# The Social Self

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#### **Socialization**

The interactive process through which people learn the basic skills, values, beliefs, and behavior patterns of a society

#### Self

Your conscious awareness of possessing a distinct identity that separates you and your environment from other members of society

#### Locke: Tabula Rasa

- Newborns were born with a tabula rasa (clean slate)
- Born with no personality
- Acquire personality as a result of personal experiences
- Humans can be molded into any type of personality

## Cooley: The Looking-Glass Self (Interactionist Perspective)

- Develop an image of ourselves based on how we imagine we appear to others
- Other people act as a mirror reflecting back the image we project through their reactions to our behavior

## **Cooley: The Looking-Glass Self**

- 3 Step Process of Development of Self
- 1. Imagine how we appear to others
- 2. Based on their reactions to us, we attempt to determine whether others view us as we view ourselves
- 3. We use our perceptions of how others judge us to develop feelings about ourselves

## **Cooley: The Looking-Glass Self**

- Process begins very early in childhood
- A newborn has no sense of person or place
- Child's primary group (family) interact, talk, reward, punish

### **Mead: Role-Taking**

- Builds off Cooley's Looking-Glass Self
- Eventually we take on or pretend to take on the role of others (Role-Taking)
- Allows us to anticipate what others expect from us
- Learn to see ourselves through the eyes of others and act accordingly
  - Significant others then Generalized other

# Mead's Development of Self

#### Step 1: Imitation (Under age 3)

No sense of self and can only imitate

**Step 2: Play** (ages 3 - 6)

- See themselves in relation to others
- Recognize specific roles and act out those roles

#### Step 3: Organized Games (Over age 6)

• Take on their own roles as well as anticipate the actions of others

# Mead's Development of Self

#### I vs Me

- According to Mead, the self consists of two related parts
- The "I" is the unsocialized, spontaneous, self-interested component of personality and self-identity
- The "me" is aware of expectations and attitudes of society, the socialized self

## **Goffman: Impression Management**

- Builds off Mead's Role Taking
- "Dramaturgy" social interaction is like a drama being performed on a stage for an audience
- We change our personalities based on what impression we want to convey
- Each role has a setting and props