SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
social perception and attitudes

Social psychology

- *Social Thinking*

- *Attributing Behavior to Persons or to Situations*

- *Attitudes and Actions*

- *Social Influence*

- *Conformity and Obedience*

- *Social Influence*

- *Group Influence*

- *Social Relations*

- *Prejudice*

- *Aggression*

Introductory remarks

- humans as naïve psychologists (Heider, George Kelly- personal construct theory)

Hypothesis →Theory →Observations → More hypotheses

- people' s natural tendency at assessing others' s personalities (accurate?, *The Reflecting Team Approach*)

- psychologists- biased?

attribution

- causation of one' s own behavior

- importance of situational context

- *Attribution theory (Weiner, 1980, 1992):*

- *(1) the person must perceive or observe the behavior,*

- *(2) then the person must believe that the behavior was intentionally performed, and*

- *(3) then the person must determine if they believe the other person was forced to perform the behavior (in which case the cause is attributed to the situation) or not (in which case the cause is attributed to the other*

- *a, First, the cause of the success or failure may be* ***internal*** *or* ***external.*** *LOCUS OF CONTROL*

- *b, Second, the cause of the success or failure may be either* ***stable*** *or* ***unstable.*** *STABILITY*

- *c, Third, the cause of the success or failure may be either* ***controllable*** *or* ***uncontrollable.*** *CONTROLLABITY*

- **An important assumption of attribution theory is that people will interpret their environment in such a way as to maintain a positive**

ATTRIBUTION
What causes certain behaviour?

It is something within the person we observe, i.e. their personality	Is it caused by something outside the person we observe, i.e. their situation
= internal attribution	= external attribution
We make a **DISPOSITIONAL ATTRIBUTION**	We make a **SITUATIONAL ATTRIBUTION**

Self-Serving Bias.

- **We tend to equate successes to internal and failures to external attributes (Miller & Ross, 1975).**

- **Imagine getting a promotion.**

- **This bias is true for most people, but for those who are depressed, have low self-esteem, or view themselves negatively, the bias is typically opposite.**

- fundamental attribution error (acter-observer bias)

- Lee Ross (1977), Nisbett et al. (1973)

- *as extrapolation from a measured characteristic to an unrelated characteristic*

- *actor-in the center, environment in the background / the knowledge -the information at the disposal (friends vs. strangers)*

- *for example: person driving in a bad way (terrible driving, or a bad day?)*

- *Subjects read pro- and anti-Fidel Castro essays.*

- *Subjects asked to rate the pro-Castro attitudes of the writers (freely or coin-toss attitude)*

EXAMPLES OF ATTRIBUTIONS

- Students with higher ratings of self-esteem and with higher school achievement tend to attribute success to internal, stable, controllable factors such as ability, while they contribute failure to either internal, unstable, controllable factors such as effort, or external, uncontrollable factors such as task difficulty. For example, students who experience repeated failures in reading are likely to see themselves as being less competent in reading.

- High achievers will approach rather than avoid tasks related to succeeding because they believe success is due to high ability and effort which they are confident of. Failure is thought to be caused by bad luck or a poor exam, i.e. not their fault.

- Low achievers avoid success-related chores because they tend to (a) doubt their ability and/or (b) assume success is related to luck or to "who you know" or to other factors beyond their control. Thus, even when successful, it isn't as rewarding to the low achiever because he/she doesn't feel responsible, i.e., it doesn't increase his/her pride and confidence.

Locus of Control & Personality

Externals
- believe success or failure is a result of luck, chance, fate, or powerful others

- tends to be negative, give up easily, not try too hard

- will not initiate contact or attempt to repair damaged relationships

- work better when pace is automated

- feel victimized by illness & stress and take less preventive action

- correlated with emotional instability, anxiety, neuroticism

- feel more anger & perceive others to be less friendly
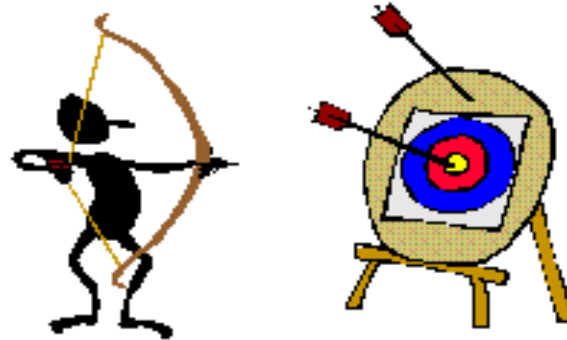
Internals
- believe they have control over personal successes and failures

