard instead of Ricardo. While his English-Spanish hybrid name indicates the parents' aspirations for their son, it was also an omen of the conflict that Richard would experience.

Like other children of Mexican immigrants, Richard's first language was Spanish—a rich mother tongue that introduced him to the world. Until the age of 5, when he began school, Richard knew only fifty words in English. He describes what happened when he began school:

The change came gradually but early. When I was beginning grade school, I noted to myself the fact that the classroom environment was so different in its styles and assumptions from my own family environment that survival would essentially entail a choice between both worlds. When I became a student, I was literally "remade"; neither I nor my teachers considered anything I had known before as relevant. I had to for-

get most of what my culture had provided, because to remember it was a disadvantage. The past and its cultural values became detachable, like a piece of clothing grown heavy on a warm day and finally put away.

As happened to millions of immigrants before him whose parents spoke German, Polish, Italian, and so on, learning English eroded family and class ties and ate away at his ethnic roots. For him, language and education were not simply devices that eased the transition to the dominant culture. Instead, they slashed at the roots that had given him life.

To face conflicting cultures is to confront a fork in the road. Some turn one way and withdraw from the new culture—a clue that helps to explain why so many Latinos drop out of U.S. schools. Others go in the opposite direction. Cutting ties with their family and cultural roots, they wholeheartedly adopt the new culture.

Rodriguez took the second road. He excelled in his new language—so well, in fact, that he graduated from Stanford University and then became a graduate student in English at the University of California at Berkeley. He was even awarded a prestigious Fulbright fellowship to study English Renaissance literature at the British Museum.

But the past wouldn't let Rodriguez alone. Prospective employers were impressed with his knowledge of Renaissance

literature. At job interviews, however, they would skip over the Renaissance training and ask him whether he would teach the Mexican novel and be an adviser to Latino students. Rodriguez was also haunted by the image of his grandmother, the warmth of the culture he had left behind, and the language and thought to which he had become a stranger.

Richard Rodriguez represents millions of immigrants—not just those of Latino origin but those from other cultures, too—who want to be a part of the United States without betraying their past. They fear that to integrate into U.S. culture is to lose their roots. They are caught between two cultures, each beckoning, each offering rich rewards.

#### FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

I saw this conflict firsthand with my father, who did not learn English until after the seventh grade (his last in school): the broken English as German is left behind, awareness that the accent and awkward expressions remain, lingering emotional connections to old ways, and the suspicions, haughtiness, and slights of more assimilated Americans. A longing for security by grasping the past is combined with wanting to succeed in the everyday reality of the new culture. Have you seen anything similar?

Sources: Based on Richard Rodriguez 1975, 1982, 1990, 1991, 1995.



An intriguing aspect of work as a socializing agent is that the more you participate in a line of work, the more the work becomes a part of your self-concept. Eventually, you come to think of yourself so much in terms

of the job that if someone asks you to describe yourself, you are likely to include the job in your self-description. You might say, "I'm a teacher," "I'm a nurse," or "I'm a sociologist."

## Resocialization

**W**hat does a woman who has just become a nun have in common with a man who has just divorced? The answer is that they both are undergoing **resocialization**; that is, they are learning new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors to match their new situation in life. In its most common form, resocialization occurs each time we learn something contrary to our previous experiences. A new boss who insists on a different way of doing things is resocializing you. Most resocialization is mild, involving only a slight modification of things we have already learned.

Resocialization can also be intense. People who join Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), for example, are surrounded by reformed drinkers who affirm the destructive effects of excessive drinking. Some students experience an intense period of resocialization when they leave high school and start college—especially during those initially scary days before they start to fit in and feel comfortable. To join a cult or to begin psychotherapy is even more profound, for these events expose people to ideas that conflict with their previous ways of looking at the world. If these ideas “take,” not only does the individual’s behavior change, but also he or she learns a fundamentally different way of looking at life.

