What is Human Nature?

• The *nature vs. nurture debate*: Are we the people that we are because of our genetics, or our socialization? This debate asks which factor determines individual behaviors and traits.

• Ultimately both sides do play a role in making us the people that we are.
The Process of Socialization

- **Socialization** is the process of learning and internalizing the values, beliefs, and norms of our social group.

- The socialization process begins in infancy and lasts throughout the lifetime.

- Language facilitates socialization.
The Development of the Self

- The **self** is our personal identity that is separate and different from all other people.
- Sociologists believe the self is created and modified through interaction in our lives.
The Development of the Self

- **Charles Cooley** believed that one’s sense of self depends on seeing one’s self reflected in interactions with others.

- The *looking-glass self* refers to the notion that the self develops through our perception of others’ evaluations and appraisals of us.
The Development of the Self

• **George Herbert Mead** expanded Cooley's ideas. Mead also believed that the self was created through social interaction and that this process started in childhood.
The Particular Other
The Development of the Self

• The acquisition of language skills coincides with the growth of mental capacities, including the ability to think of ourselves as separate and distinct, and to see ourselves in relationship to others.
Erving Goffman believed that meaning is constructed through interaction. His approach, dramaturgy, compares social interaction to the theater, where individuals take on roles and act them out for their “audience.” Goffman sees social life as a sort of game, where we work to control the impressions others have of us, a process he called impression management.
The Thomas Theorem

• W. I. Thomas stated that “if people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.” (Now called the Thomas theorem.)

• Because we encounter ambiguous situations every day, many meanings are possible. The way we define each situation, then, becomes its reality.
Agents of Socialization

• *Agents of socialization* are the social groups, institutions, and individuals that provide structured situations where socialization occurs.

• Major agents include:
  • Family
  • Schools
  • Peers
  • The mass media
Agents of Socialization (cont’d)

- The family is the single most significant agent of socialization in all societies and teaches us the basic values and norms that shape our identity.
Agents of Socialization (cont’d)

• Schools provide education and socialize us through a hidden curriculum (a set of behavioral traits such as punctuality, neatness, discipline, hard work, competition, and obedience) that teaches many of the behaviors that will be important later in life.
• Peers provide very different social skills and often become more immediately significant than the family, especially as children move through adolescence. The media has become an important agent of socialization, often overriding the family and other institutions in instilling values and norms.
Agents of Socialization (cont’d)

- **Resocialization** is the process of replacing previously learned norms and values with new ones as a part of a transition in life.
Agents of Socialization (cont’d)

• A dramatic form of resocialization takes place in a total institution, which is an institution (a place such as a prison, cult, or mental hospital) that cuts individuals off from the rest of society so that their lives can be controlled and regulated.
Total Institutions
A *status* is a position in society that comes with a set of expectations.

- An *ascribed status* is one we are born with that is unlikely to change.
- An *achieved status* is one we have earned through individual effort or that is imposed by others.
• One’s *master status* is a status that seems to override all others and affects all other statuses that one possesses. *Roles* are the behaviors expected from a particular status.
• **Role conflict** occurs when the roles associated with one status clash with the roles associated with a different status. **Role strain** occurs when roles associated with a single status clash. Either of these may lead to **role exit**.
Emotions and Personality

• Though we tend to believe that our emotions are highly personal and individual, there are social patterns in our emotional responses.
Emotions and Personality (cont’d)

- *Emotion work* refers to the process of evoking, suppressing, or managing feelings to create a public display of emotion.
Emotion Work
New Interactional Contexts

- Sociologists are interested in interactions that occur in *copresence* (when individuals are in one another’s physical presence), and the way that modern technology enables us to interact with people very far away.
Mediating Interaction
New Interactional Context (cont’d)

• Postmodern theorists claim that the role of technology in interaction is one of the primary features of postmodern life.

• We are now exposed to many more sources to help us shape our sense of self.
The process of learning and internalizing the values, beliefs, and norms of a social group is called:

a. culturization
b. nature
c. socialization
d. social isolation
In the nature vs. nurture debate, nurture is referring to:

a. The environment that you were raised in.
b. The genetics that you were born with.
When does the process of socialization end?

a. Once a child begins to understand language.
b. When a child starts school.
c. When a person gets their first job.
d. When a person gets married.
e. Never—the process lasts throughout the lifetime.
Who stated, “if we define situations as real, they are real in their consequences?”

a. Sigmund Freud  
b. Charles Cooley  
c. George Herbert Mead  
d. Karl Marx  
e. W. I Thomas
A big agent of socialization for Americans is:

a. The family
b. Schools
c. Peers
d. The mass media
e. All of the above
Mowgli, the “Man Cub”
Dreams and the Subconscious
Front and Back Regions
# Theory in Everyday Life

<table>
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<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Approach to the Self and Interaction</th>
<th>Case Study: Identity in Childhood</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PSYCHOANALYSIS</strong></td>
<td>Freud’s theory of the unconscious mind as composed of an interrelated system (id, ego, superego) that underlies human behavior; personality develops through psycho-sexual stages.</td>
<td>Parents instill a conscience (superego) in children through rules that govern their instinctual behavior (id) until children mature and are self-governing (ego).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LOOKING-GLASS SELF</strong></td>
<td>Cooley’s theory of the self concept as derived from how we imagine others see us, and the feelings about ourselves based on the perceived judgments of others.</td>
<td>Parents and significant others serve as a reflection to children, who develop a sense of self based on their appraisals, real or imagined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY</strong></td>
<td>Mead’s theory of the self that develops through three stages (preparatory, play, and game); in role taking the particular or generalized other, we learn to see ourselves as others do.</td>
<td>Children gain a sense of self through imitation, play, and games, in which they learn various roles and take on the perspectives of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DRAMATURGy</strong></td>
<td>Goffman’s theory of the presentation of self; we are like actors on a stage whose performance strategies aid in impression management.</td>
<td>Children learn the arts of impression management and may present a different self to their parents than to other children or teachers.</td>
</tr>
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Family Has the Longest-Lasting Influence
How Are Television Shows a Socializing Agent?
Sister Pauline Quinn
Chris Spielman, His Wife, Stefanie, and Their Two Children
How Different Cultures Grieve
How Different Cultures Grieve
How Different Cultures Grieve
This concludes the Lecture PowerPoint presentation for Chapter 5

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