

Walking Stories



Lisa, a fragile Indonesian woman, walked along the paths of Saint Anthony's park. Saint Anthony is a mental hospital. Lisa was dressed in red, yellow and blue; I was looking at a painting of Mondriaan, of which the colours could cheer someone up on a grey Dutch day. She had put on all her clothes and she carried the rest of her belongings in a grey garbagebag. She looked like she was being hunted, mumbling formulas to avert the evil or the devils. I could not understand her words, but she repeated them with the rustling of her garbage bag on the pebbles of the path.

When she arrived at an intersection of two paths where low rose hips were blossoming, she stopped and went into the bushes. She lifted all her skirts and urinated; standing as a colourful flower amidst the green of the bushes and staring into the sky. A passer-by from the village where Saint Anthony's has its headquarters would probably have pretended not to see her, knowing that Lisa was one of the 'chronic mental patients' of the wards. Or, urinating so openly in the park may be experienced as a 'situational impropriety', but as many villagers told me: 'They do odd things, but they cannot help it.' The passer-by would not have known that Lisa was a 'walking story', that she had ritualised her walks in order to control the powers that lie beyond her control. Lisa was diagnosed with 'schizophrenia' and she suffered from delusions. When she had an acute psychosis, she needed medication to relieve her anxiety. Her personal story was considered as a symptom of her illness. That was, in a nutshell, the story of the psychiatrists of the mental hospital. Her own story was different. Lisa was the queen of the Indies and she had to have offspring to ensure that her dynasty would be preserved. She believed at that day that she was pregnant and that the magicians would come and would take away her unborn baby with a needle. To prevent the abortion, she had to take refuge in the park and carry all her belongings with her.



However, queens also have to heed nature's call and thus she went to the best place she could find: the rose hips. Lisa is indeed a 'walking story'. She has her story and she lives it. Her behaviour acquires its meaning when one knows the story. The story acquires meaning when one observes her behaviour. Saint Anthony's is a place full of walking stories.

For many people their behaviour is odd. Writing about them may be odd ethnography. However, beyond the oddity lie meanings that reveal the often taken-for-granted cultural knowledge and understandings.

What to do with Walking Stories?

Mad stories are evocative and metaphoric. They are full of symbols, but we think that those symbols are used in very personal, even idiosyncratic ways. We consider them incoherent and incomprehensible. They are not 'rational' and do not represent any 'normal' logic. They do not fit into categories. They escape every classification, save that of 'psychotic stories' or 'mad stories'. They are matters out of place. They are viewed as signs of madness and therefore show how much we should value health and normality. Yet, mad stories are attractive. The many studies and literature on the topic which fill the shelves of bookstores and are so eagerly bought are the best proof of this attraction. Why then put another book on the shelves?

De-pathologising mad stories

Psychiatry kidnaps the stories of mad people. This means that the stories are often transformed and re-interpreted into medical stories. They become 'pathographies'. By describing others as 'schizophrenic', they are incorporated into the cultural scheme of things. At the same time mad people are made into potentially 'normal' people. The madness can be overcome by conversion; they can be re-socialised into normality by therapies and pharmaceutical treatment. If they remain 'mad' this can be fought by higher doses. The greater part of scientific research on schizophrenia is blind to the possible different socio-cultural meanings of madness. The stories and behaviour are described in similar terms as used for 'normal' ones: expressions of experience, idioms of suffering. What the medical world sees as a disease has little to do with what people may experience. International, epidemiological studies leave out atypical cases to get better possibilities for cross-cultural comparison of onset and prognosis of the disease. One of the consequences of this practice is that the original stories

disappear, taking on the meaning of a symptom, a sign of mental illness. In the clinic, during the intake process, the patient has to tell the story to enable the psychiatrist to provide good diagnosis. Clinical storytelling relies on a chronology of bodily and social events. The sick person experiences altered states of being and tells this to the psychiatrist or the therapist. The therapist renders the sick person's story into narrative sequences to produce a diagnosis. The clinician brings the past to the present to locate causes of the sickness. The sick person, family members, friends and all relevant others have to recall the past to give meaning to the present state of the afflicted person. Reasons for misfortune are sought in the personal life of the sick person and his/her immediate social environment.

Yet, the stories themselves are thought to be important. This is stressed in the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, DSM-IV. The story has to provide the diagnostician with a better understanding of the cultural background and explanations of the patient. Although cultural concerns are represented in a significant way in the text of the DSM-IV, members of the culture and diagnosis task force heavily criticise the text. Good (1996) discusses the task force's critiques. They view psychopathology as social and cultural. One of the criticisms is that the DSM-text makes too sharp a distinction between disease and illness, wherein diseases are viewed as universal biological entities, while illness consists of forms of experience and cultural interpretations of the experiences of the individual and cultural groups (Good 1996: 129). Another criticism is that particular forms of science are hegemonic and that 'the reluctance to incorporate knowledge generated at the social margins, are issues of power and what the French social theorist calls 'symbolic violence'' (Good 1996: 130).

This means that the stories are still transformed into the hegemonic explanations and that the people who tell them are further marginalized. Diagnosis is not the only reason for bringing the past into the present. The story has to be told in therapy. Thus the patient becomes an observer of himself. He has to objectify himself and to distance himself from the problem. He has to develop the capacity to reconstruct the story in a special way. Together with the therapist, it is transformed into a 'new' past with a different meaning and a 'new' sense so that people can live with it in the future. He has to cut himself off from the past and to look at it as if he were a stranger. He will become a stranger to his own story because it is transformed into the therapeutic myth and acquires the meaning of a

symptom of severe mental illness. The result may be that, depending on the therapist's and others' position and strategy, which is linked to their interests, the story may offer either 'victim blaming', 'madness' or be a source of continued confrontation with and reflection about the past (Friedlander 1993: ix).

I do not want to show that psychiatry is a conspiracy against everything that is considered as odd, abnormal or awkward. Therapists sometimes understand stories as intelligible individual symbolic ways to signify feelings and experiences, but the stories always will remain idiosyncratic and do not have meaning to others. This may easily lead to the conclusion that the stories are outside the cultural realm and thus cannot tell about 'the work of culture'.

However, Littlewood and Lipsedge, both psychiatrists, say that it is 'particularly difficult to decide whether a person's belief is a delusion or not relative to the usual beliefs in his community when its culture is changing or when it contains a variety of conflicting belief systems' (Littlewood & Lipsedge 1989: 207). The authors give many examples which show that under certain circumstances, unusual beliefs are accepted or explicable. They argue that the community can use the stories of the psychotic as metaphors for their own experiences. They show that 'psychic epidemics' will occur when large parts of a population undergo experiences that they would be considered abnormal in other times. 'Mass hysteria' is an example.

The phenomenon of school girls in South Africa, who insist that they were sexually abused, or female labourers in Malaysia who said to be possessed, or that of parents in a small Dutch village, who insist that their children were sexually abused, becomes 'hysterical'. Their stories show that the concept of mass hysteria (or conversion, as it is now named) is a useful term for disempowering dangerous forces and undesired movements or resistance and protest. I agree with the authors when they say that mad people do not become sane when we tolerate and accept their stories. Their stories should be taken as they are. When such stories are told, cultural symbols and myths, rules, morality, values and norms are tested, violated, constrained and turned upside down. This draws attention to their deviant nature, but also to the discomfiture of culture.

Chronic Stories

What about the 'chronic stories'? What about the stories that never change? It is suggested that people with long-lasting mental illness cannot cut themselves off from the past. They lack the capacity to 'locate the self as actor within a seamless

unity of past, present and future' (Adam 1992: 159). The past and future are mixed and they leave no room for reality constructing in the present (Ibid.). This is a strong belief which has been discussed at length in the literature (cf. Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992) and brought into the daily clinical reality. Rosenwald and Ochberg even suggest that the reason to tell stories is to liberate the stories and therefore the lives of the people who tell them, because the stories relate to critical insight and engagement. They see stories as reflections on social conventions and telling a story as a means to make a 'better story', which means that people re-signify life and change it.

Storytelling is empowering for disadvantaged people and protects them against moral judgement. Storytelling is 'politics', or as the subtitle of their book tells us, 'politics of self-understanding'. Although I basically agree with the authors' arguments, I do not believe that storytelling is always liberating, emancipating and empowering. The idea of empowerment and liberation in science is a cultural belief, based on the creation myth of western religions: 'In the beginning was the word...' The word created the world. Although words are powerful, their power in itself is overrated. The power of the words depends on who speaks the words, when, why and to whom. The words of mad people alone have no power. They need more. To make others listen, words and deeds are needed. The words must become flesh and blood to be effective and convincing.

Re-anthropologising mad stories may provide a different knowledge. Illness experiences have become an area of interest in the social sciences. Medical anthropology focuses on 'the lived experience' of what is going on in bodies and lives. Studies of illness narratives, like those of Kleinman (1988), Csordas (1994) and Good (1994), see illnesses as polysemic and multivocal. Meanings of illness are personal, social and cultural. They reveal what it means to be ill. Illness cannot be separated from the life course. Anthropologists have argued that stories are the forms 'in which experience is represented and recounted' (Good 1994: 139). Actually, we cannot directly obtain access to people's experiences. Just like in psychiatric practices, life stories in anthropology are used as sources of information about the human condition. Psychiatrists agree that the life story has a potential for providing insight. Thus, psychiatry (at least part of the discipline) and anthropology have much in common.

However, anthropology may have a different approach to life stories. They provide a different sort of insight. Anthropologists often collect life stories in

order to obtain information about cultural practices. The study of stories questions the relationships between experience, symbols and culture. We need to approach stories from a variety of directions in order to understand illness and suffering because all too often, suffering resists language and cannot be given a name (Good 1994: 129). We have to understand culture and its work in order to formulate a perspective on the interplay of cognition and emotion, rationality and irrationality, morality and immorality, fantasy and reality, and body and psyche as human features that play their part in the story and life, and people's struggle to find a meaningful niche in society. But what will be the aim of understanding? Medical anthropologists differ in their opinions. Kleinman (1988) combined the anthropological and clinical traditions and opts for a more human relationship between the doctor and the patient. He sees experience as a mediator between persons. He argues for an ethnography of interpersonal experience, which gives room to 'the local context that organizes experience through the moral resounding and reinforcing of popular cultural categories about what life means and what is at stake in living' (Kleinman 1991: 293). Good comes to a similar conclusion: 'Narratives are the source of contested judgements ... a rupture of the moral order' (Good 1994: 134). He suggests that we should investigate the 'experiential dimensions of human suffering' (Ibid.).

The problem is that human suffering escapes any category, whether it is ethical, political, medical or spiritual (Connolly 1996). Sometimes, suffering is a catalyst of more suffering. When people suffer, their relatives, friends and relevant others suffer too. Therapy with traumatised refugees often reveals that to tell a story may mean suffering again for the person who tells and for the listener. In my field experiences, this was the case with schizophrenic people. 'Interpersonal suffering' may relieve the pain and give a deeper understanding, but what do we do with this understanding when we only consider it 'interpersonal' or intersubjective?

The anthropology of illness narratives provides a preponderant number of studies that focus on the individual level, which is seen as the observable ethnographic reality. Health studies often ignore the active role of people who shape the broader context. Stories are not only stories: they come into life and are 'acted out'. People actively shape their lives and are shaped by social and cultural structures. Stories are responses to conditions that the people have to face. This means that suffering is not only an experience, but also a social product

'constructed and reconstructed in the action arena between socially constituted categories of meaning and the political-economic forces that shape the contexts of daily life' (Singer and Baer 1995: 101).

Morality plays an important role in stories of misery. It is closely linked with emotions and passions. Anthropology has studied the relationship between what Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) call the individual body, the social body and the body politic. These authors discuss emotions and show how anthropology has always dealt with emotions when they were public, ritual or formal, leaving the more private emotions to psychoanalysis and psychobiology. Scheper-Hughes and Lock see these private emotions as 'a bridge' between the 'three bodies'. Emotions, they argue, are signs that illness makes and unmakes the world. However, it is not clear in their argument how exactly emotions are 'a bridge' and how they are linked with morality. Morality mostly is understood as a set of interpretations of goodness, badness and obligation (Connolly 1996: 252). Taped conversations of the therapists and the patients made clear that those interpretations were contested and that both the teller and the listener judged each other (Van Dongen 1994). Without doubt, one may say that the power to define the situation of the sufferer lies in the hands of others.



The stories contain expressions of love, hate, contempt, disgust, anger, and fear. These passions are considered very dangerous and threatening to the social world and should therefore be controlled and channelled into culturally appropriate outlets. For example, the stories of Rosa, one of the people in the book *Walking Stories*, are full of hate and jealousy toward her mother (and vice versa). For example, she tells that both she and her mother fell in love with the family doctor. Rosa became so envious that she wanted to kill her mother. Those feelings are considered morally improper, but 'natural'. Therefore, they must be expressed, preferably verbally, to a mediator: the therapist who has to resignify them. Maybe the therapist would judge the behaviour of both women, but the 'badness' would be considered as innocent because both women were ill. The problem will be followed by a 'charity model of obligation, in which... helpers are pulled by the helplessness of the needy' (Connolly 1996: 255). Connolly argues that sick people do not need help; rather they need engagement in what is called the politics of becoming: the right to form a new identity, which is formed out of old cultural

possibilities.

However, this idea of 'becoming' is based in a strong cultural belief that also forms the foundation of the therapeutic myth: the belief in progress and change by reflection and hard work, which are – according to some authors – rooted in a 'disenchanted worldview', deriving from the Protestant Reformation (Gaines 1984: 179). 'Becoming' can be achieved 'by action in this world, not by the intercession of preternatural forces and beings into this life. Action in this world is caused by physical factors, not by fate, immaterial saints, genies [...], devils or miracles ...' (Gaines 1984: 179). However, illness by itself does not lead to 'becoming'. In all those years I never heard people make the claim that they 'have grown' or 'became' by their illness. Those who made such claims and have written their stories are by no means the people in *Walking Stories* and in my ethnographic work. People like Artaud and Wolfi, both with mental illness, would have written anyway because they were writers. The people of *Walking Stories* are neither artists nor writers. They are 'common' people who have to struggle to find words for their stories.

Morality is also linked to the specific nature of the illness. In her paper on chronic illness, disability and schizophrenia, Estroff (1993) analyses how sceptical we are about chronically ill people. We cannot tolerate their presence on a large scale, but we also cannot punish or neglect those who are chronically sick. The author writes that our suspicion may increase regarding the role of will or individual unwillingness to become well. This is well illustrated by the mechanics at a garage nearby Saint Anthony's.

A cordon of experts

Anthropology has described and analysed the consequence of this scepticism with the concept of liminality. Chronically mentally ill people are in a 'frozen liminal state' argues Barrett (1998: 481), because the rites of reaggregation are vestigial or absent all together. There is a lack of resolution.

I do not totally agree. In a sense, schizophrenic people are not liminal in our society. They are of concern to policy makers, health care, and social work. They are the focus of scientific research, pharmaceutical industries and even the arts. They are surrounded by a cordon of experts. Estroff (1993) argues by quoting other research, that among the factors that contribute to chronicity are the growing numbers of and the demand for jobs by mental health professions, the widespread belief (fuelled by public and political advocacy) that the people need

medical care, and income maintenance resources that are illness-tested and bound to deservedness through disability. We may conclude that it is in the interest of many to keep chronically ill people in a 'frozen liminal state'. Thus, we may listen to the stories as attempts to free oneself from this state.

Several authors have 'de-medicalised' mad stories. For example, Perry (1976) found that there were common themes and personalities in the stories of psychotic people which were typically cultural/archaic: the hero, the victim, the God, the queen or the king. Perry describes the common structures of the stories. Each story is 'an inner journey' with one or more of the following components: establishing a world centre as the locus, undergoing death, return to the beginning of time and creation, cosmic conflict when opposites clash, apotheosis as king or messianic hero, sacred marriage as a union of opposites, new birth as a reconciliation of opposites, new society of the prophetic vision, and quadrated world forms (Perry 1976: 82). The author sees psychosis as a process of personal renewal with the help of cultural myths.

Others have described mad stories as stories that cross cultural and social borders (Foucault 1961). For example, it is often assumed that schizophrenic people violate social interaction rules and that they are 'out of reality'. This is too a general statement. Goffman (1961) describes a different picture. Working as an assistant physical therapist in a large mental hospital near Washington (D.C.), he was able to fraternise with the patients because he had a low staff status. He concluded that just as the patients' behaviour was bizarre to those who were not living in a mental hospital, it was natural for those who live in it. Goffman also shows that the odd behaviour of mental patients makes sense in such a situation and even is often a sign of sensitivity to social rules and norms. Through breaking the rules, people show their awareness of them and also how the rules work.

Some authors have described mad stories as 'ununderstandable'. For example, Jaspers (1974) argues that although people with schizophrenia are diverse, they all have the following in common: they are strange, they are enigmatic, they are alien, and they are bizarre. They are unknowable. You cannot empathise with them. Their symptoms lie beyond the realm of human meaning, beyond the possibility of human interpretation. They are, not to put too fine a point on it, 'ununderstandable' (quoted in Barrett 1998: 469).

Jaspers was trying to discover what it means to be human. For him, human is what is understandable and interpretable. Others have tried to bring

schizophrenic people back into the human community of understanding by arguing that mental illness is a myth (Sasz 1961), or by making sense of madness through a comparison with art (Laing 1967) and modernism (Sass 1992). These authors found striking parallels between art, modern society and madness. I agree substantively with Barrett (1998: 488), when he writes that the problem with the idea of the relationship between madness and art, or between madness and modern society, is that it may lead to restigmatising schizophrenic people because they represent symbolically much of what is going wrong in the modern world, while they also have to deal with horrors and pain. On the other hand, it is acknowledged world-wide that social factors contribute substantially to mental health problems. We should do in-depth research to study how exactly social and cultural factors do that.

Schizophrenia is a well-documented illness and considered 'a serious mental disorder of unknown cause characterized by delusions, hallucinations, associations of unrelated ideas, social withdrawal, and lack of emotional responsiveness and motivation' (Kleinman 1988: 34). It is increasingly assumed that schizophrenia has a pathological basis, that it is a brain disease (Boyle 1990: 171). The consequence is that the focus is less on stories of schizophrenic people and more on the refinement of diagnosis. Anthropology could make an important contribution, but to my knowledge, few anthropologists have studied the meanings and consequences of a life with severe mental illness, or the stories of mad people. Corin (1990) studied the life worlds of schizophrenic people and showed that the behaviour of these people is based in cultural norms and values and that their way of living makes sense in the social context. Estroff (1981) immersed herself in the lives of patients at a day treatment centre and describes a group of chronic patients as they attempt life outside the mental hospital. Rhodes (1991) wrote an ethnography of an acute psychiatric unit. Using a Foucauldian perspective, she describes how the staff manages briefly to treat and place often indigent emergency patients. She focuses on the strategies developed by the staff members to deal with dilemmas they have to face every day.

My own work (1994) focused for a great part on the interactions of schizophrenic people and therapists. I showed that the odd behaviour and speech of schizophrenic people is often not a consequence of their illness, but caused by the paradoxes, ambiguities and power of the therapists. Martínez Hernáez (2000) showed that there is not only a pathophysiological or psychopathological reality behind the symptom, but cultural manifestations, metaphors, etcetera. He says

that a symptom may be understood as a symbol which condenses social and political-economic conditions. This allows us to investigate the construction of meaning and the reality of suffering. Too many others have attempted to understand madness, to give meaning to it and make it 'reasonable'.

I will not attribute new meanings to schizophrenia, nor will I give a description of life in closed wards. I will focus the work with culture of schizophrenic people. Culture is not only something people can have, it is also something they can use, or something that happens to them. Agar writes: 'Culture starts when you realize that you've got a problem [...], and the problem has to do with who you are' (Agar 1994: 20). Usually, people are not aware of culture; 'meanings usually float at the edge of awareness' (Agar 1994: 21). People simply assume that culture is an unequivocal whole of meanings and symbols, while they mostly are capable of dealing with the contradiction: the ambiguity and multiplicity of culture. However, meetings with 'walking stories' change that.

Learning about culture through mad stories: tricksters and buffoons



Across Saint Anthony's there is a garage. In the morning when the mechanics are working hard to get all the cars fixed, Vincent (one of the storytellers in *Walking Stories*; see below) comes from the hospital and leans against the wall of the garage with a bottle of beer in his hand. He observes the mechanics' hands and overalls becoming dirty from the lubricant. Some mechanics greet him; others just ignore the man against the wall. Vincent grins and takes a good gulp from his bottle. He challenges the mechanics, saying: 'You are crazy! You have to work to drink a beer! I don't! I get my money and I am free.' The atmosphere of benevolence changes into animosity. The tolerance of the mechanics becomes very low because Vincent touches on a sore spot in their feelings. Probably, they too want to be 'free', and drink beer in the morning sun. The image of the psychiatric patient, who is needy and with whom one should have compassion because he suffers changes into the image of someone who - in the Dutch Welfare State - gets his money from social security or insurance and seems satisfied and conceited. 'Go to hell! We have work to do.' Vincent smiles meaningfully and walks away, maybe to look for others with whom he can amuse himself.

This is one simple event out of the many I have jotted down in my field notes. Those events bring about the deeper layers of 'the work of culture' and the work

with culture. Obeyesekere describes the work of culture as 'the process whereby symbolic forms existing on the cultural level get created and recreated through the minds of people' (Obeye-sekere 1990: xix). However, work of (and with) culture is not only the creation and recreation of symbols. Symbols hide something that cannot be mediated or symbolised openly. Passions and emotions like jealousy, hatred, disgust, contempt, anger, and anxiety cannot easily be communicated and symbolised. Yet, it is suggested by Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) that they are the mediatrix between the individual, the social and the politic. Mad people, like Vincent, display emotions in a vivid way.

They are thought of as having lost their feelings of decorum and control over their emotions. A well-known and dreaded phenomenon in psychiatric practice is 'acting out'. Although psychoses may be overwhelming emotional experiences, I disagree with the idea that mad people have lost their feelings of decorum or control over emotions. Sometimes they may do, but often the 'mad behaviour' and 'situational improprieties' are intentional. I do not see 'intentional' acts as wilful or purposeful and conscious, but as people's state of which the content of assumptions, ideas, commentaries or beliefs have to be made clear to others (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986). The madness cannot be divorced from the social and the moral, because others react to it. Fabrega (1997: 36) speaks of 'emotional contagion', which refers to others' responses to emotional display. One may feel shocked and repelled when people talk so openly about rape, sex, violence, badness, incest and revenge in such an emotional way to everyone, certainly when one witnesses the story coming alive. One looks, and one probably looks twice... Miller (1997) argues that such paradoxical reactions to emotional stories and behaviour are both negative and positive, because they help to preserve dignity; they mark the boundaries between others and oneself, enabling one to overcome feelings of repulsion. However, those feelings go hand in hand with moral judgements of others and oneself, which one feels that one cannot make. Miller continues to explain that people are truly in the grip of norms and values, because once the emotional reactions are recognised, the results are often shame and guilt. This can be illustrated by an event in Saint Anthony's. Vincent, a colleague and I were chatting in the coffee shop. Suddenly, Vincent asked my colleague if she thought that he was crazy. Her answer was to pretend that there was nothing unusual about him. Vincent did not take that. He laughed and told her that he was really crazy and different from her and me. She should not lie to him. He said that he looked different and that he was not like others. My

colleague felt uncomfortable. Miller might have explained this with the following: *The stigmatized variously generate alarm, disgust, contempt, embarrassment, concern, pity, or fear. These emotions in turn confirm the stigmatized person as one who is properly stigmatized. [...] Strangely enough, it has come to pass that one of the surer markers of our recognition of stigma is our guilt for having recognized it. The stigmatized make us feel that we are not properly according them civil inattention, for we are never certain what we are supposed to do in their presence (Miller 1997: 199-200).*

We cannot allow that moral emotions govern all situations, because people would be brutally and badly treated. Nevertheless, the emotions are there. We feel that there are sometimes instances that lie beyond our tolerance and decent treatment of crazy people and we feel guilty about it. Crazy people see through these behaviours and they will tell us so.

It is through the work of emotions and morality that one may compare mad people with tricksters. As one could see in the example of Vincent and the mechanics, mad people call attention to the ambiguity, ambivalence and instability of symbols, rules and morality. They deal with what Kerenyi (1972) calls 'the spirit of disorder, the enemy of boundaries'.

Tricksters have a double role. On the one hand, they have creative insight and serve human beings. On the other hand, they show compulsive and excessive behaviour, lust and greed for unsuitable objects and relationships (Basso 1996: 53). Mad people expose the forces behind social interaction and the instability of norms and values. Their emotions counter rationality; disruption is more common than integration. Their stories will show that phenomena of ambiguity and instability belong to the essence of social life. Carroll (1984) poses the question of whether one should regard the trickster as a cultural hero or as a (selfish) buffoon. The underlying question is what the implications of 'disorderly' actions are. Should we see mad people as 'free and uninhibited experimenters' who are exempt from moral responsibility? This is suggested by the 'mechanics story'. Vincent's challenge triggered hidden opinions and emotions of the mechanics. I could not overhear the words of the men in the garage (if there were any) afterwards, but I can imagine that they might have said what I usually heard when I talked to villagers. On the one hand, they might have said that Vincent was mad and thus not knowing what he did. On the other hand, somebody might have said something about 'injustice' and 'parasites who live on my tax money...',

not an uncommon banal accusation in a Welfare State. But there also might have been feelings of shame and guilt for one's own feelings, like in the episode with my colleague. Madness is such a negative stereotype that it inherently threatens and even destroys being a social being, but feelings of shame and guilt may prevent mad people from total social isolation and downfall.



Mad people resemble the trickster. But for mad people, the repetition of their stories and what they do is problematic. Basso (1996) suggests that a trickster is successful only when he does not repeat an action. In trickster stories repetition is an indication that the trickster is foolish, compulsive and stupid. Mad people repeat stories and actions endlessly. And when they do, one speaks of regression and chronic illness. One labels them as chronic patients. Basso's description of the trickster who fails is very similar to psychiatry's description of chronic mental patients: 'characters whose actions are stable and fall into a general pattern and whose goals and modes of orientation to goals seems not to vary are in danger of being regarded as *excessively compulsive and inflexible* and, ultimately, failing in imagination' (my emphasis). However, it is not only words that make mad people similar to tricksters. To compare mad people with tricksters also means that one has to study the dramatic performance, because performance is an essential part of social interaction. Anthropologists have studied drama as 'social drama', which is considered by Turner as the 'social ground of many types of narratives' (Turner 1980: 145). However, the social drama in Turner's view is functional and cognitive. 'The drama moves towards crisis and ultimate solution' (Jules-Rosette 1988: 149). In mad stories and lives, especially those of 'chronic mental patients', there seems to be no 'solution', no finality or reintegration of members of the social group.

The assumption that contradictions and 'disturbing compulsive, excessive behaviour' can be transformed into socially acceptable forms is based on the functionalistic belief that order and consensus in society are norm-al (hyphen on purpose). It seems to me that the value of the performance of mad people cannot be measured with consensus and reintegration. It is by definition disturbing, shocking and jolting. Mad people's stories and lives are dramas which have dramatic and comic dimensions (Van Dongen 1994). Especially the way in which

the people involve others in their stories is an often humorous or ironic and intentional way to break social manners. By 'bizarre' connections of symbols of different domains (religion, science, art, sexuality, etcetera) and by suiting the action to the word, they make others laugh and – at the same time – they give others a fright about what is mostly hidden. It is extremely difficult to resist or ignore a man who comes very close to a therapist at the beginning of their conversation, touches him, opens his pants and shouts: 'It comes out again!' This is a 'ceremonial profanation', which is according to Goffman (1961) a token of sensitivity for rules, values and norms. This behaviour undermines power relationships and forces the therapist to reflect on those relationships. The man was saying: 'I fuck you.' The main characteristic of their performance is openness and reversal of taken-for-granted rules.

The meaning of the performance is in the performance itself. If the performance of mad people invites the reflection of others, it is the reflection in (social) daily practice (like in the event with the mechanics or the therapist). Besides, the idea of Schieffelin (1985: 707) that 'through performance, meanings are formulated in a social rather than cognitive space' fits very well in this case. However, mad people always run the risk that their performance turns against them. What keeps them from total exclusion? Ricoeur (1969: 219) noticed that tragic-comic persons amuse others, but also that ethical and moral accusations are essential in comedy. According to this author, the tragic person is protected against moral judgement and presented as an 'object' of pity. Tricksters and mad people both evoke double feelings in other people. Some of these feelings are pleasure, aversion, attraction, admiration, compassion and rejection. But others will never be indifferent to them. The difference between tricksters and mad people is that the latter succeed in letting others feel the stories they tell, because they do not stop to tell and because they perform so intrusively into others' space. Nobody can resist Vincent when he comes close and talks about the cosmos and the apocalypse; nobody can ignore Joris when he speaks so loudly. The taken-for-granted world is usually turned upside down. The difference between tricksters and mad people is that reversal, which is a common phenomenon in trickster stories, carnivals, theatres and festivals, is permanent in mad stories (Littlewood and Lipsedge 1989). One should seriously wonder if this condition is a problem of mad people, or a problem of others. When one hears the odd stories, one knows that there is too much meaning. Too much is the revelation of cultural reserves. Madness is not a trick to reveal hidden meanings; it shows extra and unforeseen dimensions of symbols

and myths. It shows that culture is a permanent unstable process.

Symbols, myths and magic in mad stories and lives

A general characteristic of the stories in *Walking Stories*, and all the other stories of the people in the wards, is that the tellers are 'hermitic thinkers'. Hermitic thinkers see correspondence between events, models, myths, meanings and symbols. Everything is meaningful and people play 'le jeu des ressemblances'. The world of the stories and subsequently the lives are 'a palace of mirrors in which everything reflects everything' (cf. Eco 1985). The stories rest on core models, myths and metaphors of the culture with which we all are familiar and which we take for granted.

These core tropes are used to make sense of lives. They also expose the basic building blocks of culture (Turner 1967: 110). They reaffirm and reinforce these blocks and they test, question and judge them. Anthropological studies of chronic illness have argued that stories often deal with the liminal state of people. From the perspective of those studies, chronic mental patients are in a permanent liminal state. It means that the final stages of the social drama as Turner has described does not take place. One of the reasons that those stages cannot take place is ascribed to the private, personal or even idiosyncratic use of symbols, myths and cultural models by schizophrenic people, which deviates so much from the way they 'should' be used that the stories are rendered incomprehensible. The problem is not how symbols, myths or models 'should' be used; close examination of mad stories makes it clear that they deal with the inherent indeterminate and ambiguous meanings of symbols, myths, models and metaphors.

Littlewood and Lipsedge (1989) discuss the relation between public and private symbols. They write: 'To express adequately our experiences to others in our community we have to be able to perceive the world symbolically in a standardized matter' (Littlewood & Lipsedge 1989: 219). The authors continue that when people have experiences for which there is no acceptable code, or when we are uncertain which is the proper code to use, confusion in communication may arise. The more uncommon the experiences are, the more difficult it is to communicate them to others. The authors write that schizophrenic people employ highly idiosyncratic symbolic communication. They write: 'It is difficult to explain the overwhelming hold symbols possess over us unless they were learnt in association with powerful personal experiences. ...They [the symbols] appear both to have a personal emotional or sensory pole and also to articulate general culture and

social concerns' (Littlewood & Lipsedge 1989: 220-224). I think that the authors are referring to the 'combat zone of disputes over power...' (Taussig 1980: 9) because what is personal and what is public, is not as plain as it seems to be and may differ from situation to situation, from context to context, from interest to interest.

Devereux (1979) defines a symbol as a special form of fantasy, 'which as a rule, stands for something having, or alleged to have, an existence, and susceptible of being designated by a conventional and specific signifier' (p. 19). Thus, convention is an important aspect of a public symbol. Devereux tackles and questions the problem of the difference between private and public symbols, which was discussed by Firth (1973). Devereux concludes that the nature and genesis of private symbols does not differ from that of public symbols and that both can be decoded by recourse to identical methods and techniques. In the first Lewis Henry Morgan lecture in *The Work of Culture*, Obeyesekere (1990) also discusses the distinction between private and public symbols. The author revisits the story of Abdin, a psychotic Muslim ecstatic, who hangs himself on hooks and cuts his tongue, both known rituals in Hindu India. For Obeyesekere, Abdin was 'abreacting his past and using the pre-given cultural symbol system to express and bring some order to and control over his psychic conflicts' (p. 10). Abdin reverted from the level of the symbol to the level of the symptom, because he repeated his acts compulsively. For Obeyesekere, a symptom is characterised by an overdetermination of motive, while a symbol is characterised by a surplus of meaning. The difference between a psychotic person and a priestess would be that the psychotic person moves in a regressive direction as he acts out the symbol system, whereas the priestess does the reverse (p. 14). Obeyesekere sees the significance of this distinction in the notion that people express their ontological problems of existence and being through the available cultural repertoires. Personal symbols are cultural symbols, public and private at the same time, that make sense in relation to the personal history of the individual. Obeyesekere calls the distinction between public and private symbols a false distinction (p. 24).

I too believe that schizophrenic people do not use 'idiosyncratic or private symbols'. They use public symbols in such a way that others are alienated or become confused. The stories of mad people are full of (all too) well-known symbols which always have a surplus of meaning because cultural symbols are inherently ambivalent and ambiguous. For example, a chain may be the symbol of

captivity, but also of solidarity.

Culture is extremely powerful. Even when people are overwhelmed by psychosis and madness, culture does its work. The views, beliefs, assumptions and opinions that are expressed in myths and stories by symbols, claim a certain truth, which is always debatable, because their meanings depend on the context and the situation. Symbols claim truth, but one can never be sure what exactly their meaning is unless one understands the context. The conclusion has to be that symbols are perfectly suitable for manipulation and (power) play. I disagree with the idea that the repetitive, compulsive use of symbols by mad people is regressive. I maintain that the use of symbols is 'special'. It is related to a mimetic process. Mimesis is a normal human tendency and can be observed in education, schooling, cultivation, etcetera. It enables people to acquire certain cultural attitudes. It requires guidance and taboos. When no restrictions are accepted, it will manifest itself in every domain of human behaviour (Girard 1978). This is often the case in mad stories. The models and myths have a strong force. Models will be mimed. Often, this means that the symbols will be repeated, acquire unexpected meanings or will refer to additional meanings which we did not know existed.

One should do away with the traditional way of approaching mad stories and what they do, and presuppose heterogeneity between the stories of mad people and other types of stories. If those other types were to account for mad stories, they would make them say things that they do not say or that they do not signify. The known approaches to mad stories do not explain why the stories and behaviour remain the same over time.

I will try to explain my approach and I base my explanation on the work of José Gil's *Metamorphoses du corps* (1985), which takes an interest in 'forces' and power and focuses on the practical effects of signs and symbols. He takes the study of forces as the way to understand how signs and symbols function in their own right, sometimes in ways that may differ from the ways they are usually attached. Gil presupposes that phenomena in modern societies are quite similar to those that take place in bodies during magical ceremonies. Madness consists of extra-ordinary forces which drive people away from their community. The people of the wards told me that their psychotic experiences are fearful and incomprehensible for themselves. After they experienced their first episode of psychosis, they believed that their lives were profoundly changed, and that they

had to make sense of their intense experiences. However, intensity of experiences is not enough to drive people to give meaning. What drives people is the fact that two forces are set in opposition to each other: the people's struggle to signify their lives in a meaningful sense, and the social force to control that struggle.

Mad people try to get a grip on their lives and to influence their courses, which actually lie beyond their control. They do so through the use of myths and symbols, stories and models that 'inspire' their motivations and desires, and influence their emotions. Culture, as a collective of stories, is used to practise magic. The idea of magic in relationship with mad stories may be odd. Usually, magic is understood as something by which people influence the 'supernatural' powers of the world. Traditionally, anthropology sees magic in relation with religion. But the concept may be used in a broader sense without referring to religion directly. In this sense, magic is the human control of what actually lies beyond control, but, though there is strong belief that magic exists, it too must be controlled and signified. Magic is the ability of words to effect things.

On the one hand, madness is a power that exists and must be controlled by specialists. In this context, it is meaningful that psychiatry is sometimes seen as the 'new religion' of our society. People see psychiatry as a power that can control and manipulate the superpowers of irrationality through control of the powers of flesh and blood (i.e. mad people). On the other hand, culture itself is a powerful force to control the experienced powers in madness like devils, ghosts, voices from heaven, demons and spirits of the dead. Because the magic of psychiatry has more prestige than the magic of the mad, there is a gap between the two and mad stories will no longer relate to the former. It means to control and manipulate the powers of madness through the rituals of therapy and the use of medicines. However, in the case of chronic schizophrenic people it is difficult to control. Patients of Saint Anthony's know for example very well how to escape regimens or how to play with rules and how to influence the flux of daily life in the wards.

The idea that certain phenomena in modern societies are much similar to those that take place in bodies during magical ceremonies, is described by Gil (1985). This seems to be the case in stories of chronic schizophrenic people, who also try to control the powers of madness. Magic is the ability of words to effect things. Signs, symbols and myths are recycled, mixed, and put together in a way that alienates others, but that has power to manipulate the course of events and the

others' responsive actions. This was exactly what nurses in the closed wards of Saint Anthony's always complained about; their plans were thwarted by incarnate stories of their patients; they felt manipulated, and the daily routine was disturbed.

