Socialization
The old man was horrified when he found out. Life never had been good since his daughter lost her hearing when she was just 2 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.

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 1940/2007:156–157)

When the newspapers reported this case, sociologist Kingsley Davis decided to find out what had happened to Isabelle after her discovery. We’ll come back to that later, but first let’s use the case of Isabelle to gain insight into human nature.
“What do you mean, society makes us human?” is probably what you are asking. “That sounds ridiculous. I was born a human.” The meaning of this statement will become more apparent as we get into the chapter. Let’s start by considering what is human about human nature. How much of a person’s characteristics comes from “nature” (heredity) and how much from “nurture” (the social environment, contact with others)? Experts are trying to answer the nature–nurture question by studying identical twins who were separated at birth and reared in different environments, such as those discussed in the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page. Another way is to examine children who have had little human contact. Let’s consider such children.

Feral Children

The naked child was found in the forest, walking on all fours, eating grass and lapping water from the river. When he saw a small animal, he pounced on it. Growling, he ripped at it with his teeth. Tearing chunks from the body, he chewed them ravenously.

This is an apt description of reports that have come in over the centuries. Supposedly, these feral (wild) children could not speak; they bit, scratched, growled, and walked on all fours. They drank by lapping water, ate grass, tore ravenously at raw meat, and showed insensitivity to pain and cold. Why am I even mentioning stories that sound so exaggerated?

It is because of what happened in 1798. In that year, such a child was found in the forests of Aveyron, France. “The wild boy of Aveyron,” as he became known, would have been written off as another folk myth, except that French scientists took the child to a laboratory and studied him. Like the feral children in 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 scientists’ detailed reports make fascinating reading (Itard 1962).

Ever since I read Itard’s account of this boy, I’ve been fascinated by the seemingly fantastic possibility that animals could rear human children. In 2002, I received a report from a contact in Cambodia that a feral child had been found in the jungles. When I had the opportunity the following year to visit the child and interview his caregivers, I grabbed it. The boy’s photo is to the left. If we were untouched by society, would we be like feral children? By nature, would our behavior be like that of wild animals? That is the sociological question. Unable to study feral children, sociologists have studied isolated children, like Isabelle in our opening vignette. Let’s see what we can learn from them.

Isolated Children

What can isolated children 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. Perhaps she simply was unable to progress through the usual stages of development. It certainly looked that way—she scored practically zero on her first intelligence test. But after a few months of language training, Isabelle was able to speak in short sentences. In just 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. In just two years, Isabelle reached 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 1940/2007:157–158).
Heredity or Environment? The Case of Jack and Oskar, Identical Twins

Identical twins are identical in their genetic heritage. They are born when 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 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 Roman Catholic mother and a Jewish father, they were separated as babies after their parents divorced. Jack was reared in Trinidad by his father. There, he learned loyalty to Jews and hatred of Hitler and the Nazis. After the war, Jack and his father moved to Israel. When he was 17, Jack joined a kibbutz and later served in the Israeli army.

Oskar’s upbringing was a mirror image of Jack’s. 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).

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, 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 the result of their environment—their different social experiences.

Not only did Jack and Oskar hold different attitudes toward the war, Hitler, and Jews, but their basic orientations to life were also different. In their politics, Jack was liberal, while Oskar was more conservative. Jack was a workaholic, while Oskar enjoyed leisure. And, as you can predict, Jack was 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 were other things. As children, Jack and Oskar had both excelled at sports 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 they both enjoyed startling people by sneezing in crowded elevators.

For Your Consideration

Heredity or environment? How much influence does each 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 aptitude for mathematics), while attitudes are the result of the environment. Basic temperament, though, seems to be inherited. Although the answer is still fuzzy, 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; Segal and Hershberger 2005; De Moor et al. 2007.
As discussed in the previous chapter, language is the key to human development. Without language, people have no mechanism for developing thought and communicating their experiences. Unlike animals, humans have no instincts that take the place of language. If an individual lacks language, he or she lives in a world of internal silence, without shared ideas, lacking connections to others.

Without language, there can be no culture—no shared way of life—and culture is the key to what people become. Each of us possesses a biological heritage, but this heritage does not determine specific behaviors, attitudes, or values. It is our culture that superimposes the specifics of what we become onto our biological heritage.

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, orphanages were common because parents were more likely than now to die before their children were grown. Children reared in orphanages tended to have low IQs. “Common sense” (which we noted in Chapter 1 is unreliable) made it obvious that their low intelligence was because of poor brains (“They’re just born that way”). But two psychologists, H. M. Skeels and H. B. Dye (1939), began to suspect a social cause.

Skeels (1966) provides this account of a “good” orphanage in Iowa, one 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 problem was the absence of stimulating social interaction, not the children’s brains. To test their controversial idea, they selected thirteen infants who were so mentally slow that no one wanted to adopt them. They placed them in an institution for mentally retarded women. They assigned each infant, then about 19 months old, 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. They enjoyed taking care of the infants’ physical needs—diapering, feeding, and so on. And they also loved to play with the children. They cuddled them and showered them with attention. They even competed to see which ward would have “its baby” walking or talking first. In each ward, one woman became particularly attached to the child 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 received the usual care. They also had low IQs, but they were considered somewhat higher in
intelligence than the thirteen in the experimental group. Two and a half years later, Skeels and Dye tested all the children’s intelligence. Their findings are startling: Those cared for by the women in the institution gained an average of 28 IQ points while those who remained in the orphanage 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. The twelve in the control group, those who had remained in the orphanage, averaged less than a third-grade education. Four still lived in state institutions, and the others held low-level jobs. Only two had married. The thirteen in the experimental group, those cared for by the institutionalized women, had an average education of 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, “high intelligence” depends on early, close relations with other humans.

A recent experiment in India confirms this early research. Many of India’s orphanages are like those that Skeels and Dye studied—dismal places where unattended children lie in bed all day. When experimenters added stimulating play and interaction to the children’s activities, the children’s motor skills improved and their IQs increased (Taneja et al. 2002). The longer that children lack stimulating interaction, though, the more difficulty they have intellectually (Meese 2005).