### Total Institutions

Relatively few of us experience the powerful agent of socialization that Erving Goffman (1961) called the **total institution**. He coined this term to refer to a place in which people are cut off from the rest of society and where they come under almost total control of the officials who run the place. Boot camps, prisons, concentration camps, convents, some religious cults, and some boarding schools, such as West Point, are total institutions.

A person entering a total institution is greeted with a **degradation ceremony** (Garfinkel 1956), an attempt to remake the self by stripping away the individual’s current identity and stamping a new one in its place. This unwelcome greeting may involve fingerprinting, photographing, shaving the head, and banning the individual’s *personal identity kit* (items such as jewelry, hairstyles, clothing, and other body decorations used to express individuality). Newcomers may be ordered to strip, undergo an examination (often in a humiliating, semipublic setting), and then to put on a uniform that designates their new status.

Total institutions are isolated from the public. The walls, bars, gates, and guards not only keep the inmates in but also keep outsiders out. Staff members closely supervise every

aspect of the residents’ lives. Eating, sleeping, showering, and recreation—all are standardized. Preexisting statuses are suppressed, and inmates learn that their previous roles such as spouse, parent, worker, or student mean nothing. The only thing that counts is their current role.

No one leaves a total institution unscathed, for the experience brands an indelible mark on the individual’s self and colors the way he or she sees the world. Boot camp, as described in the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page, is brutal but swift. Prison, in contrast, is brutal and prolonged. Neither recruit nor prisoner, however, has difficulty in recognizing how the institution affected the self.

## Socialization Through the Life Course

**Y**ou are at a particular stage in your life now, and college is a good part of it. You know that you have more stages ahead of you as you go through life. These stages, from birth to death, are called the **life course** (Elder 1975, 1999). The sociological significance of the life course is twofold. First, as you pass through a stage, it affects your behavior and orientations. You simply don’t think about life in the same way when you are 30, are married, and have children and a mortgage as you do when you are 18 or 20, single, and in college. (Actually, you don’t even see life the same as a freshman and as a senior.) Second, your life course differs by social location. Your social class, race-ethnicity, and gender, for example, block out distinctive worlds of experience. Consequently, the typical life course differs for males and females, the rich and the poor, and so on. To emphasize this major sociological point, in the sketch that follows, I will stress the *historical* setting of people’s lives. Because of your particular social location, your own life course may differ from this sketch, which is a composite of stages that others have suggested (Levinson 1978; Carr et al. 1995; Lee 2001).

### Childhood (From Birth to About Age 12)

To begin, consider how different your childhood would have been if you had grown up during the Middle Ages. Historian Philippe Ariès (1965) noticed that in European paintings from this period children were always dressed in adult clothing. If they were not depicted stiffly posed, as in a family portrait, they were shown doing adult activities.

## DOWN-TO-EARTH SOCIOLOGY

## Boot Camp as a Total Institution

THE BUS ARRIVES AT PARRIS ISLAND, South Carolina, at 3 A.M. The early hour is no accident. The recruits are groggy, confused. Up to a few hours ago, the boys were ordinary civilians. Now, a sergeant sneeringly calls them "maggots," their heads are buzzed (25 seconds per recruit), and they are thrust quickly into the harsh world of Marine boot camp.

Buzzing the boys' hair is just the first step in stripping away their identity so that the Marines can stamp a new one in its place. The uniform serves the same purpose. So does the ban on using the first person "I." Even a simple request must be made in precise Marine protocol or it will not be acknowledged. ("Sir, Recruit Jones requests permission to make a head call, Sir.")

Every intense moment of the next eleven weeks reminds the recruits that they are joining a subculture of self-discipline. Here pleasure is suspect, and sacrifice is good. As they learn the Marine way of talking, walking, and thinking, they are denied the diversions they once took for granted: television, cigarettes, cars, candy, soft drinks, video games, music, alcohol, drugs, and sex.