It is tempting and reasonable to describe the world of chronic schizophrenic-psychotic people as magical if one looks at core aspects of the affliction: 'reality testing' and the differentiation between logical and prelogical thinking. Generally, it is assumed that schizophrenic people live 'outside reality'. It is also suggested that the psychotic world is irrational. However, it can be misleading to contrast the world of normal and abnormal; reality and 'outside reality'. First, schizophrenic people also live in 'reality' (the normal) for a greater part of their time. Second, the magical world cannot be described in terms of the normal discourse. The mad world has its own universe of discourse, its own conception of reality and criteria of rationality, perhaps different from the nonpsychotic world. Until here, the argument is similar to Winch's argument that describes the scientific form and the magico-religious form of thinking as a distinct form of social life whose practices and beliefs are only intelligible in the context in which they are held (Winch 1958). This is precisely the argument of Goffman (1961), which I have described in the previous section of this paper. It is also true, but not surprising, that the psychotic world is often seen as 'savage'; that psychotic people are, to put it in Comte's not too fine words: 'slaves of the infinite variety of phenomena' and 'nebulous symbolisation' (Comte 1908, cited in Lévi-Strauss 1996). However, Winch insisted on the incommensurability of the two worlds (science and magic). That would mean that no communication is possible. As we have seen in the discussion on private and public symbols, the symbols used by mad people are known, public and private at the same time. The differences between the two worlds lie in the fact that non-schizophrenic people and chronic schizophrenic people live different forms of life. For this reason, the magic world of mad people demands its own discourse, logic and rationality. The problem is whether others will accept this discourse.

There is another fascinating parallel between the magic world of mad people and other magic worlds, in relation to power. Both Taussig (1987) and Lévi-Strauss (1955) discussed the magical power of the written word. To quote Taussig (1987: 262): 'what is in effect obtained through the purchase of magic books is the *magic of the printed word* as print has acquired this power in the exercise of colonial

domination with its fetishization of print, as in the Bible and the law. *Magica*, so it seems to me, does not so much magicalize colonising print as draw out the magic inherent in its rationality and monologic function in domination' (my emphasis). I see the parallel between the magical books of the Colombian Indians with mad stories in the idea of the power of written words.



Schizophrenic people also are very aware of the power the reports, files, judicial decisions – all written words, that determine and control their lives. The patients often counter them with letters to the board of the hospital, psychiatrists, judges, or other personnel of Saint Anthony's, repeatedly and in a ritualistic way, often with similar words. Lévi-Strauss (1955) described the case of chief Namikwara, who imitated the ethnographer's writing and in so doing gained prestige among his people, even if his writing was not understood. This example also shows a similarity with the patients' writings. For example, Rosemary, an older schizophrenic woman in one of Saint Anthony's wards, had a typewriter in her room with which she wrote letters about her life to staff members, to me, and to her mother. The typewriter gave her prestige in the ward; her room partly gave the impression of an office (she was a secretary at one of the Dutch multinationals), or a 'writer's room'. Besides, Rosemary tried to convince others with her letters that she, although 'mad', was capable of controlling her own life. Rosemary repeated her typewriting and her stories over and over again. It seemed, like the stories of other patients, a ritual performed with symbols, words, and attributes.

The repetitive and formulaic nature of the mad stories resembles the fixed rites in a liturgy, although this 'liturgy' is not, like for example the religious liturgy, in service of the community. But the mad stories have important liturgical characteristics in their repetition of the same symbols, words, and actions. Besides, like in a liturgy, they need answers from others (staff members, people in the streets, family members, the anthropologist). Mostly, it is assumed that the stories are about the past; the events of the past are constructed within the personal and social history of the patients. Thus seen, the stories are attempts to give meanings to the past. This is also the case in liturgy: what happened in the past – for example, the Last Supper – is re-given meaning and memorised.

However, mad stories are not so much attempts to remember the past or to give

meaning to it; they are attempts to master and control the future. This also resembles the liturgy; it means reunion of people (and gods) and renewing the bonds within the group. Mad stories reclaim the place of their tellers in the community. Mad people tell and live their stories in an almost ritualistic manner: they tell the same stories over and over again, they use the same symbols and they will live them again and again. They have to, because they have to practise double magic: the counter magic to control the powers of the healing system, and the magic to control the powers of the madness.

Remembrance and repetition are attempts to master not only the past, but also the future. During all the years that I heard the mad stories of the same persons in different periods of their lives, I discovered that the stories did not change. This discovery was confirmed by review of the patients' files and the stories of therapists and nurses. There was also something else. In anthropology, it is assumed that stories are about the past, about those parts of life which are already lived. Events of the past are constructed within the personal and social history. Thus seen, memories and repetitive compulsion are attempts to master the past and to give new meaning to it. However, we should not stress the reflexivity of people, the re-play of past actions, too much. In our studies of narration, we also should consider that stories may be a fore-play of what will happen in the future.

Having said that symbolisation and metaphorisation of mad people are not idiosyncratic or private, we still have a problem. This is the issue of distance and demetaphorisation. Usually, a metaphor or a symbol stands for something else, but mad people often are what they say they are. They tie the symbols directly to their body and life. Thus, there is no difference between the story and the life. Jim told me his story, as he insisted, for the last time in his life. Then, he told me that he was a rock. How can we understand this? We know that people can be 'steady as a rock', but this was not what Jim meant. He is a rock. Maybe, anthropology, and also psychoanalysis, would interpret the 'rock' as a symbol for insensitivity and closeness to the outer world and incapability to have inner feelings. Another interpretation is possible. The fantasy of the rock, a powerful cultural symbol, can be a mark in the process where a schizophrenic man closes his body for the forces which make him repeat his story vis-à-vis more powerful stories. The solution for his frustration and hopelessness may be to become a rock. The problem that others have with these kinds of stories is that such things are symbols for them,

whereas they are reality for mad people.

This leads me to the role and the weight of culture in the stories and lives of the people of the wards. Anthropology may see culture as a collective of beliefs, customs, symbols, etcetera. There are more than a hundred definitions of culture, but what is often lacking is that culture is also a force, an energy that is directed to something. Culture has power over people. It is even so strong that people become 'possessed' by symbols and stories and do everything to come close to, for example, an ideal model. The body model of the tiny, active and thus beautiful woman may have such a strong impact on girls, that they will go beyond a healthy life pattern, become taken over by the image, and become anorectic. But when they are, they are told that they are not healthy or beautiful at all.

Cultural ideals and images cannot be described as coherent. What to do with 'walking stories'? The stories will make clear, as we will see, that people are not helpless victims or scapegoats. They are active agents who have nothing else than what their culture provides them to combat. They reclaim more than their own lives. They also reclaim the right to be involved in moral and cultural matters. The symbols and myths are not used as metaphors for signifying illness. Rather, they are used by people to re-take their place within the culture. They have to tell their stories, and others should listen, because they are not about illness; they are about the human/cultural condition.

One of the stories from Walking Stories: Vincent, Morrison and the cosmic man

Desire and resistance of a schizophrenic man

Billy, are you completely crazy?

No, it's true. Really. This guy told me. It's true. I'm really gonna do it.

I bet only reason you won't come with me is because I ain't got any money. Well, listen, I'm telling you

I'm gonna go back up there and get me some money, lots of it, maybe even ten thousand. And then I'm coming back for you. I'm coming back.

- Jim Morrison: the Hitchhiker

The story of Vincent is emblematic for my argument. I followed Vincent's well and woo for many years. In general, his story and his life remained the same over all those years. Vincent had a dream and this dream became his life. He lived his story and he still does. Obviously, the ideas and models which were so important

in our shared history were so strong for him that he could not resist them. His story shows the magic of culture and his struggle to resist and manipulate the world. How does this work?

Anthropologists have highlighted that 'human motivation' has to be understood as the product of interaction between events and things in the social world and interpretation of those events and things in people's psyche (Strauss 1992: 1). This approach stresses that motivation depends on cultural models, but that the motivation is not automatically derived from ideology, discourses or symbols in a culture. Cultural models have a 'directive force'; they set forth goals and include desire. Emotions and cognition are interrelated. According to Quinn (1992) an important way cultural models become goal-schemas is by supplying people with understanding of themselves. It often is assumed that mad people suffer from disturbances in the sense of self. These disturbances are attributed to a false incorporation into culture in the crucial stage of childhood, causing a semi-permanent identity-crisis and a repetitive desire to construct a self. This, in turn, results in continuous redefinitions or elaborations of an imaginative, 'unrealistic self'.

However, the sense of self or self-understanding may vary throughout one's lifetime and may even vary from situation to situation. We all have to deal with experiences which raise disturbing existential questions, with 'sequestration of experience' (Giddens 1991). Many of us are 'homeless minds' in an era in which old cultural boundaries are opened up and new ones are established. However, it is sufficiently shown that these disturbances and inconsistencies do not mean fragmentation or permanent disturbances in a person's self per se. In fact, Vincent's story is about a 'stable self': he remained the same 'self' over many years. The story of Vincent has to be interpreted differently; it is a reclaiming of his life and his story from psychiatric discourse and therefore is a form of resistance: against medical discourse, against moral ambiguities in his culture. Vincent's desire seems to be a positive force which produces resistance against the moral and ideologies, power and control. Above all, his story and his life form a resistance against 'settings of technical correction' (Giddens 1991: 160) and a plea for imagination and emotional 'play' with culture.



The story and the life of Vincent

Vincent was a forty year old schizophrenic man. Vincent looks like his famous namesake: Vincent van Gogh. He was red-haired. His face has also the tensed and restless expression that can be seen on Van Gogh's self portraits. As a result of extensive use of psychotropes his movements are sometimes slow and his tongue hangs out of his mouth. He has lived for more than twenty-four years in a mental hospital together with his brother, who is also diagnosed as schizophrenic. He is a well-known man in the hospital and in the nearby city. When a student came to see me for advice on her master's thesis on mental illness she saw the portrait of Vincent in my office. She recognised him and told me stories about his life in the city. Those stories were very similar to what I heard during my fieldwork!

When we ascribe an identity to another person it may summon resistance of that person. The resistance is comprehensible, but in clinical psychiatry it is made an issue. Consider the utterance of Vincent, who was involved in a conversation with his personal supervisor. The conversation was a part of my research project on schizophrenic and psychotic people (Van Dongen 1994). Therapists and nurses talked with their patients about the patients' lives. Contrary to most of Vincent's conversations, this one was a rather sad reflection on his situation. It was not like his usual wonderful stories of success, pop culture and cosmic life.

The nurse and Vincent recorded the conversation. The opening is as follows: *[Nurse: How long are you in psychiatry?] I want to undo my chocolate. [Nurse: Vincent?] Vincent undoes his chocolate and does not say a word. [Nurse: How long are you in psychiatry?] Vincent does not answer. [Nurse: Well, let me ask you in another way. How long are you taken in here?] Vincent: Twenty-one years!*

These utterances point to several things: the starting point of the nurse, Vincent's reluctance to answer the first question and the assumption that there is something special with psychiatry to Vincent. The nurse wanted to talk about Vincent's life in a linear chronological way: from the beginning of Vincent's admission to the hospital to the present. Vincent's reluctance to answer the question about his life in *psychiatry* is clear.

However, as soon as the nurse asked in a different way, Vincent responded. He

strongly disliked being identified with a mental inpatient. He had a totally different view on the hospital. For him, the hospital was a place to sleep, to eat and to get protection when the outside world had become too threatening. The hospital was a shelter for withdrawing and settling down after a turbulent evening out in the city. Vincent often remarked ironically that everyone had to work and yet could not be sure to have a home, good food and enough leisure time. He was sure to have such things. But he resisted being referred to as a psychiatric patient. This had a strong negative impact, as it did for most of the patients who participated in my research. The model of a mental patient had a negative moral dimension and a negative directive force. It did not fit into his self-perception, just as it did not fit most patients in my research. The model of madness was related to guilt and shame.

Popular ideas of madness in western cultures are less rational and biomedical than one may expect. Those ideas include different cultural models of the human mind, the brain, religion, etcetera. They also include models of the moral order. Popular models are vague and loosely constituted. However, they share one aspect. They explain when someone exceeds the limits of the social order. Exceeding limits is shameful and embarrassing, not only for the person who crosses the border, but even more for the members of the social group. By ascribing the responsibility for exceeding limits to individual failure and personal guilt the madness and shame become a matter of the individual who commits the 'crime'. Madness becomes badness. To be assigned as a psychiatric patient means a moral judgement for the person. Vincent shows this belief in a compact package of ideas which is related to his view of the social reality and self-identification (cf. Strauss 1992: 205-207). The hospital was for Vincent a 'place where strange and wild things happen' and 'fights are going on'. He went through 'mad things like scuffles and breaking windows and so on'. He said that he had not a 'psychiatric disease', but that he went to the institution 'to rest' and 'to become an adult'. For him, the hospital was a 'nunnery', which indeed it was twenty years ago. It had a protective meaning. His ideas about madness and the mental hospital belonged to an 'authorative discourse': 'sharply demarcated, compact and inert [...] one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it' (Bakhtin 1981: 343).

There is no doubt that Vincent rejected the model of madness and the connected intrinsic moral judgement. The consequence was a considerable inner and social conflict, since others identified him as 'mad' or 'schizophrenic'. His turmoil was

connected to conflicts with nurses, family and people in the town. In spite of his overt rejection of the madness model, Vincent was always involved in fights, quarrels, drinking, gambling, begging and exhibitionism. In short, he was involved in all the things, which he thought to have belonged to the mad-bad model. Vincent was very aware of the contradictions between his models and those of others, and of the difference between a part of his story and his actual behaviour. He knew that he was different. He said: 'I am unlike others, maybe because I am red-haired.' He knew that others rejected him and he cared about it: 'They always reject me. When I enter a pub, they will say ta-ta. In other words, they say: Piss off. I am hardly inside when they say: Ta-ta, piss off!'

How did he manage the contradictions for himself and in front of relevant others? First, he reversed the moral dimension of the popular madness-badness model. He was not mad, he was not bad: *God does not exist any longer, because the people are bad. The devil became a common human being. People destroy each other when they finish their plundering [...]. All that I say wrong, are the thoughts of bad people. From my birth on I fight with bad people.*

The badness of others was directly fixed upon Vincent. He experienced 'the lives of others'. This sensation gave him 'troubled feelings', because 'people creep under his thoughts'. The badness of others had become a physical experience. Other subjects like death, education, fatherhood, psychiatry and sexuality were penetrated by the evil of other people. This had such a strong negative effect on Vincent that he wanted to be 'a cosmic man', stripped of all human qualities and possibilities to do any evil: *I want to be a cosmic man. Cosmic people don't die. They don't have an anus. They are very clean and wear white clothes. They have a kind of penis, but they don't masturbate or crap. [...] Life in the cosmos is rough. You have to drink until you feel good.*

Sometimes he thought that he 'had to lay down shorn and naked' until he was transformed. The only way in which he would achieve his exalted goal was by a life in the hospital, where he could 'work' at his transformation. He said: 'I work at my standstill, to live at myself.' This higherlevel goal – the ultimate 'good' – was an echo of a Buddhist ideal of the seventies which told him to make his mind empty in order to achieve the absolute state of Nirvana. This ideal was mixed with other ideas of the seventies, when flower power, pop culture and alienation from the parental generation predominated the lives of adolescents. We hear wellknown cultural and psychological issues in Vincent's story of the cosmos:

human beings who are not imprisoned in lower desires like sexuality; white clothes could signify purity; the cosmos could be heaven: one feels good. Purifying oneself by removing everything that is dirty (clothes and hair): shaving could be symbolic castration. There exists an over-determination of meaning in Vincent's story. There are lots of symbols of different (cross)cultural domains. Shaving for example is also a symbol of castration in Buddhist India. One can recognise the angels in the people without anuses and the little virgin penis. Thus, this polysemy refers to the determination by the motives of evil and good, and the many symbols which Vincent used. The problem is that there is no distancing or disconnection between the desire and the cultural public domain of storytelling. The story's text remains close to Vincent. His story is perceived by others as 'fleurs du mal', an illusion, simply 'crazy', or personal symbolism. The assumption that crazy people tell through the use of personal symbols, which are cultural but not distanced from motives, desires or imagination, means that they are disempowered. The symbols are similar to the public symbols.

When Vincent was a young man he was very attracted by these ideas. He tried to get rid of an authoritarian father and he wanted to live like his idols Jim Morrison and The Doors. Vincent was the son of a factory worker. His mother was a housewife. He had left school when he was sixteen years old. He became a waiter in a second rate restaurant. He fell in love with a girl, whose parents were well-to-do. The young couple went out and made trips by taxis. The girl's parents were willing to pay for them. Vincent must have felt very successful in those days, because his family was not rich and he himself did not have the job that could afford him the desired lifestyle. However, the relationship came to an end.

Vincent wanted to continue the life to which he had become accustomed. He remained a regular visitor of the city's bars. He went for taxi rides and he took the train to Paris. His father paid these trips. When the father finally refused to pay, Vincent's lived dream of glamour and wealth collapsed. Vincent became psychotic and was admitted to the mental hospital in which he still lived at the time of my field work. But the dream remained alive and very strong. In the first years of his stay in the hospital he often lived in the locked wards. When his dream took over him, he broke the windows and escaped to the city or jumped on the train to Paris. He was imprisoned for some time, because his debts to the national railway company had risen to unacceptable heights. Seclusion and imprisonment could not prevent him from escaping again and again. What

Vincent experienced as 'high life' was irresistible for him.

The idea of 'standstill', his identification with Jim Morrison and The Doors gave force to a range of related goals. He wanted to be sociable, successful and well known. In a certain way, Vincent succeeded in achieving these goals. He was well known in the hospital. Personnel and patients knew his stories and imaginations about his travels with Jim Morrison. Sometimes Vincent felt repelled, but he could not convince others of this feeling. When he tried to explain his feeling to a nurse, the latter said: *When I see you in daytime... at night, well, everybody knows Vincent, and you set us on laughing. I don't have the feeling that you are repelled...*



Jim Morrison 1969

Vincent was also well known in the nearby city. He liked to go to cafés, bars and night clubs and to talk to the people. Sometimes he travelled by train without paying. He still rode in taxis when he had the opportunity and the money. People would give him a blanket when he had to sleep in porticoes of a flat at night. However, as a psychiatric patient Vincent could not afford the lifestyle he desired. Social insurance paid him a little pocket money, not enough to cover his costs. He lamented: 'How much does life cost to make it without begging?' His passionate wish to be Jim Morrison or to be with the pop star was so strong that he had to go into the world, mixing with corruption and sin, dirtying [him]self with externals, having some trick with the despised forms, instead of worshipping the sacred mysteries of pure content (Douglas 1982: 155).

He felt frustrated, because he could not achieve the status of a 'cosmic man'. He felt dirty and polluted. He had a strong but not unusual idea that money was a guarantee for success and happiness, which he saw as a bridge to the higher-level goal of the state of emptiness, Nirvana. Success was an intermediate station to cosmic existence. In his view earning money in the usual way was a sad thing to

do. He rejected the social value of 'working for your bread' by saying: 'Life is not for working, life has to be pleasant.' However, he had to supply his pocket money in order to keep his dream alive and to live his dream. He did so by gambling, begging and exhibitionism. These activities belonged to the evil, the polluting. He slept in the street or in porticoes of houses on a piece of cardboard when he had no money to pay the bus or a taxi. For others he was no different from the tramps that people the modern big cities nowadays.

For himself, dirtying was a necessary evil: he did so to achieve his goals. Each little amount of money he got by begging, gambling or exhibitionism permitted him to be like Morrison for a short time. To be like the pop star was a mark on the road to Nirvana. The ideas of the pop culture – fame, plenty of money, beverage, women, music and a 'flashy lifestyle' – were part of Vincent's success model. This model was a strong leading principle. But begging, gambling and other behaviour gave rise to conflicts with others. In the city Vincent was abused many times. The incidents that followed his exhibitionism illustrate this: *I show my penis. [Els: You do?] They say that I must do that and I get forty guilders. [Els: If you don't want to do it, you can refuse.] No, I must, otherwise they beat me up. It is like a rape when they beat me. They beat so heavily, it's like I am in a woman. [Els: Why are people so curious to see your penis?] I am red-haired and red-haired people are special. So, people want to see my penis with that red hair. That's special for them. [Els: Don't you think it's annoying for you?] Even the sportsmen do it when they take a shower. [Els: Is that the same?] Yes, they are naked.*

In this narrative Vincent related his exhibitionism with his otherness. He also stressed the role of others and his helplessness. His abnormality was transformed into the badness of others. The realisation of his dream clashed painfully with his madness, the evil and the limits of society. No matter how strong the motivational force of his success model was, in this case the bridge between money and success and the good was very insecure. The piers of this bridge were inadmissible behaviour and social taboos. Nevertheless, Vincent showed a certain obstinacy in his continuously repeated efforts to achieve success on his way to the cosmos. Vincent was an incarnated problem of the western consumer society. On the one hand, his life is an extreme example of the rat race: pursuing success and happiness. On the other hand, his life was a struggle between evil and good.

Desire and passion

Vincent's story may support the claim of certain psychiatric theories that the

process of becoming a 'self' in psychotic people is disturbed. Serious disorders as psychosis and schizophrenia have disturbances in the sense of identity and capacity for social relationships. However, to view psychosis or schizophrenia as a combination of ego-functions and deficiencies in parental education, family structure and communication show the cultural foundation of the approach. The cultural beliefs and values are manifest on the level of ideology, but also on the level of behaviour and social interaction. Prominent characteristics are self-reliance, selfdirection and verbal expression (Kirschner 1992). These notions persist in modern psychiatric ideas. Vincent's story and life may support this view. He does not seem a person who is self-reliant, autonomous. His behaviour does not match the accepted social behaviour, his verbal expressions violate the rules of interaction. His life story suggests that the theory of a derailed self through disturbed identification and education is right. His hospital files tell about an indulgent mother and an authoritative father; an uncertain situation in childhood, due to which Vincent's ego was not integrated in the cultural domain.

In psychosis the passage from the imaginary order to the symbolic order does not take place (Lacan 1966). The name of the Father (to be understood symbolically) is rejected ('forclusion du nom-du-père'). This means that the configuration of differences and rules - the law of the Father - is also rejected. The child does not participate in the symbolic (linguistic-social) game. The 'metaphore paternelle' fails and the result is that the child stays subordinated to desire (of the mother). The child has no choice and no own identity. The child coincides with the other's words. It has no possibility to take a symbolic marked identity from the symbolic order and therefore it has no distinguished position. His self is what others say it is. For Lacan the idea of an integrated ego is rejectable.

Every self is divided and fragmented. Desire is the inevitable result of division and fragmentation, and becomes the motor of human creations. Lacan's idea is similar to Ewing's notion. This anthropologist states that the presentation of the self may differ from context to context (Ewing 1991). Desire created Vincent's 'cosmic man'. The fulfilment of that desire (being first like Jim Morrison in order to become a cosmic man), however, could not be achieved through the life Vincent had since he was an adolescent. In a Lacanian view desire means only more desire. According to this view Vincent's desire was a regressive process. His dream of success and the good leads him back to his starting point again and again. However, the dream and the subsequent stories are more than that: they are means to survive and to resist.

Plurality and ambiguity are to be studied in their context. Vincent's ideas about the self embody certain assumptions about the person which are characteristic of the culture in the south of the Netherlands. Here the self consists also of significant others. The self is partly composed of elements over which a person has no control. The self can change and is less unbound and autonomous. Vincent shows for example this awareness when he said: 'You have to live with other people in a social way.' Psychotic people frequently violate the cultural rules in order to satisfy their needs. Vincent was involved in an ongoing social conflict. Sometimes it seemed as if he did not experience an offence of a cultural prohibition when showing his genitals in town. However, rather than suggesting that there is no conflict, as some psychiatrists do, I suggest that Vincent's behaviour was intentional and conflictual. It is well known that when people learn different or conflicting assumptions about what is right or wrong, moral or natural, a possibility exists for resistance to cultural ideas and beliefs (Quinn 1992: 122). In Vincent's case the conflicting assumptions had their origin in childhood. His rigid assumptions about the evil and the good were not simply cultural models which had directive force because they were learned in childhood and experienced as 'natural'. Vincent's story suggests a long process, beginning in adolescence, in which his ideas about failure, success, evil, purity, etcetera became incorporated in Vincent's understanding of himself and led to the identification with Jim Morrison. His behaviour and his almost conscious will to behave like he did echoed, as I wrote before, ideals of the youth in the seventies: resistance against authority and the ideal of total personal freedom. In fact, it echoes resistance against the cultural law by a large 'peer group' of adolescents: the 'protest generation'.

Vincent's technique of resistance was that of parody and grotesque realism. He offended precisely those cultural norms of which he said that to offend was a bad thing to do. He did it very openly. Begging, drinking, and exhibitionism seemed to be what Goffman (1971) called 'ceremonial profanations', i.e. conscious offence that shows sensitivity for values and norms.

Anthropologists showed that the directive force of cultural models is 'over determined'. Social sanctions, pressure for conformity, reward and values act together to give a model its directive force (D'Andrade 1984: 98). In this sense the cultural models Vincent used seemed not very rewarding for him. His offence was chastised immediately, sometimes through beatings, sometimes in the

hospital by being prohibited from going out. The socialisation process seemed not to be very effective. Vincent was admitted to a psychiatric hospital and he lived in the margins of society. He offended the rules and violated cultural norms. No matter what therapists or other mental health workers did over the years to reinforce a moral and proper way to behave, he maintained his dream and thus his way of living for more than twenty years. Obviously, there was a strong force involved. Vincent knew the values and norms of his culture, but he had different feelings about them. For him norms and values were associated with strong negative feelings. His experiences with people in town, his resistance against the ascribed identity of psychiatric patient and his feelings about the 'hypocrisy' and 'badness' of people caused these feelings. To understand what motivated Vincent (and others as well) we must know the feelings that he associated with cultural models as the result of his specific life experience. They were his passions of life...

If culturally organized views of possibility and sense must figure centrally in the acquisition of a sense of self – providing images in terms of which we unselfconsciously connect ideas and actions – then culture makes a difference that concerns not simply *what* we think but how we feel about and live our lives. Affects, then, are no less cultural and no more private than beliefs (Rosaldo 1984: 140-141).

Desire and intentions

It is not so strange that Vincent wished for a completely different way of life when we know how he lived. The different life was situated in the cosmos. For other psychotic people the ideal way of being was in heaven or in some utopia. One may say that the 'real' life of psychotic people forms a negative force. Often, this particular kind of desire had not developed in childhood, but in adolescence. From my research data it became clear that most of the psychotic patients which expressed so plainly a desire for heaven, utopia, or cosmos, were the adolescents of the seventies.

They were involved in the counterculture of that era. This desire is not so very different from a general desire people express for example in religion, myths or ideologies. The problem is not that psychotic people desire heaven or so, but that they desire it too often and too 'loud', therewith showing that the desire for 'heaven' is ridiculous. For us, this is very uneasy, because that which we express and believe in religion or ideologies, we deny to madness.

Should we define desire as a force that is characterised by a lack of something? Or should we view it as a positive force? Lacan (1961) defines desire as a lack, but Deleuze and Guattari view desire as a presence and a productive force. According to these authors 'needs are derived from desire: they are counter products within the real that desire produces' (Deleuze & Guattari 1984: 27). In their theory an individual is not bound to be a slave of his desire nor is the desire always a repetition of the oedipal triad mother-father-ego, but a will-to-power, a will-to-become, while opposing the regular social discourse. The authors do not exclude Lacan's version of desire, but they see desire as discursive, that is, emanating from power and control, while the object of desire is created in social discourse. In their view desire is dual. I will explain this by Vincent's case.

On the one hand, when his desire to become a 'cosmic man' is seen as a lack, there is always something that is lost and has to become reinforced. In a psychiatric view, what is lost is his sense of self and his sense of reality. What has to be reinforced involves re-territorialisation of his ideas and beliefs within the common ideology. This is what psychiatry wants to do. On the other hand, when his desire is conceived as a will-to-become, Vincent would have room for resistance to the social and the cultural order. In this case re-territorialisation becomes an outcome of discursive practices. This means for example that the 'cosmic man' can be made into a central figure in conversations with Vincent.

However, there is still Vincent's desire to be like Jim Morrison. I explain this desire for identification as a bridge between his actual life and his life in the cosmos. This desire cannot be explained by repetition of an oedipal model or a familial model of authority. Morrison is for Vincent a model of anti-authority. It is possible to see the repetition of the 'Morrison'-desire as 'pursuing failure', as Shafer (1984) describes for clients in clinical psychiatry. These clients have failed in life tasks and their emotional patterns related to these failures seem to persist. Failures become goals with directive force and their pursuit is valorised. Embroiding this theme, failure can be a model of something that happens to vulnerable people and the model of a vulnerable self with elements over which one has no control might make failure a goal. Thus, powerful forces like marginality, moral judgement of others, exclusion or denial of worth on the basis of a position as a psychiatric in-patient can lead Vincent to take on some of these models. It can be argued that this is for example the case with marginality when Vincent sleeps on the streets, in porticoes, or even on a dung-hill. But the

Morrison-model – the desire to double Morrison – is more complicated than an intra-psychic model of free, individual choice (if there is any!). There are two important items related to Vincent's Morrison-model, which I would like to discuss. Firstly, desire as a positive intentional force of resistance, and secondly, desire as a 'political' and mimetic process.

Vincent was an active agent. He was the 'nomadic subject, able to become, to resist, to see that things can be otherwise' (Fox 1993: 86). The desire of Vincent to be Morrison soaked his life. Morrison was a model with a strong directive force for many years. 'Higher-level goals' clustered around this model: success, freedom and happiness. Morrison stood for all. Nothing is abnormal in the goals of success, freedom or happiness in the Anglo-American and Northern European cultures. D'Andrade (1984: 98) notes for example about the American emphasis on success: 'there are external sanctions involving money and employment, there are conformity pressure of many kinds, and there are the direct personal rewards and value satisfactions'.

However, for Vincent the achievement of these goals did not pass off by socially accepted employment, but precisely by the opposite. He tried to achieve the goals by begging, gambling or exhibitionism. These activities are not signs of madness per se, but in Vincent's case they are signified as symptoms of mental illness. However, they offered Vincent satisfaction and pleasure, because if he succeeded to win a couple of hundred guilders by tapping the buttons of a gambling machine his dream about 'good life' became reality. People would accept a drink and would even have a conversation with him. He would take a taxi and the chauffeur would be polite and open the door for him. This gave him 'the kick'.

The directive force of such models cannot be entirely explained by personal and social reward. According to D'Andrade there are two motivational systems involved with cultural meaning systems: one that satisfies personal needs and another that represents a self as proof of a particular set of values (D'Andrade 1984: 98). For example, what motivated Vincent to identify himself with Morrison may be rewarding because it satisfied his need for recognition and attention. The effect of this open identification was the constant attention and care of mental health workers, because this identification was conceived as a sign of madness. Ironically, mad people have to behave mad in order to stay in social contact with others. The identification also represented the 'free' self and this self came close to the cosmic man.

However, the need for success and related feelings of freedom and happiness was only temporarily satisfied. The ways in which Vincent tries to fulfil his desire often meant a social conflict. We can hardly speak of any form of reward in this case. What made Vincent do this again and again? To explain this, we need another dimension of desire, namely intentionality. From a psychological view intentions are mental representations capable of being realised in action. I do not mean a full conscious effort to make something clear or to satisfy a desire. Analogous to Sperber and Wilson (1986) who see a communicative intention not just as an intention to inform someone else of something, but as an intention to make an informative intention known to the one who communicates and the one who listens, intention of desire is a semi-conscious effort to make an intention clear or to make clear that there is an intention to everyone who is involved in social interaction. Desire is thus not only a positive force that takes place in the real, as Deleuze and Guattari see it, but also an intentional force, not only to fulfil needs but also a force that is effective and productive in the social domain. The desiring subject communicates an intention with the desire. The question is what effects it has, and what it produces.

Jim Morrison and especially his ideas of fame, a 'flashy' lifestyle, plenty of money, spirits, women and music, were strong leading principles for Vincent. The proceeds of begging, gambling and other business enabled Vincent to live like his model. He could buy drinks and ride in a taxi. This, in turn, gave him the idea that he was 'on the road with Jim'. Vincent told me: 'I think I am the fifth Doors.' This is a remarkable phenomenon. Vincent did exactly what Morrison did. Morrison was not only a 'success model' for young people. Essential components of his life were 'doing dirty', protest, nihilism, anti-materialism and death. It is striking that Vincent fitted almost perfectly in this double Morrison-model. But the dark side of the model, e.g. anti-social behaviour and death, was disregarded in Vincent's discourse. About Morrison's death, he said: *Is he still alive, Morrison? [Therapist: He is dead.] He is dead? But I never found out he is dead! [Therapist: No?] Never. Does it hurt? [Therapist: I don't know, I was never dying.] I don't know whether he is dead or not.*

When the movie on Morrison's life and death was shown in the nearby town, Vincent did not want to see it. When I took a photo of Morrison's grave at Père Lachaise in Paris, he did not want to see it. He said that he disliked 'the ugly images of Morrison', but I believe that seeing Morrison's grave or the film would

mean the end of Vincent's story and thus the end of his life. The most important thing in Morrison's life for Vincent was his glamour and success. Doing dirty, although it is an essential component of the star's life, was not a motivating force for Vincent, but an inevitable necessity. Vincent pointed therefore to the evil of others and the 'logic' of his own behaviour. He did dirty, but by doing so he was confronted with norms and values in his society. His behaviour was not tolerated. Complaints of his family, fights in the town, people making a fool of him and sending him away were the results. Yet, some of the things Vincent did are not uncommon in towns, where people 'celebrate the weekend' or have their parties. Carnavalesque ideas and a 'we-live-just-once' model could be seen. Vincent described this as follows: *They say: We live just once, when they walk around with a big glass of beer. Do you understand that? Who lives once? They say: When we are dead, we rot away, so let us drink! That is not possible. There is maybe a life after life. Incarnation? Rubbish! It is your world. You see so many people and then you may ask yourself: Why are you seeing that? Why are they destroyed like that?*

Vincent connected the carelessness of people, their badness, the evil and the consequent destruction. He contrasted these with the cosmos, the good and infinity: *My life is eternal. [...] I don't reincarnate, I disappear. The universe is infinite. Life continues till the entire universe is filled up with cosiness. There is no end to my life.*

Vincent did 'bad things' to be in the 'scene' he despises. This was not simply copying Morrison's life. The proceeds of his 'jobs' guaranteed him not only fulfilling of a personal desire to be Morrison, but also meant (short-term) social relationships. This was the only way Vincent had. Alternative social institutions that could satisfy his social needs were missing. Through his madness and status of psychiatric patient he was marginal and lonely. So, social aspects created the conditions of the force of his models. The forbidden actions Vincent used to attain his goals belonged to these social factors. What he did openly, others did clandestine. He knew this: *I have to tell everything to my wife. Are you mine? [Els: No, I have already someone else. I am not yours, but I am listening. Tell me.] Well, if I tell my wife she falls asleep... [Els: I don't fall asleep. Do you have a friend?] Yes. She is a twin. [Els: Does she live here?] No, I meet her in town. She takes a gin from me and leaves it. Then my money is gone and she does not want anymore. If I had five thousand guilders, she would come with me, she said. She is so beautiful, she is a twin. I want to tell her anything, but she won't listen.*

He almost exactly copied a song of Morrison, i.e. 'The Hitchhiker' (the text is at the beginning of this part). This image suited Vincent. He was wandering about and he always tried to get some money so that he could buy love and a social relationship.

An older but still actual argument of Goffman (1971) in his 'Asylums' on intentionality of mad behaviour is that such behaviour is not so much a result of any violence, but an intentional offence of rules. The behaviour shows sensitivity for those rules. It is a profanation. According to Goffman the behaviour is of interest, because it shows us the common ritual order. In its offence the behaviour shows us rules of which we are hardly aware in our daily lives. Later (1971: 411), Goffman adds: 'In sum, mental symptoms are wilful situational improprieties.' It is not so difficult to see the intentionality of 'mad' acting here. Also the relation with Morrison's wilful offences of culture and social rules and norms is clear. The openness with which Vincent offended cultural norms brought him not only into conflict with people in town, but the offence ridiculed a double moral.

Norms of what people can do in public are ambivalent and ambiguous. This ambivalence and ambiguity offered to Vincent (and other psychotic people as well) different possibilities to withdraw himself from the obligations of 'social regulation' and cultural norms. Vincent's contempt of behaviour of the feasters in town was evoked in others by his own behaviour. Showing his genitals in town was to stage the hidden and secret perversity of people: 'They say I have to.' When Vincent would refuse to do what the drunken people asked, he was punished by abuse. When he did what was asked, because he wanted to earn some money and because people wanted to see his penis, he was punished by his supervisors in the hospital. This was a dilemma for him.

The question is then: who was bizarre? Vincent or the people in town? I would like to stress that I do not claim that Vincent's 'mad' behaviour is a fully conscious act to make people aware of the ambivalent morals and norms and the hidden passions in his society. I argue that desire has three positive intentional dimensions which motivate people to act the way they do. First, there is the intention to satisfy the need to feel well, to be happy or get 'a kick'. This is a personal intention. Second, there is the intention to satisfy social needs, for example to have social contacts or sympathy of others. Third, there is an intention to express displeasure or an awareness of hidden negative aspects of a moral

system within a society. These intentional dimensions are intertwined. For example to express displeasure of negative aspects in a moral system can be of personal worth because it satisfies personal needs for a certain achievement and because 'it represents the "good" self' (D'Andrade 1984: 98).

Desire, resistance and mimesis

In this section I want to explore the intentionality of a desire in relation with the effects of the behaviour that follows from that desire on other people in Vincent's culture. In other words, is desire a 'will-to-power' that has a positive social impact? Is it a political act? Vincent's caricatured mimesis of Morrison and 'wilful situational improprieties' had an enormous impact on social relationships for himself, but did they show the ambiguity of cultural values and norms? In other words, could Vincent be compared with the trickster figure? Vincent's life threw him into conflict with the cultural conceptions of a person, norms of behaviour and social rules, which are in force in the society. These are regulations that somebody is trained and educated to adhere to mainly in childhood. These regulations always enclose resistance, because individuals may differ in the degree to which they are committed to cultural ideas (D'Andrade 1992).^{*} They can reject ideas totally or partially. [^{*} *D'Andrade expands the ideas of Spiro (1987) by adding the motivational force of cultural models to Spiro's concept of internalisation. He writes: 'Spiro has pointed out that all parts of a culture are not held by people in the same way; that cultural propositions vary in the degree to which they are internalized (1987)' (1992: 36). Somewhat before he writes: 'Thus it could be said that the statements generated by cultural models had directive force for some people, that is, had a force which made people obligated to do what the statement said. However, the term "directive force" refers to a specific kind of motivation - the moral or quasi-moral sort, where one feels obligation' (1992: 39)*] Vincent's desire to become Morrison and finally become a cosmic man reflected intentional efforts to dismantle the cultural rhetoric on decency, autonomy, self-reliance, labour, and all other concepts which seem so important nowadays. He showed the 'ridiculous' and arbitrary use of these concepts. It was as if Vincent wanted to say: 'You want me to be mad or to violate norms and rules? I will give you what you want.' He did this by well-known mechanisms in our culture, i.e. 'desire', 'mimesis', 'identification'. The mime had the same effect as that of a clown.