Let’s consider Genie, a 13-year-old girl who had been locked in a small room and tied to a chair since she was 20 months old:

Apparently Genie’s father (70 years old when Genie was discovered in 1970) hated children. He probably had caused the death of two of Genie’s siblings. Her 50-year-old mother was partially blind and frightened of her husband. Genie could not speak, did not know how to chew, was unable to stand upright, and could not straighten her hands and legs. On intelligence tests, she scored at the level of a 1-year-old. After intensive training, Genie learned to walk and to say simple sentences (although they were garbled). Genie’s language remained primitive as she grew up. She would take anyone’s property if it appealed to her, and she went to the bathroom wherever she wanted. At the age of 21, she was sent to a home for adults who cannot live alone. (Pines 1981)

In Sum: From Genie’s pathetic story and from the research on institutionalized children, we can conclude that the basic human traits of intelligence and the ability to establish close bonds with others depend on early interaction with other humans. In addition, there seems to be a period prior to age 13 in which children must learn language and experience human bonding if they are to develop normal 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. 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 terrycloth. To obtain food, the baby monkeys nursed at the wire frame.
When the Harlows (1965) frightened the baby monkeys with a mechanical bear or dog, the babies did not run to the wire frame “mother.” Instead, as shown in the photo on the previous page, they would cling pathetically to their terrycloth “mother.” The Harlows concluded that infant–mother bonding is not the result of feeding but, rather, of what they termed “intimate physical contact.” To most of us, this phrase means cuddling.

The monkeys raised in isolation could not adjust to monkey life. Placed with other monkeys when they were grown, they didn’t know how to participate in “monkey interaction”—to play and to engage in pretend fights—and the other monkeys rejected them. They didn’t even know how to have sexual intercourse, despite futile attempts to do so. The experimenters designed a special device, which allowed some females to become pregnant. Their isolation, however, made them “ineffective, inadequate, and brutal mothers.” They “struck their babies, kicked them, or crushed the babies against the cage floor.”

In one of their many experiments, the Harlows isolated baby monkeys for different lengths of time and then put them in with the other monkeys. Monkeys that had been isolated for shorter periods (about three months) were able to adjust to normal monkey life. They learned to play and engage in pretend fights. Those isolated for six months or more, however, couldn’t make the adjustment, and the other monkeys rejected them. In other words, the longer the period of isolation, the more difficult its effects are to overcome. In addition, there seems to be a critical learning stage: 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:** Babies do not develop “naturally” into social adults. If children are reared in isolation, their bodies grow, but they become little more than big animals. Without the concepts that language provides, they can’t grasp relationships between people (the “connections” we call brother, sister, parent, friend, teacher, and so on). And without warm, friendly interactions, they can’t bond with others. They don’t become “friendly” or 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.”

Further keys to understanding how society makes us human are our self-concept, ability to “take the role of others,” reasoning, morality, and emotions. Let’s look at how we develop these capacities.

### Socialization into the Self and Mind

When you were born, you had no ideas. You didn’t know that you were a son or daughter. You didn’t even know that you were a he or she. How did you develop a **self**, your image of who you are? How did you develop your ability to reason? Let’s find out.

**Cooley and the Looking-Glass Self**

About a hundred years ago, Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929), a symbolic interactionist who taught at the University of Michigan, concluded that the self is part of how society makes us human. He said that our sense of self develops from interaction with others. To describe the process by which this unique aspect of “humanness” develops, Cooley (1902) coined the term **looking-glass self**. He summarized this idea in the following couplet:

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Each to each a looking-glass
Reflects the other that doth pass.
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The looking-glass self contains three elements:

1. We imagine how we appear to those around us. For example, we may think that others perceive 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 frames our 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, lifelong process.* During our everyday lives, we monitor how others react to us. As we do so, we continually modify the self. The self, then, is never a finished product—it is always in process, even into our old age.

**Mead and Role Taking**

Another symbolic interactionist, George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), who taught at the University of Chicago, pointed out how important play is as we develop a self. As we play with others, we learn to **take the role of the other.** That is, we learn to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes—to understand how someone else feels and thinks and to anticipate how that person will act.

This doesn’t happen overnight. We develop this ability over a period of years (Mead 1934; Denzin 2007). Psychologist John Flavel (1968) asked 8- and 14-year-olds to explain a board game to 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 we develop this ability, at first we can take only the role of **significant others,** individuals who significantly influence our lives, such as parents or siblings. By assuming their roles during play, such as dressing up in our parents’ clothing, we cultivate the ability to put ourselves in the place of significant others.

As our self gradually develops, we internalize the expectations of more and more people. Our ability to take the role of others eventually extends to being able to take the role of “the group as a whole.” Mead used the term **generalized other** to refer to our perception of how people in general think of us.

Taking 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.

As Figure 3.1 illustrates, we go through three stages as we learn to take the role of the other:

1. **Imitation.** Under the age of 3, we can only mimic others. We do not yet have a sense of self separate from others, and we can only imitate people’s gestures and words. (This stage is actually not role taking, but it prepares us for it.)

2. **Play.** During the second stage, from the ages of about 3 to 6, we pretend to take the roles of specific people. We might pretend that we are a firefighter, a wrestler, a nurse, Supergirl, Spiderman, a princess, and so on. We also like costumes at this stage and enjoy dressing up in our parents’ clothing, or tying a towel around our neck to “become” Superman or Wonder Woman.

3. **Team Games.** This third stage, organized play, or team games, begins roughly when we enter school. The
significance for the self is that to play these games we 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, it isn’t enough that we know our own role; we also must be able to anticipate what everyone else on the field will do when the ball is hit or thrown.

Mead also said there were two parts of 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 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 like robots, with programmed software shoved into us. Rather, our “I” is active. It evaluates the reactions of others and organizes them into a unified whole. Mead added that the “I” even monitors the “me,” fine-tuning our ideas and attitudes to help us better meet what others expect of us.

**In Sum:** In studying the details, you don’t want to miss the main point, which some find startling: Both our self and our mind are social products. 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 so would not possess a self-concept or that entity we call the mind. The self and mind, then, like language, are products of society.

### Piaget and the Development of Reasoning

The development of the mind—specifically, how we learn to reason—was studied in detail by Jean Piaget (1896–1980). This Swiss psychologist noticed that when young children take intelligence tests, they often give similar wrong answers. This set him to thinking that the children might be using some consistent, but incorrect, reasoning. It might even indicate that children go through some natural process as they learn how to reason.

Stimulated by such an intriguing possibility, Piaget set up a laboratory where he could give children of different ages problems to solve (Piaget 1950, 1954; Flavel et al. 2002). After years of testing, Piaget concluded that children do go through a natural process as they develop their ability to reason. This process has four stages. (If you mentally substitute “reasoning skills” for the term operational as we review these stages, Piaget’s findings will be easier to understand.)