- do better in jobs where they can set their own pace

- more health conscious & seek medical attention when needed

- less prone to stress related illnesses, anxiety, or depression

- high achievement and expects to perform well

- more independent, achieving and dominant

- express more contentment with life

Cognitive Dissonance (L. Festinger)

Overview:

According to cognitive dissonance theory, there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (i.e., beliefs, opinions). When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behavior, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behavior.

Two factors affect the strength of the dissonance: the number of dissonant beliefs, and the importance attached to each belief. There are three ways to eliminate dissonance:

 (1) reduce the importance of the dissonant beliefs,

(2) add more consonant beliefs that outweigh the dissonant beliefs, or

(3) change the dissonant beliefs so that they are no longer inconsistent.

Cognitive dissonance theory Leon Festinger
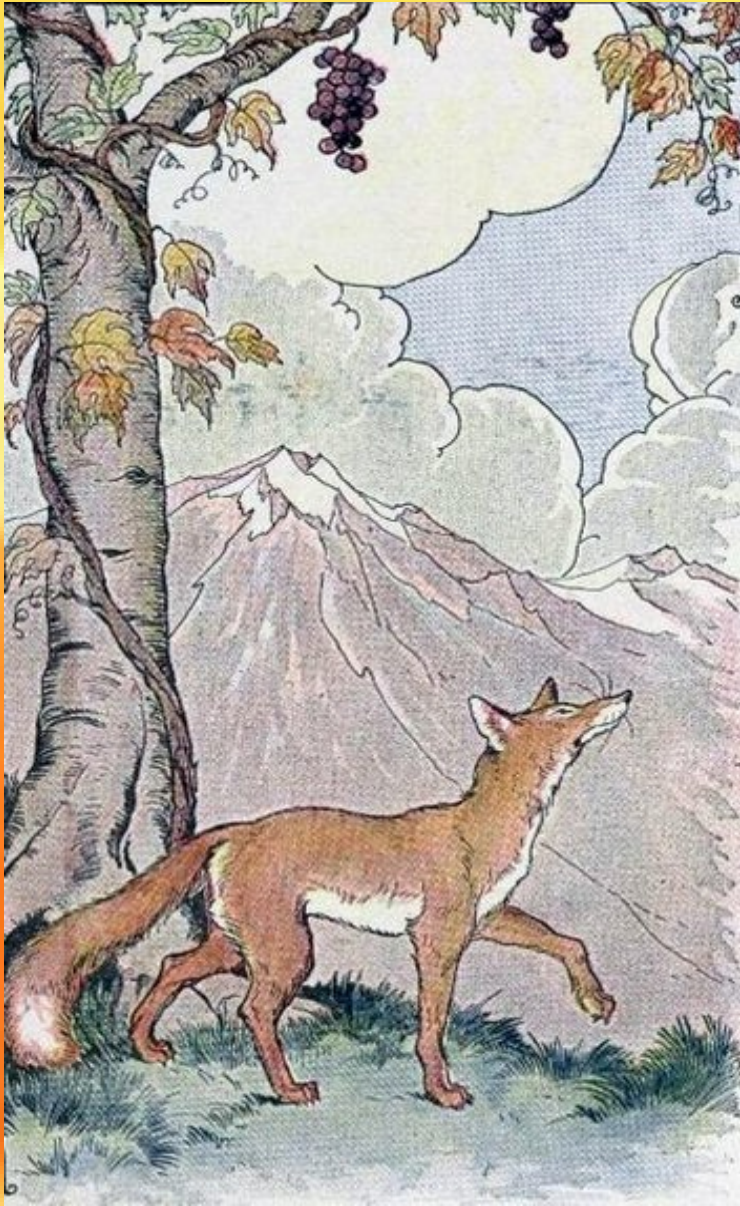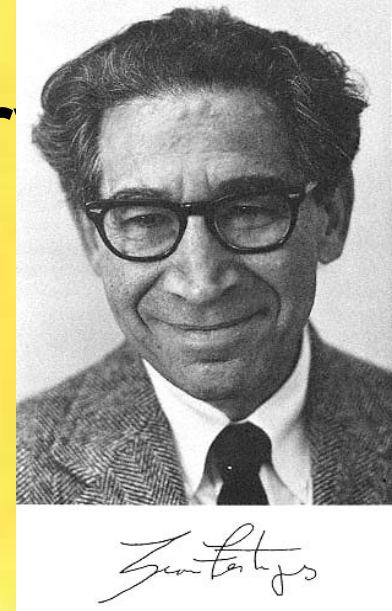
- **Principles:**