Jim Morrison
(Graffiti Rosario)

The people in the centre of the city laughed and challenged him to behave 'crazier'. Two issues are important. First, the issue of flexibility and constraints of cultural ideas. Second, the related issue of power. Obviously, notions of what is, what can be and what must be done have thresholds. On the one hand there are infinite possibilities for people to explain themselves. The flexibility, or pandemonium as Gergen (1985) names it, is not as infinite as it sometimes seems to be in a post-modern society. When Vincent said 'I am Morrison' or 'I want to be a cosmic man', the social impact and force was large, but only because of the irony, 'exaggeration' and impossibility of what he did. We cannot gather information about the irony in Vincent's life from his texts as they are presented above. We can derive his ironical attitude from the tone in which he talked and from the rhythm of his behaviour. His stories were sometimes told in a Rabelian way.

They are of grotesque realism, using vulgarisms, puns, mockeries and benignant fabrications. His behaviour was also ironic. I happened to be a victim once of his way of begging. To illustrate this I quote a fragment from my diary: *There comes Vincent! His red hair flickers as a warning signal in the sun. Without knowing why, I feel something is going to happen. 'Hey!', Vincent shouts. With his long thin legs he rushes at me, his hand held out. He laughs. 'How are you? What are you going to do?', he asks, while shaking my hand. 'I am going to work, Vincent.' 'Work? What work? Are you going to tell stories about the hospital?' 'Yes, I will.' 'That's great, that's very great. Are you doing this alone?' 'Yes, I do it alone.' Vincent tilts his feet. He gets a deep breath and then: 'Hey, do you have something for me? For buying a bottle of lemonade? You gave me something lately, but that is gone. It does not matter what: nickels, dimes. I pay you back, I pay you. I will tell you another story. I pay you back. Please?' Vincent held his hand. 'I am so thirsty, girl!' [To make a longer story a little shorter, I gave him some money.] 'I pay you back! Did you note down the dates of the coins?' Vincent*

comes very close to me and smiles. I can smell his body and see his brown teeth. 'Thanks, I pay you back!' Then he disappears to the café.

I have to admit that this encounter gave me mixed feelings. On the one hand I felt rather defenceless against Vincent's charms. I felt as if I had to laugh, which I did indeed. To note down the dates of the coins was ridiculous. On the other hand, I felt repelled by unwashed flesh and I also was embarrassed, because I did not like to be forced to give him money. The stories and behaviour of psychotic people are tragic and comic. Psychotic people amuse, but they are also accusing. The tragedy, which summons compassion of others, guards them from total rejection.

This resembles the reactions people have for the behaviour of the trickster. The effects of his behaviour may be compared to 'the drastic entertainment' of the tricksters' stories (Kerenyi 1972). Stories of such grotesque realism, imaginations or fabrications are mostly only permitted in childhood, in our silent thoughts, in a cabaret or as an artist. What Vincent did and said had to stay behind the curtains of the public stage. His madness offered him a possibility to resist cultural values and norms, or to challenge them. Desire became a 'political' process. In the story of Morrison and the cosmic man Vincent presented himself as a caricature of the ideal of a totally free man. This was an ideal that developed out of the youth culture in the seventies and seems to be accepted as normal in the nineties. He pointed to the 'good' and the 'evil' and their ambivalent character. He pointed for example to drinking and gambling, which belong to evil things in popular cultural ideas, but which are at the same time permitted during an evening out. With irony and caricature the psychotic man or woman is accusing: he or she points to and makes a mockery of cultural values and norms.

However, we have to be careful to take this resistance and protest as political acts that undercut power and ambiguity. We can learn from feminist studies on disease that hold that resistance and protest against gender domination do not undercut existing power relations, but are utilised in the maintenance and reproduction of these relations (Jaggar and Bordo 1992). For example, a study on eating disorders shows that transformations of meaning 'through which conditions that are "objectively" (and experientially) constraining, enslaving, and even murderous, come to be experienced as liberating, transforming, and life-giving' (Bordo 1992). The transformations appear to be non-liberating; they reproduce the existing models of femininity. How is this in the case of psychotic people, whose ideas are dominated by the culturally accepted ideas? Vincent's

protest and caricature appeared to be counterproductive. The symptoms of chronic psychotic diseases weaken people and turn the lives of patients into an all-absorbing desire. Because psychotic people are wedded to an obsessive desire, they are unable to make an effective change in their lives when others are not willing to acknowledge the social meaning of psychotic language. Vincent remained the 'reproducer' of the dependent person of the psychiatric in-patient. Employing the language of the moral through his own psychotic 'language' involved the ambiguity of that moral and suited perfectly the dilemmas of a culture's mores, but everything remained in its place because Vincent's language reproduced, rather than transforming what was protested and mocked. The fact that the psychotic world has been taken as the 'unreal' world during the history of psychiatry in spite of attempts within psychiatry to give this world its meaning, is significant. Psychotic symptoms and pathology as potential means for resistance and protest serve in the maintenance of established and generally accepted cultural order. How can Vincent's desire become implicated in the cultural order?

D'Andrade claims that the standard analysis ignores what organises the desires. Desires are not simple things in themselves or motives independent of culture. D'Andrade claims that desires are 'conscious interpretations of goals activated by other cultural schemas' (1992: 55), and he agrees with the claim of the standard analysis that 'idiosyncratic and cultural schemas (or models) are organised in complex hierarchies'. Which schema is at the top of a person's interpretative system, varies. Top-level models are 'master motives' and contain the most general goals. For Vincent these were things like success, happiness, and standstill.

Further down in his hierarchy of models there were things like money, social contacts, drinking, women, etcetera. According to D'Andrade there are two empirical issues involved. First, it is not clear how the notion of 'directive force' should be used. D'Andrade proposes a psychological description by organising the data around cultural models which have the greatest directive force. Second, which factors cause cultural models to be internalised? For example why did the cultural model of success affect Vincent so deeply, while others of his generation are not so much attracted by it? D'Andrade gives us a part of the answer. It is because others have already learned other models, which interfere with the success model. The author concludes: Each individual's life history can be viewed as the building of new schematic organizations through processes of

accommodating to experience and assimilating these experiences to previous schematic organizations. The final result is a complex layering and interpenetration of cultural and idiosyncratic schemas which always contains some degree of conflict (1992: 56).

D'Andrade's conclusion is valuable for Vincent's story. However, there is a mechanism involved, that Girard calls mimesis. This mechanism is related to the directive force and internalisation of models and has to do with the maintenance of a model despite the evidence that desires will never be fulfilled. This is what has happened in Vincent's life. Vincent was an adolescent in a critical historical period. It is suggested that the rivalry between youths and adults in western societies during the seventies was uniquely critical. The young were profoundly alienated from the parental generation. Two main forms of dissent were important in that time: the radicalism of European youths with significant social criticism, and an American experimental and flexible dissent from what Roszak called 'the technocracy' (1970: 4). Although the European radicalism was closer to the front door of the Netherlands, it limits itself to the intellectual young people at the universities. It seems that the experimental dissent had a greater impact on the young outside the universities in the Netherlands. Vincent was one of the latter. Flower power, hippy culture or pop culture flourished well with the youth. It offered them the impression of full freedom, with no binding loyalties, no personal attachments, no home, no family, no obligations, no authority. What Vincent, and many others with him, did not see was that the propagated 'leisure' of sunny beaches, luxurious hotels, big cars, cool drinks and drugs were adjuncts of the jet set and high income class, not of underpaid waiters in a small restaurant. Vincent was confronted with and opposing a 'technocratic society' which equipped the young with an 'anaemic superego', made possible by unrestricted pursuit of profit, commercialising and permissive education. Withdrawing from the family and becoming a beggar or a gambler for example was a formidable gesture of protest.

The culture of permissiveness ill prepared the young for life. Adolescence was no longer a passage to adulthood, but 'a status on its own and a prolongation of permissive infancy' (Roszak 1970: 32). Vincent demonstrated awareness of this status of the adolescence period, when he said: *At that time I could not care for myself. [...] You are only an adult when you are forty. [...] I am not a psychiatric patient. I stayed in the hospital because I got lessons, perhaps for becoming an*

adult.

Such a permissive culture as in the seventies smothered protest by saturation coverage. Strictly speaking, it was not the parental default, but the social conditions which caused problems. The counterculture of the seventies was not simply an expression of protest or cultural renewal. The essence of this culture was, as it is with all countercultures, to aggravate contradictions and conflicts which already existed (Abma 1990). These contradictions and conflicts were social conditions. One of these conditions was not the lack of models for mimesis, but the lack of someone in that time who told, for example, the adolescent Vincent that on the one hand, his identification with Morrison could be beneficial and rewarding sometimes, but, on the other hand, it could not continue life long. When he was young his fantasy was nourished by the indulgence of the parents of his friends and his mother. When he grew up he was left too long without restrictions. He did not adjust to prescribed patterns of an adult man. He continued to assert pleasure, freedom and doing dirty, just like Morrison. Originally developed as a resistance against authority and society, Vincent's model came to dominate his entire life.

It came to belong to his passions and it shows the magic of culture. His mimesis presented itself as a caricature of the ideal of a totally free man – a cosmic man – an ideal that developed in the seventies and seems to have a climax in the nineties' hyper individualism. Apparently, the model of freedom and standstill had not lost its force. On the contrary, Vincent mimed Morrison as much as he could. He was so fascinated by his model that he was warming up to it. Morrison was the embodiment of all 'master models' and the models lower in the hierarchy. The pop star became over the years Vincent's 'master's voice'. The mechanism that lied behind the exceptional manifestation of mimesis was that Vincent's being was no longer defined by a place in society. Motivation was stirred up instead of decreased (Girard 1978) and desire increased at the expense of differentiation between the model and Vincent. Being mad was being mesmerised by the models of desire. However, it is not fully correct to ascribe the mesmerising totally to Vincent's madness. It is also not fully correct to see Vincent as a scapegoat. Through intentional behaviour Vincent showed the conflict, rivalry and undermining of the cultural order which were joined together.

Vincent's behaviour did not transform the cultural ideas about a person or the cultural ideas of good and evil. On the contrary, it strengthened the cultural

models of madness. The 'solutions' offered by psychotic language, too excessively uttered, lead to their own undoing. Vincent remained a 'docile body' (Foucault 1979). He remained a locus of social control; a psychiatric inmate.

In conclusion

If Vincent's story is perceived as a 'fleur du mal' and a fantasy, how is it related to his life? Normally, lives are storied. What keeps the stories from being odd is that they summarise and justify the work from which they arose, and that they do not become identical with the teller's desire or motives. But, this is precisely what happens in odd stories: the lives are not storied, but the stories are lived. They are identical with the tellers.

Crazy people are disempowered by the fact that their story is perceived as odd and personal. The problem with odd stories is that they are very attractive for normal people. We suspect 'deep meaning' in them. This becomes clear in the literature on art and madness. In this literature it is assumed that madness enables a person to get access to the deeper domains of creation and ontology. Good examples are studies of Nietzsche and Van Gogh, and many other artists. Crazy people are 'createurs bruts', who have access to an original pre-cultural world, which serves as a source of creativity. I do not want to argue that every crazy man or woman is an artist, but I agree with the opinion that crazy people are ontologists: they are engaged in a new way of experiencing fundamental categories, in experiencing new frames from which reality can be described and experienced. Craziness is thus a new way of experiencing, like art. But it is an involuntary way, sometimes fearful and certainly not comfortable. Mad people do not invent a new culture or a new frame. They unbolt normative frames and inverse the rules of social relationships.



Their stories and lives have sensational and shocking attributes and therefore they resemble the trickster. But, everything in the world has a deep meaning and that drives them crazy. Mad people test possible worlds in their stories to see if they are endurable. Their stories *must* come to life because it is often the only way to contact the social world.

But the openness with which Vincent and the others offend cultural frames (values and norms) brings them into conflict and ridicules a double morality and the arbitrariness of the frames. Cultural norms of what people can do in public are fully alive to ambiguity and ambivalence.

One does not show his penis in public, but when one is drunk on a Saturday night, one asks someone else to show the willy. Vincent and his story are at the core of our culture. We witness the interplay of emotions and cognition, of rationality and irrationality, of calculation and raging passions, of morality and immorality. It is a struggle to fight the magic power of culture. Vincent's story is a sad one and he knows it. When the story comes to an end, his life will end too. His denial of Morrison's death has to be understood as his will to survive. But what will happen when he becomes old?

—

Published in – Els van Dongen – Walking Stories

Rozenberg Publishers 2002 – 978 90 5170 655 0

In Memoriam

Els van Dongen (1946-2009)

By Sjaak van der Geest

In the evening of 4th February 2009, Els van Dongen, anthropologist, colleague and editor of this journal, died at the age of 62. Her death came after a long and painful sickness, a period of hope and desperation, of gratefulness for a rich life mixed with stubborn resistance to the unfairness of that same life.

Els was a gifted anthropologist and an unusual colleague. Students loved her teaching, original, sharp, concerned and full of entertainment. Colleagues admired her for her unbridled energy and productivity and her many talents. She was fast in everything she undertook and impatient if things went too slowly. She deeply disliked bureaucracy and its meetings.

Her anthropological life started late, at the age of 35. She first trained as primary school teacher, during which time she met her husband Leo Hulshof. From 1968 till 1978 she taught in two primary schools in the proximity of their beautiful house in the rural south of the Netherlands, near the Belgian border. In 1978 she decided to study geography. During that course she discovered anthropology, which she liked instantly.

In 1982 she decided to join the new part-time evening course anthropology at the University of Utrecht. She combined the role of student with the care of her

family. She completed her master's 'cum laude' in 1988 with a thesis on the semiotic approach in the study of illness [1988].

Six years later, in 1994, she defended her PhD thesis based on conversations with psychotic people in a psychiatric hospital. The title of her thesis 'Zwervers, knutselaars, strategien' (Tramps, handymen, strategists) betrayed her aversion to psychiatric labels: She regarded the people she met in her research first of all as people out of tune with the 'normal' society, but gifted with extraordinary skills and ideas. I am sure that she experienced 'kinship' with them in their common 'unusualness'. Provocative also was the quote from John L. Caughey that she chose as device for her book: "'Schizophrenic' is perhaps best kept in its traditional sense, as a pejorative label for deviants whose visions we do not like." A few years later she would write that 'madness' showed: "that otherness is present in all of us. The otherness we fear"

In her book, which ten years later was published in a slightly revised English version, she sought to describe and understand how psychiatric patients experienced their world. She did so from the patient's point of view, focusing on the fears and hopes that characterise the life in a clinical mental ward. Dilemmas in that life are: How to express subjectivity in an atmosphere designed to restrain demonstrative emotion? And how to maintain personal integrity in a completely ordered regime? She portrayed the psychiatric patients as 'wanderers' - homeless people, as it were - in an alien and hostile country, creating a 'bricolage' reality from materials at hand. Although she often positioned the therapists and psychiatrists as representatives of an oppressive regime, she did not doubt their integrity either.

In 1996 she joined the staff of the Medical Anthropology Unit at the University of Amsterdam and began to play her key-role as teacher and researcher in our team. She taught both general courses in anthropology and specific medical anthropology modules on themes such as 'anthropology and psychiatry', 'anthropology and chronic illness' and 'medical anthropological ethnography in Europe'.

She published a collection of six narratives by people she met in the closed wards of the mental hospital during her PhD research. The personal stories are alternated by her observations and comments. The book, she wrote in her prologue, was her debt to these people: "I became indebted because the people

shared with me what they had: their stories and (part of) their lives” .

A little further she reflects: “When I went into the hospital, my aim was to study how people deal with mental illness and how mental illness could be understood from the perspective of the people themselves. Now I must admit that madness taught me more about the power of culture and the power of people than about madness” .

The power of culture... In 2000 she co-edited a volume with contributions about the way Europe treated migrants in need of health care. A central theme in that volume is exclusion. It proved a recurrent theme in all her work: exclusion and marginalization of ‘others’, such as psychiatric patients, migrant, refugees, victims of violence and older people.

When she turned her attention to older people in South Africa, she came home with touching stories about the beauty and warmth of old age but also with horrifying data of older people being abused and maltreated by their own children and grandchildren. In one article she spoke of ‘social gerontocide’. Invisible dramas unfold in poor households where the young generation despise and reject their older relatives for their passive role in the Apartheid era and try to ‘kill’ them socially. But, she stressed, the older people are not helpless victims. They fight back and develop strategies to survive.

Research among older people drew her attention to remembrance. Being old consists of having many memories. Rejecting or silencing those memories, however, implies a rejection of the older people themselves. “It is almost as if the past never happened,” one person tells her. In one of her last published articles she quotes a common saying of the young silencing the old: “That was your time... This time is ours!” In other words: Shut up. The ‘culture of silence’ in which they were forced to live during Apartheid is thus prolonged into the post-Apartheid era. That awareness of muted memories inspired her and Monica Ferreira, with whom she collaborated throughout the South Africa years, to bring out a collection of ‘untold stories’ to give voice to the lives of older people in the new South African society.

Her last major publications were two edited books, one about lying and concealment in medical settings and one about distance and proximity during illness. The former, co-edited with her long-time friend and colleague Sylvie

Fainzang, argued that lying is a way of dealing with major crises that people encounter, particularly during illness. The theme connects with ideas she has been airing from the very beginning: health problems are not only about health; they are linked to shame, exclusion, suffering and social violence. Lying in such circumstances may be the most effective medicine to restore the damage. But lying is mutual; those with power in medical contexts may exploit the lie as well, to maintain their position in the medical hegemony.

Facing distress, co-edited with Ruth Kutalek, brought together papers of a conference of the European Association of Social Anthropology in Vienna. Distance and proximity constitute the ambiguity of the illness experience. On the one hand, illness leads to loss of independence and need of help and care by others; on the other hand, illness makes one lonely as it isolates the patient from normal social encounters and may scare others away. The pain of the sick body will thus be aggravated or replaced by the distress of ostracism.

In 1998 Els and I organized the first conference on 'Medical Anthropology at Home' (MAAH). For Els doing fieldwork 'at home' was a personal experience. For about ten years she had been doing research 'around the corner' in a psychiatric hospital. For me, it was - and remained - mainly a dream. For both of us it was an attempt to contribute to the de-exoticisation of (medical) anthropology. The theme and format (small-scale / intensive discussions) proved successful and since 1998 the MAAH conference has been held every second year, in The Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Finland and Denmark. Els, Sylvie Fainzang and Josep Comelles, became the driving forces. Els co-edited two voluminous special issues with conference proceedings and remained active as long as she could. She wrote a paper for the last conference in Denmark focusing on her personal sickness and suffering, but was unable to present it. We discussed her moving self-reflection in her absence.

In 1990 Els published her first article in *Medische Antropologie*. She described the social meaning of medicines in the psychiatric ward where she did her research. The medicines, she wrote, had a binding as well as an oppressive effect in the interaction between patients and staff. Relations between these two parties had the character of a combat in which medicines (taken or refused) replaced words. The article became a key-text in our work on 'pharmaceutical anthropology'.

In 1994 she helped as guest editor to make a special issue about Zintuigen (The Senses) and in that same year she joined the team of editors. She kept that position till the end of her life. *Medische Antropologie* has been the main outlet for her ideas on health, culture and violence, certainly in the first decade of her career. She wrote eighteen articles and comments and an uncounted number of book reviews for this journal and (co-)edited five special issues on 'the senses', 'older people, wellbeing and care', 'shit, culture and well-being', 'medical technology and the body' and 'violence and human rights'. We, the editors, will miss her fast and sharp judgment in the evaluation of manuscripts, her invaluable editorial suggestions to the authors and her cheerful directness during our discussions.

Another journal favourite journal for her was *Anthropology & Medicine*, in which she published about the creation of cultural difference, lying and illness, and bodywork in nursing.

From the beginning in 1994 she has also been one of the editors of the book series 'Health, Culture and Society' which has brought out sixteen titles so far.

Els was a person with many talents. She took lessons in drawing and painting and produced beautiful canvasses with symbolic objects and portraits of relatives, friends, and people she met during fieldwork. Many of her productions can still be viewed on her website. She was also a filmmaker and photographer. The topics she chose for her photographs and films were sometimes from her anthropological research but often focused also on other things such as nature, everyday life and unexpected details such as the movements of hands during a conference.

Els has lived a very full life and accomplished more than most of us will be able to achieve in a life twice as long as hers. Even so, she was not always a happy scholar, perhaps feeling that her close colleagues did not fully understand or appreciate what she was doing. Close colleagues are sometimes more distant than those who are far away. Nevertheless, in this space, she carried on with her own strong and positive energy, becoming a popular guest lecturer in universities abroad and serving on various international scientific committees. When her sickness grew more serious, about two months before her death, we decided to make a book of friends for her. Thirtyeight people, colleagues from Amsterdam, from other Dutch universities and from abroad, plus students and friends

contributed brief essays (and one poem) that dealt with the themes that had been prominent during her academic life. They focused on people who are excluded or marginalised, because of their age, their illness, their 'madness' or because they are living in violent circumstances. Other contributions were about people who are oppressed because they do not fit in the dominant discourse: people with HIV/AIDS, victims of (sexual) violence, refugees and migrants.

The title of the book 'Theory and Action', was the name of a famous core module that Els taught in the Master's of Medical Anthropology and Sociology. In one of her papers she stressed that theory and action are closely connected in medical anthropology. "Theory helps us to bear our ignorance of facts," she quoted George Santayana. Facts, she continued, acquire their meaning from what people do to them, in this case anthropologists and the people they are working with. Theory provides a way of finding pertinent meanings and making intelligent interpretations that open the door to relevant action. She then cited the famous line from Kurt Lewin that there is nothing so practical as a good theory. A good theory is practical because it enhances understanding and produces the questions that really matter in medical anthropological research. In her module, Els discussed with the students that problems of ill-health and suffering should be regarded in their historical, political and economic contexts and how larger social and political forces shape relations and actions and cultural imagination at the local level. The necessary - but often difficult - cooperation between anthropology and health workers received special attention. Questions that were addressed during the course included: Why do we need theory? Which theories are relevant? How can we link macro, meso en micro theories with practical work?

'Theory and Action' constitutes both medical anthropology's ambition and its weakness. The frequent criticism that medical anthropology receives from those who work in the heat of the day confirms that, unfortunately, much academic work remains largely or totally useless to 'actors' in health care. Nearly every contributor in the book struggled in one way or the other with this dilemma and with the challenge of proving the practical relevance of theory.

When her condition became critical, we decided to tell her about the book and gave her the list of authors and the titles of their contributions. She was overwhelmed and deeply moved when she saw the list of so many friends. She gave us one of her paintings for the cover of the book and allowed us to include one of her last essays that dealt with her own illness and the way people express

their connectedness in times of suffering and uncertainty. Four weeks later we brought the book. I held a short speech and she responded directly and with humour. She was almost too weak to open the paper wrapped around the book. We drank a glass of wine and had a lovely lunch while she observed us from the sofa. She read the essays and reacted personally to many of the authors. Ten days later she died. On the 9th February we said farewell to her in a ceremony full of music and words of comfort.

References

Van Dongen, Els - 1988 Betekenen van ziekte. Een explorerende studie naar de mogelijkheid van een semiotische analyse bij de bestudering van ziekte als symbool van sociaal conflict. University of Utrecht: Master thesis.

1994a Zwervers, knutselaars, strategen. Gesprekken met psychotische mensen. PhD Thesis, Utrecht University. Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers.

1994b (ed.) Zintuigen. Special issue Medische Antropologie 6 (1).

1997 Ouderen, welzijn en zorg. Special issue Medische Antropologie 9 (1) (co-edited with Sjaak van der Geest).

1999 Poep, cultuur en welbevinden. Special issue Medische Antropologie 11 (1) (co-edited with Sjaak van der Geest).

2000 Health for all, all in health. European experiences on health care for migrants. Rome: Cidis/Alisei (co-edited with P. Vulpiani and J. Comelles).

2001 Medical Anthropology and Anthropology. Special double issue AM rivista della societa Italiana di Antropologia Medica 11/12 (together with J. Comelles).

2002a Themes in Medical Anthropology. Special double issue AM Revista della Societa Italiana di Antropologia Medica 13/14 (together with J. Comelles).

2002b Walking stories. An oddnography of mad people's lives. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers.

2002c (ed.) Medische technologie en het lichaam Special issue Medische Antropologie 14 (1).

2004a Worlds of psychotic people: Wanderers, 'bricoleurs' and strategists. New

York/London: Routledge.

2004b Untold stories. Giving voice to the lives of older persons in new South African Society. Cape Town: The Albertina and Walter Sisulu Institute of Ageing in Africa/University of Cape Town (edited with Monica Ferreira).

2005a Musa ukuba yibokhwe ezigusheni: Social gerontocide in South Africa? *Medische Antropologie* 17 (1): 7-22.

2005b Lying and illness. Power and performance. Amsterdam: Aksant (co-edited with Sylvie Fainzang).

2005c Violence and human rights. *Medische Antropologie* 18 (1) (co-edited with Annemiek Richters).

2007 Facing distress. Distance and proximity in times of illness. Vienna: LIT Verlag (coedited with R. Kutalek).

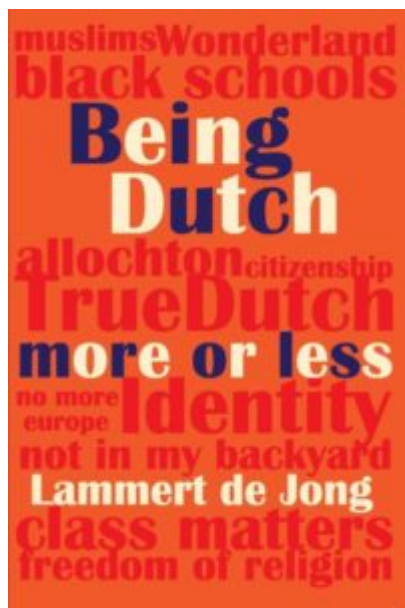
2008a "That was your time... this time is ours!" Memories and intergenerational conflicts in South Africa. In: E. Alber et al. (eds), *Generations in Africa: Connections and conflicts*. Berlin/Münster: LIT Verlag, pp. 183-206.

2008b Cancer and integrity. Dealing with fragile realities. Paper for the 5th MAAH Conference, Sandbjerg, Denmark. Forthcoming in *Proceedings*.

2009 Keeping the feet of the gods and the saints warm: Mundane pragmatics in times of suffering and uncertainty. In: S. van der Geest & M. Tankink (eds), *Theory and action: Essays for an anthropologist*. Amsterdam: AMB, pp. 1-10. [First published in *Anthropology & Medicine* 15 (3): 263-269 (2008)]

The Dutch Black School: They Are

Not Us



Lammert de Jong - Being Dutch. More or less. In a comparative Perspective of USA and Caribbean Practices Rozenberg Publishers 2010. ISBN 978 90 3610 210 0 - The complete book will be online soon.

'An Inconvenient Truth'

In the Netherlands, 'black' is *not* black; it is 'non-western', including Moroccan, Turkish, and people of Caribbean origin, lumped together as allochtons. In government statistics, schools with more than 70% allochton pupils are generally classified as a black school; schools with less than 20% allochton pupils are graded as white. The *black school concept* is also used in relation to the surrounding neighborhood. Schools with more pupils of non-western origin than expected in view of the composition of the neighborhood are labeled blacker or, in the case of an over-representation of white pupils, whiter. A deviation of 20% or more between neighborhood and school population classifies a school as *too white* or *too black* (Forum, 2007). The number of primary schools with more than 70% allochton pupils is increasing; in Dutch nomenclature: the schools are becoming blacker.

The *Dutch black* school is a perfidious contraption that locks in children of non-western origin, while its black label flags an underlying *apartheid syndrome* to underscore for the *True Dutch* - intentionally or not - how different these allochtons are. Yet the black school touches an open nerve in the Netherlands, a

sensitive reality that surpasses its statistical definition. On the one hand the black school reeks of *apartheid*, which the Dutch so bravely contest when occurring elsewhere in the world. On the other hand the *True Dutch* are well aware that their entitlement and unencumbered access to white schools is at stake when school *segregation* is tackled in earnest. So far Dutch counteraction is limited to research and some experimental desegregation projects.

The Dutch black school is embedded in the particular Dutch school system that funds public-secular as well as private-denominational schools. Once, the Dutch school system was driven by the accommodation of different beliefs. On the strength of their belief – church-religion or secular ideology – parents wanted a school for their children that adhered to the values, doctrines, and rules of their faith, and paid for by the state. *[Note: In 2009 the Netherlands' Council of State pointed out that publicly financed orthodox religion-based schools may refuse teachers who identify with a particular gay life style. The fact that a teacher is gay is not sufficient to deny a position, but if he or she is in a same sex relation and married in church or city hall, that may suffice, as such contravenes the orthodox rule that marriage is a holy sacrament between one man and one woman]*

Denominational and non-religious schools emphasized particularity, a distinctiveness that corresponded with religious doctrines or ideological orientations. The principle of *Freedom of Education* (Onderwijsvrijheid) is enshrined in the Netherlands Constitution, art. 23. Over the years parents have come to believe that they are entitled to choose a specific school for their children, which is a travesty of the freedom to choose a particular type of school, based on denominational or secular definition.

Dutch politics wavers when coming to grips with the effects the black school brings – quite literally – home. Most parents don't set out intending to discriminate, which makes a noble difference, and legally enforced segregation is not on the books. Nonetheless a segregated white-black educational system has become a reality, with most True Dutch children in better schools and having better school careers, and children of allochtons at the other end. And that with long lasting effects after the school years have come to an end. This type of school segregation stigmatizes New Dutch children for life, while reinforcing an allochton footprint that will divide the nation for years to come. Although most political parties assert that integration is the major social issue of our time, they

fail to confront the black school with a sense of urgency. Dutch politics still has to acknowledge that the black school emblemizes the allochton population in the Netherlands with an explicit signature: *They are not Us*.

Black schools are a common feature in most major Dutch cities. So far the black school does not stand out in Dutch politics as a problem that must be solved urgently by law, regulation or in the courts. The black school seems more of an inconvenient truth than a critical social or political issue. To an outsider this must be surprising, given that the Netherlands is known for its rock-solid liberal reputation. How come then that the Netherlands has become a segregated nation? And do they discriminate against people of color? Do the Dutch not know how to handle the ethnic complexities of today's multi-cultural society? Or is it a lack of compassion for those who do not belong to the white Dutch tribe: *Discrimination or not, my children first*. Or is it merely a matter of social-economic stratification, a distinction between advantaged and disadvantaged children, so that the Dutch black school is just a *myth* (Vink, 2010)?

The Dutch Black School

The Dutch black school has come into existence at the intersection between non-western immigration and the particular Dutch history of a nation that until the 1950s was separated by religion and ideology. The Dutch were used to the idea of organizing themselves along the lines of church religion and secular ideology, in schools, politics, libraries, and on the social parcourse. This divide partitioned marriage and friendship, sports and universities, and shopping for groceries, milk and meat. So when immigrants flocked into the Netherlands and concentrated in certain neighborhoods, thus becoming physically separated from the True Dutch, this division fitted into a historic pattern of a segregated nation.

The immigrants were administratively grouped together as allochtons whose children went to black schools.[*Note: According to the Netherlands Statistitical Office, Japanese and Indonesian immigrants are classified as western-allochton because of their social-economic and social cultural position. Japanese immigrants and their families are defined as economically incorporated, Indonesian immigrants are mostly born in the Dutch East Indies, which became independent in 1949*]

School segregation was already mentioned in 1971, especially with regard to

immigrants from Suriname (Karsten, 2005). Most of the immigrants from Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles are classified as racially black. Concentrations of Surinamese immigrants gradually changed the character of the white neighborhood schools into black schools. Where guest workers settled, schools in their neighborhood became populated with children of Moroccan and Turkish origin. The idea of particular schools for foreign children who eventually would be returning home to Morocco and Turkey (but did not) was not too farfetched. These children had different educational needs, which could be best addressed by schools that also taught the language of origin, though only a few hours per week. At a later stage Muslim schools were established as a logical extension of the Dutch particularistic school system. Occasionally these Muslim schools were challenged as holdouts of backwardness, or not in line with the historic Christian-Judeo cultural signature of the Dutch nation, but overall these schools fitted the Dutch concept that religion merited a particular school, paid for by the state. The concept black school covered all these varieties in school population, which became a distinctive category for schools with a majority of pupils of non-western origin, irrespective of its racial make-up. The use of a black label simplified a more detailed allochton classification. Black is not just a word; it comes with gargantuan amounts of racist baggage, which is included in the True Dutch perception of these schools. White parents do not send their children to such schools, however liberal minded they might otherwise be.

School segregation in Amsterdam (DOS, 2008)

Many children in Amsterdam attend white or black schools. A study 'Segregation in Primary Education in 2008 in Amsterdam' comprised 203 schools of which 86 are black (over 70% allochtons) and 31 white (less than 20 % allochton); 86 schools have a balanced ethnic composition. So over half of all primary schools are either white or black.[Note: Zwarte scholen steeds zwarter. In: Trouw, 19 July 2007] Against the background of the composition of the neighborhood population, 29 schools are too black and 31 too white, calculated on a deviation of 20 % or more. When counting pupils, 11% of a total of almost 60,000 attend a 'too black' school and 9% a 'too white' school. 'Too black' schools count on average 222 pupils, which is less than 'too white' schools (311). This study points out that segregation also exists in terms of schools being overcrowded with children whose parents have little education, and schools where such children are few.

School segregation follows residential segregation, but is reinforced by parental

choice. The Amsterdam study indicates that many children attend schools outside their own neighborhood: 43%, while 57% attend schools in the neighbourhood. Children – black and white – from relatively black neighborhoods, who are going to school elsewhere, attend more often a white school than would have been the case if they had attended school in their residential neighborhood. The difference for white children is 62 against 26%; for black children 17 against 5%, which indicates that parental choice goes for white. That parental choice favors white is also shown in the choice of a school that is further away than three other schools, and is at the same time whiter than those neighborhood schools: 40% of the white parents choose the whiter schools, and 14% of the allochton parents. These parents do not mind their children biking or walking an extra mile to get to a relatively whiter school.

What's Wrong with the Black School?

Is the black school really that bad? Doesn't the black school perfectly fit into the Netherlands' live and let live tradition? Are black schools a form of discrimination? In quite a number of cities, a black school in a predominantly allochton neighborhood is not perceived as a problem. School governors do not feel pressured to take action, as such schools are a reflection of the (allochton) neighborhood (Forum, 2007, 18). As long as the school population is in line with the ethnic composition of the neighborhood, the composition is attributed to residential segregation, which is beyond the school governors' control. This black school is considered inevitable and a priori fated not to become desegregated. A black school in an allochton neighborhood is 'at home' as it were, and segregation is not judged to be an issue.

This calculation is disingenuous, as it does not acknowledge the double bind of these children, living in a segregated allochton neighborhood and attending a black school. Residential allochton segregation is topped with black school segregation. The double bind segregation of school and neighborhood is generally overlooked. An exception was an advisory council on Integration and Diversity in Amsterdam that condemned all black school segregation, also the black school in the black neighborhood, because of its adverse effects on the development of common Dutch citizenship (Adviesraad, 2009).

Assuming that the black school cannot be eradicated, perhaps this school should be accepted as such, and be dealt with realistically. Doubt is cast on the received opinion that black schools obstruct social-cultural integration and citizenship

participation. Furthermore the practicality of reducing high concentrations of underachievers in allochton neighborhoods is questioned. '*Making the best*' of the *black* school is put forward as a realistic alternative. Specific support programs for black schools must be developed (Karsten, 2007, 19). Additional programs and specific efforts must elevate the black school. Provided that pupils get the same opportunities as children at other schools, the black school should not be considered a problem per se. Black schools must be reformed when they are stagnant schools which do not serve their students upward social mobility (Gramberg, 2005, 189). According to this reformist view, separate but equal is the next-best thing for educating allochtons to proper Dutch levels, a reality that must be accepted. Considering all impediments to a better integrated school system, the black school must become an end in itself, something to be accepted, and where necessary, improved. In the USA the case of the black school has been turned upside down. Movements of *Black Power* and *Black is Beautiful* have encouraged African-Americans to endorse black school segregation, as legal action had for decades not succeeded to end school *segregation*. In the slipstream of this separatist argument, integration of allochtons by means of school desegregation is no longer seen as a feasible option (Karsten, 2007, 19).

Obviously, *black* schools in the Netherlands have created an issue that must be dealt with, if only by listening to the plenitude of statements on most political platforms: we oppose school segregation, and we oppose the black school. But it seems that, first of all, a multitude of research projects must be undertaken before the problem can be outlined in full. Too white or too black schools are focused on as a problem that can possibly be tackled by manipulating registration and reigning in parental choice. Research is called for to determine the black school plusses and minuses; the effects of the black school. On social integration, and society in general; on immigrants' social-economic advancement and mobilization; children's educational success or failure; and civic participation of the allochton in adult years. It seems that research is called for as a way out of a problem that a priori is deemed intractable, because all parties realize that when white parents have a choice, they do not send their children to black schools, nor do they allow too many allochton kids into the school of their choice. Studies from both the USA and around the world have shown that parental choice often leads to more segregated schools: 'Unless policy makers actively intervene in the choice process, parental choice of school is very likely to make schools more segregated than they would otherwise be' (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 3-5).