1. **The sensorimotor stage** (from birth to about age 2) During this stage, our understanding is limited to direct contact—sucking, touching, listening, looking. We aren’t able to “think.” During the first part of this stage, we do not even know that our bodies are separate from the environment. Indeed, we have yet to discover that we have toes. Neither can we recognize cause and effect. That is, we do not know that our actions cause something to happen.
2. **The preoperational stage** (from about age 2 to age 7) During this stage, we develop the ability to use symbols. However, we do not yet understand common concepts such as size, speed, or causation. Although we are learning to count, we do not really understand what
numbers mean. Nor do we 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) Our reasoning abilities are more developed, but they remain concrete. We can now understand numbers, size, causation, and speed, and we are able to take the role of the other. We can even play team games. Unless we have concrete examples, however, we are unable to talk about concepts such as truth, honesty, or justice. We can explain why Jane’s answer was a lie, but we cannot describe what truth itself is.

4. The formal operational stage (after the age of about 12) We now are capable of abstract thinking. We can talk about concepts, come to conclusions based on general principles, and use rules to solve abstract problems. During this stage, we are likely to become young philosophers (Kagan 1984). If we were shown a photo of a slave during our concrete operational stage, we might have said, “That’s wrong!” Now at the formal operational stage we are likely to add, “If our county was founded on equality, how could anyone own slaves?”

Global Aspects of the Self and Reasoning
Cooley’s conclusions about the looking-glass self appear to be true for everyone around the world. So do Mead’s conclusions about role taking and the mind and self as social products, although researchers are finding that the self may develop earlier than Mead indicated. The stages of reasoning that Piaget identified probably also occur worldwide, although researchers have found that the stages are not as distinct as Piaget concluded and the ages at which individuals enter the stages differ from one person to another (Flavel et al. 2002). Even during the sensorimotor stage, for example, 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; Suizzo 2000). College, for example, nurtures the fourth stage, and people with this experience apparently have more ability for abstract thought. Social experiences, then, can modify these stages.

Learning Personality, Morality, and Emotions
Our personality, morality, and emotions are vital aspects of who we are. Let’s look at how we learn these essential aspects of our being.

Freud and the Development of Personality
Along with the development of the mind and the self comes the development of the personality. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) developed a theory of the origin of personality that has had a major impact on Western thought. Freud, a physician in Vienna in the early 1900s, founded psychoanalysis, a technique for treating emotional problems through long-term 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 element, 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: food, safety, attention, 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 and end up wearing 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, the ego fails to control the conflict between the id and the superego. Either the id or the superego dominates this person, leading to internal confusion and problem behaviors.

**Sociological Evaluation.** Sociologists appreciate Freud's emphasis on socialization—his assertion 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 I just summarized applies to both females and males, Freud assumed that what is "male" is "normal." He even referred to females as inferior, castrated males (Chodorow 1990; Gerhard 2000). It is obvious that sociologists need to continue to research how we develop personality.

**Kohlberg, Gilligan, and the Development of Morality**

If you have observed young children, you know that they want immediate gratification and show little or no concern for others. (“Mine!” a 2-year-old will shout, as she grabs a toy from another child.) Yet, at a later age this same child will become considerate of others and try to be fair in her play. How does this change happen?

**Kohlberg’s Theory.** Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1975, 1984, 1986; Reed 2008) concluded that we go through a sequence of stages as we develop morality. Building on Piaget’s work, he found that children start in the amoral stage I just described. For them, there is no right or wrong, just personal needs to be satisfied. From about ages 7 to 10, children are in what Kohlberg called a preconventional stage. They have learned rules, and they follow them to stay out of trouble. They view right and wrong as what pleases or displeases their parents, friends, and teachers. Their concern is to avoid punishment. At
about age 10, they enter the conventional stage. During this period, morality means following the norms and values they have learned. In the postconventional stage, which Kohlberg says most people don’t reach, individuals reflect on abstract principles of right and wrong and judge people’s behavior according to these principles.

**Gilligan and Gender Differences in Morality.** Carol Gilligan, another psychologist, grew uncomfortable with Kohlberg’s conclusions. They just didn’t match her own experience. Then she noticed that Kohlberg had studied only boys. By this point, more women had become social scientists, and they had begun to question a common assumption of male researchers, that research on boys would apply to girls as well.

Gilligan (1982, 1990) decided to find out if there were differences in how men and women looked at morality. After interviewing about 200 men and women, she concluded that women are more likely to evaluate morality in terms of personal relationships. Women want to know how an action affects others. They are more concerned with personal loyalties and with the harm that might come to loved ones. Men, in contrast, tend to think more along the lines of abstract principles that define right and wrong. As they see things, an act either matches or violates a code of ethics, and personal relationships have little to do with the matter.

Researchers tested Gilligan’s conclusions. They found that both men and women use personal relationships and abstract principles when they make moral judgments (Wark and Krebs 1996). Although Gilligan no longer supports her original position (Brannon 1999), the matter is not yet settled. Some researchers have found differences in how men and women make moral judgments (White 1999; Jaffee and Hyde 2000). Others stress that both men and women learn cultural forms of moral reasoning (Tappan 2006).

As with personality, in this vital area of human development, sociological research is also notably absent.

**Socialization into Emotions**

Emotions, too, are an essential aspect of who we become. Sociologists who research this area of our “humaness” find that emotions are not simply the results of biology. Like the mind, emotions depend on socialization (Hochschild 2008). 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, that we simply express universal feelings. Paul Ekman (1980), a psychologist who studied emotions in several countries, concluded that everyone experiences six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. He also observed that we all show the same facial expressions when we feel these emotions. A person from Peru, 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 Peruvian’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 wired into our biology.

**Expressing Emotions.** If we have universal facial expressions to express basic emotions, then this is biology, something that Darwin noted back in the 1800s (Horwitz and Wakefield 2007:41). What, then, does sociology have to do with them? Facial expressions are only one way by which we show emotions. We also use our bodies, voices, and gestures.

Jane and Sushana have been best friends since high school. They were hardly ever apart until Sushana married and moved to another state a year ago. Jane has been waiting eagerly at the arrival gate for Sushana’s flight, which has been delayed. When Sushana exits, she and Jane hug one another, making “squeals of glee” and even jumping a bit.

