INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, we will explore the "self" through the lens of sociology. It intends to facilitate the exploration of the issues and concerns regarding self and identity to understand one's self better. The question of "*how the self is being developed in the sociologist's eyes*" will be the starting point of our inquiry.

A sociological perspective of self starts with the premise that a reciprocal relationship exists between self and society. The self influences society through different activities individuals engage in, like creating groups, organizations, networks, and institutions. On the other hand, society influences the self through its shared cultures during social interactions and engagements of each member. It enables the self to take the role of others.

Why do we need a sociological perspective anyway in understanding oneself? There are at least two reasons: (1) to help us to see general social patterns in the behavior of the individual, and (2) to offer insights about the social world that extends far beyond explanations that rely on individual quirks and personalities.

MODULE 1.2 LESSON on Sociological Perspectives
by: Rowena Gaspay - Fernandez

Ready to learn more about sociological perspectives? If that is so, at the end of this lesson, you will be able to achieve the following intended learning outcomes:

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Identify the conceptualizations of the SELF based on the perspective of Sociology.
2. Reflect on one' social self development through creative arts.

To achieve the outcomes above, start by participating in the Looking-Glass Self Activity and sharing your insights in the processing.

MOTIVATION

A. LOOKING-GLASS SELF ACTIVITY

1. Choose two partners. Your partner may be a roommate, a friend, a classmate, a sibling, a relative, or anyone you are comfortable with. For each partner, choose one topic that you will discuss with each other. You may select one topic from the choices below.

    a. When was the last time you had a heart-to-heart talk? Why? How was it?

    b. As an adolescent, how did you face the challenge of the quarantine period?

2. After your discussion, answer the questions in the box. Write at least one sentence about each of your partners.

What I think of my partner?	What do I think my partner thinks of me?

B. PROCESSING

✓ After sharing with your partners, what are your common things with your chosen partners?

_____
_____
_____

✓ When you answered what your partner might think of you, did your answer match what your partner thinks of you?

_____
_____

The looking-glass self is just one of the sociological concepts of the self. Learn more by reading and reflecting on the lessons below.

LESSON PROPER

Sociology is best defined as the science of society, social institutions, and social relationships, specifically: the systematic study of the development, structure, interaction, and collective behavior of organized groups of human beings. Hence, sociology studies social life, social change, and the causes and consequences of human behavior in a social context.

Sociologically, the "self" is a product of social interaction. This perspective also explains how "the self" emerges as a product of social experience. This social experience happens when we start to socialize. In this process of socialization, we acquire our social identities. Also, we tend to internalize the values and roles expected of us in our social world. Conklin (as cited by Lilly, 1984) says that society transmits its cultural values for us to function properly as its members.

Let us try to understand how the self is developed based on the three sociologists' perspectives: George Mead's social self theory, Charles Cooley's looking-glass self theory, and Erving Goffman's performed self / dramaturgical approach.

1. SOCIAL SELF THEORY

First, let us talk about George Herber Mead's theory. It is considered that George Mead's social self is one of the most important sociological approaches to the development of self. He conceptualizes the role of the mind in a social process. He also believed that the self emerges from the social experience. The self is not part of the body and does not exist at birth. Thus, the self starts to develop when we interact with others. For Mead, existence in a community comes before individual consciousness.
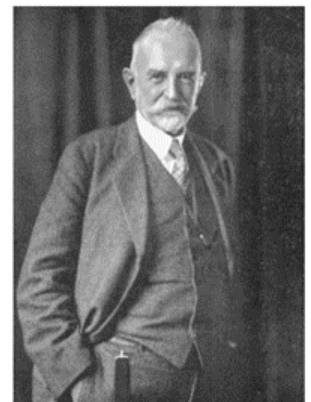
The social experience involves communication and the exchange of symbols. It is we, people, who create the meaning of a symbol. This meaning emerges based on our interaction with it. For example, to elaborate on this idea, the symbol '#' means a '*number sign*' for the older generation. However, the present generation gave it new meaning and called it a '*hashtag*.' Another example is when a guy and a lady are always together; different meanings could be attached to their relationship depending on who perceives it. They could be seen as friends, lovers, or siblings.

Furthermore, Mead believed that the **self is reflective and reflexive**. It is evident when in social interaction. An example is when you want to understand the motive of another person. Mead implies that to understand someone's intention, you must imagine the situation from the other person's point of view. By taking the role of the other, the self becomes reflective and reflexive.