- 1. Dissonance results when an individual must choose between attitudes and behaviors that are contradictory.

- 2. Dissonance can be eliminated by reducing the importance of the conflicting beliefs, acquiring new beliefs that change the balance, or removing the conflicting attitude or behavior.

- STUDY WITH BORING TASK – REWARD (0$ 1$ 20$)- Persuasion- Rating of the task

- 1. World hunger is a serious problem that needs attention.

- 2. Our country needs to address the growing number of homeless.

- 3. The right to vote is one of the most valuable rights of American citizens.

- 4. Our government should spend less money on nuclear weapons and more on helping citizens better their lives.

- 1. Do you personally do anything to lessen world hunger (e.g., donate money or food or write your representative)?

- 2. Do you personally do anything to help the homeless (e.g., volunteer at a homeless shelter or donate money)?

- 3. Did you vote in the last election for which you were eligible?

- 4. Do you personally convey your feelings to the government (e.g., by writing your representative or by participating in protests/marches)?

- attractiveness bias
- - attractive people as being more social, intelligent
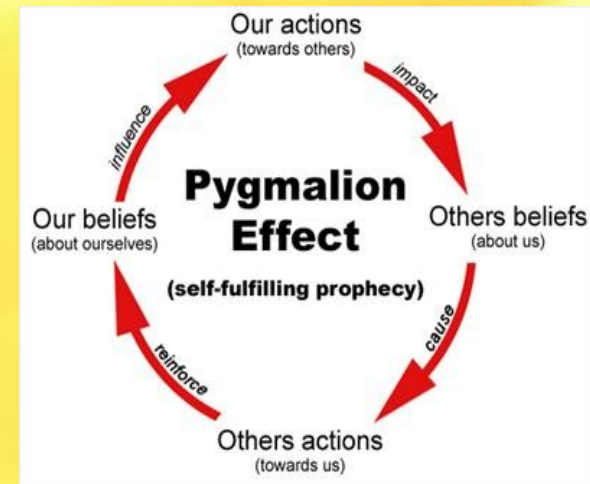- teachers evaluating pupils

- baby-face bias
- kind, naive, innocent, friendly
- Konrad Lorenz (caring, compassion elicited by the baby face)
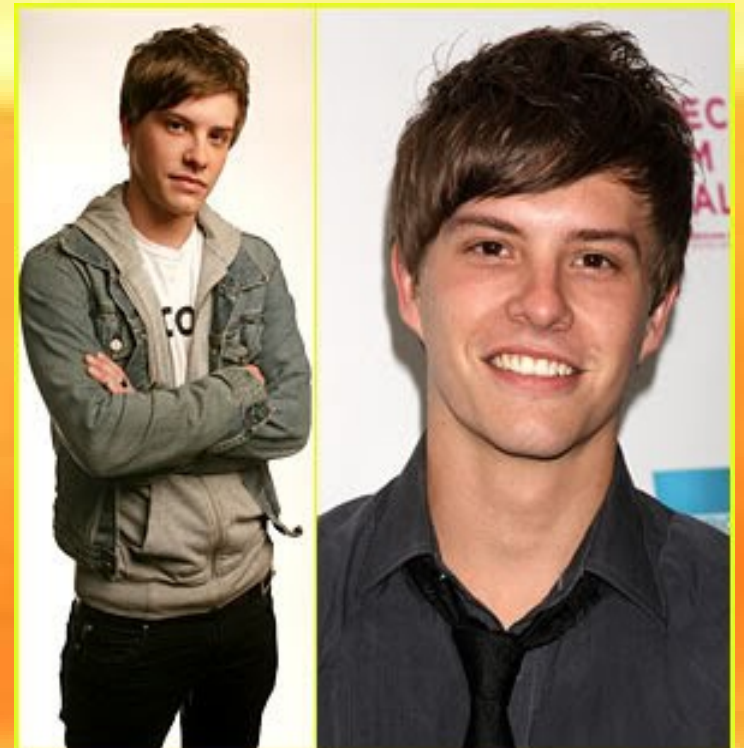
Self-fulfilling prophecies