If you couldn’t tell from their names that these were women, you could tell from their behavior. To express delighted surprise, U.S. women are allowed to make “squeals of glee” in public places and to jump as they hug. In contrast, in the exact circumstances, U.S. men
are expected to shake hands, and they might even give a brief hug. If they gave out “squeals of glee,” they would be violating a fundamental “gender rule.”

In addition to “gender rules” for expressing emotions, there also are “rules” of culture, social class, relationships, and settings. 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 so significant that it, too, cuts across 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 feelings more openly if we are with close friends, more guardedly if we are at a staff meeting with the corporate CEO. The setting, then, is also important, with each setting having its own “rules” about emotions. As you know, the emotions we can express at a rock concert differ considerably from those we can express in a classroom. A good part of our socialization during childhood centers on learning our culture’s feeling rules.

What We Feel

Joan, a U.S. woman who had been married for seven years, had no children. When she finally gave birth and the doctor handed her a healthy girl, she was almost overcome with happiness. Tafadzwa, in Zimbabwe, had been married for seven years and had no children. When the doctor handed her a healthy girl, she was almost overcome with sadness.

The effects of socialization on our emotions go much deeper than guiding how, where, and when we express our feelings. From this example, you can see that socialization also affects what we feel (Clark 1997; Shields 2002). To understand why the woman in Zimbabwe felt sadness, you need to know that in her culture to not give birth to a male child is serious. It lowers her social status and is a good reason for her husband to divorce her (Horwitz and Wakefield 2007:43).

People in one culture may even 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 words to express them.

Research Needed. Although Ekman identified six emotions as universal in feeling and facial expression, I suspect that there are more. It is likely that all people around the world have similar feelings and facial expressions when they experience helplessness, despair, confusion, and shock. We need cross-cultural research to find out whether these are universal emotions. We also need research into how culture guides us in feeling and expressing 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 essential to 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 you act: the expectations of friends and parents, of neighbors and teachers; classroom norms and college rules; city, state, and federal 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. Your social mirror, then—the result of your being socialized into a self and emotions—sets up effective controls over your behavior. In fact, socialization into self and emotions is so effective that some people feel embarrassed just thinking about running naked 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 the shaping of 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

Learning the Gender Map

For a child, society is uncharted territory. A major signpost on society’s map is gender, the attitudes and behaviors that are expected of us because we are a male or a female. In learning the gender map (called gender socialization), we are nudged into different lanes in life—into contrasting attitudes and behaviors. We take direction so well that, as adults, most of us act, think, and even feel according to this gender map, our culture’s guidelines to what is appropriate for our sex.

The significance of gender is emphasized throughout this book, and we focus specifically on gender in Chapter 11. For now, though, let’s briefly consider some of the “gender messages” that we get from our family and the mass media.

Gender Messages in the Family

Our parents are the first significant others who show us how to follow the gender map. Sometimes they do so consciously, perhaps by bringing into play pink and blue, colors that have no meaning in themselves but that are now associated with gender. Our parents’ own gender orientations have become embedded so firmly that they do most of this teaching without being aware of what they are doing.

This is illustrated in a classic study by psychologists Susan Goldberg and Michael Lewis (1969), whose results have been confirmed by other researchers (Fagot et al. 1985; Conners 1996; Clearfield and Nelson 2006).

Goldberg and Lewis asked mothers to bring their 6-month-old infants into their laboratory, supposedly to observe the infants’ development. Covertly, however, they 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, to try to climb over the barrier.

Goldberg and Lewis concluded that mothers subconsciously reward daughters for being passive and dependent, and sons for being active and independent.

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**gender** the behaviors and attitudes that a society considers proper for its males and females; masculinity or femininity

**gender socialization** the ways in which society sets children on different paths in life because they are male or female
Our gender lessons continue throughout childhood. On the basis of our sex, we are given different kinds of toys. Boys are more likely to get guns and “action figures” that destroy enemies. Girls are more likely to get dolls and jewelry. Some parents try to choose “gender neutral” toys, but kids know what is popular, and they feel left out if they don’t have what the other kids have. The significance of toys in gender socialization can be summarized this way: Almost all parents would be upset if someone gave their son Barbie dolls.

Parents also subtly encourage boys to participate in more rough-and-tumble play. They expect their sons to get dirtier and to be more defiant, their daughters to be daintier and more compliant (Gilman 1911/1971; Henslin 2007). In large part, they get what they expect. Such experiences in socialization lie at the heart of the sociological explanation of male–female differences. For a fascinating account of how socialization trumps biology, read the Cultural Diversity box on the next page.

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.”

The family is one of the primary ways that we learn gender. Shown here is a woman in South Africa. What gender messages do you think her daughter is learning?
**Socialization into Gender**

**Cultural Diversity around the World**

**Women Becoming Men: The Sworn Virgins**

“I will become a man,” said Pashe. “I will do it.”

The decision was final. Taking a pair of scissors, she soon had her long, black curls lying at her feet. She took off her dress—never to wear one again in her life—and put on her father’s baggy trousers. She armed herself with her father’s rifle. She would need it.

Going before the village elders, she swore to never marry, to never have children, and to never have sex.

Pashe had become a sworn virgin—and a man.

There was no turning back. The penalty for violating the oath was death.

In Albania, where Pashe Keqi lives, and in parts of Bosnia and Serbia, it is the custom for some women to become men. They are neither transsexuals nor lesbians. Nor do they have a sex-change operation, something unknown in those parts.

The custom is a practical matter, a way to support the family. In these traditional societies, women must stay home and take care of the children and household. They can go hardly anywhere except to the market and mosque. Women depend on men for survival.

And when there is no man? That is the problem.

Pashe’s father was killed in a blood feud. In these traditional groups, when the family patriarch (male head) dies and there are no male heirs, how are the women to survive? In the fifteenth century, people in this area hit upon a solution: One of the women takes an oath of lifelong virginity and takes over the man’s role. She then becomes a social he, wears male clothing, carries a gun, owns property, and moves freely throughout the society.

She drinks in the tavern with the men. She prays with the men at the mosque.

When a man wants to marry a girl of the family, she is the one who approves or disapproves of the suitor.

In short, the woman really becomes a man. Actually, a social man, sociologists would add. Her biology does not change, but her gender does. Pashe had become the man of the house, a status she occupied her entire life.

Taking this position at the age of 11—she is in her 70s now—also made Pashe responsible for avenging her father’s murder. But when his killer was released from prison, her 15-year-old nephew (she is his uncle) rushed in and did the deed instead.