Lessons are bestowed with fierce intensity. When Sgt. Carey checks brass belt buckles, Recruit Robert Shelton nervously blurts, "I don't have one." Sgt. Carey's face grows red as the veins in his neck bulge. "I?" he says, his face just inches from the recruit. With spittle flying from his mouth, he screams, "I is gone!"



*Resocialization is often a gentle process. Usually we are gradually exposed to different ways of thinking and doing. Sometimes, however, resocialization can be swift and brutal, as it is during boot camp in the Marines. This private at Parris Island is learning a world vastly unlike the civilian world he left behind.*

"Nobody's an individual" is the lesson that is driven home again and again. "You are a team, a Marine. Not a civilian. Not black or white, not Hispanic or Indian or some hyphenated American—but a Marine. You will live like a Marine, fight like a Marine, and, if necessary, die like a Marine."

Each day begins before dawn with close order formations. The rest of the day is filled with training in hand-to-hand combat, marching, running, calisthenics, Marine history, and—always—following orders.

"An M-16 can blow someone's head off at 500 meters," Sgt. Norman says. "That's beautiful, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir!" shout the platoon's fifty-nine voices.

"Pick your nose!" Simultaneously, fifty-nine index fingers shoot into nostrils.

The pressure to conform is intense. Those who are sent packing for insubordination or suicidal tendencies are mocked in cadence during drills. ("Hope you like the sights you see / Parris Island casualty.") As lights go out at 9 P.M., the exhausted recruits perform the day's last task: The entire platoon, in unison, chants the virtues of the Marines.

Recruits are constantly scrutinized. Subperformance is not accepted, whether it be a dirty rifle or a loose thread on a uniform. The subperformer is shouted at, derided, humiliated. The group suffers for the individual. If a recruit is slow, the entire platoon is punished.

One of the new Marines (until graduation, they are recruits, not Marines) says, "I feel like I've joined a new society or religion."

He has.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Of what significance is the recruits' degradation ceremony? Why are recruits not allowed video games, cigarettes, or calls home? Why are the Marines so unfair as to punish an entire platoon for the failure of an individual? Use concepts in this chapter to explain why the system works.

Source: Based on Garfinkel 1956; Goffman 1961; Ricks 1995; Dyer 2005.

From this, Ariès drew a conclusion that sparked a debate among historians: that at that time and in that place, childhood was not regarded as a special time of life. He said that adults viewed children as miniature adults and put them to work at very early ages. At the age of 7, for example, a boy might leave home for good to learn to be a

jeweler or a stonemason. A girl, in contrast, stayed home until she married, but by the age of 7, she was expected to assume her daily share of the household tasks. Historians do not deny that these were the customs of that time, but some say that Ariès' conclusion is ridiculous. They say that other evidence of that period indicates that



*In contemporary Western societies such as the United States, children are viewed as innocent and in need of protection from adult responsibilities such as work and self-support. Ideas of childhood vary historically and cross-culturally. From paintings, such as this 1605 portrait of Lady Tasburgh and her children, some historians conclude that Europeans once viewed children as miniature adults who assumed adult roles at the earliest opportunity.*

childhood was viewed as a special time of life (Orme 2002).

Having children work like adults did not disappear with the Middle Ages. It is still common in the Least Industrialized Nations. The photo essay on pages 178–179 provides a startling example of this practice, reflecting not just different activities but also a view of children different from the one common in the Most Industrialized Nations.