- ## Pygmalion effect

Key Principles

The concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy can be summarized in these key principles:

We form certain expectations of people or events
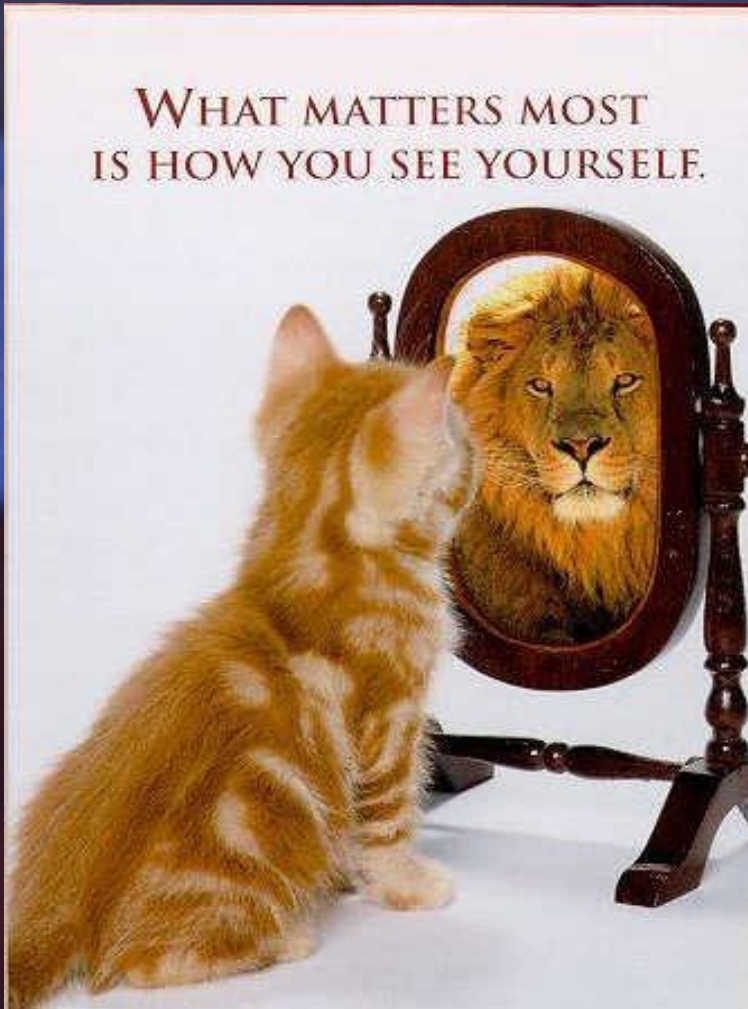**We communicate those expectations with various cues.**
People tend to respond to these cues by adjusting their behavior to match them.
The result is that the original expectation becomes true.

This creates a circle of self-fulfilling prophecies

Perceving and evaluating the self

WHAT MATTERS MOST IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.

- self- awareness emanates as being 15 months old
- *the dot-on-the-nose test- THE ROUGE TEST (self-recognition)*
- a social product?
- self-esteem

a, Seeing ourselves through eyes of others

- *Charles Cooley* the looking glass self

- responding in accordance with what we are told to be like (children being tidy and neat)

- depends on the firmness of self-beliefs (children vs. adults)

The Looking Glass Self

How my mom and dad see me.