Sworn virgins walk like men, they talk like men, they hunt with the men, and they take up manly occupations. They become shepherds, security guards, truck drivers, and political leaders. Those around them know that they are women, but in all ways they treat them as men. When they talk to women, the women recoil in shyness.

The sworn virgins of Albania are a fascinating cultural contradiction: In the midst of a highly traditional group, one built around male superiority that severely limits women, we find both the belief and practice that a biological woman can do the work of a man and function in all of a man’s social roles. The sole exception is marriage.

Under a communist dictator until 1985, with travel restricted by law and custom, mountainous northern Albania had been cut off from the rest of the world. Now there is a democratic government, and the region is connected to the rest of the world by better roads, telephones, and even television. As modern life trickles into these villages, few women want to become men. “Why should we?” they ask. “Now we have freedom. We can go to the city and work and support our families.”

**For Your Consideration**

How do the sworn virgins of Albania help to explain what gender is? Apply functionalism: How was the custom and practice of sworn virgins functional for this society? Apply symbolic interactionism: How do symbols underlie and maintain women becoming men in this society? Apply conflict theory: How do power relations between men and women underlie this practice?

Based on Zumbrun 2007; Bilefsky 2008; Smith 2008.
As you grew up, you saw girls and boys teach one another what it means to be a female or a male. You might not have recognized what was happening, however, so let’s eavesdrop on a conversation between two eighth-grade girls studied by sociologist Donna Eder (2007).

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.

Do you see how these girls were giving gender lessons? They were reinforcing images of appearance and behavior that they thought were appropriate for females. Boys, too, reinforce cultural expectations of gender. Sociologist Melissa Milkie (1994), who studied junior high school boys, found that much of their talk centered on movies and TV programs. Of the many images they saw, the boys would single out those associated with 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 a lot of behavior like this. You may have been amused, or even have shaken your head in disapproval. But did you peer beneath the surface? Milkie did. What is really going on? The boys, she concluded, were using media images to develop their identity as males. They had gotten the message: “Real” males are 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

As you can see with the boys Milkie studied, a major guide to the gender map is the mass media, forms of communication that are directed to large audiences. Let’s look further at how media images reinforce gender roles, the behaviors and attitudes considered appropriate for our sex.

Advertising. The advertising assault of stereotypical images begins early. The average U.S. child watches about 25,000 commercials a year (Gantz et al. 2007). In these commercials, girls are more likely to be shown as cooperative and boys as aggressive (Larson 2001). Girls are also more likely to be portrayed as giggly and less capable at tasks (Browne 1998).

The gender messages continue in advertising directed at adults. I’m sure you have you noticed the many ads that portray men as dominant and rugged and women as sexy and submissive. Your mind and internal images are the target of this assault of stereotypical, culturally molded images—from cowboys who roam the wide-open spaces to scantily clad women, whose physical assets couldn’t possibly be real. Although the purpose is to sell products—from booze and bras to cigarettes and cellphones—the ads also give lessons in gender. Through images both overt and exaggerated and subtle and below our awareness, they help teach what is expected of us as men and women in our culture.

Television. Television reinforces stereotypes of the sexes. On prime-time television, male characters outnumber female characters. Male characters are also more likely to be portrayed in higher-status positions (Glascock 2001). Sports news also maintains traditional stereotypes. Sociologists who studied the content of televised sports news in Los Angeles found that female athletes receive less coverage and are sometimes trivialized (Messner et al. 2003). Male newscasters often focus on humorous events in women’s sports or turn the female athlete into a sexual object. Newscasters even manage to emphasize breasts and bras and to engage in locker-room humor.

Stereotype-breaking characters, in contrast, are a sign of changing times. In comedies, women are more verbally aggressive than men (Glascock 2001). The powers of the teenager Buffy, The Vampire Slayer, were remarkable. On Alias, Sydney Bristow exhibited 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.” This new gender portrayal continues in a variety of programs, such as *Totally Spies.*

The gender messages on these programs are mixed. Girls are powerful, but they have to be skinny and gorgeous and wear the latest fashions. Such messages present a dilemma for girls, for this model continuously thrust before them is almost impossible to replicate in real life.

**Video Games.** The movement, color, virtual dangers, unexpected dilemmas, and ability to control the action make video games highly appealing. High school and college students, especially men, find them a seductive way of escaping from the demands of life. The first members of the “Nintendo Generation,” now in their thirties, are still playing video games—with babies on their laps.

Sociologists have begun to study how video games portray the sexes, but we still know little about their influence on the players’ ideas of gender (Dietz 2000; Berger 2002). Women, often portrayed with exaggerated breasts and buttocks, are now more likely to be main characters than they were just a few years ago (Jansz and Martis 2007). Because these games are on the cutting edge of society, they sometimes also reflect cutting-edge changes in sex roles, the topic of the Mass Media in Social Life box on the next page.

**Anime.** *Anime* is a Japanese cartoon form. Because anime crosses boundaries of video games, television, movies, and books (comic), we shall consider it as a separate category. As shown below, one of the most recognizable features of anime is the big-eyed little girls and the fighting little boys. Japanese parents are concerned about anime’s antisocial heroes and its depiction of violence, but to keep peace they reluctantly buy anime for their children (Khattak 2007). In the United States, violence is often part of the mass media aimed at children—so with its cute characters, anime is unlikely to bother parents. Anime's depiction of active, dominant little boys and submissive little girls leads to the question, of course, of what gender lessons it is giving children.

**In Sum:** “Male” and “female” are such powerful symbols that learning them forces us to interpret the world in terms of gender. As children learn their society’s symbols of gender, they learn that different behaviors and attitudes are expected of boys and girls. First transmitted by the family, these gender messages are reinforced by other social institutions. As they become integrated into our views of the world, gender messages form a picture of “how” males and females “are.” 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 in our socialization.
Agents of Socialization

Individuals 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 in other ways to take our place in society. We shall first consider the family, then the neighborhood, religion, day care, school and peers, and the workplace.
The Family

The first group to have a major impact on us is our family. Our experiences in the family are so intense that their influence is lifelong. These experiences establish our initial motivations, values, and beliefs. In the family, we receive our basic sense of self, ideas about who we are and what we deserve out of life. It is here that we begin to think of ourselves as strong or weak, smart or dumb, good-looking or ugly—or somewhere in between. And as already noted, the lifelong process of defining ourselves as female or male also begins in the family.