Class Matters-Classmates Count (Paulle)

Efforts have been made to take the black denomination out of the black school. From that angle the question is raised whether it is strategically right to focus on the black school, as race (or ethnicity) is not the principal denominator of educational failure or success. Doesn't the social-economic status (SES) of parents correlate more strongly with the school scores of their children? In a study of two schools, one in the Bronx, NY, and one in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam, Bowen Paulle quotes a generally respected research finding: '*Educational research suggests that the basic damage inflicted by segregated education comes not from racial concentration but from concentration of children from poor families*' (Paulle, 2005, 276). Pupils from disadvantaged milieus are more sensitive to the quality of teaching. He points to the success of experiments with economic desegregation programs: schools statistically dominated (70% or more) by youth from middle- or high income families can successfully absorb youth from low-income families (Paulle, 2005, 277). Yet this self-evident argument needs further confirmation. The right proportional mix is still a subject of research and debate: what is the actual tipping point for high SES parents, and what is the turning point in absorbing disadvantaged children in a school dominated by advantaged children? These experiments have built a strong case for mixing school populations according to parental SES in a win-win proportion, yet it does not exonerate the existence of the black school.

The *black* denomination is also taken out to explain differences in school careers of allochton children. *Allochton* children are especially disadvantaged when being tested for further education. In the Netherlands parents are counseled early - at a child's age of 11, about follow-up education, the options being various types of high school, which lead to university education, or a range vocational training alternatives. At this age, many allochton children lag behind *True Dutch* pupils because of a language disadvantage, due to the language of origin often being still spoken at home. They tend to be steered toward vocational training, based on non-biased scores, but perhaps also on a teacher's subtle bias that blacks tend to fail academic education. Quite a number of these students do reach university level, but only after having made a detour of several years on vocational and high school training circuits. This has caused a debate on postponing the age of decision on a child's high school academic or vocational training options, especially in view of the detour black children are making. Though the Dutch may be relieved that also in this case ethnicity can be taken out of the black school,

the black school is still there, in actual reality and very much so as a stark image in the Dutch mind, especially because the black school legitimizes *True Dutch* entitlement to white schools.

Dismantling the black school by social-economic stratification and the effects of early decision on secondary education both serve Dutch enlightenment. Social-economic stratification is of course not as bad as a simmering ethnic taboo that allochtons are underachievers from birth, justifying white flight and so creating the black school. Others argue that when segregation is exclusively defined as a black-white issue, the problem of white underachievers in the rural areas is overlooked; the big-city bias of ethnic *segregation* had created a blind spot for white underachievers (WRR, 2009, 162). The SES argument relieves Dutch uneasiness about the black school, because the high rates of underachievement are not a black issue anymore but rather an issue of a forgotten underclass, which includes whites as well. The changeover from black to social-economic class was welcomed as a clearance from the probability that Dutch school particularity had lubricated racial discrimination and ethnic segregation. What a relief. What good news exclaimed Wouter Bos, the labor party leader, when hearing about the near perfect exchange rate between black and underclass scores.[*Note: Aleid Truijens, Klassen met louter dezelfde kindertjes. In: De Volkskrant, 27 January 2009*] He may have thought that having an underclass is something to be sorry for, but certainly not as annoying as white-black apartheid. It just ain't that easy.

The black school denomination is whitewashed by research indicating that class matters in explaining achievement scores. Yet this does not change the fact that differences of underachievement continue to be registered in terms of autochthon and allochton scores. The drop-out rates in vocational training schools during 2006-2007 – 27.5% for autochthons, and 50.1% for *allochtons* – testify to a divided reality that, according to Dutch parlance, is a black school issue (WRR, 2009, 27). Given the reality of the black school in Dutch politics, cities, media, conversation and statistics, it is cynical to argue that a black school does not matter much, because SES and class matter more. This class difference does not make the black school disappear from the parental radar that is set to be sensitive for color. Besides, for the most part SES and non-western origin (if you want, race) walk hand in hand in Dutch society (DOS, 2008, 22).[*Note: It is often assumed that allochton children are equally disadvantaged in terms of the low level education of their parents. Amsterdam's segregation study indicates that allochton children*

vary in being disadvantaged. Half of the Surinamse children (54%) and 62% of the Antilleans are educationally disadvantaged while much more Turkish and Moroccan children are disadvantaged (85 and 86%) (DOS, 2008, 22)]

The Dutch black school collects children of an underclass, mainly of non-western origin or, according to a fashionable non-class jargon, disadvantaged youth. Yet some critics believe that since the breakdown of bloc-based segregation Dutch society is classless, and its educational system as well. [Note: Frans Verhagen, *De eerste Italianen van Amerika. 'Hun geloof is vreemd en bedreigend.'* In: *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 6 June, 2009]

Obviously the very existence of the Dutch black school contradicts the assumption of a classless *Dutch Wonderland*.

Awkward Family Ties

The *Dutch black school*, and its underlying residential segregation, inevitably reminds one of *racial discrimination* elsewhere, in South reason, the Dutch black school is whitewashed by SES and cultural disadvantage, and shrouded in black power mystification. In these countries, whites and blacks were kept apart, based on the believed superiority of white over black. Separate educational structures were to safeguard the superiority of the white race: *slegs vir blanke, or whites only*. South Africa's apartheid came to an end in 1994 when the first elections with universal suffrage were held. The USA's Supreme Court ruled in 1954 against the separate but equal doctrine. Institutionalized and legally enforced separation of white and black education was outlawed. Yet in 1957 the Arkansas Governor called in the National Guard to prevent a group of African-American high schools students to enter the white Central High School in Little Rock: '*Blood will run in the streets if Negro pupils should attempt [to enter] Central High School*' (Ogden, 2008). The struggle of the Little Rock Nine was caught in stark pictures of white hatred and newspaper headlines all over the world. And so was Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama in 1963 when he announced that he would defy the federal court order and block the door of the university's main building to keep the black students out. Eventually President John F. Kennedy managed to resolve the ominous standoff without bloodshed. [Note: Fred Kaplan, *When the Kennedys took on Wallace over Integration. About the television documentary (1963) "Crisis: Behind a President's Commitment."* In: *The New York Times*, 18 January 2009.]

The Supreme Court ruling did not make the black school disappear, nor did it

make much difference to the inferior quality of *black* schools. But the USA upholds the principle that separate but equal is against the law. Transgressions are continuously fought out in court to determine the constitutional options and limits of (affirmative) action to further desegregation.

White hatred and staunch segregationists are rarely to be found among the Dutch. These extreme phenomena are also petering out in the USA; overt bigotry has become risky and unpopular: 'today most racial conflicts involve ambiguous facts and inscrutable motivations' (Ford, 2008, 263). Even so, Richard Ford maintains: 'Today's racial injustices are, in many ways, as severe as ever. But these injustices now stem from isolation, poverty, and lack of socialization as much as from intentional discrimination or racism' (Ford, 2008, 307). Though the Dutch black school does not fit the historical origin and the exact definitions of school segregation in the USA, quite a few characteristics overlap. The vernacular of Dutch school segregation is framed in ethnic and racial definitions.

Most True Dutch parents are liberal enough that they do not mind allochton children in a white school, as long as it remains a white school. After all, a bit of color adds an interesting touch to a cosmopolitan Dutch self-image. But not too many allochtons should have this privilege. White parents do not want their children in black schools, for sure. Black schools are seen as inferior to white schools; they have become distinctly separate institutions, which offer inferior school careers when compared to white schools. Even when black is taken out of the equation by class and cultural disadvantage, the black school remains firmly rooted in the actuality of Dutch education.

The decisive argument against the black school is not that it scores relatively low on educational benchmarks – an occasional white school may score even lower, but that it is a particular school populated by children of non-western origin, being separated from their white compatriots. The *black* school constitutes de facto a new Dutch reality: a particular school for Dutch children because of their non-western origin, and with a second rate classification. Nomen est omen, the name says it all. The *apartheid* label does apply. In the end, True Dutch parents do not send their children to a black school if they can help it. *True Dutch* parents who insist on a white school for their children are exonerated from being xenophobic or racist; they simply look for what's best, and don't have the intention to discriminate. From their point of view this cannot be wrong.

Particularistic Dutch School System

In the Netherlands, a group of parents is free to establish a school where their children are educated in line with their religion or belief, to be funded with public monies. As such the Dutch school system is rather particular; it is based on intentional segregation according to privately held religious beliefs or secular orientations. As a result, there is no tradition of what in the U.S.A is called a 'common school' that serves the entire community and promotes a common sense of civic and other values (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 8). The USA public school is a melting pot of differences with a communal public orientation. The concept public school as known in the USA does not make sense in the Netherlands. The USA public school fosters 'the foundation for good citizenship', which necessarily implies that public education is an instrument of public socialization to common values and a common national identity (Ford, 2008, 206). Americans are free to send their children to private schools, for which they pay themselves. A small minority of private schools are prestigious non-religious institutions, but the vast majority of them are operated by religious organizations, predominantly Roman Catholic, but also Jewish and others. A combination of parents, private and religious institutions, funds these schools, while government finances the public schools. Only 11.5 % of all pupils in primary and high school attend private schools. Income plays a role of course, but also 80 % of the children of families with an income of > \$ 75,000 per year attends a public school (Council for American Private Education). [Note: Council for American Private Education: <http://capenet.org/facts.html>] The British public school is a different species going back centuries, where admission was restricted for children from a particular aristocratic class. Nowadays the term refers to fee-charging independent secondary schools.

In the Netherlands, the government funds almost all schools, also denominational schools which would be labeled private schools in the USA. The Dutch *Freedom of Education* induced a widely held belief that parents are free to choose the school they want for their children; this has become identified as a constitutional right. Parents can chose schools of a particular religious denomination (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Christian, Jewish, Muslim) (*bijzondere scholen*), or secular schools (*openbare scholen*), which do not claim a particular religious affiliation. All schools have to meet centrally set educational standards and goals. They are supervised by the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education, and financed out of public funds. Only a few schools are privately funded. What stands out is that

denominational schools enjoy full financial support from the state. This has not always been the case.

The Education Act of 1878 reflected the established practice of the day: not one penny of public aid to denominational private schools (Lijphart, 1975, 106). In the second half of the 19th Century, more than three quarter of all pupils attended public (non-denominational) elementary schools, which were paid for by the state. One century later, in 1957, the situation was completely reversed. Only 28 % still attended public-secular schools (non-denominational) and 72 % were in private-denominational schools (Lijphart, 1975, 52). In the second half of the 20th Century, these figures have not changed much. In 2006 31 % attended public-secular schools and 69 % private-denominational schools; 34 % Catholic; 24 % Protestant; and the remaining 11 % include Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Evangelical, Catholic-Protestant-Combined schools. *[Note: Trends leerlingen aantallen 2002-2006. Bron cijfers: Cfi/OCW]* All these schools are financed with public monies.

A decisive moment came at the end of the 19th Century when the ruling political parties recognized that the unequal financial treatment of private-denominational schools and public-secular schools fundamentally divided the Dutch nation. Around 1900 both the Catholics and the Protestants had grown into strong blocs, each with a principled desire to have their own school financed by the state. The State's regents could no longer overlook these aspirations, all the more so as demands for universal suffrage had become a burning issue as well. Especially the Protestants' *kleine luyden* (little people) acquired strong leadership demanding that also their schools must be financed out of public funds. Voting rights were part of the power struggle in which the *kleyne luyden* also triumphed. The first elections under universal suffrage (according to those days: male only) were held in 1918. Just before, in 1917, the Dutch legislature enacted a law that guaranteed government funding (Lijphart, 1975, 110).

all elementary schools, public and private, were to get the same financial assistance from the government in proportion to their enrollments.

The equal financial provision by central government guaranteed the schools an even financial foundation irrespective of denomination, or locality – rich or poor – and so added real value to the doctrine that all men are created equal. Rather interestingly it was assumed that this financial equality would help to consolidate

the cultural unity of the nation.*[Note: A proposal to decentralize the financing of schools to municipal and provincial authorities was contested in 2008 for this reason. Jaap Dronkers, Zo verbrokkelt Nederland als cultuureenheid. In: De Volkskrant, 9 December 2008]* While in the USA the public school was assigned the task of uniting the nation, in the Netherlands equal funding for public-secular and private-denominational schools had to serve the same purpose. Ever since, the parents' freedom to choose a school has become carved in stone in Dutch national consensus. That is, until the Dutch Muslim community claimed this freedom to set up Muslim schools.

In the Netherlands parents do not have to balance their choice by cost considerations; they can simply opt for what they think is best. From an American point of view, such freedom sounds too good to be true. In the USA private schools are not financed by the state but out of the parents' pockets; and they are very expensive.*[Note: Charter schools are a recent phenomenon in the USA, and can best be defined as a hybrid structure of a publicly financed school - often initiated by philanthropic monies - that is independently operated on a specific charter. Examples include schools dedicated to Arabic language and culture, or those dedicated to the Hebrew language (e.g. the Hebrew Language Academy Charter School)]* No wonder that the USA Brookings Institution came to visit the Netherlands to find out how this freedom works. Could it be of use across the Atlantic? Alas, the USA concept of separation of church and state forbids the use of public monies for religious causes, although there are numerous exceptions.

School choice based on church religion lost its momentum after the strong wave of secularization passed through the Netherlands. Likewise ideological contestants such as socialism and liberalism had lost much of their imaginative hold by the end of the 20th Century. The formative and behavioral appeal of church-religion and ideology no longer suits the individualized mind. In the meantime, specific pedagogical platforms, also called signatures, such as Dalton, Montessori, Jena, and Waldorf School (Vrije School), have become strong competitive factors in determining parental choice. Although Protestant and Catholic families are still likely to enroll their child in a school with the corresponding religious orientation, a recent study shows that 29 % of Protestants and 23 % of Catholics attend either a non-religious school or a school of another religious persuasion (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 9). For many parents school choice is no longer determined by church religion or ideology; yet the particularistic school

system remains in place, and conveniently accommodated a new phenomenon, the *black* school, which had come into being by default of the *True Dutch* white choice.

Freedom of Education's Travesty

The principle of *Freedom of Education* is meant to guarantee that education is provided and can be accessed according to one's belief (*overtuiging*; Government Paper, 2008, 5). Nowadays *Freedom of Education* has been manipulated to become a choice that takes into account a school's excellence, reputation, and ethnic composition (black or white) as well. Religion lost much of its impact with regards to the choice of a school. Perhaps with the exception of some Jewish, Hindu and Muslim parents, parents now balance their choices between a school's denomination, proximity, ranking and status, and color. Parents generally prefer the best school, which must also be within close range of their residence. These days the choice of a particular school has for many parents little to do with its denominational or secular definition.

Residential patterns and parental school choice determine school segregation. When residential patterns are segregated the schools become segregated: white neighborhoods produce white schools, allochton neighborhoods *black* schools. But parents are not inhibited from looking over the neighborhood boundaries.

White parents do not normally send their children to a black school, as their choice for a white school is a matter of course (with a few exceptions). Not only because of the assumed better education but even more so with regards to school culture and after-school contacts. A black school is perceived to be not as liberal as a white school, especially in case of a dominant Muslim presence. These parents perceive a miss-match between school and home (Karsten, 2005). They contend that white children in a black school have difficulty making after-school friendships. When such white parents live in a predominantly black neighborhood, they look elsewhere, or they move home and hearth to find a white school that fits their aims. This is known as *white flight*. However, a grey flight is formed by allochtons who have progressed on the social-economic status (SES) ladder, and opt for white schools as well, often in suburbia.

White schools are sought after, and thus become overbooked and tend to expand.

On average, half of the white pupils attend a school *outside* their own neighborhood, while 80% of the allochton children are at a school within their neighborhood. Allochton parents are less inclined to travel an extra mile to the

school of their preference than white parents. If *allochton* parents prefer a white school, they must compete with white parents. At the same time, Muslim parents may prefer a Muslim or another black school, as they perceive white schools out of step with the traditional upbringing they hold dear. For them, white schools are too liberal.

Parents who insist on free school choice cling to the constitutional provision of *Freedom of Education* as a roadblock against regulating school admission. Though parents' school preference may be directed by a consumer mindset to pick the best school, the *Freedom of Education* still serves as a strong rallying principle. An improbable alliance of disparate activists has gained leverage to block school desegregation, not bonded by principle or intention but by happenstance. Parents that are directed by denominational-choice found a partner in large numbers of enlightened best-school-choice parents to safeguard a principled *Freedom of Education*. Best-school-choice parents now include a rising number of *allochton* parents who do not want their children in an inferior black school. This rather respectable combination happened to connect with an increasing number of equally principled parents who pursue a True Dutch cause that forbids their children to be mixed with *allochton* kids: *Not In My Backyard* (NIMBY). This alliance of motley adversaries considers desegregation an infringement upon the *True Dutch* right to *Freedom of Education*, based on denomination, best-school, and NIMBY preferences. Invoking a hard won constitutional right of *Freedom of Education* of more than a century old, this alliance is hard to beat notwithstanding the fact that many of these crusaders harbor a motivation that is irrelevant to the constitutional clause of *Freedom of Education*.

Dutch media have finally begun to picture the black school as an *integration* problem. But as long as the extent of the Dutch principle of *Freedom of Education* is not critically questioned in parliament and courts, all attempts to counter segregation are bound to remain tokens of goodwill without real impact. What are the limitations of this *freedom*? Does this freedom include a choice for a *specific* school, as such has become received opinion and customary practice?

Or is a parent's choice limited to a type of school in terms of religious and ideological orientation? Can this *freedom* be controlled by *positive discrimination* or *affirmative action* to secure equal rights of children who otherwise would not stand a chance? These questions must be raised before they can be answered.

Benevolent good-will initiatives are fine, but remain doomed without national, political and legal backing. The Netherlands' minister for Integration absolves himself of the responsibility for the ever-deepening process of school segregation by leaving the problem to municipalities, parents and school boards to deal with, and sits back in anticipation of the outcomes of a few goodwill pilots (Integration Brief, 2009, 22-23). Apparently the black school is too sensitive an issue to be tackled by national politics and parliamentary action. Exactly for this reason, it cannot be solved locally. The stakes are too high for *True Dutch* parents to lose their right of school choice while *Allochton Power* to change this course has yet to be mobilized.

Regulating Parental Choice?

Changes in the playing field are beginning to desecrate the sanctity of parental school choice as an absolute right. Against the backdrop of deepening ethnic school segregation, school choice has become a contentious issue. Critics point out that parental choice has all along been conditioned by availability, zoning of school catchment areas and the discretionary powers of school authorities.

Parental choice has never meant that parents could pick a *specific* school. If schools are full, then parents must look elsewhere. However, the way the system was organized allowed savvy parents to jump the queue, suggesting that actually the parents called the shots. Growing concerns about the divide between white and black schools in the Netherlands are now causing some people to call for a re-interpretation of *Freedom of Education*. A tentative critic merely suggests that a critical debate on the Dutch particular education system must continue (Scheffer, 2007, 422). A more imaginative approach is proposed by an expert on educational inequality in the Netherlands, who recommends a distribution of pupils based on an all encompassing score system for each local authority (municipality, city), allowing children from lower SES parents to register at a good school. Parental preference does still count but is balanced by a range of other scores and considerations (Dronkers, 2007, 76). An interesting twist in the logic of parental choice is that school segregation actually limits the choice of parents; especially those who do not want their children to attend a white or a black school. These parents prefer the blessings of mixed schools so that their children become aware and accustomed to the habitat of the Dutch multicultural society; a kind of multicultural citizenship training: 'more mixed schools, more choice' (Adviesraad, 2009).

There is even a suggestion that the time has come to replace the Dutch particular *Freedom of Education* system with a general structure which aims at public education for all, while allowing latitude for cultural and religious diversity (Pels, 2008, 170). Ahmed Marcouch, a prominent politician, and ex-mayor of Slotervaart, one of Amsterdam's Burroughs, Muslim, of Moroccan origin, supports an overhaul of the system: 'I believe that Muslims should integrate along with their religious identity. We must create Dutch Muslims. You can't just put children from religious families into separate Muslim schools. That adds to segregation. By teaching different religions in public schools, you encourage children to think critically.' [Note: Ian Buruma, *Letter from Amsterdam. Parade's End. Dutch liberals get tough*, pp. 36-41. In: *The New Yorker*, December 7, 2009] Such a radical departure from Dutch *particularity* however would entail for a politician - even in these secular times - a guaranteed electoral downfall.

Kees Schuyt, an esteemed sociology professor, questions whether the particularity of Muslim schools must be encouraged in view of the demands of a multicultural society: '*One can argue that pupils from the first school day must be confronted with each other's different religion and cultural behavior*' (Schuyt, 2009, 123; Translation mine). However, Schuyt warns, this common school may turn out to be a rough encounter with discrimination and humiliation in classroom and schoolyard. So it may be better to let Muslim children grow up in a protected school environment, namely a Muslim school that scores high on good teaching and postpones the confrontation with a tough outside world to a later age, similar to the way Roman Catholics and Protestants operated. He emphasizes that Muslim schools are in line with the Dutch segregated school system, and that blocking them would be extremely hypocritical. Yet in the end Schuyt doubts whether the present Muslim schools meet the terms of educating children to become free citizens (burghers) in a modern society, just as some other religion-based schools fail to do (Schuyt, 2009, 124). As late as 2010 orthodox protestant schools claim the right to keep their schools free from homosexual teachers and students who live by their sexual identity. Schuyt's argument comes close to a declaration that the Dutch particular school system does not fit the demands of a modern multicultural society, which is held together by a commitment to democracy, personal freedom and the rule of law.

The pressure is mounting to combat school segregation by legislation. At first, in 2009, only one of the political parties publicly recommended legislation to force

schools mixing their population.[*Note: Agnes Kant & Sadet Karabulut, Bevecht Segregatie. In: De Volkskrant, 3 October 2009*] A few months later, the governing socialist party (PvdA) also called for legislation to mix schools according to high and low parental SES.[*Note: PvdA: Wet tegen segregatie onderwijs. In: de Volkskrant, 19 January 2010*]

These political suggestions were answered in Parliament by a Christian-Democrat Pavlov reaction, throwing together all possible disagreements to forestall hands-on action: No way! Parents won't support this mixing [...] The effect of mixing white and black schools is not evident: the opinion is still out [...] A child's school success is determined by neighborhood, parents' education and income [...] A black school is not per se a bad school, nor a white school per se a good school [...] Instead of mixing schools, the quality of schools must be raised [...] The preliminary outcome of pilot-projects looks promising.[*Note: CDA: mix zwart/witte scholen vrijwillig. In: NRC, 21 January 2010*]

This reaction makes a travesty of the Netherlands' *Freedom of Education*. Knowing that school segregation deepens, whether defined by white/black color, high/low class parents, or advantaged/disadvantaged youth, the problem is obfuscated to forestall regulatory change. Foreign experts conclude that the segregation of disadvantaged immigrant pupils in the four major Dutch cities exceeds that of black students in most major American cities: 80 % of ethnic non-white Dutch students attend a black school, while in the USA 50 % of non-white students attend a black school. They are pessimistic about change: 'Thus any efforts to reduce segregation will have to reflect the voluntary commitment of a substantial number of stakeholders for whom private interests in maintaining the status quo may well exceed the public benefit to them of reducing segregation' (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 25-32).

Extras, Goodwill and Projects

Additional support, private goodwill and benevolent activism help to soften the edges of school segregation. Schools receive extra money for catching-up purposes. Until recently the allocation of a school's budget was apportioned on the basis of a pupil's origin and the level of education of parents: 1.0 for autochthon pupils at the right level, 1.25 for autochthon pupils with parents' of a low education level, and 1.9 for allochton pupils. In 2006/07 the ethnic component was abandoned and since then only the level of education of parents defines the number of disadvantaged pupils (*achterstandsleerlingen*), irrespective of their

origin. The net result of this change was that the additional budget was spread thinner over the cohort of *allochton* pupils (Aboutaleb, 2005, 130). Yet a black school's extra budget allows for programs that aim specifically at allochton pupils, which naturally attract allochton parents. Notwithstanding this benevolent purpose, these subsidies in effect ease the way for even more segregation. Some have argued that extra finances should be poured into an integration budget that sets a premium on schools that have achieved a mixed pupil population.[Note: Jan Marijnissen, *Gemengde school bevordert integratie*. In: *Algemeen Dagblad*, 23 December 2003. Weblog Jan Marijnissen]

A variety of initiatives and agreements have spontaneously sprung up to contest school segregation. Numerous schools use double registers, which temporarily give priority to allochton pupils to a *too white* school and vice versa. A *too white* school will first admit *black* pupils if there is a *black* waiting list.[Note: *Dubbele wachtlijsten tegen zwarte scholen*. In: *Trouw*, 23 november 2004]

These double ethnic registers are contested – though not in court – as they supposedly disrespect the freedom of choice. *The Council for Education* and the *Commission for Equal Treatment* have spoken out against a distribution based on ethnicity, but support a distribution that aims at parental SES variance. In thoroughly segregated residential areas, a white-black pupil mix is not attempted. Instead *friendship schools* are formed to stimulate (mostly after-school) interaction between white and allochton pupils. Since 2006-2007 the Ministry of Education obliges an Agenda on Local Educational Affairs (*Lokaal Educatieve Agenda*), to spell out the action taken to counter segregation. These deliberations between school boards and municipal authorities are binding (*bindend; niet vrijblijvend*) but according to how the Dutch phrase these things, this binding does not mean a legal or moral obligation without any possibility of withdrawal or avoidance. What it boils down to is that the parties are obliged by law to report once a year what has been done about school desegregation. Reporting that nothing has been achieved, or even been undertaken, perfectly fulfills this obligation.

At the request of the four big cities, the Ministry of Education has given municipalities a helping hand by establishing an *Expertise Center for Mixed Schools* that provides assistance to pilot programs, publishes about trials and errors, and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of actions taken (Kenniscentrum, 2008). This expertise center is an extension of the Ministry of

Education. At the end of 2010, reports of several pilot projects to combat school segregation, in total 12 municipalities, will be communicated to the Ministry.

An *Agreement* between the City of Amsterdam, Burroughs and School Boards to counter segregation is a case in point. The idea was a departure from idealistic white parents who register their children at a black school. In this *Agreement* the School Boards proposed that popular white schools, which had a waiting list, become mixed with more black students. Neighborhoods were chosen with schools that were too white and too black in comparison with the color composition of the population. In theory this color mismatch made a redistribution of pupils a possibility. The waiting list of the white school was forked into an individual registration, and a twinned registration – a combination of white and black pupils. At the moment of registration white parents who were accompanied by an allochton couple were given priority, which would result in a more mixed school population of the too white school.

The *Agreement* included a cap on school size to prevent that expanding white schools would attract white pupils from mixed schools. This *Agreement* had been almost three years in the making.

When *the Agreement* was signed, Amsterdam's Deputy for Education called this a historic moment.

The project failed before it even started. The white-black combos were criticized; instead combos of SES variations were proposed, as these would be more in tune with the latest academic results. The high correlation between these entries was deemed irrelevant, and the fact that SES would be more difficult to apply was ignored. Second thoughts sprung up about the political correctitude of the project: 'What's actually wrong with black schools?' Another complication was thrown in by questioning how to deal with brothers and sisters of those who are already at school? One of the initiators scornfully reported that the white Dutch elite idolizes Nelson Mandela, South Africa's anti-apartheid hero, while being persistent in placing their children in white schools, no apartheid questions asked.[Note: Pieter Hilhorst, *Apartheid*. In: *De Volkskrant*, 17 December 2008] The *Agreement* was shelved and the historic moment forgotten. The *Agreement* did not include any instrument to enforce the agreement. A well-positioned initiative, which was highly publicized and backed by local authorities and school boards, came to naught because as it was lacking formal regulation to keep the parties on task.

Nijmegen, a medium size city, announced in February 2009 a new trial along somewhat different lines than the Amsterdam attempt. In order to pre-empt *white flight* from the inner city, children are obliged to enroll in neighborhood schools. On a preference list of 6 schools, parents may include schools outside the neighborhood. Only if a preferred school outside the neighborhood has vacancies, enrolment may be accorded. Parental preferences are played out against factors such as: the school of brothers-sisters, an equitable distribution of children from parents with little or no education, and a fixed enrolment number per school. Popular schools are not allowed to expand, as this would create a pull-away effect that blackens neighboring schools. Parental religion or political leanings are not factored in, nor a preferred educational platform. All parents receive a binding enrolment advice, which can be appealed and reconsidered by an administrative body. According to a municipal council member, the principle of Freedom of Education is fully respected, but 'full is full'. [Note: *Nijmegen zet het mes in witte en zwarte scholen. In: De Volkskrant, 11 February 2009*] Of course, others disagree. [Note: *Vrije schoolkeuze bevordert segregatie. In: De Volkskrant, 11 February 2009*]

Nijmegen's Deputy for Education expects that 95 % of the parental choice will be honored, that is one of the six schools on the preference list, which may not be exactly the first choice. The city and school boards are convinced that this project will hold out in court if challenged.

In Utrecht, one of the four big cities, parents and students opted for better schools outside the city of Utrecht, causing the inner city schools to deteriorate even further, and eventually to shut down. [Note: *"Dwang nodig bij schoolkeuze." In: De Volkskrant, 5 February 2009*] The problem was to stop the flight of the best segment of secondary education pupils, both autochthon and allochton, to schools in the surrounding municipalities. Provincial authorities pursued the city of Utrecht and the surrounding municipalities to come to an agreement on stopping this flight; to no avail. Utrecht's Deputy for Education complained to the Ministry of Education that school integration was sabotaged on several fronts: by schools, school boards, as well as parents. [Note: *Wethouder Utrecht: sommige scholen willen gewoon wit blijven. 'Integratie op school gesaboteerd'. In: De Volkskrant, 29 September 2009*] The Deputy argued that voluntary agreements with school boards in the surrounding municipalities had not stopped the grey flight out of Utrecht, and pushed for central government intervention to come up with enforceable regulation.

Parental goodwill is not lacking, but is mostly incidental or unsubstantial, on paper only. Some politically correct white parents do purposely send their children to *black* schools and try to convince neighbors and friends to do so as well. A poll in a neighborhood with an equal share of autochthon and *allochton* children indicated that over 90 % of the parents preferred two mixed schools over one white and one *black* school. Segregation is generally deemed bad, and desegregation as something that must be pursued, but it is not felt as a personal issue when one's own children are involved. Very few feel a personal motivation to actually pursue desegregation (Karsten, 2005). In addition, enlightened white Dutch politicians set a poor example by not sending their children to black schools if they can help it. Why would they, as nobody questions a parental choice that aims at the betterment of their children? A conspiracy of silence seems to prevail in media and politics that a politician's parental white choice has nothing to do with school segregation. Politicians and media-makers generally do not differ in their parental choice.*[Note: The media silence about the Obamas' private school choice for their children after they moved to Washington is a telling mark, especially when compared to the media frenzy about their choice of a White House puppy]* And some racially black parents at the high end of the social-economic status (SES) distribution have stated that school choice is a very complex personal matter, which means that they either regret their choice for a black school, or have chosen differently.*[Note: Personal statement of a black father, with a PhD, and his wife, a prominent Dutch politician]*

Good intentions are not enough as long as the political will to change course is lacking. Regulating school enrolment in order to attain a mixed school with regards to parental SES or children's origin is only at an experimental stage. Although the Netherlands government declared in 2007 to impose a school registration policy (*aanmeldingsbeleid*), nothing has come about as yet. Without formal regulation most initiatives to seal loopholes used by savvy and creative parents fall by the wayside (Karsten, 2005). Apart from a few pilots and goodwill experiments, desegregation runs into a pro-choice wall, built upon the constitutional Dutch *Freedom of Education* and paid for by the state. Thus Dutch particularity is engraved in stone, one of the sacred cows of Dutch politics. A school board director stated that he would rather resign than initiate action to engineer a mixed school population (WRR, 2009, 251). Recommendations given to the Netherlands government on how to create mixed schools of various grades of (under-) achievers receive negative press. One editorial outlined how badly

underachievers must feel when they were going to be mixed with high achievers.[*Note: Een gunst is geen recht. In: NRC Handelsblad, editorial. 27 January 2009*] Does it really feel so much better in a black school? In *Today's Youth. One Year in a Black Class*, Kees Beekman, a teacher, depicts in detail how stigmatized these *allochton* children feel; they feel worthless and no good because they attend a school for *Dummies* (Beekman, 2006).

Equal Rights, Integration and Diversity

The Netherlands' rather recent experience with black school segregation and the experimental efforts to do something about it, inevitably invites a comparison with the USA's long history of principled school segregation, and equally principled desegregation. While in the Netherlands *Freedom of Education* set out the course, in the USA the Civil Rights Movement took on school desegregation as a major challenge, culminating in a range of unending USA court battles over equal rights, states rights, racial integration and ethnic difference.

The *Civil Rights Movement* in the USA in the 1960s testifies to the strength of civic activism to pursue codification of rights that were once denied. At that time, people were killed while securing civil and voting rights for African-Americans: *Civil Rights Act* (1964 and 1965), and the *Voting Rights Act* (1968). A long and bitter fight over equal education rights culminated in a legal victory in 1954. In a now famous case, *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) the separate but equal doctrine of the segregationists in the Southern States was overturned. The Supreme Court decided that separate black schools, even when offering quality equal to white schools, trampled upon the principle of equality. The Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to institutionalize education along color lines: 'The unmistakable promise of Brown was that primary education could and should coax children away from the racial and ethnic solidarities of their parents and supplement those affiliations with a sense of common citizenship that could, at least occasionally transcend racial differences' (Ford, 2008, 306). The Brown case inspired African-Americans in the Southern states to demand their rights as they never had before, without waiting for lawsuits: 'Black college students began sitting in at drugstore lunch counters to demand service; Rosa Parks and countless others suffered hardship to protest the humiliation of being forced to sit in the back of the bus.' [*Note: Anthony Lewis, A New National Scripture. A literature professor analyses the origins and meanings of Martin Luther King's famous speech. By: Eric J. Sundquist, King's Dream, Yale University Press. In: The*

New York Times Book Review, 18 January 2009]

And yet, however victorious this outcome had been, the fight over the black school had just begun. Since the Supreme Court's decision, everything imaginable has been undertaken, either to keep desegregation in place, or to undo it. The boundaries of school districts have been manipulated in order to keep schools white. Elsewhere, courts have ordered busing to transport black children to white schools. In the face of unrelenting obstruction to desegregation, the Black Power movement came to the conclusion that black parents' best choice was a black school for their children.

Notwithstanding fierce opposition and confusing choices, institutional discrimination is not allowed. Legal codification, court orders and activists have changed the tide. Thompson Ford proudly summarizes the achievements in fighting discrimination (Ford, 2008, 27):

Schools once accepted racial integration only under court order, the armed forces only under executive order, private enterprise only under congressional mandate. Now universities, the military, and private business combine forces to defend integration and race-conscious affirmative action. Officially sanctioned racist propaganda has been replaced by multicultural sensitivity training.

Yet affirmative action has followed a twisted trajectory in the USA. Over a period of years affirmative action served different goals and used a variety of vehicles, some of which have been declared illegal; it is a policy with a history that is loaded with contest. The American civil rights movement initially argued that affirmative action must achieve racial integration, setting quota aside for African-American students in order to attain a racially mixed school or university population. America's Ivy League elite universities embraced racial affirmative action for a mixture of reasons. On the one hand, it was driven by idealism: 'it would be better for this diverse country if there were a diverse elite.' On the other hand, minority recruitment of the white Ivy League universities was based on more practical considerations. In order to control such a diverse country as the USA 'it would be better to socialize the best and brightest of the minorities and make them more like us.' [Note: Helene Cooper, *Meet the new elite, not like the old*. In: *The New York Times*, 26 July 2009]

Racial affirmative action caused many students, especially at primary and high school level, to travel larger distances than would have been the case when attending school in their white or black neighborhood. School busses and *busing*

became iconic and contested emblems of this way of integration. Eventually the highest USA court did not agree with racial quota. The court ruled that such would violate the equal rights of others, the rights of white children. Student assignments based on race could no longer be used to keep public schools from re-segregation after finally having achieved a measure of integration. In the end a most familiar civil rights concept of integration as racial balancing was rejected. Chief Justice John Roberts recently summarized once more his rather uncomplicated opinion: 'The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race, is to stop discrimination on the basis of race.' [Note: Lida Greenhouse, *Two Stars, meeting across a Bible*. In: *The New York Times*, 18 January 2009]

This one liner does not acknowledge the perpetual character of established privilege, nor does it distinguish between the intentions behind race discrimination on one hand and *affirmative action* on the other. *Affirmative action* is designed to bring underrepresented minorities in, not to keep whites out. Diametrically opposite Justice Robert's view stands the observation that *You can only fight discrimination with discrimination*, arguing that the amount of injustice in the world cannot be totally solved or even alleviated but at best be redistributed (Wijnberg, 2006, 216-220). *Affirmative action* in the USA had to find another vehicle.

Thompson Ford analyzes in *The Race Card* how *affirmative action* meandered through the courts over the years. For *affirmative action* to be legal, a 'compelling interest' must be argued: 'This means that in practice, the legality of affirmative action depends on whether or not it's a good policy' (Ford, 2008, 248-249). Several arguments to build a case for affirmative action flourished, and subsequently foundered: (white) bias in grades and test scores; bigoted teachers; social discrimination; racial stratification; diversification of the nation's well-educated elite; and familiarity with underprivileged minority communities. Only one policy goal got an unambiguous thumbs-up from the Supreme Court: affirmative action that furthers the compelling interest in a 'diverse' student body. The court endorsed the right to select those students who will contribute the most to the 'robust exchange of ideas': to *differ* and to *be different* became an educational asset. The rationale for *affirmative action* became the pedagogical benefits of diversity. Critics argued that racial and ethnic difference rather than racial integration became the orthodoxy of necessity; supporters of affirmative action now needed to shore up racial difference and diversity, which were once fringe positions taken by black nationalists and white supremacists (Ford, 2008,

The Civil Rights Movement became a house divided. On the crest of the *diversity* creed, the drive for integration was turned upside down. *Integration* had failed to improve the education of black children, and *integration* had also manifested itself as whitewashing minority cultural norms and practices. Segregation and separation, which were once the marrow of civil rights activism, now gained legitimacy as a guardian of multiculturalism revisited that glorified the virtue of racial difference. Once forceful arguments are now contested: 'For every argument that racial justice demands integration, there is now a counter argument that it requires separatism [...]' (Ford, 2008, 305). Colleges and universities must now advance a questionable and convoluted justification for affirmative action - diversity - when the more sensible one - integration - is a better fit. Thompson Ford deplores that the strongest arguments for affirmative action have been ruled out by judicial fiat (Ford, 2008, 262-263). The different faces of *affirmative action* over the years are an indication of its political and judicial sensitivity: at first racial integration was the defining metaphor while now *diversity* and *difference* frame the compelling interest that legitimizes affirmative action. All along through its turbulent course, affirmative action in the USA exercised strong agency to combat school segregation.