Mead's theory posits **stages of self-development**.

The first stage is called the preparatory stage, which takes place between 0 – 3 years old. At this point, the children do not have a self because they imitate the people around them. As the children learn the language, they learn the symbols as well. For example, when babies are hungry, they cry. The mother will say "*dede*," and the one giving it is "mama." In this process, the baby learns that the way to address hunger is to have "*dede*" provided by "mama." The "mama" and "*dede*" are the languages, while the mother and the object "*dede*" are the symbols.

The second stage is the play stage which occurs between 3 – 5 years old. Role-taking happened in this stage. Children begin to assume the perspective of their significant other mentally. The self is developing and emerges through pretend play. A classic example of this idea is when children play "*bahay-bahayan*." The boy pretends to be the father, the girl takes the role of the mother, and there is an imaginary baby. The imaginary baby represents the child in their family. Children internalize the parts of their parents. The portrayals of the roles of a mother and a father are reflections of their perspectives of how their mother and father perform their functions in the family.

The third stage is the game stage which takes place between 5 – 8/9 years old. At this stage, children consider tasks and relationships simultaneously. They take the perspective of several others and can take the rules of society. It is learned through group games. For example, they play taguan. They establish the rule. For instance, one will volunteer as the *taya*, and others will hide. The last to be found by the *taya* will be the next *taya*. Thus, rules and roles are learned in the process. But still, the self is not fully formed in this stage.

The fourth stage is the generalized other stage. According to Mead, the self is formed when a person takes the perspective of generalized others. Generalized others are the general attitude or perspectives of a community that a person may take to him/herself. In short, it is the general expectations of society. People tend to use these expectations to shape their behaviors. Examples are society's expectations for a mother, a father, etc. At this point, the person develops a less fragmented sense of self. An example of this is when a woman looks at the mirror; she judges the reflection based on the general perspective dictated by society (e.g., media, culture) on how the woman should look.

Let us check how much you have remembered from Mead's Stages of Development. Try filling in the boxes below.

Give at least two characteristics of self in each stage.

| Preparatory stage	Play stage	Game stage	Generalized others stage

Were you able to give at least two learnings from each stage? That's good, then. Let us learn more about Mead.

For Mead, the self is a complex reflection of the society around it. Instead, he believes that the self is not a social robot; the self is an active process. He postulates that the self has two interactive sides: the "I" and the "Me." It is the dual nature of the self or the belief that we experience the self as both subject and object.

Me is the socialized aspect of the self. It contains the learned behaviors, attitudes, and expectations of others and society that the individual assumes. Here, you tend to think beyond yourself. Your concern does not revolve around yourself alone; instead, you consider society's expectations of you. It is the objective self.

I is part of the self that is unsocialized, unpredictable, and spontaneous. It is the part of you where you do not mind what society expects from you. You only concern about yourself. The individual's identity is based on their response to the "me." It is the subjective self.

2. LOOKING GLASS SELF THEORY
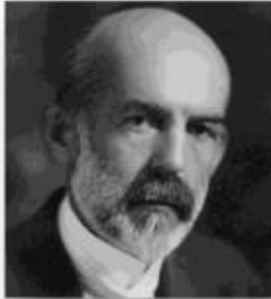
The second concept we will discuss is the Looking Glass Self theory of Charles Cooley. According to Charles Cooley, **people's self-understanding is constructed, in part, by the perception of how others view them**. An example is when someone tells you that you dance well, you will internalize it, and in turn, you will tell yourself that you are a good dancer. It is a process called "the looking-glass self." The **self is built within social settings**. The people we interact with become the mirror through which we view ourselves. For example, your friends, teachers, classmates, neighbors, parents, and siblings have varying perceptions of you. You tend to collate and internalize these perceptions and develop one description of yourself. What if these people give you opposing views about yourself? For example, your teacher viewed you as a diligent student while your father viewed you as "*tamad*"? Cooley said that even those opposing views about ourselves are continually internalized. We tend to integrate it into our attributes.

The theory also explains that favorable views of people around us help us to develop a positive self-concept. On the other hand, if we think that others perceive us negatively, we also develop a negative self-concept or pessimistic view of ourselves.

Try reflecting on your self-concept by identifying the views of others about you.