The Family and Social Class. Social class makes a huge difference in how parents socialize their children. Sociologist Melvin Kohn (1959, 1963, 1976, 1977; Kohn et al. 1986) found that working-class parents are mainly concerned that their children stay out of trouble. For discipline, they tend to use physical punishment. Middle-class parents, in contrast, focus more on developing their children's curiosity, self-expression, and self-control. They are more likely to reason with their children than to use physical punishment.

But why such differences? As a sociologist, Kohn knew that the answer was life experiences of some sort. He found that answer in the world of work. Blue-collar workers are usually told exactly what to do. Since they expect their children's lives to be like theirs, they stress obedience. Middle-class parents, in contrast, have work that requires more initiative, and they socialize their children into the qualities they find valuable.

Kohn wanted to know why some working-class parents act more like middle-class parents, and vice versa. As he probed further, he found the key—the parents’ type of job. Some middle-class workers, such as office workers, are supervised closely. It turned out that they follow the working-class pattern and emphasize conformity. 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).

Social class also makes a difference in the ideas that parents have of how children develop, ideas that have fascinating consequences for children's play (Lareau 2002).
Working-class parents think of children as similar to wild flowers—they develop naturally. Since the child’s development will take care of itself, they see parenting primarily as providing food, shelter, and comfort. They set limits on their children’s play (“Don’t go near the railroad tracks”) and let them play as they wish. Middle-class parents, in contrast, think of children as more like tender house plants—to develop correctly, they need a lot of guidance. With this orientation, they try to structure their children’s play to help them develop knowledge and social skills. They may want them to play baseball, for example, not for the enjoyment of the sport, but to help them learn how to be team players.

The Neighborhood

As all parents know, some neighborhoods are better than others for their children. Parents try to move to those neighborhoods—if they can afford them. Their commonsense evaluations are borne out by sociological research. Children from poor neighborhoods are more likely to get in trouble with the law, to become pregnant, to drop out of school, and even to have worse mental health in later life (Brooks-Gunn et al. 1997; Sampson et al. 2001; Wheaton and Clarke 2003; Yonas et al. 2006).

Sociologists have also found that the residents of more affluent neighborhoods keep a closer eye on the children than do the residents of poor neighborhoods (Sampson et al. 1999). The basic reason is that the more affluent neighborhoods have fewer families in transition, so 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

How important is religion in your life? You could be among the two-thirds of Americans who belong to a local congregation, but what if you are among the other third (Gallup Poll 2007b)? Why would religion be significant for you? To see the influence of religion, we can’t look only at people who are religious. Even in the extreme—people who wouldn’t be caught dead near a church, synagogue, or mosque—religion plays a powerful role. Perhaps this is the most significant aspect of religion: Religious ideas so pervade U.S. society that they provide the foundation of morality for both the religious and the nonreligious.

For many Americans, the influence of religion is more direct. This is especially true for the two of every five Americans who report that during a typical week they attend a religious service (Gallup Poll 2007). Through their participation in congregational life, they learn doctrine, values, and morality, but the effects on their lives are not limited to these obvious factors. For example, people who participate in religious services learn not only beliefs about the hereafter but also ideas about what kinds of clothing, speech, and manners are appropriate for formal occasions. Life in congregations also provides a sense of identity for its participants, giving them a feeling of belonging. It also helps to integrate immigrants into their new society, offers an avenue of social mobility for the poor, provides social contacts for jobs, and in the case of African American churches, has been a powerful influence in social change.

Day Care

It is rare for social science research to make national news, but occasionally it does. This is what happened when researchers published their findings on 1,200 kindergarten children they had studied since they were a month old. They observed the children multiple times both at home and at day care. They 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 time in day care have weaker bonds with their mothers and are less affectionate to them. They are also less cooperative with others and more likely to fight and to be “mean.” By the time they get to kindergarten, they are more likely to talk back to teachers and to disrupt the classroom. 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 (Belsky 2006). On the positive side, the children also scored higher on language tests.

Are we producing a generation of “smart but mean” children? This is not an unreasonable question, since the study was designed well and an even larger study of children in England has come up with similar findings (Belsky 2006). Some point out that the differences between children who spend a lot of time in day care and those who spend less time are slight. Others stress that with 5 million children in day care (Statistical Abstract 2009:Table 559), slight differences can be significant for society. The researchers are following these children as they continue in school. The most recent report on the children, when they were in the 6th grade, indicates that these patterns are continuing (Belsky et al. 2007).

The School

Part of the manifest function, or intended purpose, of formal education is to teach knowledge and skills, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. The teaching of such skills is certainly part of socialization, but so are the schools’ latent functions, their unintended consequences that help the social system. Let’s look at this less visible aspect of education.

At home, children learn attitudes and values that match their family’s situation in life. At school, they learn a broader perspective that helps prepare them to take a role in the world beyond the family. At home, a child may have been the almost exclusive focus of doting parents, but in school, the child learns universality—that the same rules apply to everyone, regardless of who their parents are or how special they may be at home. The Cultural Diversity box on the next page explores how these new values and ways of looking at the world sometimes even replace those the child learns at home.

Sociologists have also identified a hidden curriculum in our schools. This term refers to values that, although not explicitly taught, are part of a school’s “cultural message.” For example, the stories and examples that are used to teach math and English may bring with them lessons in patriotism, democracy, justice, and honesty. There is also a corridor curriculum, what students teach one another outside the classroom. Unfortunately, the corridor curriculum seems to emphasize racism, sexism, illicit ways to make money, and coolness (Hemmings 1999). You can determine for yourself which of these is functional and which is dysfunctional.

Conflict theorists point out that social class separates children into different educational worlds. Children born to wealthy parents go to private schools, where they learn skills and values that match their higher position. Children born to middle- and lower-class parents go to public schools, which further refine the separate worlds of social class. Middle-class children learn that good jobs, even the professions, beckon, while children from blue-collar families learn that not many of “their kind” will become professionals or leaders. This is one of the many reasons that children from blue-collar families are less likely to take college prep courses or to go to college. In short, schools around the world reflect and reinforce their nation’s social class, economic, and political systems. We will return to this topic in Chapter 17.

Peer Groups

As a child’s experiences with agents of socialization broaden, the influence of the family decreases. Entry into school marks only one of many steps in this transfer of allegiance.
Cultural Diversity in the United States

Immigrants and Their Children: Caught Between Two Worlds

It is a struggle to adapt to a new culture, for its behaviors and ways of thinking may be at odds with the ones already learned. This can lead to inner turmoil. One way to handle the conflict is to cut ties with your first culture. Doing so, however, can create a sense of loss, one that is perhaps 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 first spoke 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 forget 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 Rodriguez, language and education were not simply devices that eased the transition to the dominant culture. They also 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 much, 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 Fulbright fellowship to study English Renaissance literature at the University of London.