Positive Discrimination and Affirmative Action

Positive discrimination has become a contested issue. Discrimination literally means recognizing or identifying a difference, or to pay attention to subtle differences and exercise judgment and taste. But the term has gained wide currency as unfair treatment, usually because of prejudice about race, ethnic group, age, religion, sexual preference or gender. In most countries discrimination is unconstitutional; it is against the law. How then can discrimination be positive? The term must be applied to measures that do not have the intention to discriminate but instead to affirm options of people who otherwise would not stand a chance. Positive discrimination allows one to have precedence over another, not on the basis of merit, educational score or performance, but for other reasons. For instance, in order to prevent black-white school segregation, entry quotas have been imposed, which have given black children with lower school scores precedence over white children with an equal or higher score. The student with the higher score is 'discriminated' against to make room for the next best, or even the next-next best applicant. In America's

equal rights parlance, the better scoring student's *equal rights* are violated. Much more than in the Netherlands, USA parents and school boards tend to go to court, one day to contest *segregation* by requiring positive *discrimination*, and the next day to protect the principle of equal rights against affirmative action programs. In the rubrics of positive discrimination and affirmative action an ever-progressing range of legal cases has clarified what is legally permissible, and what is not, when pursuing policies of school desegregation.

Positive discrimination and *affirmative action* are used interchangeably, but it makes sense to point out a difference. *Positive discrimination* confuses because of its suggestion that discrimination can be positive. Isn't that a contradiction in terms? It also confuses by implying that one's status has been earned at the expense of someone else. Quite a few oppose *positive discrimination* because it supposedly violates equal rights. When one is enlisted at a good school, the best university, or a top position with the help of positive discrimination, these entries have not been earned on the strength of merit and ability, but simply by having been given precedence. Though this is a gross simplification of a day-to-day reality that is replete with glaring inequalities, a bias of being *second-rate*, or not being as good is always in the air. In spite of *all born equal rhetoric*, people are not born equal, and after being born they are embedded in disparate settings. The social-economic status (SES) of parents, especially their educational level (Dronkers, 2007,14), determines to a large extent the chances their children have, starting from first grade to university, and subsequently in the careers that follow. Children from parents on the high end of the SES scale usually attend better schools, and do better at school, than students born to low SES parents. Ivy League parents tend to create Ivy League access for their children.

In reality, the Dutch *Freedom of Education* has become an advantage to children surrounded by social-economic privilege, and thus not available to everyone. Schools do not intentionally discriminate between students of different background, but it turns out that the school choice of parents firmly correlates with where they come from. Parents who are well off themselves, especially in respect to education, insist on – and often succeed in putting their children in better schools. They know how to maneuver through the registration bureaucracy; they encourage their children to do better, and will step up their own or additional extra-mural efforts when necessary. Not all, but many True Dutch children come from the 'lucky sperm club' [Note: Michael Young, *The Rise*

of the Meritocracy, 1957. In: De Volkskrant, 4 July 2009], and are better off when starting their school education compared to most allochton offspring.

Positive discrimination has been disqualified as giving precedence at the expense of others who are discriminated against. Many a critic emphasizes that positive discrimination is an infringement on the equality principle. For example, Paul Scheffer, an *integration* pundit in the Netherlands, underscores that this may cause conflict, violence, or even war (Scheffer, 2007, 423). He is prepared to make an exception for the black population in the USA because of their history of slavery and forced segregation, but warns against extending this way of thinking to immigrants who don't need recompense for any historic wrong doing. Scheffer narrows the idea of positive discrimination to compensation for wrong doing at some stage in history, giving advantage to descendents of those who have been done wrong. But why does Scheffer exclude asylum seekers? And why exclude immigrants who have suffered from the Netherlands' immigration policies of the *live and let live era*?

The party wings of the Netherlands' 'Young Socialists' and 'Young Liberals' oppose *positive discrimination* of allochtons and women being recruited by the Police Force, which was recently prescribed by the Netherlands' Interior Department.[*Note: PvdA Nieuwsbrief 31 March 2008, OPINIE Geen positieve discriminatie, Niet gebaat bij positieve discriminatie*] To bolster their opposition the usual arguments were aired: quality deficiency, substantiation of the second-rate level of the target groups, problems on the shop floor, and negative discrimination of capable men and autochthons. They suggest that quality control is blown out of the window with a pro-active recruitment procedure that intensifies the search among the target groups. They do not account for the negative effects that a *True Dutch* white-male dominated Police Force has in cities with a high degree of diversity, populated with groups of people from all corners of the world.

New York Police Department: Diversity matters

The ethnic diversity of the New York police that beats the streets correlates securely with the diversity of the millions who occupy these streets every day. The New York Police Department has never been so diverse, a result of quality control indeed. A majority of the cadets in the last rookie police class were members of ethnic and racial minorities, offering a rainbow cross-section of the city itself. Over all, 47.8 % of the city's officers are white, 28.7 % Hispanic, 17.9 % Black and

5.4 % Asian.³¹ *This is not a matter of course, or Darwinian selection, but of creative design, aka affirmative action by New York City authorities who know that diversity matters in keeping order and peace.*

Of course, there is resistance to this kind of affirmative action. An editorial in *De Groene Amsterdammer* on positive discrimination aired that first the mentality within the Netherlands' Police Force needed to be changed before regulation should be imposed. [Note: Margreet Fogteloo, *Blauwe Vrouwen*. In: *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 5 June 2009] How is this done? Precisely, by departmental regulation to intensify recruitment from these target-groups! [Note: Lammert de Jong, *Blauwe Vrouwen*. In: *De Groene Amsterdammer*, Letter to the Editor, 17 June 2009.] This is exactly what the women's Quota-Manifest in 2009 proposed, an initiative that sprang from the supposition that the rise of women to top positions required time and patience, just as was required all along. The Quota Manifest's signatories had lost their patience, and pushed for legally backed quotas to increase the number of women in public and private top-positions. [Note: 'Geen zeurkous, ze steekt haar nek uit.' In: *De Volkskrant*, 20 October 2009]

Affirmative action to attain a desired order, at school or university, nation-wide or social-economic, or even international, is an alternative to *positive discrimination*. *Affirmative action* aims to include those who otherwise would not stand a chance; *affirmative action* aims at building bridges between diverse populations. These actions are legitimized by farther reaching political goals, such as having more people participating in the national economic commonwealth; or to widen the recruitment reservoir of talent to be tapped; or to bring apartheid to an end. Where Scheffer's *positive discrimination* is limited to recompense for wrongs done to the African-American or American Indian population, *affirmative action* is a more productive concept because it aims further than compensation to particular groups. Affirmative action is concerned about the disorder of racial segregation, or of a class-riddled society; or the imbalance between disparate regions; the *divide* between rich and poor countries; or the diversity of the nation.

Affirmative action basically aims at correcting the damage done to the nation – and the world for that matter – by gross inequality. In the USA *affirmative action* was always meant to be a temporary remedy. Some argue that the policy should be based on 'the situation on the ground,' rather on some arbitrary timeline: '... reasonable people may disagree how much remedy is enough, and how much is too much but ... no reasonable person can look at our society's disparities in

income, employment, education and incarceration rates and argue that the job is done.’ [Note: David Berman, New York, July 20, 2009. In: *The New York Times*, July 26, 2009] Another commentator adds: ‘I too hope that affirmative action will, at some point in the future, not be needed. However, it is not *affirmative action* that corrupts and condescends and corrodes, but rather a society in which unequal educational and economic opportunities are provided to some of its citizens because of the color of their skin. *Affirmative action* is a necessary corrective for our imperfect society.’ [Note: Cathleen Barnhart, White Plains, July 20, 2009. In: *The New York Times*, July 26, 2009] Affirmative action is testimony to the belief that the state must level the playing field. [Note: Josef Joffe, *The Worst of the West. Reviewing Tony Judt’s ‘Ill Fares the Land’*. In: *The New York Times Book Review*, 2 May 2010]

Much government policy, especially in so-called welfare states, can be measured as affirmative action: subsidies for a more expansive family re-production, or producing *affirmative action babies* [Note: *These subsidies produce affirmative action babies in the truest sense of the word. See also Stephen L. Carter, Reflections of an Affirmative-Action Baby. Basic Books, 1991*]; extra development funds for backward regions (European Structural Fund); preferential tariffs for elderly and disabled people; or facilities for enterprising initiatives of economic starters.

These programs and funds serve a purpose and intentionally target regional areas or specific groups of people. Under most fiscal regimens, taxpayers are not treated equally, but are treated according to income and wealth instead, in order to finance – among other things – welfare state policies. In the USA this redistribution of wealth is perceived as coming dangerously close to socialism, or even communism, while in the Netherlands a wide consensus endorses the Dutch welfare state as a telling expression of social solidarity.

Government practice is to make policy choices that often have disparate impacts on different (groups of) people. The intention of these policies *to make a difference* is totally different from discrimination as unfair treatment rooted in prejudice with regard to race, sex, origin or other wicked inclinations (Scheffer, 2007, 423). [Note: Scheffer misses this point when he equates ‘negative’ discrimination with ‘positive’ discrimination]

Therefore positive discrimination does not fit as concept; this term can better be ditched as a contradiction in terms, and exchanged for affirmative action defined

as political engineering to attain specific societal goals, not only in the realm of undoing historic wrongs but also with regard to today's mundane government affairs. *Affirmative action* is essentially in the interest of good governance; it is regular government business to keep the nation together, or to elevate the underclass, or to regulate immigration. 'In a sense, all law is social engineering' (Ford, 2008, 226). *Affirmative action* is designed to enroll children of non-western immigrants and disadvantaged whites in good schools; this action is not designed to keep advantaged pupils or advantaged colors out (Ford, 2008, 260). And in the case of the Netherlands' job market, affirmative action must help law study graduates of non-western origin to find a place in the law firms and professions, and so combat discrimination (Schuyt, 2009, 132-133).

Eyes Wide Shut

'Relax, it will happen' concludes Frans Verhagen in *'The American Way': do not accelerate an immigrant's advancement in the Netherlands by assistance and positive discrimination; that's counterproductive* (Verhagen, 2006, 244; Translation mine). Does this mean that the slippery palisades surrounding Dutch school segregation must be left untouched? Has the Dutch disposition to immigrants nothing to want for? Is there no ethnic discrimination to fight? Weariness rather than activism prevails these days with regards to the *black* school. Even among activists a fighting spirit is absent and political leadership to tackle the Dutch black school is limited to secondary adjustments. Some Dutch integrationists argue that ethnic discrimination is a matter of mentality that must be changed, not by laws but primarily by instilling the awareness that discrimination is wrong. Instead of regulation, everybody must come to an agreement that ethnic discrimination is immoral, and must be made aware that it is against the nation's self-interest as scarce talent may be lost in the process (Scheffer, 2008, 424).

How do we arrive at this agreement? Voluntary initiatives, *binding* agreements and lots of goodwill have not substantially changed the segregated school scene; mainly because white parents do not want to risk what they believe to be in their child's best interest. Only one out of six parents and just a quarter of all citizens are willing to consider a next best choice if that would challenge the formation of black schools. The majority does not feel motivated to jump the color line. They are insensitive to arguments of a possible white school bias, which overestimates the quality of the white school, neither are they concerned about the apartheid and out-of-touch white schools in otherwise predominantly multiethnic cities

(Aboutaleb, 2005, 133). An *Eyes Wide Shut* attitude negates the effects of school and neighborhood segregation on generations of Dutch children. Against better wisdom!

In 2007 the Scientific Council for Government Policy pointed to *school* and *work* as essential vehicles in the process of an immigrant's identification with the Dutch nation, while criticizing school segregation. The Council observed that school segregation was increasing in terms of *black* schools as well as *too black* schools. [Note: In the period 1985-2000 the share of 'black' primary schools (with more than 70% pupils of non-western families with low education) rose from 15 to 35 % in the 4 big cities in the Netherlands. In 2002 of all the primary schools 33% were 'too white' or 'too black.'] Reviewing the actions to fight this segregation, the Council concluded that such depended to a large extent on local activists (parents, schools, boards, municipalities) who must navigate the rigidity of the constitutional *Freedom of Education*, and the sanctity of parental school choice (WRR, 2007, 119-125). The Council recommended that Dutch parliament legalize a *Connection Through Education* (Verbinden) principle that would assign school authorities the obligation to pursue a policy of connecting disparate groups. This would provide a legal basis for school desegregation projects and experiments (WRR, 2007, 205). However laudable in its intention, this recommendation was too general to stand a chance to be implemented.

Legalizing a *Connection Through Education* principle was presented as a *must* without a persuasive reconnaissance of its practicalities or an implementation strategy. Being well aware of the problem of school segregation as well as the sanctity of parental choice, the Council made a perfunctory gesture.

In its reaction, the Netherlands' government merely took note of the Council's recommendation; and left it there. Government took a benign stand and declared that everybody should have access to high quality education, which should not depend upon the composition of the school. Government saw no need to amend the constitutional *Freedom of Education* and emphasized that investment in school quality must have priority, as well as combating residential segregation. Government expressed its unwavering support for school desegregation pilots (Government Paper, 2008, 13-14). By failing to be more specific, the Council missed an opportunity to elevate the Dutch black school to the top of the *integration* agenda.

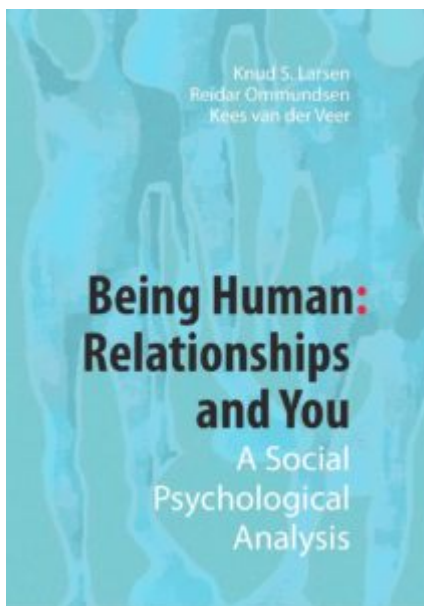
School *segregation* in the Netherlands carves out multiple negative distinctions.

First, an immigrant's ethnic group distinction is invalidated by the conception of the *allochton*, denying immigrants the advantage of a hyphenated identity. They are marked *not-Dutch*, while in the same breath their origin is obscured; as *allochton* they are in limbo. Furthermore, the schools their children attend are labeled black schools. This makes Dutch black school segregation essentially different from ethnic school segregation in the USA. In New York, Chinatown in Manhattan, around Avenue A in Brooklyn and in Flushing, Queens, Chinese-American schools abound as a reflection of the Chinese-American neighborhood population. This hyphenated identity does not negate American citizenship; on the contrary, it adds an interesting twist to the roots of these American parents and their American children. Obviously a Chinese-American school testifies to ethnic school segregation, but this school is not painted black nor considered a school for *Dummies*. On the other hand, black schools in Harlem, Manhattan, or Brooklyn, New York, carry a real history of institutionalized racism. White schools were once *Terra Prohibita* for Negroes, as African-Americans were called those days. They had to attend separate black schools, until 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled that even if these black schools were equal to white schools, this separation was against the law, which eventually inspired a powerful movement for change, though with limited results.

The Netherlands' black school is an expression of how the Dutch position non-western immigrants. The nomenclature of the Dutch integration discourse reveals a curious contradiction in terms. An immigrant's introduction to Holland is marked with segregationist road signs. As soon as non-western immigrants enter the Netherlands they become *allochtons*. They and their children carry this label for the remainder of their life, *undutchable* (White, 2006) as it were. When these children attend a school that is populated with other immigrant children of non-western origin, they find themselves in a Dutch *black* school, to be distinguished from a white school, which adds a connotation of the racist history of white over black. When income rises, *allochton* parents attempt to get away from the black school, just as *autochthon* parents have done all along. According to the lingua franca of educational platforms the black school eventually becomes a cesspit (*afvalputje*) with ever more children from underclass families only – in other words, a school for *Dummies*.

The Dutch black school is not a myth; on the contrary, it is a stark expression of *They are not Us*.

Being Human: Relationships And You ~ A Social Psychological Analysis - Preface & Contents



Preface

This book represents a new look at social psychology and relationships for the discerning reader and university student. The title of the book argues forcefully that the very nature of being human is defined by our relationships with others, our lovers, family, and our functional or dysfunctional interactions.

Written in easy to follow logical progression the volume covers all major topical areas of social psychology, with results of empirical research of the most recent years included. A common project between American and European social psychologists the book seeks to build a bridge between research findings in both regions of the world. In doing so the interpretations of the research takes a critical stand toward dysfunction in modern societies, and in particular the consequences of endless war and repression.

Including topics as varied as an overview of the theoretical domains of social psychology and recent research on morality, justice and the law, the book promises a stimulating introduction to contemporary views of what it means to be human.

A major emphasis of the book is the effect of culture in all major topical areas of social psychology including conceptions of the self, attraction, relationships and love, social cognition, attitude formation and behavior, influences of group

membership, social influence, persuasion, hostile images, aggression and altruism, and moral behavior.

Table of contents

Introduction

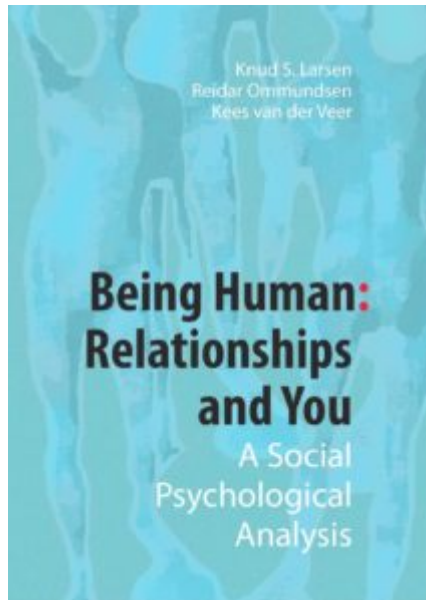
1. The Theoretical Domain and Methods of Social Psychology
2. Cultural and Social Dimensions of the Self
3. Attraction and Relationships: The Journey from Initial Attachments to Romantic Love
4. Social Cognition: How We Think about the Social World
5. Attitude Formation and Behavior
6. The Influences of Group Membership
7. Processes of Social Influence: Conformity, Compliance and Obedience
8. Persuasion
9. Hostile Inter-group Behavior: Prejudice, Stereotypes, and Discrimination
10. Aggression: The Common Thread of Humanity
11. Altruism and Prosocial Behavior
12. Morality: Competition, Justice and Cooperation

References

ISBN 978 90 5170 994 0 – NUR 770 – Rozenberg Publishers – 2008

“Therefore this reading has a rare and valuable feature, that of making a link between American and European social psychology: “Being human: Relationships and you” is an excellent example of how the two lines of thought are actually articulated...it is clearly written, using a professional yet assessable language and therefore easy to read by even the non-specialist public...always pointing to the fact that social psychology is not “just a science” but it deals with issues that constitute the substance of our existence as humans”.

Being Human: Relationships And You. A Social Psychological Analysis ~ Introduction



The roots of Psychology are international, but so is psychology. A major figure in the history of psychology was the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov. The premier pioneer in the study of childhood development was the Swiss biologist Jean Piaget. The father of the psychoanalytic movement was an Austrian medical doctor Sigmund Freud. Modern European social psychology has made major contributions, for example in the field of social categorization theory. Henri Tajfel and his collaborators made signal contributions to the understanding of group behavior during his tenure at

Bristol University, as did collaborators from other European countries.

However, Moghaddam (1987; 1990) described the United States as the “superpower” of academic psychology. In support of this claim he cites the volume of resources available to American scholars. Other observers have also described the US as the major source of academic social psychology, and the “center of gravity” for professional development (Bond, 1988). It would not be inaccurate to state that the vast majority of social psychological research is conducted in North American settings, including Canada. This might therefore be described as the “first world” of social psychology in terms of production and influence on the world scene.

Europe, with Great Britain and France leading in social psychological research, may be considered the second world of social psychology. Generally the university settings are smaller, and funds available not as large as those in the US, but social psychologists in Europe have made distinctive contributions of their own in the development of theory. In particular European scholars give more attention to intergroup behavior (e.g. Doise, Csepeti, Dann, Gouge, Larsen, & Ostelli, 1972), and the wider social context like social structure, and culture (e.g. ideology)

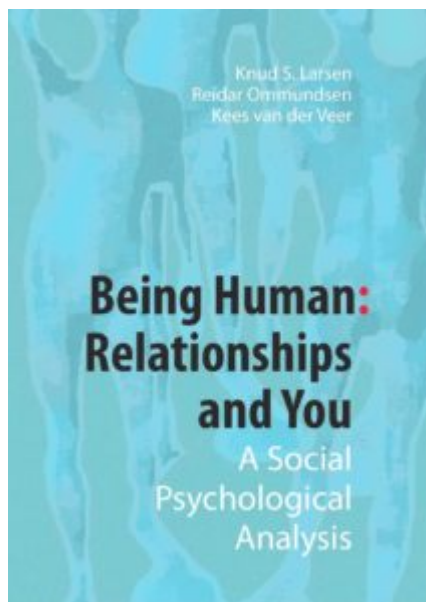
(Jaspars, 1980; Doise, 1986). European and some American colleagues tend to criticize American scholars as being too individualistic (e.g. Sampson, 1977) and culture-blind in their orientation, having mainly developed theories that reflect the salient values, goals and issues of the United States that may not be equally valid in other societies, and neglecting other social phenomena like minority influence and social change (Moscovici, 1972).

European social psychologists have developed unique laboratory methodology, the minimal group situation to study the effects of social categorization on intergroup relations (Tajfel, Flament, Billig, & Bundy, 1971), along with observation studies of how people communicate attitudes in natural settings and create shared social representations (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Van Dijk, 1987; Moscovici, 1981).

The third world of social psychology is found in the developing nations. Psychology in these countries is greatly hampered by lack of funding, and therefore has to rely to a large extent on psychology developed in other countries and cultural settings. There are many problems in these countries, which could benefit from a mature research based social psychology. The social problems of developing countries are to some extent distinctive as they involve issues of poverty, ethnic conflict, and lifestyles very different from the urban lives of the western world (see e.g. Kim, Yang and Hwang, 2006).

In the future we must look to the development of social psychology from all three worlds. There is much in the human experience that we have in common. We are all born into the world as dependent beings, all have to face developmental tasks, including forming families, and finding our social niche. We all face the great existential issues including the transitory nature of life. World psychology can provide insights that are helpful to all societies on these and other problems we all face. There are also specific problems unique to each society and culture. This is where the third world must make its contributions based on patient theoretical development, and empirical research. Reliable and valid empirical findings are superior to any armchair theorizing, regardless of the quality of the theoretical ideas. Only by empirical means can we eventually develop a significant world social psychology. Such a social psychology would describe the processes of social relations, thinking and social influence which would be common to all human beings. May this book be a step toward that noble quest, and stimulate the next generation of students, scholars, and all those interested in the field.

Being Human. Chapter 1: The Theoretical Domain And Methods Of Social Psychology



Social psychological thinking is ancient, but the science described in these pages is modern. There are those who would say “there is nothing new under the sun”. It is true that we owe a great deal to philosophers like Aristotle, Socrates, Plato and many others, who thought about society, and made astute observations. Later scholars however have since put many of these early ideas, to the empirical test. We all have a cultural heritage to which we are indebted for many contemporary ideas.

However, social psychology as a separate field commenced with the publication of two books at the beginning of the twentieth century. William McDougall was the author of *An introduction of Social Psychology* published in 1908, and in the same year E.A. Ross published *Social Psychology: An outline and source book*. McDougall was a psychologist and Ross a sociologist, so it’s right to say that these two fields were the parents of social psychology. In fact, typically social psychology is taught in both fields, but with a somewhat different emphasis.

The major issue confronting those early thinkers was how the influence of others affects our behavior. Social psychology often reflects salient concerns in history, a fact that is easily ascertained by examining the major research topics in a given time period. In the early years of the twentieth century, the French revolution was still in the mind of many social thinkers and therefore social psychology placed an

emphasis on such questions as why people behave less rationally in crowds. Le Bon said in affect “as individuals people are civilized, in crowds they are barbarians” (Larsen, 1977, p.iix).

Does the environment cause behavior; for example are some cultures more aggressive and war like than others? (Chagnon, 1997). McDougall felt that social behavior could be explained by social instincts, and therefore favored the “nature” explanation. In turn McDougall was influenced by Charles Darwin whose evolutionary theory proposed that the explanation of behavior is found in its contribution to survival. Others, however, suggested that we learn to behave in altruistic or aggressive ways through imitation of others and by the power of suggestion. For example, William James (1890), another influential pioneer, believed that the primary explanation for social behavior is “habit”; we learn our social behavior through repetition, thus emphasizing “nurture”. John Dewey (1922), another early thinker in social psychology, advanced the idea of the environment as a determinant and emphasized situational influences on behavior. These varying ideas contributed directly to the dominant theories which today influence and direct social psychological research and concepts.

1. Theories in social psychology

These early thinkers proposed major all embracing concepts in turn advocated as explaining all social behavior (Allport, 1985). For example, some proposed that hedonism (pleasure seeking) explain all that we do? Other thinkers suggested that we understand human behavior simply as a function of imitation or instincts. This emphasis on all embracing concepts, introduced the problem of “nominalism” into psychology. Do we really understand more by just labeling behavior? Eventually, social psychologists recognized the inadequacy of all encompassing principles and began the development of theories based on the scientific method.

What defines social psychology as a discipline? Allport (1985) suggested that social psychology is “an attempt to understand and explain how thought, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others” (p.3). In other words, social psychology is the scientific study of social cognition (how people think about each other), how people are influenced by the behavior of others (for example conformity processes), and how they relate to each other through cooperation or aggression.

Some scholars distinguish between a psychological and a sociological version of

the discipline (see Hewstone & Manstead, 1995). The latter is said to address more explicitly the interface between the individual and the wider social structure. We think this is an unnecessary and outdated distinction. In fact, Allport also added to his definition that “The term ‘implied presence’ refers to the many activities the person carries out because of his position (role) in a complex social structure and because of his membership in a cultural group”. (Allport, 1985, p. 3). Hence, we agree with Jones (1985) that social psychology is “an excellent candidate for an interdisciplinary field” (p.47). The present book seeks to realize this standpoint. This rationale suggests that the definition of social psychology may be found in the major explanations it has produced of social behavior. This effort resulted in four major theories within psychology, and several within sociology and related social sciences.

1.1 Learning theories

Social psychology, like other fields in psychology, benefited greatly from general learning theories (Lott & Lott, 1985). These theories include classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning. Of these approaches the most salient for social psychology is observational learning. For example, we learn to be aggressive, we learn to fight, to hurt one another, by observing significant others behaving in these ways. We develop our attitudes, our feelings of aggression, and other social behaviors through the subtle and not so subtle observation of others. Parents are role models in early development, but others including teachers and peers also influence children. In recent decades the media has played an important role, and a great deal of research has been conducted on the influence of television on human behavior. The early pioneers in observational learning (Bandura, 1979) provided convincing evidence that the mere observation of aggressive models could and did produce more aggression in children, and that this aggressive behavior was lasting. They also demonstrated that if the model was punished, it reduced aggression somewhat, whereas if rewarded the aggression increased. So we all learn through observation of significant others and by observing the consequences of their behaviors (Bandura, 1973; Bandura and Ross, & Ross, 1961; Bandura, & Walters, 1959, 1963). However, there is obviously more to the human experience than simply observing others. Some of us also have a tendency to think!

1.2 Social cognition

Cognitive consistency theories are very influential perspectives in social

psychology. These perspectives propose the idea that human beings have an essential need for cognitive consistency and balance. Festinger (1957) and Heider (1958) both influenced what would become very productive areas of research and theory building. Festinger's for example suggested that when people become aware of beliefs and attitudes inconsistent with their behavior this contradiction is experienced as an unpleasant emotional state. Dissonance in turn motivates behavioral change, and a reorganization of beliefs and attitudes.

Today we all know that cigarette smoking has terrible consequences for peoples' health. According to Festinger's theory that knowledge should produce dissonance in the mind of the smoker, and a change in habit. Some smokers do quit, but others simply reorganize their beliefs about the health risk. For example a smoker may say that he knows of many who smoked, who haven't died yet. Through rationalizations smokers bolster beliefs that smoking is not harmful and thereby remove dissonance.

Heider's balance theory proposes that the internal consistency of our likes and dislikes matters in our social behavior. From this theoretical perspective we have a fundamental need to hold consistent patterns of likes and dislikes. If your friend dislikes another person who is your friend, your relationship is not in balance, and according to Heider you would do something to restore balance. You may change your liking of the other person, or you may think your friend is unreasonable and restore balance by removing him from your life as a friend.

1.3 Information processing

Further theory development in social cognition was influenced by advances in general information theory in the natural sciences (Markus & Zajonc, 1985). Social cognition theories find the causes of human behavior in the processing of information, and in our attempts to understand others and ourselves. The basic idea is that we function like human computers (Fiske, 1993; Markus and Zajonc, 1985) as we encode information, store it in memory, and retrieve it at a later moment in time. Why do we attend to certain information while completely ignoring other resources? The field of social perception takes note of those individual differences, and more recently cognitive theories on social categorization have made signal contributions to the understanding of prejudice, aggression as well as cooperative behavior (see e.g. Spears, 1995).

1.4 Equity and Exchange theories

It should not surprise us that social psychological theories reflect our economic system, although that remains an unstated assumption of equity and exchange theories. Seeking equity and fair outcomes reflect optimal economic relations in a capitalist society. Among the most influential thinkers are Homans, 1974; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; and Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978. Essentially these theories explain human social behavior in terms of rewards, costs, and profit suggesting that all relationships contain these three elements. Raising a child can be rewarding, but also contain many costs not immediately apparent to young parents. The rewards may include the psychological pleasure of creating and nurturing life. The costs can include the obvious economic expenditures, but also psychological costs if the child is difficult and chooses a disapproved path of behavior. At some level, we mentally compute a balance sheet and subtract the costs from the rewards, leaving us with a relative profitable or unprofitable relationship.

An underlying assumption of equity and exchange theories is that lasting relationships always involve profitable outcomes. This assertion does not describe altruistic behavior. People may choose to behave in ways that are not only nonprofitable, but may even risk their very existence in an effort to help others. Do equity and exchange theories emerge solely from our contemporary culture? Social norms based on equity principles is in fact also described in ancient Confucian thinking (Hwang, 2006). This finding indicates that equity thinking not only reflects the present day economic system, but perhaps also more basic and universal tendencies in human psychology. In order to test for the universality of equity principles more research needs to be conducted cross-culturally.

2. The place of social psychology as a level of explanation

These Social psychological theories have had great heuristic value in generating and directing research, and have also led to theory building in major research areas. Social psychology's interest in social thought, feelings and behavior has led to research on such varying topics as aggression (e.g. Larsen, 1977a), persuasion, conformity, and (the destructive influences of) obedience. Research developments on these and other topics are discussed in the chapters to come.

To the overriding question what causes human social behavior there is no simple answer. For example, what causes prejudice? Is it the social environment? Is it a function of the culture that produces hatred, or dislike of ethnic or minority groups? Is it the social ideology of fascism that produces bigotry? Further, social

psychology seeks also to understand mediating variables or cognitive processes within the person. How do beliefs or attitudes of the individual influence the construal of a given situation? (Ross and Nisbett, 1991). These varying levels of influence must be integrated before we can present an overall theory of prejudice or of any other important social behavior (Doise, 1986).

An overall social psychological theory must also integrate information from related fields. Currently the “publish or perish” norm of world psychology and world social sciences encourage the ownership of psychological constructs, where labeling of concepts is in the domain of the individual investigator and those that follow in the particular research niche. This labeling process makes it difficult to interpret research from related fields, although varying terminology may in fact represent the same social phenomena. At some point in the future, after more maturing of our sciences, attempts will undoubtedly be made to integrate the social sciences.

Currently, social psychology is mainly interested in mediating variables like beliefs, attitudes, attribution of causality and responsibility, and social categorization. These factors are intriguing to social psychologists because they appear to be linked to important social behaviors like conformity, aggression, and altruism. Other mediating variables considered of great importance are the related concepts of authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1988), dogmatism, (Rokeach, 1960), and more recently social dominance orientation (see Pratto, Sidanius & Levin, 2006) which have influenced research on prejudice and aggression.

Social psychology is history, and two Jews responding to the genocide of the Second World War in fact initiated the research on authoritarianism. Another, more recent researcher Milgram (1965, 1974), also Jewish, investigated the willingness to obey commands to hurt others which led to great controversy over ethics in social psychology. Further investigations (Larsen, Coleman, Forbes, & Johnson, 1972; Larsen, 1974a; Larsen, 1974b; and Larsen, 1976a) showed that the willingness to shock innocent victims could be produced by social learning models and were motivated by need for social approval (more in chapter 7). This research on aggression reflected our concerns with understanding the history of the genocide of the Second World War and the experience with fascism.

Furthermore, it may be useful to think of the study of social psychology within the

behaviorist model of stimulus and response. There are stimuli explanations, for example the effect of the social environment that explains much behavior. Those born into racial ghettos differ from those born rich and privileged. The environment explains some of the behavior, however we have many examples of people who have risen above their social circumstances. Therefore our beliefs, values, and attitudes also account for significant portions in the explanation of behavior. Beliefs, values and attitudes are the mediating variables within the stimulus -response model. Finally, the actual behavior can also be studied. What are differences in for example aggression between social groups, and to what extent can the social environment, and/or the mediating variables of beliefs, values, and attitudes explain these differences. The S-R model provides a framework for different levels of explanation.

2.1 Levels of explanation of social behavior

Social psychology is only one level of explanation in understanding human behavior. We are not in competition with other scientific disciplines, therefore if our results are valid they should fit the insights from other scholarly approaches. Human emotion for example may also be explained by physiological variables emphasizing chemical concomitants. Emotion may also be explained in terms of the characteristics of the individual. Culture and social norms define how national groups differ in emotional display and communication (e.g. Edwards, 1999). Philosophers furthermore try to integrate emotions into an overall viewpoint of life. Therefore social psychology explains some of the human experience, but not all. That fact does not make social psychology less valuable; only it recognizes that the complexity of human behavior requires different levels of explanation

The same variability of explanation holds true for theories *within* the field of social psychology (see Doise, 1986). As was mentioned before, learning theories explain some of social psychology. We learn many behaviors, for example to love, and also to hate. Learning theories, however, do not cover the entire range of explanations. Human beings for example also behave in accordance with the economic model of exchange proposed by equity theory. Further, we also evaluate our relationships, and seek balance and harmony as proposed by cognitive theories. Thus only by taking into account all possible theories, can we get closer to understanding of love or hate, and by recognizing as scholars that we still have much to learn.

An eclectic approach must take into account different levels of explanation from

other disciplines, and also different theories within social psychology. Finally, a world psychology must evaluate the results from cross-national and cross-cultural psychology. Is it possible to develop a sound social psychology based on only western societies? Today we know that culture matters in behavior. Psychology as a discipline is dependent on the expectations of society and its cultural history. However, the other extreme, that we must only search for information that is contextually bound to specific cultures is also misleading, because there is much in the human experience that is similar in all cultures. Therefore we can learn from empirical studies from any specific culture as long as we recognize the context, and try to verify the results where possible. Different cultural perspectives are not exclusive, but rather complimentary. All cultures represent different views into the reality that is life. Social psychologists value the exchange of ideas, and the search for the principles that someday will provide more answers within a world psychology.

2.2 The related disciplines

Sociology is often confused for social psychology. Like sociology, social psychology is interested in groups, but the focus of sociology is on group behavior. Groups can behave many different ways. Some might express racist behavior like the Ku Klux Klan did in the persecution and lynching of Blacks in the United States. Other groups like the American Civil Liberties Union have in turn opposed discrimination, as have political parties on the left of the political spectrum. A social psychologist however is more likely to study racist attitudes within the individual, while of course being aware of the social and situational environment that contribute to these anti-social attitudes.

So there are many other fields that study people and groups. In addition to sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics all make contributions to the understanding of social behavior. What makes social psychology different is the focus on the individual within the group setting. An anthropologist would seek group level explanations, for example focuses on the cultural traditions as a major cause for behavior. Sociology also focuses on group level explanations within a given society. Economics, as a field of study examines peoples' behavior as primarily economic forms of transactions. Political science on the other hand seeks to understand power relations between groups in a given society.

Social psychology, on the other hand, tries to integrate all this information, in the attempt to understand the individual as a unit of analysis. Why do people

conform? Why are they excluding or including in relationships towards minorities? Social psychology is cognizant of the influence of the situation and environment, and in research therefore studies possible influence of situational variables on behavior. At the same time we also examine possible moderating effects of personality. Personality may in some cases neutralize, and for other behaviors exacerbate the effects of situational variables. In fact the study of the self or personality has been considered an integral part of social psychology and a fundamental focus from the beginning of our discipline. The clearest evidence for this is the presence of journals from the American Psychological Association that reflect this integration including *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

2.3 The social self

As early as the work of William James (1890) social psychology focused its attention on the self, thought to comprise two aspects the “me” and the “I”. The self as an object of knowledge comprises all that we know about ourselves. We are or are not intelligent or we are or are not good parents, etc. All this information constitutes the “me” component. The “I” component refers to the executive function of the self, the part of us that makes and executes decisions. This focus has led to a great interest in decision-making processes in social psychology, in learning how and why we make decisions. The self is of crucial importance, because there are many obvious connections between the self and social behavior for example how we present our selves in social situations (see Goffman, 1959). While personality psychologists focus on personality and self, their focus is on development of individually unique patterns, and internal dynamic of personality traits, and less on how these factors are linked to situational influence. The social self is discussed in chapter 2.