In earlier centuries, parents and teachers also considered it their moral duty to terrorize children to keep them in line. They would lock children in dark closets, frighten them with bedtime stories of death and hellfire, and force them to witness gruesome events. Consider this:

*A common moral lesson involved taking children to visit the gibbet [an upraised post on which executed bodies were left hanging from chains], where they were forced to inspect rotting corpses hanging there as an example of what happens to bad children when they grow up. Whole classes were taken out of school to witness hangings, and parents would often whip their children afterwards to make them remember what they had seen. (DeMause 1975)*

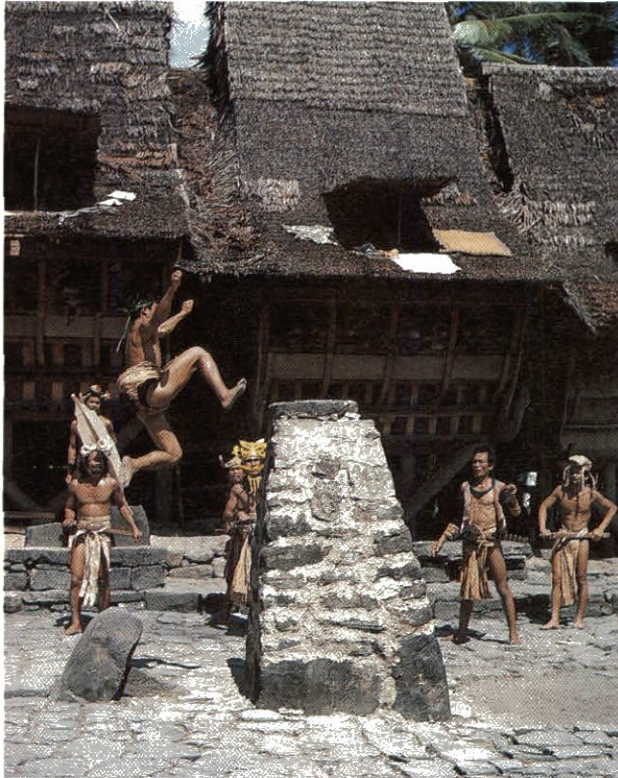
Industrialization transformed the way we see children. When children have the leisure to go to school, they come to be thought of as tender and innocent, as needing more adult care, comfort, and protection. Over time, such attitudes of dependency grow, and today we view children as needing gentle guidance if they are to develop emotionally, intellectually, morally, even physically. We take our view for granted—after all it is only “common sense.” Yet, as you can see, our view is not “natural” but is rooted in geography and history.

## IN SUM

Childhood is more than biology. Everyone’s childhood occurs at some point in history and is embedded in particular social locations, especially social class and gender. *These social factors are as vital as our biology, for they determine what childhood will be like for us.* Although a child’s *biological* characteristics (such as being small and dependent) are universal, the child’s *social* experiences (what happens to that child because of what others expect of him or her) are not. Thus, sociologists say that childhood varies from culture to culture.

## Adolescence (Ages 13–17)

In earlier centuries, societies did not mark out adolescence as a distinct time of life. People simply moved from childhood into young adulthood, with no stopover in between. The Industrial Revolution brought such an abundance of material surpluses, however, that for the first time in history, millions of people in their teens were able to remain outside the labor force. At the same time, education became more important for success. The convergence of these two forces in industrialized societies created a gap between childhood and adulthood. In the early 1900s, *adolescence* was recognized as a new stage in life (Hall 1904), one that has become renowned for inner turmoil.



In many societies, manhood is not bestowed upon males simply because they reach a certain age. Manhood, rather, signifies a standing in the community that must be achieved. Shown here is an initiation ceremony in Indonesia, where boys, to lay claim to the status of manhood, must jump over this barrier.

To ground the self-identity and mark the passage of children into adulthood, tribal societies hold *initiation rites*. In the industrialized world, however, adolescents must “find” themselves on their own. As they attempt to carve out an identity that is distinct from both the “younger” world being left behind and the “older” world still out of range, adolescents develop their own subcultures, with distinctive clothing, hairstyles, language, gestures, and music. We usually fail to realize that contemporary society, not biology, created the period of inner turmoil that we call *adolescence*.