But the past shadowed Rodriguez. Prospective employers were impressed with his knowledge of Renaissance literature. At job interviews, however, they would skip over the Renaissance training and ask him if he would teach the Mexican novel and be an advisor 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 life in 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). German was left behind, but broken English and awkward expressions remained for a lifetime. Then, too, there were the lingering emotional connections to old ways, as well as the suspicions, haughtiness, and slights of more assimilated Americans. He longed for security by grasping the past, but at the same time, he wanted to succeed in the everyday reality of the new culture. Have you seen similar conflicts?

Agents of Socialization

One of the most significant aspects of education is that it exposes children to peer groups that help them resist the efforts of parents and schools to socialize them.

When sociologists Patricia and Peter Adler (1998) observed children at two elementary schools in Colorado, they saw how children separate themselves by sex and develop separate gender worlds. 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, Nortec, death metal, rock and roll, country, or gospel, it is almost inevitable that you also prefer that kind of music. In high school, if your friends take math courses, you probably do, too (Crosnoe et al. 2008). It is the same for 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 jobs that we take 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 many jobs. This may involve anticipatory socialization, learning to play a role before entering it. Anticipatory socialization is a sort of mental rehearsal for some future activity. We may talk to people who work in a particular career, read novels about that type of work, or take a summer internship in that field. Such activities allow us to

Gradeschool boys and girls often separate themselves by gender, as in this playground in Schenectady, New York. The socialization that occurs during self-segregation by gender is a topic of study by sociologists.
gradually identify 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 more to their liking.

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**

What 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—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 find companions, start to fit in, and feel comfortable. The experiences of people who join a cult or begin psychotherapy are even more profound, for they learn views that conflict with their earlier socialization. If these ideas “take,” not only does the individual’s behavior change but he or she also learns a fundamentally different way of looking at life.

**Total Institutions**

Relatively few of us experience the powerful agent of socialization that sociologist 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 are in charge. Boot camp, prisons, concentration camps, convents, some religious cults, and some military 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, or shaving the head. Newcomers may be ordered to strip, undergo an examination (often in a humiliating, semipublic setting), and then put on a uniform that designates their new status. Officials also take away the individual’s personal identity kit, items such as jewelry, hairstyles, clothing, and other body decorations used to express individuality.

Total institutions are isolated from the public. The bars, walls, gates, and guards not only keep the inmates in but also keep outsiders out. Staff members supervise the day-to-day lives of the residents. Eating, sleeping, showering, recreation—all are standardized. Inmates learn that their previous statuses—student, worker, spouse, parent—mean nothing. The only thing that counts is their current status.

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 knowing that the institution has had profound effects on attitudes and orientations to life.
Socialization Through the Life Course

You 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

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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 young men were ordinary civilians. Now, as a sergeant sneeringly calls them “maggots,” their heads are buzzed (25 seconds per recruit), and they are quickly thrust 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. There is a ban on using the first person “I.” Even a simple request must be made in precise Marine style 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, men and women, 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 taught 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 his neck cords bulge. “I!” he says, his face just inches from the recruit. With spittle flying from his mouth, he screams, “I! I! I! I! I! I!”

“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. Subpar performance is not accepted, whether it be a dirty rifle or a loose thread on a uniform. The underperformer is shouted at, derided, humiliated. The group suffers for the individual. If one recruit is slow, the entire platoon is punished.

The system works.

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.

Sources: Based on Garfinkel 1956; Goffman 1961; Ricks 1995; Dyer 2007.
married, and have a baby 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 way as a freshman and as a senior.) Second, your life course differs by social location. Your social class, race–ethnicity, and gender, for example, map out distinctive worlds of experience. This means that 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; Quadagno 2007).

**Childhood (from birth to about age 12)**

Consider how different your childhood would have been if you had grown up in another historical era. Historian Philippe Ariès (1965) noticed that in European paintings from about A.D. 1000 to 1800 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.

From this, Ariès drew a conclusion that sparked a debate among historians: He said that during this era in Europe, 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 an early age. 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 assumed her 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 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 today, where children work in many occupations—from blacksmiths to waiters. They are most visible as street peddlers, hawking everything from shoelaces to chewing gum and candy. The photo on the upper left of page 251 not only illustrates different activities, but also reflects a view of children remarkably different from the one common in the Most Industrialized Nations.

Child rearing, too, was remarkably different. Three hundred years ago, parents and teachers 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], where they were forced to inspect the rotting corpses 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 perceive children. When children had the leisure to go to school and postponed taking on adult roles, parents and officials came to think of them as tender and innocent, as needing more care, comfort, and protection. Such attitudes of dependency grew, 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.” It is, instead, rooted in geography, history, and economic development.

**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 our childhood will be like. Although a child’s biological characteristics (such as being small and dependent) are universal, the child’s social experiences (the kind of life the child lives) are not. Because of this, sociologists say that childhood varies from culture to culture.

**Adolescence (ages 13–17)**

It might seem strange to you, but adolescence is a social invention, not a “natural” age division. In earlier centuries, people simply moved from childhood to young adulthood, with no stopover in between. The Industrial Revolution allowed adolescence to be invented. It brought such an abundance of material surpluses that for the first time in history people in their teens were not needed in the labor force. At the same time, education became more important for achieving success. As these two forces in industrialized societies converged, they created a gap between childhood and adulthood. The term adolescence was coined to indicate this new stage in life (Hall 1904), one that has become renowned for inner turmoil.

To mark the passage of children into adulthood, tribal societies hold initiation rites. This grounds their self-identity. They know how they fit in the society. In the industrialized world, however, adolescents must “find” themselves, grappling with the dilemma of “I am neither a child nor an adult. Who am I?” As they attempt to carve out an identity that is distinct from both the “younger” world being left behind and the “older” world that is still out of reach, adolescents develop their own subcultures, with distinctive clothing, hairstyles, language, gestures, and music. We usually fail to realize that contemporary society, not biology, created this period of inner turmoil that we call adolescence.