In short, the subject matter for social psychology is social behaviors and the combined social and personal influences on such behavior. The level of explanation is the individual level, e.g. individual cognition, attitudes and behavior. These individual processes are studied by either correlational or experimental methods.

The methods of social psychology

How do we study social behavior? Social psychology as a science is built on two major methods. The first methodology is correlation, i.e. examining the strength and direction of relationships between variables on topics of interest. The second

is experimental research in the laboratory, based on manipulations of independent variables observing for effects on dependent variables.

3.1 Correlational research

For example we can survey the incidence of lung cancer among smokers. If smoking increases the risk of cancer we should expect a correlation between the level of smoking and the incidence of cancer. Correlations vary from plus and minus 1.0, the larger the correlation the stronger the relationship between the two variables. A minus correlation means that a high score on one variable has a relationship to a low score on another variable, and visa versa. A positive correlation indicates that high or low scores follow the same pattern on the two variables.

It is important to remember that correlations do not imply causal affects. Correlations simply detect association between two variables A and B. A may cause B, or B may cause A, or the relationship may be caused by a third variable that is not examined. For example assuming there is a relationship between lung cancer and smoking, a third variable (perhaps some personality factor) may be responsible for both smoking and the bodily weakness producing cancer. There is a relationship between education and income in western societies. Does that mean that education causes higher income? Not necessarily. Perhaps a personality variable called achievement motivation causes both a desire for income and education.

It is an error to confuse correlation with causation. To answer questions about causation we would have to conduct an experiment where we would compare a group of subjects who smoke say thirty cigarettes a day for ten years, to a control group which is similar in every way except they do not smoke. An experiment would give us a definitive answer about cause and effect. However, we cannot carry out such an experiment on smoking for obvious ethical reasons. It would be highly unethical to encourage subjects to smoke when they may develop a deadly disease as a consequence. Perhaps we could train a sample of apes or monkeys to smoke? However, if you were in favor of the ethical treatment of animals you would no doubt object to an experimental treatment producing suffering in animals.

The ethical alternative is the survey, whereby we obtain information by asking questions to a written form with a standard or open-ended set of questions, or

through an interview. Researchers can use two basic formats in either the interview or the written survey. For open-ended questions the respondents are asked to supply their own answers that can afterwards be subjected to content analysis for common categories of responses. In the survey with standard response categories the researcher supplies several alternatives from which the respondent must choose that which most closely correspond to his attitudes or behavior. For example in Likert scaling the respondent chooses whether he agrees strongly, just agrees, is uncertain, disagrees, or disagrees strongly with a given question. Questions with standard response categories allow for comparisons between groups and individuals, and facilitate the interpretation of the results.

The major problem with surveys is the question of validity, is the respondent truthful in providing his/her answer? Some issues surveyed create social desirability motivation in the respondents, so the answer provided may be socially appropriate, but not necessarily truthful. Questions about intimate issues are often affected by social desirability and it is important to control for response sets. The possibility of social desirability responses should encourage the researcher to view survey results with measured skepticism, and try alternative wording or methods.

Another problem in survey research is the variable meaning of the actual words used to survey opinion. What appears to the observer to be small differences in meaning can produce profound differences in responses. In developing statements for attitude scaling there are a number of criteria that should be followed to ensure that the statements are not ambiguous, and therefore clearly understood by the respondent. For example, questions should be simple sentences, contain only one idea, and be clearly understood by the targeted audience. In one study in the US only 7 percent of those sampled would abolish government programs aimed at helping the "needy", whereas 39 percent would oppose programs going to support public welfare (Marty, 1982). One would think the support for "needy" is very closely related to "public welfare", but in the US "public welfare" is a negative concept provided encouragement to the lazy and unworthy. Questions may produce biased results, because of their wording. For example, responses to particular questions depend somewhat on the context of what preceded it in the survey. If a question on demographic information, e.g. income and education comes at the beginning of the survey, this information may

bias subsequent responses.

The response options also critically affect the outcome. If the response categories are open-ended the respondent may say anything that comes to his mind. This procedure produces a different result from that produced when the respondent is guided by a standard set of response categories. The nature of the response categories may provide guidance or bias of which the researcher is unaware. Therefore pre-testing of questionnaires is highly advisable (Van der Veer, 2005).

Interviews are very useful in obtaining the initial framework of the study that of identifying the key issues or topics. The interview procedure also contains problems. We know that the interviewer may produce biased results by simple nonverbal behaviors, like clearing his throat after a socially desirable response. Interviewers must have serious training to produce standardized interviews results. Surveys have the advantage of being relatively cheap, quick to administer and analyze. Today one can even administer surveys via the computer and the Internet. To summarize, the position of the question may affect the responses, the actual wording may contain hidden biases not immediately clear to the investigator (Schwarz and Strack, 1991), and the response and the interviewer options might guide or bias the response. Apart from careful preparation of the survey questions, an additional problem is found in the sampling process to which we turn now.

3.1 Random versus biased sampling of respondents

Research has shown that it is possible to represent a population of 100,000 with a sample of just a few hundred participants if proper random sampling procedures are followed. Random sampling is based on the idea that each member of a population has an equal and independent chance of participating in the sample. In voting behavior, social scientists can predict election outcomes with great accuracy after polling a few respondents who are representative of the voters from a few polling stations that are representative of all polling stations. It is this efficiency that attracts researchers to the use of the survey method.

Random sampling is however time consuming and expensive to perform so researchers often use biased samples. Consequently, the results of the research may also be biased. For example, if you studied attitudes toward homosexuality the results would be very biased if respondents are primarily conservative members of religious organizations with well formed negative opinions. Another

problem is the so-called non-response: the number of people who refuse to participate, or who just don't respond. If say 30-40 percent of the sample do not participate, we need to know how that affects the results. To learn the effect we must obtain a representative sample of those who refused and then determine how they are different from the participating respondents.

There is some middle ground in sampling procedures. For example college students are often participants in surveys. They are easily available and often have opinions on a variety of topics. They also come from a variety of backgrounds and may therefore give us a rough approximation of broader social opinion and attitudes. In addition there are some issues where it matters little if the sample is representative, issues that are believed to reflect broad human behaviors. Van der Veer, Ommundsen, & Larsen (2007) found that attitude scales produced with college students produced scales that could be validly applied to representative samples. In the obedience to authority studies (Milgram, 1965, 1974; Larsen et al, 1972; 1974a, 1974b, 1976a) on the willingness to shock innocent victims, similar behavior was found in every group and nationality studied. Such broad behaviors can therefore be studied in more narrow samples. However, for more specific issues random sampling enables the researcher to draw conclusions about opinions in the general population.

The survey method remains a very important tool for social psychology within fields of opinion research and attitude scaling. It is most popular within the branch of social psychology found in sociology. However, the experimental method searching for cause and effect still has the attention of the majority of social psychologists within psychology.

3.2 Experimental research

This type of research is typically conducted in a controlled environment like a university laboratory. From the very beginning psychology was build upon the natural sciences with aspirations to eventually becoming also a mature discipline. Given the short historical time since the beginning of social psychology it is too early to evaluate its success as a natural science, but the aspiration to become an acceptable scientific discipline explains the methods employed by most social psychologists (Higbee, 1972).

An experiment involves simulations of real life situations presented in such a way as to be believable to the participating subjects. Social psychologists manipulate

some part of the situation (called the independent variable) in order to observe the effect on another variable (called the dependent variable). For example social psychologists have studied the effect of violence in the media on subsequent violent behavior (Liebert & Baron, 1972). In one study boys and girls were exposed to excerpts of an extreme violent episode of a police drama, or alternatively to excerpts of a film showing the excitement of a sporting event. The sporting event sample was the control group since emotional excitement was created in both conditions, but only violence in the police drama. The children who viewed the violence in the police drama (experimental group) were subsequently observed behaving with more violence compared to the children who saw the sporting event film. In experiments the researcher seeks to control some aspect of a simulation believed to reflect real life, in order to observe the effect of the experimental treatment. Later in this chapter we shall examine the effect of media violence on aggression as a form of applied psychology, and its function as a social learning theory. In chapter 10 we shall more fully discuss the research on exposure to violence, as it remains a salient area of social psychology.

If the groups are different on some salient dimension other than the one studied we have no way of ascertaining if it is that difference, or the experimental treatment that is responsible for the observed effect. For example if we included only boys in the experimental group and girls in the control sample perhaps gender differences were responsible for the higher level of observed violence. Random assignment is therefore considered essential in drawing valid conclusions. All the subjects in the population of interest must have an equal chance of appearing in either the control or the experimental group. In using random sampling inferences can be drawn that it is the experimental treatment that is responsible for the observed differences. Random sampling is probably not observed frequently, since most experiments are not conducted on general populations. Choice of the population to be included in an experiment is dictated by practical concerns including the greater availability and willingness of university students to participate. That is not necessarily a negative factor since research often is directed toward topics that university students have in common with the rest of society.

3.3 Bias in experiments

One source of bias in experiments refers to the demand characteristics of the study. Biases refer to cues that are unwittingly provided to the subject by the

experimenter, by which the experimenter reinforces certain behaviors to the exclusion of others. "Good" subjects want to cooperate with the experimenter and therefore seek to "understand" the experiment and behave in accordance with these perceived expectations. In other words the experiment has demand characteristics for appropriate behavior. Orne (1962) pointed to compliant subject behavior as a major problem for the validity of experimental results.

The experimenter himself may also unintentionally influence the outcome of an experiment. For example Rosenthal (1966) showed that when laboratory assistants were told that some rats were bred for higher intelligence (maze bright) these rats performed better than rats that were described as "maze dull". In fact, there was no inbred difference between the two groups of rats, only the expectations of their handlers for the learning curve of "bright" versus "dull" rats. The expectations of the experimental assistants probably translated to more careful and rewarding handling of the rats described as "bright", which in turn produced faster learning. Demand characteristics may appear in any experiment, and therefore repetition (replication) of the experiment under the same, as well as different conditions, is warranted.

The laboratory setting as such may also affect results. For example Milgram conducted his experiments at Yale University. Perhaps the research participants were willing to deliver shocks not because they obeyed authority, but simply because they trusted a researcher at this prestigious university not to allow serious harm being done to research participants (Mixon, 1971). However, Milgram being aware of this possible bias moved his experiments to a regular office building in a small town to avoid any association with a prestigious university. The willingness to deliver shocks continued, lending support to an obedience interpretation. However, in this new setting willingness to shock was reduced, indicating that the setting where an experiment is conducted may also make a difference.

3.4 The ethics of experimental investigations

A significant problem already referred to in the previous discussion occurred when social psychology became involved in an intense debate over the ethics of manipulation of experimental subjects in the 1960's. The aforementioned obedience experiments by Milgram, Larsen, and others produced contention within psychology initiated by Baumrind (1985). The above experiments sought to understand why people were willing to obey an experimenter's commands to

shock innocent victims, and were seen as the laboratory equivalent of the holocaust. Since most subjects were willing the experiments were thought to make statements about essential human nature. Most people like to think of themselves as kind and humane, and yet here apparently “normal” people participated in what could have been lethal behavior in the laboratory.

Questions were raised as to the long-term effect of such participation on the subjects’ self-esteem, and if such a risk was justified. The resulting debate produced a revision of the ethics of experimental psychology including the requirement of informed consent. Informed consent has many components, but essentially means that the subject must be sufficiently informed so they can choose whether or not to participate in the experiment. In addition professional ethics demand that the investigator be truthful. Deception can only be used in those circumstances where the information to be obtained is valued higher than the temporary discomfort of the participant. In all cases the experimenter must try to protect the participant from harm and discomfort, ensuring anonymity of the participants and their behavior. Since participants are not identified by name there should be no social consequences for participating in experiments. Finally, at the conclusion of the experiment, all procedures must be explained to the participant, including any deception, and efforts be made to reconcile the subjects’ feelings

These ethical requirements would exclude the Milgram type experiment or similar manipulations from future study. Current ethics would also exclude many experiments on conformity and other significant social behaviors. The debate was overblown in the opinion of the authors of this book, and has had serious negative consequences for social psychological research. Others researchers have shown that there were no long-term negative consequences for subjects from participating in the Milgram experiment (Clark and Word, 1974; and Zimbardo, 1974). Most participants did not object to the manipulation when researchers explained the reasons for the deception (Christensen, 1988). These subject responses were entirely consistent with the anecdotal evidence collected at the conclusion of the aforementioned Larsen experiments.

3.5 A balance between ethical concerns of subject, society, and discipline

An important protection for the participant must be the anonymity of the participant, and the experimenter’s ethical responsibility to keep all related information confidential. Anonymity is guaranteed by the inability of the

experimenter to identify who provided what results in the experiment. No data should be kept which could identify individual participants, unless the subject gives informed consent for the purpose of some follow up at a later time. That ethical responsibility means that the experimenter must remove names and other identifying information from any records. Anonymity is not a problem in research since social psychologists are not interested in individual responses, but rather in the overall results. How many subjects were willing to shock the learner in the Milgram experiment, at what level did they stop administering shock, and how intensely did they shock? In cases where information is needed for some follow up it is incumbent on the experimenter to keep records confidential. To obtain honest responses it is necessary to create experimental conditions where the respondent feels safe, and ensure that there will be no personal repercussions for his honesty. The investigator may know the identity of the subject, but takes steps to ensure that this information is not used against the participants.

Clearly there are also ethical obligations to the larger society. Professional ethics require honesty in reporting the results, and not making inferences that are not supported by the data. At the same time society also has a responsibility toward the researcher. Instead of encumbering research, society should respect academic freedom to discover new and useful information. It is only on the basis of such information that society can respond to the human condition, and take steps to improve society.

Clearly there should be ethical considerations in social psychology, but they should include a more serious and balanced evaluation of the importance of the information obtained, and possible positive and negative consequences for the participants. For example, some of the participants in the Larsen shock experiments told the researcher that they learned a great deal about themselves, and were resolved not to find themselves committing similar behavior in the future.

4. The role of human values

Up to now we have acknowledged problems that have arisen from the experimental or survey procedures. There is also the larger problem that is not unique to social science when the results of scientific investigations are not "objective", but reflect contemporary values and biases. Does social psychology simply reflect history without an enduring set of transhistorical principles of human behavior? For example the Ash conformity experiment was conducted in

the 1950s when the proto fascist senator McCarthy created anti-communist hysteria in the United States, and the fearful majority kept their collective mouths shut and conformed. It was an age of great conformity that was reflected in the experiments conducted by Asch (1956). Subsequently, Larsen replicated the experiment over several decades, and found that conformity in the laboratory varied with the social conditions. The Asch experiment (see also chapter 7) yielded a great deal of conformity in the 1950s, less in the 1960s and 1970s, and again more in the 1980s (Larsen, 1974d, 1990). Thus behavior in the laboratory was shown to vary with the historical conditions in society (for a detailed discussion see chapter 7).

Yet at the same time our discipline is often presented as ahistorical (see Gergen, 1978). Following in the footsteps of the natural sciences the research in our journals is often presented as if representing some unvarying truth. The natural sciences, of course, discover new information as nature gives way to careful experimentation. Underlying scientific research is the idea that the fundamental laws of nature that do not change or vary. We understand much more about space now since the Hubble telescope sent back useful information, and new scientific principles may be formed as more data is gathered. But the underlying laws of nature are immutable, we just lack information to understand the complexity of nature. Can we discover similar laws of society in social psychology? The complexity of human nature almost seems to be too prohibitive in such a quest. However, if social psychology is primarily the history of society we must give careful consideration to ideology and contemporary values when discussing research results rather than assuming the permanence of these findings.

4.1 Values and history

Values inform both the content of our investigations as well as the topics that are studied. As already noted, Jewish social psychologists like Rokeach, Adorno and Milgram were in the forefront in examining both the type of personality that committed genocidal behavior and the behavior itself. It would seem reasonable to assume that personal experiences with loss, the investigator's human values, directed this research interest.

In fact as we examine the research literature we can observe a direct correlation between change in social values and the type of research focus developed. World war II, and the horrors perpetrated by the Nazi's, gave impetus to research on authoritarianism and genocide. This was followed by the McCarthyite period that

engendered paranoia and conformity in U.S.A. This happened during the height of the cold war, and of course it was in the US government's interest to sustain such fear and conformity in order to keep the population mobilized for the confrontation. During this time of broad social conformity we observed the developments of studies on conformity as that found in the Asch paradigm. During the 1960's the war in Vietnam and wars of liberation elsewhere, gave rise to an interest in conflict and aggression. It is not surprising that this period saw the foundation of peace research institutes like the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway, where the first and third author spent significant time as research fellows (e.g. Larsen, 1993). The dooms day clock ticked and the world was perceived as close to an all-consuming nuclear catastrophe. These broad social concerns inspired many social psychologists to study conflict, and try to develop knowledge on how to prevent war.

In the aftermath of student rebellion within the US and Western Europe, social norms were being challenged. This was especially true with respect to sexual behavior and gender roles. Women demonstrated and demanded equal treatment on the job and in all other significant social relations. In social psychology this became a time that saw the rise of gender studies, and an increase in research on sexual behavior. During the 1980s the relations between the big powers turned worse, and the news described the militarization of space creating an unstable world, with renewed concerns about nuclear catastrophes. This was reflected in social psychology by more research on topics related to the arms race. Although justice and peace are closely interrelated concepts, clearly the nuclear arms race presented an overriding threat of annihilating the human race or at least civilization, and controlling that threat constituted prominent value for social science researchers. In the 1990s we saw a continued effort to make the world more tolerant of diversity, since it was assumed that in the lack of tolerance lies at the foundation of conflict. So, we can see that social psychology is history. It is clear that researchers, like other thinkers in society, direct research toward what is seen as the most relevant topics and major concerns of their times

However the natural science model also had a strong hold on scientific imaginations. To some degree research reflected the concern with the scientific paradigm in wanting to control variables in a laboratory setting. In social psychology some psychologists began moving away from social issues to more abstract or theory driven studies. In social psychology we saw imaginative

researchers develop very sophisticated and abstract studies as found in the minimal group design (Tajfel & Billig, 1974) that did not at face value translate easily to the human condition but nevertheless has yielded new and important theoretical understanding of causal effects of social categorization. The development toward more theory-driven research has characterized research into the 21st century.

A further factor affecting research topics is the internal ethical debate that ensued after the obedience experiments. Researchers, like to be thought of as ethical people, and this concern (and professional injunctions) may have directed research away from the burning issues of the day that required deception, toward more socially approved research. Regardless whether research is determined by social values or internal conflict, social psychological research faithfully reflects human values, and therefore differs from the natural sciences that are less encumbered. We say less, because in the Soviet Union we saw ideology also affecting physical scientific research as in the case of the Lysenko scandal, where the Marxist emphasis on the environment caused researchers to overlook the essential genetic basis of agriculture. Also the values expressed in the arms race led to many scientific developments so the physical sciences are not independent of human ideology.

Values may also play a role in who is attracted to psychology as a “helping profession”. The two fundamental values in psychology are the pursuit of truth and helping others. Although psychological knowledge may also be used to manipulate others, the majority of those attracted to the profession, are people who want to express the fundamental values in their lives honoring for example Human Rights, and sustainable development on our planet. Research in social psychology is developing as a normative science (Larsen, 1980). The emerging discipline reflects our specific historical time and what we think, hope and fear.

4.2 A critique of the natural science paradigm

Kuhn (1980) stated that scientific paradigms continue to exist until they no longer have useful answers to scientific problems. The historical development outlined above suggested to many social psychologists, that our discipline could not meet the requirements of a natural science. Social psychology should at the very least be conscious of the effect of values and ideology on ongoing research. The so-called “crisis” literature continued for some time suggesting both an identity crisis, or that social psychology lacked a coherent direction (Larsen, 1980).

Gergen (1978) suggested further that the continued commitment to the natural science paradigm would result in a myopic and irrelevant social psychology. These criticisms were echoed by Marxist social psychologists, who felt that social psychology uncritically reflected the ideology of society (Larsen, 1980).

Scholars often share common views that are not challenged because they are basically assumed or taken for granted. Social psychologists called these “social representations” (Moscovici, 1988; Augoustinos & Innes, 1990). Social representations refer to the subtle biases that exist without examination in much of the research literature. Feminists for example take note of the political conservatism of many scientists who prefer a biological interpretation of gender differences that may have a cultural origin. The emphasis on biology in turn is believed to hamper the quest for sexual equality. Marxists have further noted how much of our research is directed toward social harmony and middle class values. The middle class has a real stake in the status quo and in static social relations, however the poor in society need change. Research funding, and acceptance of articles for publication is limited by the ideological bias of powerful individuals as to what is considered important to study, and how it is to be studied. Despite this debate research in social psychology has not changed substantially as we move into the 21st century.

Yet social psychology has also made other important contributions. These include raising the consciousness of students in psychology (and virtually everyone in the United States getting a college degree today takes the introductory psychology course). As students read about or participate in studies like the Milgram experiment they are often “socially inoculated”, and come to an awareness of the dangers of social manipulation. Those who participated in the historical genocides, including the most recent in Rwanda and the Darfur, were apparently “normal “ people, the only major distinguishing factor being their willingness to obey commands to kill and destroy. Social research can encourage higher levels of consciousness by focusing on the irrationalities and injustice of the social system. This assertion depends on academic freedom to tell the truth fearlessly as required by our findings. In addition, social psychology is also a practical science that can make useful suggestions helpful to the development of economic, and other social organizations. Organizational and applied psychology developed out of this desire to produce findings that generate efficiency and harmony in social organizations.

4.3 Psychological labels are the fruit of psychological values

Our unstated assumptions of what constitutes the good life, i.e. psychological health, also direct how we label psychological concepts. For example Maslow's description of the "self-actualized" person was largely a reflection of his own bias and values. How we label personality traits is likewise a consequence of our hidden values since there is no set of absolute standards to guide the categorization. Social psychology seeks to understand the world through the commonly accepted value system. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. In Palestine those who attack the Jewish state are labeled terrorists by the Israelis, and described as freedom fighters by the Palestinians. Researchers are not different in the categorization of behavior; their labels also reflect unstated assumptions about what they consider to be optimal psychological functioning. The authoritarian personality described by Adorno et al. (1950) as "rigid" implies a negative evaluation. However, some years earlier the Nazi psychologist Jaensch used the positive word "stability" to describe a quite similar personality profile (Brown, 1965, p. 478). We all have a tendency to view happenings from the perspective of our society and culture. In doing so we have part of the picture, but only part. In trying to understand our world we must also try to understand the unstated assumptions that underlie all research, both that of the natural sciences, but also that of social psychology. In that regard it is important to remember that what is defined as "normal" is not necessarily good. Genocidal societies throughout history have made brutality normal. The concentration camp directors lived "normal" lives with social support of culture and family relationships. In many cases participants in genocide have not only viewed their behavior as normal, but also morally correct. Participants in genocide may reason that killing others is a painful duty, but necessary for the greater good. Being normal is not always good from a moral perspective.

4.4 The ideology of the major theories in social psychology

Keeping the previous discussion in mind, how are we to interpret the dominant theories in social psychology? Is it not natural in a capitalist society, and perhaps other societies, to believe that learning proceeds from a program of rewards and punishments that is central to learning theories? The unstated assumption here is that human beings are under such strong influence of the environment that it allows little room for individual volition and consciousness. Do people act according to self-interests, and it is "rational" to go for things considered rewarding and to avoid punishment? In capitalist society incentives are mostly

material and economic rewards, and yet many people don't act according to principles and values that carry an economic cost. Social psychologists are also developing a literature on altruistic behavior that challenges learning based solely on rewards. Reward based learning theory is dominant in attitude research, prejudice and aggression, but also in research on prosocial behavior. Yet, human beings are more than reward driven, capable of unselfish and noble behavior.

Cognitive theories imply there is a fundamental need for consistency that motivates people in search for balance and internal peace. Is that a consequence of a society that stresses logical consistency as a virtue? Would cognitive balance also be a need among all cultures? These are questions yet to be explained in an emerging world psychology. Cognitive consistency theory has also guided research in attitude formation and change (see chapters 3 and 5), in how people are attracted or repelled by others, and in prejudicial behavior.

As mentioned earlier the information processing theories are of a more recent development, and not coincidentally emerged along with computer science. The unstated assumption of information processing is that people seek to understand and make sense of the world. People are described as social computers that evaluate, observe, and encode information. We wonder how much effort people place in understanding the world? People often live habitually and display robotic conformity even to events that have serious impact on their lives. Many people are guided by the minimum knowledge required to get through life, seeking lives of minimum effort, and are mainly motivated by the desire to avoid negative consequences? As long as the essential levels of life are met, most people seem happy for the diversion provided by television without reflecting on their lives or the meaning of the human condition? Of course information processing theories note that much thinking is automatic or unconscious, and people are unable to describe their own thinking processes (Wegner & Bargh, 1998; Wilson, 2002). Research shows that information processing often occurs at a low level of consciousness, and the human desire to understand and make sense of the world may even be processed at unconscious levels.

Equity or exchange theories fit our dominant economic system as hand in glove (see chapter 3 for more detailed discussion). These economic models of exchange argue that all human development is guided by relative costs and rewards. Implied is the assumption that relationships are only stable if the rewards exceed the costs. While it may be true that people strive for fair exchanges in social

interactions, we have many examples of people who act unselfishly, without apparent personal advantage. Many parents provide a very selfless pattern of assistance to their children without apparent or expected reward. Equity theorists would say that many rewards are psychological, and parents obtain pleasure by seeing children grow into productive citizens. But often children bring grief to parents without changing parental love and affection. History reveals many cases of absolute altruism where people sacrifice their lives to help others. Is such behavior also to be understood as some part of psychological reward and balance? Equity and exchange theories that integrate elements of other theories are very prominent in research on group conflict, bargaining, negotiation, and organizational behavior, and much of that we think of as applied social psychology. These theories have been strongly influenced by contemporary society. Whether there is a basic human need for equity (Hwang, 2006) must be explored in cross-cultural studies. The differences between interdependent and independent societies (Triandis, 1989) however suggest that social exchange is a culturally defined concept.

Finally, one other theory from social psychology has influenced thinking in modern psychology. Lewin (1935,1936) initially fled to the United States during the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany. He developed the concept of "field", by which he meant a person's life space. Lewin suggested that all psychological happenings could be understood as a function of this life space. Life space is composed of the immediate situation and the environment. Behavior is the outcome of the interaction between these two components. From this conceptual viewpoint, life space consists of all time dimensions, the past, the present as well as the anticipated future. The emphasis on the immediate situation was a particular important emphasis as it was neglected in other theories.

In Lewin's theory, we can again see the hand of history in social psychology. Since he came out of a society with brutal authoritarianism and with a strong emphasis on the hierarchical nature of leadership in the Nazi dictatorship, it is no wonder that one of the enduring research projects by Lewin was his study of the effect of authoritarian leadership or democratic leadership on productivity (Lewin, Lippit, and White, 1939). In general he found that democratic leadership was associated with greater individual contentment, more group focused behavior, and greater productivity.

5. Social psychological theories emerging from related fields

Early psychologists like William James (1890) and John Dewey (1922) sought to explain behavior as a function of habits. They assumed we develop predictable patterns of behavior by repeated practice. Some habits are collective referred to as the customs of society. In modern social psychology customs of society is defined by our social structure, i.e. how our culture and society demands certain behaviors and habitual forms of interaction. An early sociologist, Robert Park (1922), advanced the concept of roles. We are in effect our roles in modern times as defined by the concept of impression management discussed in chapter 2 (Baumeister, 1982), and we come to know who we are through the roles we play in society. What are the roles of a teacher, a student, a mother, a manager of economic enterprises? We are our roles whether these refer to familial relationships, religious functions, or broader social roles of citizen and voter in society.

Linton (1936) advanced role theory further. In Linton's theory social interaction describes actors in society playing assigned roles as required by their culture. These role expectations are understood by everyone in society, and make social interaction predictable. We know a mother will act to protect and nurture children. This expectation is so strong that nearly all mothers comply, although in any society there are those who deviate from the norms. Role demands and expectations vary according to gender and also age. Females have different role demands than males, although much has changed in this regard over the last few decades. Growing maturity also assigns different roles depending on age. We expect children to play, but adults to make some contribution to life through employment or other achievements. Such age categories can divide our lives into stages of childhood, adolescence, young adults, mature adults, and older age. Each life stage describes a time of significant human development, and establishes timetables for accomplishments of learning or social interaction such as raising a family.

Role theory has also been developed within more narrow confines such as employment. Within employment groups roles are assigned based on specific task expectations by management. Furthermore, within task groups there are specific role expectations about abilities and task competency (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch, 1972; Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985). In general members of groups with valued competence are expected to make higher contributions to the common goals of the group.

In post modernism theory, social psychologists seek to go beyond contemporary group expectations, and take into account the effect on behavior of historical changes in the capitalist world. According to post modern theory people have gradually lost their ability to be autonomous, as their individual characteristics have been suppressed by the need for an efficient society (Murphy, 1989; Gergen, 1991). The rise of capitalism produced conformity pressures and people gradually came to be viewed as commodities. Members of modern societies are primarily valued for their productive efforts, and not as persons with individual qualities. Personal relations become less important in such a society, and individuality gradually erodes as people seek to find a niche in an increasingly impersonal world. Conformity to clothing styles and food habits are manifestations of this historical era, together with social diversions that ensure that people do not think too much. Mindless television programs and styles of music perpetuate impersonal behavior. According to post modernism theory, dancing as a form of social interaction has changed drastically from couple symmetry, balance, and finesse to an activity that emphasize a collection of movements where individuals have only a vague idea about who the partner is in a sea of modulating individuals.

So the structural perspective adhered to by psychologists takes into account the influence of societal expectations on behavior, the power of role expectations and requirements, and the conformity pressures as a result of these demands. Theories about social structures form a necessary addition to those proposed by social psychologists from within the psychological field that seek to understand behavior primarily through an understanding of individual behavior in the group context. Obviously there are many habits and expectations, which produce culture, another word for commonly expected behaviors. These are largely formed in the mind as unstated assumptions about life, and are therefore most often carried out more or less automatically with little reflection. The structural perspective does not take into account possible interactions between the individual and role demands.

More recently, identity theory (Stryker and Statham, 1985) has placed emphasis on the reciprocal interaction between the individual and society. Identity theory argues that role theory does not provide the whole picture, as the individual has some power to select which role to play, and can therefore shape what type of interaction he/she has with others in society. Goffman originally (1959) took that

view a step further by asserting that we are not assigned roles by culture, but often select one from several choices presented by society in order to achieve our own personal goals. The above ideas are reflections within sociology about the importance of cognition and personal volition, understood as part of social cognition in social psychology. Role and identity theories emphasize very important aspects of the human experience: Whatever we become psychologically is circumscribed by role expectations. What is required by our culture is mediated further by gender and age and other cultural requirements. The above structural views differ therefore from those developed in social psychology by their emphasis on the social structure, and the power of individuals in shaping the many roles played in society. Individuals have some choice in negotiating role related behavior.

From these can we select any one theory that is best? The answer is that each represents some important view of social knowledge, and we would do best to take an eclectic approach that recognizes that fact. Each perspective is a window into social psychological reality and the “truth” of human behaviors is found in some integration of all these viewpoints, although such an integrated effort is still a task for the future.

6. Applied social psychology

As the student will observe, there are many applications of social psychology that can be useful as long as we keep in mind the aforementioned discussion. As has been shown, social psychology is interested in a whole range of social issues. What are the currently important social questions? As noted earlier a recent social issue of importance is the effect of violence in the media on aggression in society (Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen, & Brook, 2002). In the United States tens of thousands are murdered each year. Sometimes the debate on violence is simplified for instance by the argument of the gun lobby that guns do not kill people, but people kill people. Such reasoning is simplistic and overlooks the fact that the availability of guns is a stimulus that routinely leads to fatal encounters in a society where violence is taken for granted. The effect of television violence remains an important social issue, and applied research into this topic might produce useful and important social solutions.

Although it is difficult or impossible to create a pure science as observed in the natural sciences, many research findings can inform and produce useful applied knowledge. Research described in the following chapters, show that even studies

not inspired by social concerns (in other words that fall within a pattern of “pure” research) contain useful results applicable to individual and group behavior. Research on attitudes may for instance be useful in marketing and in persuading public opinion. Of course, we have to be cognizant of the line between persuasion and manipulation, a line that is frequently violated in the advertising world of today. Moreover, research on prejudice may be useful in addressing and resolving issues of ethnic and national hostility. Countries that have many minorities within its borders may benefit from an examination of the major theories on prejudice. These and other research findings will be discussed in following chapters.

6.1 Action research is applied psychology

Much of the aforementioned social psychological research addresses interest in theory development. Applied social psychology also addresses specific issues in the form of action-oriented research. Action research seeks to illuminate social issues from which one can infer the need for and how to improve the social condition. In Australia the Aboriginals is historically a displaced people. Larsen studied the presence of discrimination toward aborigines in the areas of employment, housing, and access to public facilities (1977b). The high levels of discrimination found in the research were published in a government report that subsequently led to a debate in parliament on the adequacy of the 1975 Civil Rights Act. Other research on land rights, and alcoholism also sought to improve the conditions of the aboriginal population and could therefore be considered applied research.

There are then the two major ways in which social psychology has made applied contributions to contemporary problems. The first contribution is in the building of social psychological theories that have applied implications. The second contribution is applying research directly to social problems, with the aim of understanding these problems and changing the underlying social condition.

7. Toward better theories in social psychology

Social psychology employs theories to specify the basic assumptions underlying research and topical interests. Theories identify the behavioral domains that are considered important for study, and therefore also what areas are considered irrelevant. There are scholars in the history of social psychology, who have dominated the debate about what is or is not important. Leaders in the profession decide what gets published, based on their own unstated assumptions. The

professional hierarchy also acts as gatekeepers controlling access to funding, and without funding little work gets done. The end result is the social psychological literature presented on the following pages. The influence of a professional hierarchy is not necessarily a negative situation for social psychology as long as topics considered important for study are derived from open debate and not based on unstated assumptions. For example, is all conflict bad? Well, if it is in your interest to maintain the social status quo, then conflict is indeed bad. But if your objective is to be critical of the status quo and you have a desire to improve the world, then conflict can be useful. Conflict can facilitate better thinking and improve functioning of groups and society.

Each theory has a unique perspective, but consists of man made concepts not necessarily related to any absolute truth about the human condition. The best path for all science is the eclectic, taking from each theory that which is valuable, that which experience has shown to be useful, and leaving behind dogma. Theories are merely tools that enable us to describe and analyze social behavior. A good theory will provide insights enabling us to have a better vision of reality, to understand the world better. Different theories often draw attention to different phenomena of the same topic or issue. Learning theory may emphasize the role of parents in the imitation of behavior, or in teachers providing rewards for achievements. Cognitive psychologists on the other hand seek to understand how people perceive and understand behavior, and social exchange theories focus on the profits of interaction. Each theory says something that is useful, and all are required to understand more of social reality.

7.1 The cultural relevance of theories developed in one culture to that of other cultures

Cultures differ in behaviors, beliefs, and values (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). These differences, however, are not absolute differences as there is also a common human experience. For example all cultures appreciate good parents, although they differ in what may be considered good child rearing. In some dogmatic societies good child rearing may involve ritualized behavior including praying several times a day toward Mecca, female circumcision, or in Western societies demonstrating other forms of social obedience like waving the national flag. In yet other cultures child rearing takes other paths, but at the end of the day there is a similar concern for the welfare of the child. In all cultures people display common human personality traits like shyness, only to varying degrees

(John & Srivastava, 1999). Some cultures encourage modesty, others encourage boasting and self-enhancement, but in all societies some people display shyness. It is part of the human condition. Likewise in all cultures we can observe aggressive individuals. Some societies may encourage aggression, other cultures will discourage this behavior. Interpersonal violence remains partly a predisposition of all humanity because it has from an evolutionary standpoint made a contribution to survival (Lore & Schultz, 1993).

Although the content of beliefs and attitudes may vary in different societies the process of forming these attitudes is similar. We obtain our attitudes through watching our parents and other significant people (learning by imitation), or through being rewarded or punished (reinforcement theories), or through other well known psychological principles. It is important to keep this distinction in mind. Our cultures define the content of our psychology, but our common human condition produces a similar process of acquiring this psychological knowledge or content. Therefore in evaluating the findings of this book in terms of relevance to different cultures, we must recognize that differences obviously exist in the frequency and intensity of certain behaviors. However, the presence of particular behaviors, or the process by which these behaviors are acquired may be very similar in all cultures.

7.2 From research to "real" life

An important issue in social psychology is whether findings found in the simulation of life in laboratories can in fact be relevant to real life experiences. Do people behave in similar ways in real life situations as under the contrived conditions set by the experimenter? For example, in the Milgram -Larsen experiments so-called "normal" people shocked innocent victims when the situation made such demands (discussed further in chapter 7). In evaluating this issue we have only to remember past wars, and the genocide of the holocaust where apparently normal people participated in atrocious acts of murdering millions of people. We don't have to revert to the example of in the concentration camps of the Second World War as similar atrocious acts are being committed as these words are written. What Milgram, and subsequently Larsen found seems to correspond very well with what is happening in the real world. All educated people are also aware of the war crimes committed during the American war on Vietnam. My Lai was not unique, except what happened there came to the knowledge of the world. This action was carried out by a group of "normal"

American soldiers, who proceeded to murder women and children of an entire village. In more recent times we have the sad example of torture at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, and the disappearance of innocent people into the Black Hole of the U.S. prison at Guantanamo, Cuba. So we see we can apply many of the findings of the laboratory to real life, and such utility must be the overall criterion of a valuable research finding and theory in social psychology.

7.3 Building theories, pure versus applied research in social psychology

Pure research is carried out to meet the basic need of understanding our world, to pursue understanding of our existence. As Søren Kierkegaard said "we live life forward, but understand it backward". Some of our research findings may seem like common sense, but that is generally only after the fact, after we know the results of research. Of course many people are satisfied with simple or simplistic explanations, but for those Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living"!