### Young Adulthood (Ages 18–29)

If society invented adolescence, can it also invent other periods of life? Historian Kenneth Keniston suggests that this is happening now. He notes that industrialized societies are adding a period of prolonged youth to the life course, in which people postpone adult responsibilities past adolescence. For millions, the end of high school marks a period

of extended education characterized by continued freedom from the need to support oneself. During this time, people are “neither psychological adolescents nor sociological adults” (Keniston 1971). Somewhere during this period of extended youth, which sociologists are now calling **transitional adulthood**, young adults gradually ease into adult responsibilities. They finish school, take a full-time job, engage in courtship rituals, get married—and go into debt.

## The Middle Years (Ages 30–65)

### The Early Middle Years (Ages 30–49)

During the early middle years, most people are more sure of themselves and of their goals in life. As with any point in the life course, however, the self can receive severe jolts—in this case, from such circumstances as divorce or being fired. It may take years for the self to stabilize after such ruptures.

The early middle years pose a special challenge for many U.S. women, who have been given the message, especially by the media, that they can “have it all.” They can be super-workers, superwives, and supermoms all rolled into one. The reality, however, often consists of conflicting pressures, of too little time and too many demands. Something has to give. Attempts to resolve this dilemma are often compounded by another hard reality: that during gender socialization, their husbands learned that child care and housework are not “masculine.” In short, adjustments continue in this and all phases of life.

### The Later Middle Years (Ages 50–65)

During the later middle years, health and mortality begin to loom large as people feel their bodies change, especially if they watch their parents become frail, fall ill, and die. The consequence is a fundamental reorientation in thinking—*from time since birth to time left to live* (Neugarten 1976). With this changed orientation, people attempt to evaluate the past and come to terms with what lies ahead. They compare what they have accomplished with how far they had hoped to go. Many people also find themselves caring for not only their own children but also their aging parents. Because of this often crushing set of burdens, people in the later middle years sometimes are called the “sandwich generation.”

Life during this stage isn’t always stressful. Many people find late middle age to be the most comfortable period of their lives. They enjoy job security and a standard of living that is higher than ever before; they have a bigger house (one that may even be paid for), newer cars, and more exotic vacations. The children are grown, the self is firmly planted, and fewer upheavals are likely to occur.

As they anticipate the next stage of life, however, most people do not like what they see.

### The Older Years (About 65 On)

In industrialized societies, the older years begin around the mid-60s. This, too, is recent, for in agricultural societies, when most people died early, old age was thought to begin at around age 40. With its improved nutrition, public health, and medical care, industrialization prolonged life. Today, for those in good health, being over 65 is often experienced not as old age, but as an extension of the middle years. People who continue to work or to do things they enjoy are less likely to perceive themselves as old (Neugarten 1977). Although frequency of sex declines, most men and women in their 60s and 70s are sexually active (Denney and Quadagno 1992).

Because we have a self and can reason abstractly, we can contemplate death. Initially, death is a vague notion, a remote possibility, but as people see their friends die and their own bodies no longer function as before, death becomes less abstract. Increasingly during this stage in the life course, people feel that “time is closing in” on them.

## Are We Prisoners of Socialization?



From our discussion of socialization, you might conclude that sociologists think of people as robots: The socialization goes

in, and the behavior comes out. People cannot help what they do, think, or feel, for everything is a result of their exposure to socializing agents.

Sociologists do *not* think of people in this way. Although socialization is powerful and profoundly affects us all, we have a self. Established in childhood and continually modified by later experience, the self is dynamic. It is not a sponge that passively absorbs influences from the environment but, rather, a vigorous, essential part of our being that allows us to act upon our environment.

Indeed, it is precisely because individuals are not robots that their behavior is so hard to predict. The countless reactions of other people merge in each of us. As the self develops, we internalize or “put together” these innumerable reactions, producing a unique whole that we call the *individual*. Each unique individual uses his or her own mind to reason and to make choices in life.

In this way, *each of us is actively involved in the construction of the self*. For example, although our experiences in the family lay down the basic elements of our personality, including fundamental orientations to life, we are not doomed to keep those orientations if we do not like them. We can purposely expose ourselves to groups and ideas that we prefer. Those experiences, in turn, will have their own effects on our self. In short, although socialization is powerful, within the limitations of the framework laid down by our social location we can change even the self. And that self—along with the options available within society—is the key to our behavior.