How my girlfriend sees me.

How my older brother sees me.

How my ex-girlfriend sees me.

a,Seeing ourselves through eyes of others

- opposite effect (Zebrowitz et al.,(1995,1998)- soldiers, or submissive partners

- social roles (staring with William James)- general self+ many situational selfs CONTEXT!

- multiple selfs protect oneself
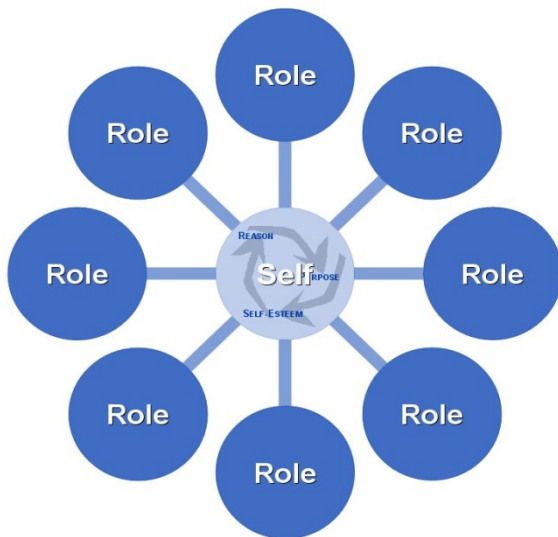
Expectations for the ways in which people are expected to behave in specific situations. These expectations are created and defined by the societies in which the people live, which means that different societies have different social roles (and therefore, different expectations for the ways people are "supposed to act").

b, Comparing and contrasting ourselves to others

- not passive acceptance of roles but selective process

- social comparison – dependent on a reference group (how different is it from myself?+ importance of the role, trait)

- We learn about our own abilities and attitudes by comparing ourselves with other people and their opinions. Mostly, we seek to compare ourselves with someone against whom we believe we should have reasonable similarity, although in the absence of such a benchmark, we will use almost anyone.

- *Upward social comparison* occurs where we mostly compare ourselves with people who we deem to be socially better than us in some way. *Downward social comparison* acts in the opposite direction.

- ***Hornstein et al***

b, Comparing and contrasting ourselves to others

- big-fish-in-little-pond effect vs. opposite effect (dependent on the achievement of the status)- Olympics (silver vs. bronze)

- Self-delusion:

- better-than-average phenomenon (overestimation of one's own abilities)

- self-serving attributional bias

- vs. depression

- vs. culture (Japan vs. USA)

- self-effacing vs. self- enhancing bias

- (what is an ideal person)

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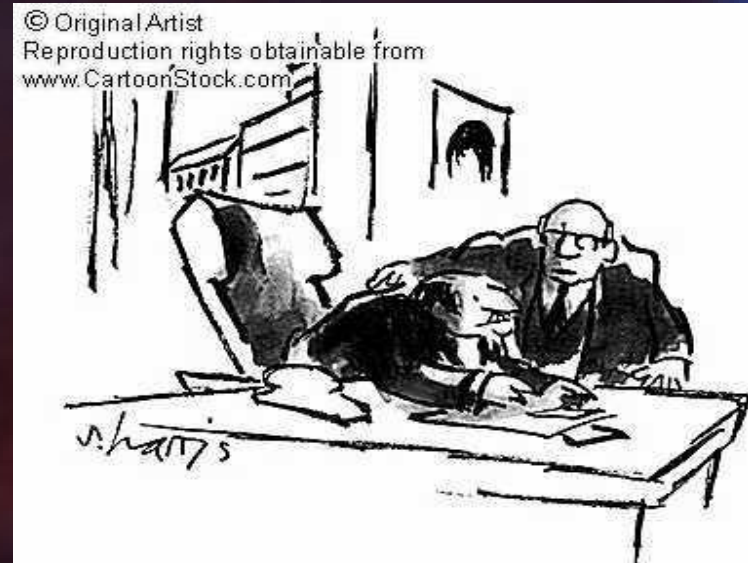
"But R.G., you can't be a big fish in all the big ponds—
you can only be a big fish in your big pond."