So a great deal of our research is pure in the sense that we seek to illuminate the human condition, without necessarily having a practical goal in mind. Some of these findings may also, upon reflection, have practical consequences for many social issues. Is school integration helpful in overcoming racial bias? Well, some findings suggest that this depends on the conditions of contact between the racial groups (Allport, 1950; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000). If these contacts facilitate more egalitarian relations and have the support of society, integration may indeed produce better relations. Research that seeks to understand such very specific social issues, may not make obvious contribution to building theory, but still have important practical applications.

Experimental research is primarily carried out to test hypotheses derived from one or more of the theories in social psychology. Theories are a collected set of principles that integrate findings in a logical and consistent manner. We develop such an integrated set of principles because we are interested in furthering our ability to predict and explain social behavior. With the hundreds of journals and thousands of investigators our research efforts would have no coherence if we did not have some theoretical framework with which to integrate our findings. Today we are literally drowning in our data, with tremendous resources being put to work to understand the human condition. Some of the research is of such importance that it can stand by itself, but the light it sheds on some aspect of social psychological theories justifies by far the great majority of current research

projects. Theories are the principles, assumptions and hypotheses that explain our data; a good theory seeks to reduce the complexity of the research data, by placing the research within a common framework, much like classification seeks to reduce the complexity of seemingly different objects by searching for a common denominator which bring order and explain the results.

8. The functions of social psychological theories

One function of social psychological theories is to produce hypotheses that can be tested in a laboratory or real life situation, thus either verifying the theory or disconfirming the hypothesis. Hypotheses are specific predictions that we make on the relationship between variables and behavior, e.g. do children learn to be aggressive by watching violence in the media as discussed previously in this chapter (Johnson et al, 2002). This hypothesis is in turn based on social learning theory that children learn by imitation. From this general hypothesis we can make more specific predictions. Is aggression facilitated if the model displaying aggression on television receives social approval like that accorded “heroes” in war films, or to police when subduing criminals? Another hypothesis might assert that television violence will produce less aggression if the person who models the behavior is punished? Such research would then shed light on social learning theory (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963), i.e. that we learn by imitating models. Social learning theory contains important ideas for a society that wants to reduce violence.

Research findings determine what may be considered a “good” or “bad” theory. Does the theory help integrate related research data and results? Can the theory produce testable hypotheses that can be examined in the laboratory or in real life situations? A theory is not useful if it cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed. Is the theory heuristic in the sense that it produces a wealth of exploratory studies? The utility of a theory is demonstrated when many researchers become interested in the same problems. However, dominant research paradigms also indicate conformity to professional norms and expectations reflecting a desire to be published in journals and receive research funding. At the end of the day a theory’s utility must be established by its applications to the human condition. What recommendations can we make to reduce violence and promote cooperation among ethnic groups? What specific steps can be recommended based on these integrated ideas that we call a theory in social psychology?

So to summarize, the function of theories is to step by step develop principles that

explain significant social behavior. Social psychologists are not looking for some overriding philosophical principle that explains all life, like pleasure seeking or the denial of desire. The primary function of theories is to direct research, to offer a framework to integrate the results, and to explain social phenomena. Theories may constantly suggest new hypotheses, which can either be confirmed or disconfirmed thus advancing our knowledge of human behavior. For many keen social psychologists theories provide the underpinnings of their research programs.

Theories give meaning to what might otherwise be a chaotic and bewildering set of empirical data. The hundreds of studies produced yearly can be brought together and given meaning when analyzed within a theoretical framework. The use of meta-analysis is a step toward theoretical integration. Finally, theories not only explain social behavior, but also help to predict social behavior. The complexity of human behavior makes prediction of behavior a goal for the future. We still have much to do before our science has matured to the level where we can say with assurance that these scientific criteria have been met.

8.1 Applications of social psychology to contemporary society

In this chapter we have observed examples of some applications of social psychological research to problems of society. Each of the chapters that follow present another set of applications. Bandura's social learning theory showed how "pure" research can have applications to violence. The wars of the past century motivated much social psychological research including Lewin's concern about democratic leadership and the advantages of consensual governance. The horrors of genocidal behaviors motivated Milgram's significant research into violence as "normal" behavior. The questioning of authority that followed the war on Vietnam also produced a revolution of thinking on gender related issues. Gender related research contributed to many changes in social policy, and today women expect equal treatment in education and on the job. Although significant progress has been made in treating the sexes equally in employment, this does not hold true for equal pay for equal work. Nevertheless, both issue oriented and "pure" research has produced many findings which if applied could improve life and society.

There are also specific fields within social psychology that can be considered applied. Generally the fields of organizational or industrial psychology are domains devoted to improving efficiency and motivation within social

organizations. Industrial psychology deals with many varying issues including assessments of jobs and job performance. How do we determine aptitudes, and how do we go about finding the right people for a given profession? Other practical issues are those related to training employees. Organizational and industrial psychology examines the problems of learning, how the transfer of learning takes place, and the adequacy of various learning methods. Other important issues include job satisfaction and worker commitment. Under what conditions will the worker make his best efforts, what needs must be fulfilled by the social organizations to produce the best efforts. Also what work environment is related to productivity? Labor unrest generally derives from poor or insensitive working conditions, so a smart manager would also be aware of employee morale, and take steps to meet needs that go beyond survival and minimum wage. Findings from social psychology have direct application. How are values and attitudes related to job satisfaction? What basic motivational theories have utility to the organizational setting? Are these theories limited by culture or are they of general utility in the increasing global community?

8.2 Where are social psychologists employed?

For students interested in a career in social psychology it may be of interest to see where our colleagues are employed. The vast majority of those who obtain PhD's in North America and Europe are employed in the academic field (75 percent), although some 17 percent find employment in business or government (Lippa, R.A., 1994). Students who have completed master degrees are also working in these and other fields, including social clinics, health agencies, and probation departments. The world is not getting less complicated, so it may be expected that there will be a need for social psychologists as long as they can produce ideas useful to the larger society, and provide training leading to improvement in social organizations. Currently we see more concern about the health of the world environmental system, where social psychologists may produce useful consultations to overcome denial, and other defense mechanisms which retard much needed reform. Directly related to that issue is the growing field of health psychology. How to create a social environment that is productive of maximum health? That is an issue of the social environment, as well as other health obstructions, like how to help people to quit smoking.

Beyond these major fields there is also the use of the specific skills of the social psychologists. For example an important field is opinion research since that is

directly linked to behavior. How do we go about completing useful market research, how can we poll opinion in society so the results represent genuine and informed public opinion (as contrasted with manipulated views)? How can we evaluate progress in government functioning, and the effect of social change derived from these programs?

These are all issues to which social psychologists can make contributions with appropriate training and social support. The future is exciting, and especially for the keen students of social psychology who want to make a contribution and carve out a niche for themselves in improving society.

Summary

This chapter outlined the domain, methods, and major issues of the field of social psychology. A consistent thread running through this discussion is that social psychology is actually history. From the earliest thinkers to the present, our field reflects the major concerns of our times. The parent disciplines are psychology and sociology, although social psychology, as an integrating discipline has also been influenced by other social sciences. The major social psychological theories reflect history and our theoretical debt to those who came before. Contributing ideas include those that are derived from learning theories, e.g. classical and operant learning with a special emphasis on imitation or observational learning. The second theoretical perspective is social cognition based on the assumption that human beings have a need for cognitive consistency and balance and that this requirement motivates behavior. A third perspective is information processing in which people are seen as having a need to understand the world. Finally, the chapter examined equity and exchange theories that reflect the dominant economic system in the world. Equity and exchange theories propose that human interaction involves costs, rewards and profits to the participants.

What is the place of social psychology? There are many social sciences seeking to explain human behavior. Therefore only an eclectic viewpoint is useful eventually leading to more accurate views about human behavior from a cross-cultural perspective. We can learn from research conducted in other societies since after all, people from all cultures share common demands of the human condition. In Western societies much of the focus has been on mediating variables of beliefs and values used to explain a variety of behaviors like aggression and conformity. Eastern societies display more interdependence affecting their psychological responses.

Social psychology is history, because the historical experiences of individual researchers, as well as of historical changes in society, have both to a large extent determined the focus and content of our studies. Like other disciplines our work reflects what is considered urgent in society, although there is also the influence of powerful individuals who through control of funds and publication access define what is important. All sciences are important in explaining human behavior. Likewise all theories within social psychology are salient for an eclectic perspective and integrated theory. Culture also provides a framework for understanding behavior, although there is much to the human experience that is common in all cultures. Stimulus response theory helps in providing an overall theoretical framework since all behavior is elicited by social stimuli that include mediating variables like beliefs and attitudes, resulting in actual behaviors produced by the stimuli and mediating variable. This chapter recognizes the contributions of the related fields, and notes that social psychology is the integrating field which has its utility in combining the findings and overlap from these fields.

The methods of social psychology include correlational techniques that the researcher employs to investigate how variables co-vary. Is there an association between smoking and cancer? Correlational work typically uses surveys in either written form or in interviews. The chapter also discusses common problems in surveys that affect the truthfulness of the responses. These problems of validity show that social desirability may confound the results, and motivate socially acceptable responses. Interpretation of survey data must be cautious as related words may have very different social meanings to our respondents, and the order of questions in the survey affect the results. What precedes a question may influence the responses that follow. Problems in interviews show that the interviewer may have subtle, yet powerful effects through nonverbal behavior like smiling or nodding at different times. This evidently reinforces certain responses and therefore presents a problem of validity.

The importance of representative sampling is stressed for all methods used in social psychology. Random sampling is the only scientific method. Using this scientific procedure requires that each member of the population of interest have an equal and independent chance of appearing in the sample. Biased sampling and the refusal to participate have effects that are not easily understood.

The majority of social psychologists employ the experimental method, exclusively

or in combination with survey efforts. In the research situation the experimenter seeks to control some aspect of a simulated environment in order to study the effects of independent variables on dependent variables. This procedure requires the use of two groups from the same population, one of which is given some experimental treatment (like observing violence in the media), and then compared, to a control group which does not get any treatment. The overall intent is to observe if the treatment had an effect on the dependent variable. As shown televised violence (the independent variable) did that have an effect on increased aggression (the dependent variable). Bias that occurs in the experimental situation often results from the demand characteristics of the experiment. Here too the experimenter can influence the outcome through subtle yet powerful expectations and reinforcement.

A very important issue in social psychology is that of ethics. The Milgram experiments and those that followed created a large debate in psychology about the possible effects of experimentation on the participating subjects. This controversial issue produced many changes that have influenced the content and direction of investigations of social psychology. Subsequent research on participating subjects however showed that subjects' self concept was not damaged by participation, and the ethical debate might have been overblown. The ethical changes include informed consent for participation, and limitations on deceit used by the experimenter. In most cases however, the participant is well protected if assured anonymity or confidentiality, both essential in order to obtain valid results. As social psychologists we have an obligation to be truthful with society, in turn society has an obligation to support academic freedom in order to allow investigators to pursue useful information.

Ideology and human values play important roles in providing frameworks for social psychology. While psychology aims at being an objective natural science, human values produce a discipline that is circumscribed by the prevailing ideologies and values. Social psychology is history that can provide useful information. In disseminating results from social psychological research we can raise human consciousness, and provide practical applications to social problems. Many of the major research thrusts in social psychology relate to important events in society including the women's movement and studies of gender. The internal debate we had on ethics also influences research, and the values expressed by such investigations. There are always unstated assumptions

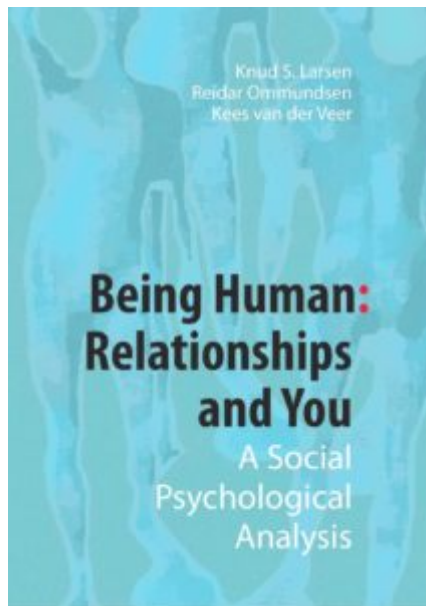
involved in all human endeavors including research. The labels used by social psychologists in describing behavior are but a reflection of the author's own unstated views of the behavior being considered. What for example is the ideal human condition? Maslow's concept of the self-actualized person was developed from the comfort of middle class society that assumed that people had the luxury of pursuing fulfillment rather than struggle for survival. Dominant theories in psychology also reflect many unstated assumptions about human values and ideology. There are unstated assumptions understood by everyone, but never discussed.

We build theories because of fundamental human needs to understand the human condition partly reflected in so-called pure research, which does not necessarily have practical goals in mind. But theories are also useful in generating hypotheses that may shed light on the validity of concepts. A good theory helps reduce the complexity of our findings which otherwise is overwhelming in quantity. Whether a theory is good or bad depends on whether it helps in answering important questions. Is it heuristic and does it generate useful research? Does it have applications to the human condition? If the theory helps direct research and offers a framework for understanding human phenomena, then it is considered a good theory

A major value of social psychology is the application of its findings to pressing social issues. In applied psychology we seek solutions to problems of society like violence, or improvement in the work of important social organizations. Applied social psychology aims to improve the life of individuals and the functioning of society. As the world is becoming increasingly complex there will be employment for social psychologists for the foreseeable future assisting society in overcoming salient problems, and facilitating solutions.

Being Human. Chapter 2. Cultural

And Social Dimensions Of The Self



A group of international students is sitting around the dinner table discussing the television menu for the evening. A Norwegian woman student says, “let’s watch the soap, exciting things are happening to the relationships in the show”. A student from Asia disagrees since soaps “show disrespect for social values and relationships”. Someone from the States suggests watching a boxing match since that “demonstrates personal courage and achievement of the up and coming athletes”. The Asian student replies that rather than boxing, watching a team sport like soccer is more interesting. Another

supporter of the soap option however, suggests that soap dramas are much more exciting as they deal with relationships, and “that is all there really is to life”.

Cultural and gender stereotypes that are parodied above are addressed in this chapter. Our social selves are partially defined by gender and cultural values, and much else. How do we come to be who we are? How is the self formed and what function does it play in the psychological economy of the individual? Are we motivated to behave in certain ways depending on our social selves? What is the route to well-being; does it help to have illusions about life? Why do we spend so much time and effort trying to impress others, and is impression management adaptable? These and many other issues are discussed in this chapter.

Who we are and where we come from has engaged the attention of philosophers and psychologists for generations. In more recent times the methods of experimental social psychology have been employed in the quest to understand the self and its dominant attributes. The self is defined as a set of beliefs we hold about our attributes and ourselves. We think of ourselves in terms of important personal characteristics like our career choice, our level of competence, and our plans for the future. The latter defines our possible selves. The continuity we feel in life is due to the self-concept. Similarity in personality with siblings, and especially identical twins, is based on common biological heritability that also contributes to self-hood.

Everything important about our lives, our family relationships, our development, the cultural and social context of our lives, all contribute to the topic of this chapter. Self-knowledge provides direction and order in our lives. Since we all fall short in goal attainment, there is a balance between flaws and self-efficacy. These discrepancies directly impact how we feel about ourselves, our self-esteem. Since feelings of self-esteem are also bound up with how others think about us, we perform in the great theater that is life, playing out roles of self-presentation. We want to convince others of our positive qualities and therefore have strong motives to manage the impression we make. We know how to react appropriately to varying situational demands because culture creates the parameters of appropriate conduct.

1. The beginnings of the social self

Self-awareness begins early in life. By about nine months of age the average child begins to differentiate the self from others (Harter, 1983). At the age of 18 months the typical child will have a developed sense of self-awareness such as reacting more to pictures of themselves than to those of unrelated people. Gradually as our self-knowledge grows, the primitive sense of self takes on other attributes. Our environment may nurture positive self-attributes leading to feelings of competence or self-efficacy. Others not so fortunate live in restrictive environments that place early limits on what is considered possible, and therefore affect plans for career and development. We are not the only species to demonstrate self-awareness (Gallup, 1977; 1997). The experimenter initially placed a mirror in the cage of chimpanzees until it became a familiar object. Afterwards the experimenter placed an odorless red dye on the animals' ear or brow. The animals recognized that something had changed and responded with immediately touching the area dyed. Studies with dolphins and other animals demonstrate a similar pattern of self-recognition (Mitchell, 2003).

1.1 Self-knowledge

Using similar techniques with toddlers, researchers found that self-recognition is present at around age two (Lewis, 1997; Povinelli, Landau, & Perrilloux, 1996). Over time the child begins to incorporate psychological attributes including more complex feelings and thoughts. Our social self is inseparable from how we are evaluated by others (Hart & Damon, 1986). As we develop more complex beliefs and feelings about the self, we also begin to project ourselves to some degree into the future. From these initial experiences with the family, educational system, and

the broader culture the social self gradually emerges. The self-concept is the knowledge we have of ourselves, that we exist separately from others, and have our own unique properties. As part of our self-knowledge we develop a belief system that governs behavior. Do we live in a world of chaos or order? Do we believe we can accomplish important goals? Can other people be trusted? Is it a dog-eats-dog world, or are there valid altruistic behaviors. This complex web of beliefs in turn contributes to whether we approach or avoid others, our feelings of self-esteem, and whether we have a concept of what we could become in the future, a possible self. In this process of maturation children gradually place less emphasis on concrete physical descriptions of the self, and place more emphasis on complex psychological states including thoughts, feelings, and the evaluations of others (Harter, 2003; Hart & Damon, 1986).

1.2 Self-esteem

The second aspect of the self-concept consists of our self-evaluations or self-esteem. Self-esteem is evaluative based on very basic judgments of personal morality, and whether in our own eyes we are satisfied or dissatisfied with our performance. Global self-esteem can be measured by surveys and is related to our need for approval (e.g. Larsen, 1969). The lower our self-esteem the more we have a need for affirmation and approval by others and society. High self-esteem on the other hand is associated with setting appropriate goals, using feedback from others to progress, and enjoying positive experiences to the fullest extent possible (Wood, Heimpel, Michel, 2003). When experiencing rejection or frustration, those with high self-esteem will find a silver lining. High self-esteem is adaptable and is associated with goal persistence and the ability when frustrated to envision alternative goals (Sommer & Baumeister, 2002). High self-esteem people will look at the past through rose-colored glasses, and this selective positive memory bias may in turn support higher self-esteem (Christensen, Wood, & Barrett, 2003).

On the other hand those people with low self-esteem not only think poorly of themselves, but the negative self-conceptions have other unfortunate consequences. Low self-esteem persons are more pessimistic about the future, tend to obsess about their negative moods, are more concerned about the opinions of others, and have higher needs for approval (Heimpel, Wood, Marshall, & Brown, 2002). Low self-esteem is also reflected in negative estimations of competence or self-efficacy, and in self-loathing. On the other hand, those with

positive feelings toward the self, like themselves and have feelings of competence (Tafarodi, Marshall, & Milne, 2003). As we shall see throughout this chapter and what follows, the cultural context matters. Members of Asian cultures, for example, are less self-enhancing in explicit ways, but enhance more in implicit ways (Koole, Dijksterhuis, & Van Knippenberg, 2001).

2. Building blocks of the emerging self

Children are not truly a tabula rasa when entering the world. Scientists have for some time found traits that seem to be universal in all cultures. Traits typically describe cross-situational consistency; i.e., the consistent way people act, think or feel despite changing circumstances. Researchers point to five traits as basic to our self-understanding. These characteristics include relative openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, also known as the Big Five (Costa & McCrae, 1995; John & Srivastava, 1999).

People use these basic traits in describing themselves, and in judging other people. The descriptions of others tend to be accurate in the sense that they match self-descriptions (Funder, 1995; John & Robins, 1993; Watson, 1989). Many psychologists believe that the Big Five traits are the basic building blocks of personality. Is there a biological basis for these fundamental traits? The evidence is pointing in that direction since people from a variety of countries and cultures use these same traits in describing the self and other people (Buss, 1999).

2.1 The heritability of personality traits

Evidence has been produced that supports at least the partial heritability of personality traits (Plomin & Caspi, 1998). Studies of identical and fraternal twins show conclusively that trait similarity is based on shared genes. For example, studies of the personalities of identical twins show a greater similarity in traits compared to fraternal twins. Those trait similarities are reliable even when identical twins are reared apart, strongly suggesting a genetic component to some aspects of personality (Loehlin, 1992).

Often traits found early in development are consistent over the lifespan. Longitudinal studies have shown that children identified as shy at nine months develop elevated levels of stress hormone cortisol associated with fear (Kagan, 1989). Neuroticism is associated with a heightened activation of the autonomic nervous system involved in subjective stress (Zuckerman, 1996). On the positive side extraversion is related to higher levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine that

is in turn predictive of approach related behaviors (DePue, 1995). Clearly the self cannot be understood apart from our biological inheritance. People react consistently to the varying manifestations of these traits. These reactions in turn play a significant role in how we develop as persons and how we develop more complex self-identities (Malatesta, 1990).

2.2 Genetics and social behavior

The relationship of genetics to complex social behavior is an exiting new frontier. Social behavior is complex and both genes and the social environment play a role. Some genes require specific environments to have an effect on behavior so interactions matter. In a study on violence (Caspi, McClay, Moffitt, Mill, Martin, & Craig, 2002) the researchers tested for the presence of the Monoamine oxidase A gene responsible for metabolizing neurotransmitters in the brain, and for promoting smooth communication between the neurons. The absence of the gene by itself had little effect. However, when combined with abuse and maltreatment the men in the study were three times as likely to have been convicted of violent crimes by age 26. Low levels or absence of the MAOA gene combined with maltreatment developed anti-social behavior in 85 percent of the boys. As we begin to see the complex interaction between our biological inheritance and complexities of the social context the interdependence of both is clear. Many of these traits were adaptive in response to evolutionary requirements. As society has also evolved many of these traits are no longer functional. Being a little fearful and neurotic might have been very functional in the days of saber tooth tigers, but create interpersonal problems for those who have inherited an excess of these traits today.

3. The nature of the self-concept: the hard and easy problem

William James (1890) is today recognized as a founder of American Psychology. In his early writings he described the essential duality of the self-concept. The first aspect of the self-concept is composed of all the thoughts and beliefs we hold about our self, also called the “known self” or “me”. The second component of the self is the “knower”. The “knower” refers to the observatory function of the self, or now more commonly called self-awareness. We come to know who we are by becoming aware and thinking about ourselves.

Today the aspect of the self defined as the self-concept or “me” is gradually being understood through experimentation. The self-concept and its relationship to brain functions is what might be called the “easy” problem. The hard problem

that remains is somewhat of a mystery, is what is called the “knower”. Those with religious inclinations would refer to the “knower” as the immaterial soul. The scientist does not find that construct convincing as the soul construct explains everything and in reality nothing. The soul definition is a form of nominalism that simply puts a label or name to a process, and we do not advance much in our understanding by just placing another label on the “knower”.

3.1 The easy and the hard problem in self-definition: Me versus the knower

Freud wrote a great deal about conscious and unconscious processes. Much of our thinking is in fact accessible to our awareness. We make plans for the future, decide on what to have for dinner, save up for children’s college. These and much more are conscious in the sense that they are accessible thoughts that we can think about and evaluate. Other processes like the functions of the autonomic nervous system are largely unconscious. We know they are present in the body, but they are generally not available to the reasoning or planning functions of the brain.

The hard problem is trying to understand why it feels like we have a conscious process to begin with, that we are aware of a first person very subjective experience, the executive “I” or the decision maker (Pinker, 2007). The scientist finds it difficult to explain how this subjective feeling of the self arises from neural computations in the brain. Do you believe that all our joys and pain can be reduced to neurological activity in the brain? The hard problem is: does consciousness exist in an ethereal soul or is consciousness purely a brain function defined as the activity of the brain.

Today some cognitive neuroscientists claim that by using MRI we can practically read people’s thoughts from blood flow in the brain. Through electrical stimulation of certain areas of the brain we can cause hallucination such as hearing music played long ago, or experiencing childhood memories. Anti-depressants like Prozac can profoundly affect feelings and thoughts. Also, whenever the brain function ceases so far as we can see our consciousness comes to an end. No reliable reports of contacts with the dead have been produced. Even near death experiences where the soul purportedly departs the body only to return are probably caused by oxygen starvation of the eyes and brain. Some Swiss neuroscientists (Pinker, 2007) have managed to turn out-of-body experiences off and on by stimulating the part of the brain overlapping vision and bodily sensations. The fact that all observable psychological activity has a

physiological concomitant lends little support for a soul construct.

Many visions or “miracles can be attributed to how the brain developed to meet survival needs. It appears, for example, that we possess a template for the recognition of faces in a variety of objects. Some years ago a woman made herself a cheese sandwich and experienced a vision, as she perceived the Virgin Mary in the brown skillet marks. She eventually sold the sandwich on eBay for \$28000.00 probably to someone who wanted a vicarious vision. In another case people saw a three dimensional face on the surface of Mars after an orbiter captured images from the Cydonia region of Mars. That image ignited enthusiasm, and encouraged conspiracy theories about denial of life on our sister planet. All of us have had the experience of gazing into the sky and finding faces in the moving clouds. These experiences appear to be functions of three regions of the temporal lobe of the brain that is involved in the recognition of faces. The tendency to see faces is a result of neural architecture with obvious evolutionary advantages (Svoboda, 2007) In our distant past some faces or images should be avoided like that of the saber tooth tiger; others should be approached like that of family or beneficent higher powers.

The materialist explanation is advanced by the argument that the “knower” or “executive I” is an illusion. From this perspective consciousness consists of numerous or even an overwhelming amount of external events that compete for attention. As an evolutionary adaptation the brain developed decision-making functions to discriminate between important and non-essential input. Subsequently the brain rationalizes the outcome after it has occurred giving us the impression that someone was in charge. Information overload requires the decision making function of the self, and those who developed better neural webs were the ones who survived. Pinker believes that the “knower” is nothing more than “executive summaries of the events and states that are most relevant to updating an understanding of the world and figuring out what to do next” (p.65).

Damasio (2007) argues that self-awareness is a function of evolutionary biology and psychology. Initially gene networks organized themselves to evolve complex organisms with brains. Further evolution enriched the complexity of brains by developing sensory and motor maps to represent the environmental context. Eventually with more evolutionary complexity different parts of the brain developed the ability to communicate, and generate sophisticated maps of the organism interacting with the environment. From this natural knowledge the

basic self emerges, and the brain's sensory-motor maps change from non-conscious mental patterns to conscious mental images. Scientists are gradually developing the ability to find neural correlates of conscious activity of the self.

However, what of the inner experience we called the hard problem? Some would simply call it information processing thereby making it an "easy" problem. Others would say that since there is no test that could distinguish between a well-designed robot, and a human, we should just let the problem go away as irrelevant (Dennett, 2007). Still others will say that our failure to understand the hard problem is a function of the limitation of our brain. After all we have many other limitations like failing to grasp the existence of spheres greater than three. Brain limitations include the difficulty of understanding how stimuli from the outside produce subjective feelings on the inside.

Many fear the loss of a moral perspective if we come to believe in a material self. After all if we do not have an immortal soul why worry about salvation in an unseen world to come? Others would argue that believing in the materialist self would increase empathy as we are all in the same existential boat. To be aware of how temporary life and consciousness is should give poignant meaning to all life and sympathy for all who struggle with the same reality. Keep in mind that belief in the immortal soul did not prevent believers from engaging in gross defiance of morality by committing genocide and cruelty. The crusades conquered land with great cruelty still remembered by Muslim zealots today. In the dark ages half a million women were burned at the stake by the inquisition in an attempt to save their immortal souls. The destruction of 9/11 and what followed was largely motivated by religious morality on both sides including the belief in the immortal soul. Religious ideology often provides heavenly rewards for killing and destruction. Perhaps we would all be better off believing in a fragile and temporary existence.

3.2 The hard problem remains

At the end of the day the hard problem remains unsolved. It seems particularly difficult to understand deep feelings as solely a consequence of brain activity. Some of us have experienced awe in the presence of the truly noble and good. How can one attribute these feelings as an interpretive consequence of brain activity? The sense of unspeakable joy that comes in the wake of love, the truly altruistic behavior of others resonates in our minds in ways not easily understood by the material self. The cynic can of course reduce altruism to reward

expectations, but the “knower” knows the difference. The feelings of grandeur in the presence of nature, the emotions experienced from certain types of music are examples of the presence of a “knower”. The drumbeats of the Nazi’s reflect the robotic self that resonates with martial spirit and aggression and self-aggrandizement. However, music may also cause meditation and bring to us harmony and peace. Understanding meditative feelings, altruism, and the noble as brain functions remains a hard problem.

Perhaps viewing consciousness from the perspective of brain functioning is good science, but philosophically unsound? Science has made great progress in breaking objects into atomic and subatomic particles. Is there a bias in that perspective? Are there other routes to the factual and truth? At least we know that the whole is always more than the sum of its parts. Human attributes create questions as many people feel compassion towards others. Where does that come from? If we can’t find the answer in neurons firing, then is consciousness a primary principle? Are we really illusions caused by 100 billion simmering neurons? What is the locus for experiencing ideas and intentions temporally? Do we perceive time because it is separate from us? Some parts of the self remain for life, we can recognize our basic components, but we are also aware of time and change. If we were caught up in time could we perceive it? These and many other issues remain for the most intriguing and fundamental issue of human existence.

There is a mysterious aspect to life that even the greatest minds cannot understand. Einstein too was in a state of awe by what he saw as a causal and ordered nature. Perhaps he was affected by the certainty of the subjective “I” when he wrote his credo “ The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our minds can not grasp, whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly: this is religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I am a devoutly religious man” (Isaacson, 2007). Did Einstein address the common human limitation of our brains? Did he attribute religiousness to our inability to understand what is after all natural stimuli? Or did Einstein acknowledge with certainty that the hard problem remains, and will not easily yield a solution.

4. The development of the Social Self

How do we come to know who we are? The sources of the self-knowledge are primarily other people, although we can also learn by observing our own behavior, and by thinking about ourselves. Socialization is the context in which we form our self-attributes. It is through family and other socialization agents that we learn about our level of competence, success in achieving important goals, and whether we are evaluated positively. From that we derive self-esteem. Through socialization we acquire our standards for behavior, and we incorporate the values of our family and culture. The way we are consistently treated in early socialization forms the core of what we come to believe about ourselves that guides us throughout life.

Cooley (1902) developed a concept called the “looking glass self”. From his perspective we learn about ourselves through the reactions of other people. This is called reflected appraisals. Those who experience constant praise come to believe they are valuable; those who experience maltreatment grow up thinking their lives are worthless. So feedback from others is a basic key to understanding the social self. The importance can be seen in a study on parental perceptions and children’s self-perceptions (Felson & Reed, 1986). In general there is close similarity between parent’s beliefs about children’s abilities, and the children’s self-concept.

Later of course, we encounter peers and these have profound importance during adolescence (Leary, Cottrell, & Phillips, 2001). Most of us know intuitively our social standing from the preferences of our peers. The order in which children are chosen for athletic teams tells a lot about the person’s perceived contribution to a team, and value to his peers. Whether a girl gets asked out for dates also tells her a great deal about how peers perceive her in terms of physical attractiveness and her personality. Teachers give feedback on school performance that is either encouraging or discouraging in competitive educational environments. Competitive educational experiences using the normal curve for grading feedback do not foster growth in all children. Some children will always occupy low or failing comparative standing. These early experiences contribute to whether the individual’s possible self is optimistic or pessimistic. If we are encouraged in childhood and adolescence we form plans about what we can become, what contribution we can make to society, and how we can find self-fulfillment. We have more to say about self and motivation in section 9.

4.1 Forming the possible self through family socialization

A family has influence not only through parental guidance, but also through relationships formed with siblings. In societies with scarce resources, sibling conflict is frequent and violent. Human history bears witness to violent outcomes from Cain and Abel to current news stories. Even very young children engage in frequent conflict (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Birth order matters because children learn to adjust to certain niches in the family that is functional and rewarding. Older siblings tend to be more dominant and assertive as well as more achievement oriented and conscientious (Sulloway, 1996; 2001). The larger size of older siblings would naturally make them more dominant, and at the same time give them a greater share of responsibility to look after the younger sibling.

On the other hand, younger siblings tend to be more open to new ideas, and experiment with novel thoughts. In Suloway's study of thousands of scientists, younger siblings were more open to novelty and thinking outside the box. On the negative side, they were also more likely to endorse pseudoscientific ideas like phrenology. Later born scientists possessed the consistency to make many scientific discoveries, whereas younger siblings were risk takers traveling far away in search of novel ideas. Darwin, for example, was the fifth sibling in his family, and developed a theory that changed physical and social science forever. He risked a great deal in his search for scientific data, traveling to unknown parts of the world to collect information in support of evolution, a theory that challenged the very fabric of our religiously founded beliefs about the origin of man.

4.2 The social self and group membership

Our social identity becomes part of our self-concept as we learn the values associated with the group membership, and its emotional significance in our lives (Tajfel, 1981). Much work has been completed in recent decades that show that mere membership even in meaningless groups attaches profound significance to behavior and self-conception (e.g. Doise, Dann, Gouge, Larsen, & Ostell, 1972). Since membership in nonsensical groups produces significant influence on behavior, how much more powerful is the influence of group identity if based on memberships in real social groups that produce attitudinal reactions by society? Members of minority groups often have confusing demands made by membership in both the minority and in coping with the larger society (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Some minorities develop bicultural competence and identity; others are assimilated into the dominant culture, and

yet others are marginalized from both societies (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Phinney, 1991).

Minority status has important consequences for the self-concept and esteem. As socialization takes place, the individual often engages in self-stereotyping identifying with the attributes thought positive in the group (Biernat, Vescio, & Green, 1996). Bicultural identification seems to produce the best results for self-esteem (Phinney, 1991). High self-esteem in minorities is a function of strong ethnic identity combined with positive attitudes toward the mainstream culture. It stands to reason that those with bicultural identities and competence will experience life as more rewarding, and will function more successfully in society.

4.3 Culture as a source of the self-concept

In chapter 1 we introduced the concept of independent and interdependent cultures. It is now time to apply the concept to the formation of the social self. We shall see that this cultural difference has applications throughout this chapter and in the chapters that follow. Culture has profound effects in socializing people. It produces predictable differences in self-concepts between members of different cultures. Western societies found in North America and Europe have inculcated social values significant to adaptation and survival in the capitalist model. The term “rugged individualism” points to a person who is first and foremost independent, and able to cope with the hazards of life in early United States. In this cultural environment the values of individual rights and freedoms were promoted at least formally. Each man was a king in his own house, and society was preoccupied with individual self-actualization.

In Asian societies, on the other hand, we have ancient cultures that had to adapt to high levels of physical density. Physical density is not experienced as crowding the way it would be experienced in the west, because of the highly developed structures of courtesy that meet the need for personal space and privacy. These cultural differences have been summarized in the terms “independent “ and “interdependent” societies introduced in chapter 1. Hall (1976) thought of independent societies, as “low-context cultures” where social roles while not unimportant mattered less. Therefore a person from independent cultures would more or less act the same regardless of the changing context of behavior or the situation. In interdependent cultures on the other hand, the social context matters a great deal, and the individual’s behavior will change dependent on the specific role played by the participant. In interdependent cultures the self would differ

depending on role expectation. The person would behave differentially depending on whether the behavior involves a relationship with parents, peers, or colleagues. As we shall see, in western societies the bias toward independence leads to attribution errors where we underestimate the influence of the situation, and attribute behavior primarily to individual traits.

In recent years social psychologists have carried out many cross-cultural studies on how motivations, emotions, and behaviors are shaped by cultural conceptions of the self. (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rhee, Uleman, & Roman, 1995; Triandis, 1995). From this accumulated research the independent cultures are identified primarily in the West. In these societies the self is seen as autonomous, as distinct and separate from other members of society. The focus of the independent self is on what makes the self distinctive or different from others. Consequently explanations for behavior are sought within the individual's personality. Not only is independence a fundamental value, but also westerners believe that the main object of socialization is to create independent children (Kitayama, 1992). The self is therefore described as composed of individual attributes (Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). Achievements are seen as primarily the result of individual and distinctive efforts, where family or society played at best peripheral roles.

In the interdependent cultures of Asia and countries in the developing world the self is perceived as part of the larger social context. The self is not construed apart from other people, but rather as connected to family and larger social organizations. The willingness of people to go on suicide missions like the kamikaze pilots of Japan is related to the interdependent self-construal where country and emperor are part of the self. Western combatants may also fight with great courage, however that is best elicited when there is some possibility if not probability of survival. In interdependent societies the self is completely embedded in the roles and duties of social relationships. Culture therefore determines to a large extent self-knowledge and self-esteem, as well as self-presentations and impression management. The self is connected to the attributes of others, is not seen as distinctive, but associated with common traits (Bochner, 1994). These cultural differences are thought to profoundly affect how individuals think about themselves, how they relate to others in society, and what motivates their behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

Studies have shown that Americans achieve primarily for personal reasons, whereas those from interdependent societies strive to achieve group goals

(Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). It is the personal nature of tasks and objectives that motivate behavior in the West, whereas Asian students are motivated more by group goals. Consequently students in the West are more likely to select careers or tasks in which they have experienced previous competence or which had been positive and rewarding in the past. The career choices of Asians on the other hand are not based on such personal expectations or prior performance (Oishi & Diener, 2003).

As we can imagine, these cultural differences in self-construal also affect how we organize information in memory (Woike, Gershkovich, Piorkowski, & Polo, 1999). People in independent cultures disregard the social context in memory formation, or think of events in personal terms. Elections in the United States are typically about the personal attributes of candidates where the social context matters little. Typically this process manipulates the indifferent electorate to disregard political programs in the search for the “right” person.

There are some researchers who feel these cultural differences in self-construal make intercultural communication very difficult (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). Yet, at the end of the day we must remember that these cultural differences are abstractions. There are always more differences to be found within than between social groups. In independent cultures there are many with interdependent self-construal, particularly among women (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000; Cross & Vick, 2001). In interdependent societies there are those who's self-construal are independent. Further, migration is changing the world. For example within United States and Europe there are many immigrants who think of themselves with interdependent self-construal. Many migrants work hard in western societies just so they can send most of their earnings back to the home country. Globalization is also producing more converging values for example an emphasis on human rights in nearly all societies, and as that takes its course in the future we must reevaluate the cultural differences discussed above.