## SUMMARY and REVIEW

### What Is Human Nature?

**How much of our human characteristics comes from “nature” (heredity) and how much from “nurture” (the social environment)?**

Observations of isolated and institutionalized children help to answer this question, as do experiments with monkeys that were raised in isolation. Language and intimate social interaction—aspects of “nurture”—are

essential to the development of what we consider to be human characteristics. Pp. 56–59.

### Socialization into the Self, Mind, and Emotions

**How do we acquire a self and reasoning skills?**

Humans are born with the *capacity* to develop a *self*, but the self must be socially constructed; that is, its contents

depend on social interaction. According to Charles Horton Cooley's concept of the **looking-glass self**, our self develops as we internalize others' reactions to us. George Herbert Mead identified the ability to **take the role of the other** as essential to the development of the self. Mead concluded that even the mind is a social product. Jean Piaget identified four stages that children go through as they develop the ability to reason. Pp. 59–62.

### How do sociologists evaluate Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality development?

Freud viewed personality development as the result of one's **id** (inborn, self-centered desires) clashing with the demands of society. The **ego** develops to balance the id and the **superego**, the conscience. Sociologists, in contrast, do not examine inborn or subconscious motivations but, instead, how *social* factors—social class, gender, religion, education, and so forth—underlie personality development. Pp. 62–63.

### How does socialization influence emotions?

Socialization influences *not only how we express our emotions but also what emotions we feel*. Socialization into emotions is one of the means by which society produces conformity. Pp. 63–65.

## Socialization into Gender

### How does gender socialization affect our sense of self?

**Gender socialization**—sorting males and females into different roles—is a primary means of controlling human behavior. Children receive messages about gender even in infancy. A society's ideals of sex-linked behaviors are reinforced by its social institutions. Pp. 65–67.

## Agents of Socialization

### What are the main agents of socialization?

**Agents of socialization** include the **mass media**, family, the neighborhood, religion, day care, school, **peer groups**, and the workplace. Each has its particular influences in socializing us into becoming full-fledged members of society. Pp. 68–70.

## Resocialization

### What is resocialization?

**Resocialization** is the process of learning new norms, values, attitudes, and behavior. Most resocialization is voluntary, but some, as with residents of **total institutions**, is involuntary. P. 71.

## Socialization Through the Life Course

### Does socialization end when we enter adulthood?

Socialization occurs throughout the life course. In industrialized societies, the **life course** can be divided into childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, the middle years, and the older years. Typical Western patterns include obtaining education, becoming independent from parents, building a career, finding a mate, rearing children, and confronting aging. Life course patterns vary by social location such as history, gender, race-ethnicity, and social class. Pp. 71–75.

## Are We Prisoners of Socialization?

Although socialization is powerful, we are not merely the sum of our socialization experiences. Just as socialization influences human behavior, so humans act on their environment and influence even their self concept. P. 75.

## THINKING Critically

### ABOUT CHAPTER 3

1. What three agents of socialization have influenced you the most? Can you pinpoint how they have influenced your attitudes, beliefs, values, or other orientations to life?
2. Summarize your views of gender. What in your gender socialization has led you to have these views?
3. What is your location in the life course? How does the text's summary of that location match your experiences? Explain the similarities and differences.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[www.ablongman.com/hensliness6e](http://www.ablongman.com/hensliness6e)

- Practice Tests
- Flashcards of Key Terms and Concepts
- Weblinks
- Interactive Maps
- Census 2000 Activities
- Sociology by the Numbers
- eThemes of the Times for Introduction to Sociology
- Careers in Sociology
- Study Guide for Native Spanish Speakers
- Using Research Navigator [www.researchnavigator.com](http://www.researchnavigator.com) (access code required)