**Transitional Adulthood (ages 18–29)**

If society invented adolescence, can it also invent other periods of life? As Figure 3.2 illustrates, this is actually happening now. Postindustrial societies are adding another period of extended youth to the life course, which sociologists call transitional adulthood (also known as adultolescence). After high school, millions of young adults postpone adult responsibilities by going to college. They are mostly freed from the control of their parents, yet they don’t have to support themselves. After college, many live at home, so they can live cheaply while they establish themselves in a career—and, of course, continue to “find themselves.” During this time, people are “neither psychological adolescents nor sociological adults” (Keniston 1971). At some point during this period of extended youth, young adults ease into adult responsibilities. They take a full-time job, become serious about a career, engage in courtship rituals, get married—and go into debt.

![FIGURE 3.2 Transitional Adulthood: A New Stage in the Life Course](image)

Who has completed the transition?

The data show the percentage who have completed the transition to adulthood, as measured by leaving home, finishing school, getting married, having a child, and being financially independent.

The Middle Years (ages 30–65)

The Early Middle Years (ages 30–49). During their 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. Common in this period are divorce and losing jobs. 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. Reality, however, hits them in the face: too little time, too many demands, even too little sleep. Something has to give, and attempts to resolve this dilemma are anything but easy.

The Later Middle Years (ages 50–65). During the later middle years, health issues 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 what they had hoped to achieve. Many people also find themselves caring not only for their own children but also for their aging parents. Because of this double burden, which is often crushing, people in the later middle years sometimes are called the “sandwich generation.”

Life during this stage isn’t stressful for everyone. Many find late middle age to be the most comfortable period of their lives. They enjoy job security and a standard of living higher than ever before; they have a bigger house (one that may even be paid for), drive newer cars, and take longer 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 age 65 on)

The Transitional Older Years. In agricultural societies, when most people died early, old age was thought to begin at around age 40. As industrialization brought improved nutrition, medicine, and public health, allowing more people to live longer, the beginning of “old age” gradually stretched out. People who are in good health today are coming to experience their 60s not as old age, but as an extension of their middle years. This change is so recent that a new stage of life seems to be evolving, the period between retirement (averaging about 63) and old age—which people are increasingly coming to see as beginning around age 75 (“Schwab Study . . . ” 2008). We can call this stage the transitional older years.

Researchers are focusing more on this transitional stage of life. They have found that social isolation harms both the body and brain, that people who are more integrated into social networks stay mentally sharper (Ertel et al. 2008). With improved heath, two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between their late 60s and age 75 continue to be sexually active (Lindau et al. 2007). Not only are people in this stage of life having more sex, but they also are enjoying it more (Beckman et al. 2008).

Because we have a self and can reason abstractly, we can contemplate death. In our early years, we regard death as a vague notion, a remote possibility. As people see their parents and friends die and observe their own bodies no longer functioning as before, however, the thought of death becomes less abstract. Increasingly during this stage in the life course, people feel that “time is closing in” on them.

The Later Older Years. As with the preceding periods of life, except the first one, there is no precise beginning point to this last stage. For some, the 75th birthday may mark entry into this period of life. For others, that marker may be the 80th or even the 85th birthday. For most, this stage is marked by growing frailty and illness; for all who reach this stage, it is ended by death. For some, the physical decline is slow, and a rare few manage to see their 100th birthday mentally alert and in good physical health.
The Sociological Significance of the Life Course

The sociological significance of the life course is that it does not merely represent biology, things that naturally occur to all of us as we add years to our lives. Rather, social factors influence our life course. As you just saw, when you live makes a huge difference in the course that your life takes. And with today’s rapid social change, the difference in historical time does not have to be vast. Being born just ten years earlier or later may mean that you experience war or peace, an expanding economy or a depression—factors that vitally affect what happens to you not just during childhood but throughout your life.

Your social location, such as social class, gender, and race–ethnicity, is also highly significant. Your experience of society’s events will be similar to that of people who share your social location, but different from that of people who do not. If you are poor, for example, you likely will feel older sooner than most wealthy people for whom life is less demanding. Individual factors—such as your health or marrying early or entering college late—may throw your life course “out of sequence.”

For all these reasons, this sketch of the life course may not adequately reflect your own past, present, and future. As sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) would say, because employers are beating a path to your door, or failing to do so, you are more inclined to marry, to buy a house, and to start a family—or to postpone these life course events. In short, changing times change lives, steering the life course into different directions.

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 simply a result of their exposure to socializing agents.

Sociologists do not think of people in this way. Although socialization is powerful, and affects all of us profoundly, we have a self. Established in childhood and continually modified by later experience, our self is dynamic. Our self 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 on our environment.

It is precisely because people are not robots that their behavior is so hard to predict. The countless reactions of others merge in each of us. As the self develops, we each internalize or “put together” these innumerable reactions, producing a unique whole called the individual. Each of us uses our mind to reason and to make choices in life.

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

Society Makes Us Human

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

Observations of isolated, institutionalized, and feral children help to answer the nature–nurture 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. 64–68.

Socialization into the Self and Mind

How do we acquire a self?

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. Pp. 68–70.

How do children develop reasoning skills?

Jean Piaget identified four stages that children go through as they develop the ability to reason: (1) sensorimotor, in which understanding is limited to sensory stimuli such as touch and sight; (2) preoperational, the ability to use symbols; (3) concrete operational, in which reasoning ability is more complex but not yet capable of complex abstractions; and (4) formal operational, or abstract thinking. Pp. 70–71.

Learning Personality, Morality, and Emotions

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

Sigmund Freud viewed personality development as the result of our 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, consider how social factors—social class, gender, religion, education, and so forth—underlie personality. Pp. 71–72.

How do people develop morality?

Children are born without morality. Lawrence Kohlberg identified four stages children go through as they learn morality: amoral, preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. As they make moral decisions, both men and women use personal relationships and abstract principles. Pp. 72–73.

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. 73–75.

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

**Agents of Socialization**

*What are the main agents of socialization?*

The **agents of socialization** include the family, neighborhood, religion, day care, school, **peer groups**, the **mass media**, and the workplace. Each has its particular influences in socializing us into becoming full-fledged members of society. Pp. 80–86.

**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. Pp. 86–87.

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**THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT Chapter 3**

1. What two agents of socialization have influenced you the most? Can you pinpoint their influence on your attitudes, beliefs, values, or other orientations to life?

2. Summarize your views of the “proper” relationships of women and men. What in your 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.

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

What can you find in MySocLab?  
www.mysoclab.com

- Complete Ebook
- Practice Tests and Video and Audio activities
- Mapping and Data Analysis exercises

Where Can I Read More on This Topic?

Suggested readings for this chapter are listed at the back of this book.