Give at least 5 favorable and 5 unfavorable views of other people about you.

Favorable Views	Unfavorable Views

How did it go? Did you gain more understanding of your self-concept? We hope that you did. It is how the looking-glass self influences the formation of the self-concept. Let us move on and tackle Goffman's concept of the performed self.

3. PERFORMED SELF

Lastly, we have the concept of Erving Goffman with his performed self in self-construction. Constructing situations and drama is rooted in his belief that life is like a theatrical play. According to him, "people routinely behave like actors on a stage. There are roles, scripts, and actions. Daily life is a series of stagecraft rules." He believes that the meaning of life is constructed through interactions. That is why he proposed the concept of interaction order. Interaction order is what we immediately do in the presence of others. For example, what do you do if you see your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend? *Nagtatago ka ba*? *Mag-iiba ka ba ng daan*? Thus, it is the first thing you do when seeing the other person.

Moreover, the dramaturgy concept focuses on how individuals take on roles and act them out to present a favorable impression to their "audience." According to him, we want to control how others view us. He called this process impression management. We wear different masks depending on the social situation to control how others view us. We adapt what we are depending on whom we are interacting with. Juggling with the masks happened when two different social groups met. When the presentation of self is too different, the person will need clarification about what mask to wear. It is rooted in Goffman's belief that we _do not have a true self_. Thus, there is no identifiable performer behind the role.

Shakespeare also agrees with comparing life to a theater by saying, "All the world is a stage and all men and women merely player: they have their exits and entrances. And one man in his plays many parts." Shakespeare also viewed life as a stage; we are only actors and actresses. We have exits (which can be our death) and entrances (where birth can be considered our entrance) because we are not permanent here. So, there are times that we lose important people, and we come to meet new ones (*Parang yung ex mo na pumasok at lumabas lang sa stage ng buhay mo, toink!).* And we play many roles: friend, daughter/son, sibling, boyfriend/girlfriend, mother/father, and many more. In every role, we possess a variety of masks as well.

Let's check on your roles. Fill in the blanks below and consider the different masks you wear for each role.

Who are you as:

Son/Daughter: _____

Friend: _____

Student: _____

How many masks do you wear? Do they differ from each other? Your reflections will help you understand your performed self better.

Further, Goffman has his ideas about impression management and stages for role performance. In his concept of impression management, he proposed the following components of how we control peoples' impressions of us.

Front stage - people play different roles throughout their lives and display various behaviors depending on where they are and the time of the day. It is where we act.

Backstage – when people engage in backstage behavior, they are free of the expectations and norms that dictate front-stage behavior. In short, this is what we do if no one is looking.

Goffman added that each situation's definition lends itself to a different approach, and the consequences are real. He also points out that the **self is a social construction** dependent on a situation.

Now that you have learned about the three sociological approaches on the concept of the self, test your self about how much you have grasped about social self. Do the activities below.

APPLICATION

Which of the abovementioned theories best explains the development of your social self? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

BULLET IT!

Summarize your learnings into three points. Give three statements summarizing everything you have learned from this module.

❖ _____
_____

❖ _____
_____

❖ _____
_____

LET'S DO SOME ARTWORK

Reflect on your process of social self development. Express it by creating any piece of art you choose (e.g., poem, image collage, songwriting, painting, etc.) Please include a brief explanation of your work. You may use extra paper (or surface) if the space here is insufficient.

GUESS WHAT

The next topic will be about the self through the lens of psychology. This self is called

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐ SELF.

RUBRICS for Let's Do Some Artwork Activity

CRITERIA	Needs Improvement 76 – 85 pts	Sufficient 86 – 94 pts	Excellent 95 – 100 pts
Content Comprehensiveness 50%	There are, at most, two learned concepts presented and utilized.	More than two learned concepts are presented and utilized. The presentation of content merely shows logical organization but is not reflective.	More than two learned concepts are presented and utilized. The presentation of content shows critical and reflective thoughts.
Presentation of Artwork 30%	The artwork is almost meaningless. It does not reflect the process of self development as intended.		The artwork is meaningful and clearly and logically reflects the process of self development as defined.
Organization of Explanation 20%	There are many grammatical issues. Its readability is problematic.	There are a few grammatical issues. The flow of thoughts is at least easy to follow.	There are minor to no grammatical issues. The flow of thoughts is clear. The presentation of ideas is logical.

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