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### The Development of the Self

The psychological self consists of the combination of the subjective “I” and the constructed “Me,” which are constantly developing throughout the individual’s life. The process of the formation of the self starts “as a social actor, construed in terms of performance traits and social roles” and is developed later into a motivated agent “as personal goals, motives, values, and envisioned projects for the future become central features of how the I conceives of the Me” (McAdams 272). The last stage begins when “the self as autobiographical author aims to construct a story of the Me, to provide adult life with broad purpose and a dynamic sense of temporal continuity” (McAdams 272). The actor-agent-author structure of the self is influenced by a number of factors such as culture, gender, ethnicity, and class.

Although people define themselves in the context of their physical, social, and personality characteristics, each culture brings certain differences in these categories. The culture in which our self is formed influences the perception of ourselves. For example, people from individualistic societies tend to focus on their uniqueness, while the individuals with the collectivistic backgrounds refer substantially to their social group memberships and roles (Stangor). The gender is the reason for the “cognitive self-categorization as “boy” or “girl” including gender identity, stability, and constancy when the “self” learns to identify the gender of oneself and others (Frable 2). Moreover, after individuals determine their gender, they accept typical features and the norms of behavior of the chosen kind. For instance, my brother tended to play with cars and robots, while I preferred dolls, which is quite typical of boys and girls respectively. Both ethnicity and class belonging serve the self as the tools for classifying oneself and people around in accordance with the specific set of features, like the color of the skin or the economic status. All of the enumerated categories influence the levels of the self in various ways. Gender, culture, age, ethnicity, and class belonging are the basis on which the social actor identifies the person’s traits and roles. The agent uses these categories to determine the individual’s values and goals. For the author, these identifications serve as the source of “basic forms, metaphors, motifs, and plots out of which narrative identity is made” (McAdams 287). Therefore, the self is formed under the influence of biological and environmental factors that determine how we perceive ourselves and other individuals.