Seeing ourselves and others as one: Social Identity

- personal identity vs.social identity

- (Tajfel, Turner,1979)

- *Social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups*

- *creates ingroup/ self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group.*

- *think about: -our team in Olympics*

- *- the news report about reputation of your own country*

- *- friends' comments on your borther, sister...*

- *Group favoritism*

Don't Lose Your Social Identity

Raj Iyer, Copyright 2009
http://www.thegreenjar.com

- *A) the extent to which individuals identify with an ingroup to internalize that group membership as an aspect of their self-concept.*

- *B) the extent to which the prevailing context provides ground for comparison between groups.*

- *C) the perceived relevance of the comparison group, which itself will be shaped by the relative and absolute status of the ingroup.*

- *but Culture dependent!*

ATTITUDES

- Belief or opinion that has an evaluative component

- 3 components:

  - a. behavioral

  - b. affective

  - c. cognitive

- Functions: value-expressive, social, defensive (self-esteem), utilitarian

ATTITUDES

- Schwartz
- The value wheel
- Attitudes individuals' importance of existential values
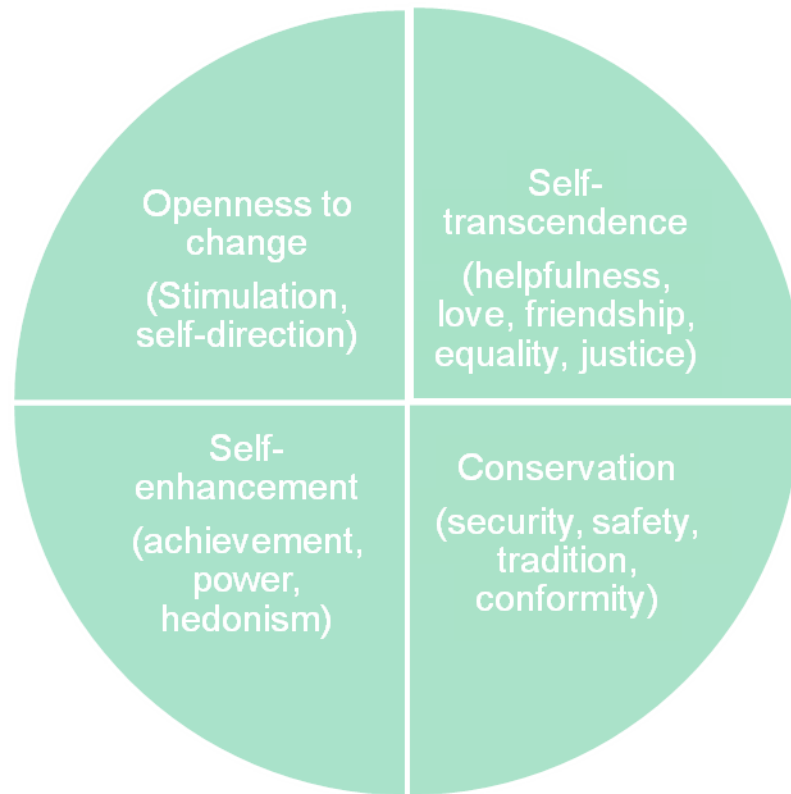
ATTITUDES

- Attitudes as social norms- shared rather than individual

- Experiment by Theodore Newcomb (1943)

- Students' political views transition from conservative to more liberal to match the values of their authorities (62% vs. 15%

- *think about: the attitudes shared by your college professors, your community, your important social group*

ATTITUDES

- Toward attaining cognitive consistency

- *Leon Festinger- Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*

- Inconsistency in our beliefs, values, attitudes creates a sense of conflict, disharmony

- Avoiding the dissonant information (Gruber and Sweeney: political news) example: buying an expensive house (not worth it), staying in an abusive relationship, changing attitude ("Ben Franklin phenomenon")

- Just-world bias(not believing it would create chaos)

ATTITUDES

- Attitudes guide

- mental guides for our behavior (Allport, 1935)

- Students attitudes toward cheating and actual cheating (score-dependent, more prone if low score)

- Retrieved from long-term memory

- Strength of attitudes (acquired by direct experience)