4.4 Gender and the social self

Gender is the most obvious parameter in our self-concept. In every society males and females are treated differentially with life-long consequences. Women are more interdependent as they tend to view themselves connected to relationships as mother, daughter or wife. Their behavior therefore tends to be more influenced by the thoughts and feelings of others because relationships are construed as central to self and life (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997; Cross & Madson

1997; Cross, Bacon, Morris, 2000; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Women display relational interdependence in close relationships especially within the family. On the other hand men display relational interdependence within larger collectives such as political parties, athletic teams, or in feelings of national identity. (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Consistent socialization processes throughout the world lead females to focus more on intimacy and to have a greater willingness to discuss emotional topics than men (Davidson & Duberman, 1982). These gender differences in self-construal appear consistent across cultures (Kashima, Siegal, Tanaka, & Kashima, 1992), and reflect the different functions of the sexes in the historical and evolutionary struggle for survival.

When women define themselves they use references to other people and relationships. For example when asked to show photographs they are more likely to include intimate others in the photos (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993). Women spend more time thinking about their partners (Ickes, Robertson, Tooke, & Teng, 1986), are better judges of other peoples personality, and more empathetic (Bernieri, Zuckerman, Koestner, & Rosenthal, 1994; Hall, 1984). In directing their attention toward others women also demonstrate greater alertness to situational clues and the reactions of other people, whereas men focus better on internal processes such as increase in heart rate (Roberts & Pennebaker, 1995).

How does socialization encourage gender differences in self-construal? All the agents of socialization are at work. The media portray women differently from men encouraging interdependent stereotypes. The educational system forms different expectations for appropriate goals and behaviors. Parents treat girls differently than boys from the very beginning. All these socialization agents work consistently together to establish reliable gender differences (Fivush, 1992). Throughout childhood girls and boys play in separate playgroups with girls playing more cooperatively, and boys engaging more in competitive games (Maccoby, 1990). In early human history these gender differences most likely evolved in response to evolutionary demands that rewarded survival to those who developed gender specific traits. As we are the most dependent of all species we are lucky for women's innate desire to love and look after defenseless infants, and their very personal interests in the survival and well-being of their babies. In the following sections we will consider two theories explaining the development of the social self.

5. Social comparison theory: learning about the social self from others

Festinger (1954) proposed a theory for understanding self-knowledge. He asserted that people have a drive to accurately evaluate their beliefs and opinions. Since there are no explicit physical standards for psychological constructs we learn by comparing our thoughts with those who are similar to us. This original model has been worked over a great deal since first proposed (Goethals & Darley, 1987; Wood, 1989; Suls & Wheeler, 2000). Research has shown that people compare themselves across all imaginable dimensions including emotional responses, personality traits, and objective dimensions like equity in salary. Any relationship that makes the self salient would evoke the comparison process, our marriage as compared to other couples, our racial group compared to others for evaluating fair treatment, our fellow students for correct answers to test questions and grades, all comparisons contribute to relative satisfaction depending on comparison outcomes.

5.1 Comparing for self-enhancement or achievement

How do we get a sense of who we are without reference to the accomplishments or failures of other people in similar situations? Sometimes we seek self-enhancement by comparing downward, to someone not doing as well, and to those less fortunate. By comparing ourselves to those who earn lower grades, get less salary, or are hungry, many can at least temporarily feel better (Lockwood, 2002). Downward comparisons are especially strategic when one has experienced failure. By comparing downward and emphasizing one's positive qualities the damage to self-esteem is reduced (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000).

At other times we are interested in improvement trying to reach a relevant and lofty goal. In that case successful others can serve as models for achievement comparisons. Most of us, perhaps all of us, would not achieve the mathematical insight of Albert Einstein. However, the aspiring scientist may be inspired by his example and seek a related self-relevant high achievement. At times upward comparisons are discouraging. When the goal is truly unreachable the comparison can result in envy and feelings of inadequacy (Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee, 2004). Anorexia and bulimia are large problems in today's society, many believe caused by the emphasis in thinness for women in the media. Nearly all models of women's clothing are super thin, and in fact look unhealthy. Perhaps worse they set an unattainable standard for most women. (See also discussion of social influence in chapter 7). Women who place high value on physical appearance suffer in self-esteem from such social comparison (Patrick et al, 2004). In

summary some comparisons can be inspirational if the goals are possible and realistic in a person's future, but discouraging and demoralizing if they involve impossible goals or dreams.

Some people also compare from a desire to bond with others in the same straits (Staple & Kooman, 2001). How do we react to a crisis like hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters? Most of us will look to others to find the appropriate mixture of fear and courage in dealing with the situation. We also compare to similar people to enhance a sense of solidarity and common fate (Locke, 2003). When experiencing common fate people compare their responses to others to feel the strength of the community in facing crisis situations.

Social comparisons may occur in any situation of uncertainty when we are trying to find some appropriate response (Suls & Fletcher, 1983). You find yourself invited to a formal dinner party for the first time, a situation of some anxiety. Being uncertain how to dress appropriately, you ask the host for some helpful guidelines. At the dinner party chances are that you will let others more experienced carry the conversation until you get your bearings.

5.2 Social comparisons in summary

In general we seek comparisons from similar others, but if we want to enhance the self we compare downwards, if we are motivated by desire for improvement we find more successful models. (Goethals & Darley, 1977; Blanton, Buunk, Gibbons, & Kuyper, 1999). Sometimes we enhance the self-concept by comparing temporally with our former self (Ross & Wilson, 2002; Wilson & Ross, 2000). Most of us can find events from our earlier life that are more negative than our current situation. For example, perhaps we have fewer friends when we get older, but we believe that the quality of relationships has improved. To enhance we can compare our lives temporally and conclude that although the quantity of relationships has declined, life long friendships have a higher value than those formed in our youth.

6. Self-perception theory: self-knowledge by self-observation

Experience produces familiarity and most of us know how to react in situations we have visited previously. You listen to a political leader and from the storehouse of memories have ready feelings about the message and the messenger. Most people have established attitudes about a variety of topics like hip-hop music, jazz, or classical music and know how to react based on these schemas. At some

point, however, you may experience the novel or unfamiliar and you are uncertain of how to respond. A stranger hands you a \$100 bill, how should you react? Should you be happy or offended? If you react with joy, you may examine your reaction and conclude that you are happy. Self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) asserts that when our attitudes or feelings are ambiguous we infer their meaning by observing our own behavior as well as the situation. In other words, when we are unsure of our feelings we infer our feelings from our own behavior, how we actually respond,. You find yourself laughing in the presence of another person and conclude from that he/she makes you happy. You observe yourself kissing the person and from that and the other's behavior conclude that you are in love. When a person is in a situation not previously evaluated, and feelings are somewhat of a mystery, often our objective behavior becomes a guide to explain these feelings (Andersen & Ross, 1984; Chaiken & Baldwin, 1981).

Secondly, in deciding the meaning of the behavior it is attributed to either the person or the situation. Is the situation compelling your behavior or is the "executive I " in charge? If we are in control of the situation and feel in charge we may attribute the feelings to our dispositions. If, however, there are compelling pressures in the situation we are likely to attribute feelings to the situation rather than to the self. In short self-perception theory argues that we infer our feelings by observing our own behavior and infer either a personal cause or a situational reason for our behavior (Albarracin & Wyer, 2000; Dolinsky, 2000). We have more to say about self-perception and attitude formation in chapter 5.

Self-perception theory has important consequences for education and learning. For example does learning occur because of some extrinsic reward like grades? Such extrinsic reward is likely to produce short-term learning since the student feels justified to forget the learning once the reward is achieved. All the anxiety and cramming that occur in American universities is not for any intrinsic pleasure of learning, but just to pass a course or get good grades. Some children however, learn because of the intrinsic pleasure of mastering a subject. Students who are intrinsically motivated engage the subject matter because they find it interesting and enjoyable. (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Senko & Harackiewicz, 2002). Self-perception theory would argue that rewards could inhibit intrinsic motivation and destroy the pleasure of mastering the subject matter. When students come to believe that they are learning to obtain rewards it leads to an underestimation of the role played by the intrinsic motives (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Lepper, Henderson,

& Gingras, 1999). So although rewards can be motivational in the short run, they may produce external attribution that overlooks the intrinsic pleasure of learning.

It is obvious that any significant achievement occurs only where the self attributes intrinsic pleasure to the pursuit of knowledge. Students may pass courses, but little of the information learned from the reward of grade incentives will be stored in long-term memory. When the rewards cease so does the motivation to remember which is why the vast amount of information learned is lost within weeks. In one study on math games children's performance was compared between a reward program and the follow up during which no rewards were provided. The reward program did initially produce more interest and the children played more. However, those who initially had enjoyed the games lost interest during the follow-up and played less after the reward program ended (Greene, Sternberg, & Lepper, 1976). The researchers determined that it was the reward program that caused the children to like the games less. Related research (Tang & Hall, 1995) should cause us to think about what we do to the minds of children in an obsessive grade competitive educational system.

For parents rewards can be a two-edged sword. Praise for work well done can increase the child's self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy. It can also convey something about parental expectations for future work. But it is important that the child believes that their performance is not for external rewards but for reasons that are intrinsic and enjoyable. The child must have some control in the educational process where teachers and parents can nurture intrinsic motivation by doing enjoyable learning activities (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). Otherwise the child comes to attribute reasons for performance to the reward system with resulting loss of motivation.

6.1 Schacter's two-factor theory of emotion

Schacter (1964) proposed a theory of emotion using self-perception ideas. Essentially the theory proposes that we learn to infer our emotions the same way as we learn about our self-concept by observing our own behavior. In Schacter's theory people observe their physiological internal experiences and try to make sense of these by looking for the most plausible explanation. The theory is called two-factor because we first experience the physiological reaction and then look for a reasonable cause to explain it. One now classic experiment was carried out to test this theory (Schacter & Singer, 1962). When the subject arrived for the experiment he was told he was participating in a study on the effect of a vitamin

compound called Suproxin on vision. After the injection the subject was led to a waiting room to let the drug take effect. While there the subject was asked to fill out a survey containing some very insulting personal questions including one asking the subject about his mother's extramarital affairs. Another participant present, an experimental collaborator, also read the questions and angrily tossed the survey on the floor and left the room.

In fact the real purpose of the experiment was not to study vision, but to understand people's reaction to physiological arousal and the meaning attached. The participants were not given a vitamin compound but were injected with epinephrine, a hormone produced by the body that causes increased heart and breathing rates. How would you feel in a similar situation? You would have noticed the physiological change that occurred from the epinephrine. Your breathing rate would have increased and you would have felt aroused. Then the other participant reacts with anger at the survey. What is the most plausible explanation for the arousal that you feel? Since you have no information that you have been injected with epinephrine the most plausible explanation is found in the situational context of the survey and the other participant's anger. In fact that is what happened, and the participants injected with epinephrine were much more angry than the participants given a placebo.

In an extension of this work the researchers demonstrated that emotions are somewhat arbitrarily defined depending on what is the most plausible explanation found in the situational context (Schacter & Singer, 1962). For example, the emotion of anger could be aborted by offering a non emotional explanation for the arousal. The researchers accomplished this by telling the participants that they could expect to feel aroused after being injected. When the subjects then began to feel aroused they inferred that it was the injection that caused the change and they did not react with anger. In yet another condition Schacter and Singer demonstrated that they could create a very different emotion by providing an alternate explanation for the arousal. In this condition the experimental collaborator acted as if euphoric and happy. The subjects began to feel the same way and inferred that they too were feeling happy and euphoric. In short Schacter and Singer showed that emotions are part of the self-perception process where people seek the most plausible reason for internal bodily changes.

6.2 Misattribution for arousal

Since we have no explicit standard to determine what causes our emotions we can

misinterpret the cause (Savisky, Medvec, Charlton, & Golovich, 1998; Zillman, 1978). We know now that the same physiological arousal occurs in a variety of circumstances and to varying stimuli. In some situations there may be more than one source to which we can attribute the arousal. To what do we attribute the increased heartbeat, shallow breathing, and the rise in body temperature? If next to another person could the physiological changes be the effect of that person? What about if you are next to the other person during a parachute jump? Is it the fascination with the other person or is it that you are approaching the Earth at great speed that causes the increased heartbeat? There is no standard that will tell for certain, and the possibilities of misattribution of the cause exist in all such circumstances.

In the classical Dutton & Aron study (1974) the researchers demonstrated the ease by which misattribution of arousal can occur. The experimenters had an attractive young woman approach males with a survey purportedly for a project for her psychology class. When they completed the survey she explained that she would be happy to explain more about the project at a later time, and she wrote her phone number on a corner, tore it off and gave it to the participant. This procedure was followed under two independent experimental conditions. In the first condition the men were approached after they had crossed a rickety 450 feet high footbridge over a river in Canada. Most of us would after the crossing experience all the symptoms of the epinephrine injection found in the study of Schacter and Singer. Most people have hard wired brains preferring low and safe altitudes, and this bridge was very high and did not give the appearance of safety. As the men were approached immediately after crossing their hearts were still racing and they experienced physiological arousal. In the second condition the men were allowed to rest for a while after crossing, and had a chance to calm down somewhat, before the woman approached. They too were also given the phone number and the opportunity to call later for more information.

What would we predict would be the outcome from Schacter's two-step theory? In the first condition the men had just experienced physiological arousal and were primed to find a plausible explanation. The most plausible cause for what they felt was the crossing of the bridge, but the beautiful woman made the stronger impression. Was the arousal due to the presence of the woman? In fact the results showed that significantly more men who were approached having just crossed the bridge called the woman subsequently to ask for a date, whereas few did if they

were approached after resting. In other words the men misattributed the cause of their arousal from the true source, the crossing of the bridge, to the more powerful stimuli found in the lovely woman. Misattribution of arousal has also been found in other studies (Sinclair, Hoffman, Mark, Martin, & Pickering, 1994).

6.3 Cognitive appraisal theory: Emotion follows cognitive interpretation

Some researchers have noted that we sometimes experience emotion when there is no physiological arousal (Roseman & Smith, 2001; Russell & Barrett, 1999; Scherer & Schorr, 2001). Cognitive appraisal theories explain that sometimes emotions follow cognition, after we determine the meaning of the event or situation. We appraise the event in terms of implications being good or bad, and what caused the event. A colleague is given a promotion, how do you interpret that event. If you live in a professional world of zero sum game behavior where someone's promotion gives you less of a chance to advance, you may feel envy and later anger. However, if you are already at the top of the game and can advance no further you might feel happy. Suppose you have helped the colleague? Then perhaps you can attribute his or her success to your advice and assistance and feel pride (Tesser, 1988).

The main point is that in cognitive arousal theories the arousal comes after cognition, after attributing meaning and cause to the event. Arousal does not always precede emotion. Sometimes we feel the emotion, as we begin to fully understand the implications of what has happened and how the situation has changed. The two-step theory and cognitive appraisal theories complement each other as previous arousal is explained by the two-step theory, and interpretation followed by arousal explains emotion from the cognitive appraisal perspective.

7. Introspection: An unreliable source of self-knowledge

We can also learn about ourselves by "looking inside" and examining our own thoughts and feelings. You find yourself in an emergency situation when a man is drowning and immediately jump in the water to save him. Afterwards you think about the event, and come to the conclusion that the reaction was consistent with who you are, with your self-concept. Sometimes looking for inside knowledge can provide accurate responses, other times it can be misleading. You may think introspection is so obvious a source of self-knowledge that it is routine for most people. In fact we spend little time thinking about ourselves (Wilson, 2002). Even when we do introspect, the true reasons for behavior may not be part of the conscious process. In one study (Csiszentmihaly & Figurski, 1982) the

participants wore a beeper that sounded off some 7 -9 times a day. Each time the beeper sounded the respondents were asked to record their thoughts and moods that were subsequently content analyzed. From all these responses the investigators determined that only 8 percent of all responses were about the self. Since life is about survival it is not surprising that much more thought was given to work, but nevertheless it suggests that the self is not a favorite object of contemplation.

Self-awareness theory contains the idea that people focus attention on the self in order to evaluate behavior in terms of meeting internal standards and values (Carver, 2003; Duval & Silvia, 2002). Only the psychopath would spend no time in being self-conscious and trying to objectively evaluate the self. Bundy, the serial killer spent the very last moments of his life trying to rationalize his behavior attributing his deeds to pornography. Of course the opposite is also true, some people have rigid moral systems and spend much time in self-accusation and self-blame. Most of us fall in-between, and from time to time become aware of discrepancies between behavior and moral beliefs. At times such self-awareness can be very unpleasant and motivate improvement and changes in life (Fejfar & Hoyle, 2002; Mor & Winquist, 2002). When self-awareness becomes too unpleasant we seek escape. Is that the reason so many people spend a good part of their lives watching television (Moskalenko & Heine, 2002)? The popularity of soaps could be understood as a way of solving personal problems by identifying with characters outside the self. Some escape is necessary in a stressful world. It becomes non adaptive when it substitutes for real answers to the person's life and challenges.

At times escape takes the route of alcohol or drug abuse. When people drink to excess they can at least temporarily divert attention away from the self, although the day after may bring back unpleasant anxiety. The fact that so many people worldwide are involved in drug abuse is a testimony to how unpleasant self-awareness can be (Hull, Young, Jouriles, 1986). Religious devotion can also be a way to escape self-focus, and find forgiveness for not living up to moral standards. Like drug abuse, some religious focuses are self-destructive when the well-being of the self is totally ignored. What comes to mind are the suicide bombers who seek total escape to "paradise" in acts of self-destruction. At other times self-awareness can be pleasant. When you graduate from the university or professional school, or complete other significant achievements you may rightly

feel enhanced in your self-awareness (Silvia & Abele, 2002). Sometimes self-awareness can help us avoid moral pitfalls when we are tempted to ignore some moral prompting. So self-awareness can serve both positive as well as aversive roles in human psychology.

One problem with introspection is that it may not tell us the real reasons for our feelings since these may lie outside our awareness. (Wilson, 2002). You find yourself instantly attracted to someone, how do you explain such feelings to yourself? Is it purely physical stimuli, or is it something else? Have you discussed important issues and found yourself in agreement, and you believe the attraction is based on similarity? People at times feel an instant chemistry (called that because we have no other explanation), but the real reason for our feelings escapes self-awareness. Introspection may not be able to access the causes of many feelings because we are simply unaware of the reasons. Most people will come up with plausible explanations, but these may in fact be untrue or incomplete.

Growing up in our societies we all have causal theories about feelings and behavior. For example many people believe that mood is affected by the amount of sleep, whereas mood is in fact independent of preceding sleep (Niedenthal & Kitayama, 1994; Wegner, 2002). Our legal system gives women custody of children based on the common belief that they are the best custodians. Yet we know that women also commit infanticide, and child abuse. Often causal theories are simplifications or simply not true, and we can make incorrect judgments about our behavior or actions. Sometimes influences that are under the screen of awareness are the deciding factor in behavior. In one study of clothing preference people evaluated clothing of identical quality. Whereas their causal theories might promote the idea that choice was based on quality, the investigators showed that it was the position of the clothing on the display table that mattered. The clothing that was placed farther to the right was preferred (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Most people would intuitively reject that idea, but it was the causal factor, perhaps dictated by brain hemispheric dominance. In all, this research shows that we should use caution in accepting causes derived from introspection about our behavior. We may come up with very plausible reasons, but they may be incorrect, and unimportant in the final analysis.

8. Organizational functions of the Social self

Self-knowledge takes on many forms including the beliefs we have of ourselves,

our self-esteem, our memories, and especially in the west of what we think are distinctive attributes. Self-knowledge describes our social beliefs, our roles and obligations, and our relational beliefs that refer to our identity as part of families and community. Furthermore it describes our personal beliefs with respect to our traits, abilities and other attributes (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995). Self-knowledge performs primarily a constricting and narrowing influence on perceptions. We construe the current situation with information from previous history thereby overlooking what might be novel. Information and experiences are made to fit our preconceived ideas about the self. In general information that can be integrated into what we already know about ourselves, our schemas, is more easily recalled. This self-reference effect has been demonstrated in several studies (Klein & Kihlstrom, 1986; Klein & Loftus, 1988). So self-knowledge not only shapes what we are likely to remember, but makes recall more efficient (Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977).

8.1 Self-schemas: Structured cognitions about self-relevant concepts

What are the dimensions you use to think about important matters? Do you consider yourself an independent person? Do you want to do everything on your own rather than rely on assistance from parents or spouses? Are you hardnosed about immigrants in your country? Then you might think the country's future depends on how global migration is solved. Self-schemas is defined as our organized thinking about important matters that are readily available in memory.

If peace as a concept was an important dimension you would have a storehouse of memories and beliefs readily available to comment on the ever-growing conflicts in the world. Some of the beliefs might explain the causes of conflict as for example derived from greed, intolerance, or the desire to control oil resources. One schema might define the solution to conflict is to treat everyone equitably. For each relevant issue your preexisting knowledge is organized for readily available responses. When we possess schemas it allows us to quickly identify and recognize situations that are schema relevant (Kendzierski & Whitaker, 1997). We judge other's behavior and essence according to their similarity to our own personality. One study asked the respondents to rate themselves and twenty other people. The results showed that the dimensions the respondents found important in rating themselves were also employed in rating others. The execution of Saddam Hussein was a grim affair. However, you may have noted that he went to his death with great personal courage and dignity. If you value bravery in the face

of annihilation your opinion of Saddam Hussein might have changed somewhat, independent of your evaluation of his policies as a political leader. We tend to use self-knowledge in an egocentric fashion when evaluating others. If scholarship is important to you, you may apply strict standards in judging the scholastic work and ability of others (Dunning & Cohen, 1992).

We cannot attend to everything in the environment. We selectively attend to those situations that are most relevant to the self. Self-schemas allow us to access information quickly and respond efficiently (Markus, 1977). Self-schemas also are restrictive and prevent information from being evaluated if it is seen as inconsistent with what we already believe.

Most people display self-image bias (Lewicki, 1983). Again culture may play a role. In the west the self-bias exists, because the self is construed independently. Asian students, on the other hand, are more likely to say they are similar to others rather than others are similar to them. Therefore in Asian self-construal, the other person becomes the standard for comparison. In one study on being the center of attention (Cohen & Gunz, 2002) the researchers showed that self-knowledge among Asian people use the perspective derived from others. In comparing Asian students with those who were native to Canada they found that Canadians were more likely to assess the situation from their own independent perspective, whereas Asians took the perspective of other persons in describing similar situations.

An important property of self-schemas is the sense of stability that they confer on the self-concept. The feeling that we have that we are essentially the same person over time, that the core of the self remains the same (Caspi & Roberts, 2001). For example children who are identified as shy as toddlers still remain shy at age 8 (Kagan, 1989), and have problems with social interaction later in life (Caspi, Elder, & Bem, 1988). Whatever we are in early life is likely to remain over time as we behave consistent and selectively to our self-schemas. Consistence is true for functional and alas also for maladaptive behavior. We are likely to remember information that is consistent with early self-schemas and disregard disconfirming events. As we review the past, self-schemas are employed to confirm our present self-concept and we resist thinking about discrepant or novel information (Ross, 1989).

8.2 Self-regulation

An important aspect of self-schemas is the concept of the possible self. Possible

selves are our conceptions that propel us into the future in search of goals and achievements (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Some of us grow up thinking that we like a particular career. Envisioning ourselves as doctors, trade people, or mechanics leads us to the training required and sustains the motivation necessary to reach the goals. Those who have a vision of future possible selves work harder at accomplishing relevant tasks (Ruvolo & Markus, 1992). Self-schemas have obvious adaptive value. They not only allow us to quickly identify relevant situations and recall appropriate and effective behaviors from memory. They also guide our behavior as we think of what is possible in the future.

So the self serves regulatory functions determining people's choices, and their plans for the future (Baumeister, & Vohs, 2003; Carver & Scheier, 1998). We appear to be the only species capable of long-term planning. Plans for our educational goals, or for family related matters like acquiring an ideal home, requires a self capable of self-regulation. In self-regulation a finite amount of energy is available. If we spend much self-regulative energy during the day we have less left over at night. Is that why couples have more arguments after a long hard day at work? (Baumeister, & Hetherington, 1996; Vohs & Hetherington, 2000). Research shows that dieters are more likely to fail at night when they are tired. Previous smokers are more likely to take up the habit again after experiencing adversity, bulimics are more likely to binge eat after a long day of self-control. With only so much energy available self-control has limits. We all need rest periods to develop the energy necessary to achieve health related goals.

Our self-regulation is determined to some extent by the culture in which we were socialized (Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995). A study comparing Japanese with American college students demonstrated a cultural difference consistent with interdependent and independent societies. Typically American college students perceive of themselves in terms of personal traits. The independent self-construal emphasizes that which makes the person distinct. Self-regulation pertaining to personal achievement would rank high as an important trait in independent cultures. On the other hand Japanese students defined themselves much more in terms of social roles recognizing their relationship to family and society.

8.3 The stable versus the working self-concept

A stable concept is the sense of self-continuity from early memories to the present. However, some situations call for specific attributes that are part of a

temporary working self-concept. The citizen soldier may have a stable self-concept that includes a working career and family life. However, when he goes to war the situation requires different attributes that become part of a working or temporary self. This working self-concept may involve a willingness to engage in violent behavior guiding action while in the war zone. Sometimes behavior in the war zone may permanently change a person, and the temporary self becomes part of the stable self. Many members of the Armed Forces returned from the war in Vietnam with permanent scars affecting their relationships and trust in other people in their civilian life. The temporary self guides what goes in a specific situation, but may itself become part of the stable self (Ehrlinger & Dunning, 2003).

In less traumatic circumstances the working self-concept may operate on the periphery of the self, and when the individual returns to normal circumstances the stable self takes over (Nezlek & Plesko, 2001). In one study (Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, 2002) the investigators studied applicants to graduate school. The respondents were asked to complete self-esteem measures on days when they received acceptance or rejection notices from graduate school programs. For those respondents whose self-esteem depended a great deal on scholastic achievement acceptance to programs increased self-esteem significantly, whereas rejection decreased self-esteem. In one graduate program rejections and acceptances were noted on a comparative poster for all students applying for Ph.D. programs (KSL). A similar enhancement reaction occurred. Those who were accepted enhanced the self. Whose idea do you think it was? Probably those applicants who were very confident of acceptance and sought further evidence for self-enhancement in the eyes of fellow students!

9. Motivational properties of the self-concept

A major function of the self-concept is its relationship to motivation (Higgins, 1999; Sedikides & Showronski, 1993). What is it that causes us to make plans for the future? Our possible selves refer to our possibilities, what we can become or hope to be in the future (Cross & Markus, 1991; Markus & Nurius, 1986). The self-concept also includes social and cultural, and religious standards that we utilize in deciding on our behavior. Feelings of shame or guilt are associated with these aspects of the self (Higgins, 1987; 1999). We compare our actions not only to the actual self, who we believe we are, but also to the ideal self, what we should be including all our aspirations. The “ought” self also has motivating

properties which refers to the duties and obligations we feel from family and society, and whether we behave appropriately. These various aspects of the self have proven to have motivational properties both in terms of cognition as well as behavior (Shah & Higgins, 1991).

9.1 Discrepancies and motivation

When we observe discrepancies between the actual self and what we think we ought to be we often experience fear or anxiety (Boldero & Francis, 2000). Loss of self-esteem might be defined as a discrepancy between real and actual compared to the ideal or ought selves. The greater the discrepancy the more dejected the person feels (Higgins & Bargh, 1987; Moretti & Higgins, 1990). These effects arrive from what Freud would call the superego, the early socialization that incorporates parental standards into the self-concept. The ideal self has a special influence when warm and accepting parents raise children. Children, on the other hand who have been raised by more rejecting parents think of behavior primarily in terms of meeting standards and avoiding rejection (Manian, Strauman, & Denney, 1998).

In recalling scenes of embarrassment Asians saw it through the eyes of other persons rather than from the perspective of personal feelings. (Chau, Leu, & Nisbett, 2005). People raised in independent cultures are more likely to look to the ideal self for guidance in regulating behavior, and be motivated to reduce discrepancies. People who are raised in interdependent environments pay more attention to the demands made by family and society as expressed by the “ought self” concept (Lee, Acker, & Gardner, 2000). The route to well-being is to regulate behavior to reduce or eliminate discrepancies between these aspects of the self and the goals they pursue in life (Bianco, Higgins, Klem, 2003).

9.2 Motivated by consistent and accurate selves

We all experience a sense of the self that is stable from childhood through the varying stages of life. Perhaps consistency in the self-concept is partially a cultural need as our rationalized society expects consistency in behavior to plan life-sustaining activities. Without consistency, a factory could not plan a work program, without a sense of continuity in traits and abilities the individual could not plan for the future, and society would be unable to educate. We need to believe that there is something within us that is consistent over time (Swann, 1983).

The motivating properties of self-consistency can be observed in a study by Swann and Read (1981). The participants were given feedback that was either consistent or inconsistent with their self-conceptions. Results showed that the students spent more time studying feedback consistent with the self-concept than inconsistent information. The need for self-affirmation can also be observed in our selective behavior. We tend to interact only with those who confirm our self-concepts. If we have a high estimation of our scholarly abilities we probably make friends with other students who also think we are good students and affirm our self-concept (Katz & Beach, 2000). We remember information better that confirms our self-concept (Story, 1998), and holds consistent self-beliefs as members of groups (Chen, Chen, & Shaw, 2004). This search for self-affirmation is modified by self-esteem. People who possess high self-esteem are willing to entertain both positive and negative self-affirming information. Those with low self-esteem want mainly positive self-affirming information whether accurate or not (Bernichon, Cook, & Brown, 2003).

Having an accurate self-concept has obvious adaptive value. To make plans for the future and experiencing success requires a fairly accurate self-concept including realistic assessments of our traits and abilities. Many of the tasks we choose are based on self-assessment of aptitudes. As discussed later all people are motivated by a desire to save face and impress others, so we are likely to pick objectives closely related to what we think we can do (Trope, 1983).

9.3 Our Self-worth: Motivated by the desire to elevate self-esteem

Culture also affects self-esteem. Those living in independent cultures experience primarily ego-based emotions. Accomplishments are a source of personal pride. Those who live in interdependent cultures experience satisfaction or frustrations based on their connectedness to others. (Mesquita, 2001). Parents and their children are for example, connected intimately in the children's scholastic achievement. Self-esteem is likewise dependent on the interdependent form of self-construal. (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Yik, Bond, Paulhus, 1998; Diener & Diener, 1995). Social approval is a primary motivator in interdependent cultures, and a better predictor of life satisfactions. In independent cultures life satisfaction is more a function of individual emotions (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998).

Our self-esteem is a major dimension of our self-concept. Self-esteem is a global evaluative assessment we make of our worth. Most psychologists employ simple

surveys to assess self-esteem (e.g. Larsen, 1969). Those who have high self-esteem feel relatively good about their self-worth, those with low self-esteem feel some ambivalence, and a relatively few feel self-loathing. Trait self-esteem refers to consistent levels of self-esteem over time probably determined from early experiences with success or failure. Trait self-esteem is defined by self-conceptions of competence and efficacy in various areas of achievement. Trait self-esteem feelings remain consistent over time (Block & Robins, 1993).

We also experience momentary changes in self-esteem as a result of development or from the impact of significant events (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Male self-esteem tends to increase during adolescence, whereas female self-esteem falls during the same time (Block & Robins, 1993). At various times in our lives we may experience enhancing events that improve self-esteem. A large raise in salary or promotion at work may improve self-esteem. On the other hand we can also experience failure. If you find yourself competing against contemporaries with higher levels of ability the comparison may have negative consequences for your self-esteem (Brown, 1998; Marsh & Parker, 1984).

How comparisons are experienced depend on the relative centrality of the domain of achievement. Is the area of competition central to your self-worth or peripheral (Crocker & Park, 2003)? Professional achievement is central to many people's sense of self-worth. If achievement is appreciated and work is progressing generally in the right direction, self-esteem will enhance; otherwise the blows of misfortune will probably impact the self-esteem negatively (Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen (2002).

Central to a person's self-esteem is the human need to be included. There is probably no more serious punishment in society than solitary confinement. Many prisoners can endure other forms of torture and denigration, but to accept isolation is very difficult. Some researchers assert that self-esteem is simply an index measuring relative inclusion-exclusion (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). From an evolutionary perspective it is easy to understand the power of social approval. Those who obtain approval from significant others are more likely to survive and thrive. Approval seeking affects a variety of behaviors (Larsen, 1974a; Larsen, 1974b; Larsen, Martin, Ettinger, & Nelson, 1976; Larsen, 1976a). Those who feel excluded are likely to report low self-esteem. Even our changing feelings correspond to the approval by others (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002).

Self-esteem responds also to temporary conditions. Our moods change from time to time, and the reasons why are not always clear. Temporary mood swings affect self-esteem in either positive or negative directions (Brown, 1998). Even setbacks that have very little real meaning can temporarily reduce self-esteem. For example if your favorite athletic team loses an important game, self-esteem may decline (Hirt, Zillman, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992).

As noted self-esteem is closely related to the domains we consider most relevant to our self-concept. Most people derive self-esteem from selected human activities. For some self-esteem is based on competence in scholarship or career. For others self-esteem is built on athletic prowess. Yet other people think that success in family and human relationships is of greatest significance. It is really a question of what we value in life. What domains are significant to you, and have you experienced success or failure?

Crocker & Wolfe (2001); and Crocker & Park (2003) have proposed a theory of self-esteem based on domains of self-worth. Self-esteem rises or falls with experiences of success or failure in key areas. Societies and cultures will vary as to what domains are considered important. Independence is a significant value in Western societies and is related to achievement of economic independence and reaching career goals. In interdependent Asian cultures the respect of others and maintenance of successful relationships may be more of a central value. Self-worth is to some degree selected by cultural emphasis and values. Regardless of culture it is important that we do not base self-worth on one or few domains since failure will be less salient if we have many domains of interest and achievement. Failure can be devastating for those who seek achievement in a single domain since they have no fallback position for self-worth.

9.4 Cultural boundaries of self-esteem and self-enhancement

The preoccupation with self-esteem is largely a Western phenomenon. It derives from our cultural values focusing on the individual and personal distinctions. It seems ironic that the rugged individualist valued in the West is vulnerable to feelings of low self-esteem. Westerners do self-report higher levels of self-esteem as compared with interdependent peoples (Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). That finding however, may be attributed to the greater modesty of interdependent peoples, and the greater preoccupation with the self in Western societies. A great deal of energy is spent in Western societies trying to enhance the self, and also supporting the impression

management and face work of others to enhance their self-esteem. Americans and Canadians insist they have comparatively more positive qualities than others (Holmberg, Markus, Herzog, & Franks, 1997). The very nature of social interaction in the West, including but not limited to education, media effects, and socializing, encourages a preoccupation with self-esteem.

Being rewarded and praised for achievement is much more common in the West where people as noted seek distinctiveness, whereas in interdependent cultures people are motivated by common goals and self-improvement (Heine, 2005; Crocker & Park, 2004; Norenzayan & Heine, 2004). In Asian cultures self-criticism is common in the pursuit of social harmony and self-improvement. A student from the West who is invited to criticize himself may perceive that invitation as a threat to the self-concept and self-esteem. Cultural differences are rooted in either a preoccupation with self-esteem in the West, or self-improvement in interdependent societies.

Finally, we should keep in mind that cultural differences are abstractions. There are within societies more individual differences than can be found between cultures. Furthermore societies change over time. The individualism of Western societies is a product of recent centuries and the advancement of capitalist economies (Baumeister, 1987; Twenge, 2002). Each generation struggles with the issues related to adaptation, and in a broader sense values that lead to reproductive success. Globalization has produced values held in common by more and more people. In the new world order many countries accept the values of independence promoted in the West. Furthermore, there is evidence that many cultures are becoming more convergent in values and what is required for self-esteem (Heine & Lehman, 2003).

9.5 Preoccupation with self-enhancement

Since self-esteem in Western societies is largely based on independent egos and achievement based distinctions, most people are motivated to enhance self-esteem (Tesser, 1988). We like to see ourselves in the most favorable light possible given the constraints of reality. According to Tesser we accomplish this vicariously by reflection where we enhance ourselves by associating with those who have accomplished significant goals. The pride of parents in their children's achievements is of this type, as is associating with those of social status. Much effort in Western societies goes into convincing others of our value by relating to those who possess status.

According to Tesser we also seek to enhance by social comparison. Social comparison can be used either upward for achievement or downward to enhance our self-esteem. Even in failure one can compare downward for self-enhancement. One is reminded of some countries where students noted a university degree in their vita followed by the word "failed". Just the mere fact that a student entered a university program attributed higher status compared with those who never started!

On a more personal basis we select friends outside our most salient domains so we can always compare downward. Since these friends may perform well in other areas, the downward comparison can be in both directions. As a general rule we select friends we outperform in our salient domains, but who are talented in other areas. Self-esteem in competitive societies is based on this fundamental idea of ranking higher than someone else. In one study (Tesser, Campbell, & Smith, 1984) the researchers asked grade school children to identify their closest friends, their own most and least important domains or activities, and how good their friends were in these activities. As evidence of self-enhancing Tesser et al found that students rated their own performance as better in the salient areas, whereas they related their friends' performance as better in areas less self-relevant (the reflection process). In other words the students overestimated their own performance in self-relevant areas, and overestimated their friends' performance in other domains lending support to both social comparison and reflection processes.

Self-enhancement needs are important, and perhaps of overriding importance for most people (Sedikides, 1993). They are especially important when life has struck a blow in the important domain area. Being refused entrance to a favorite university may be very painful to the aspiring scholar. Threat or failure leads to self-enhancement efforts trying to shore up of self-esteem (Beauregard & Dunning, 1998; Krueger, 1998). Self-enhancement means that we evaluate ourselves more favorably than others (Suls, Lemos, & Stewart, 2002). Our efforts at enhancing self-esteem also affect the memory process. We remember the good and positive features about ourselves, and forget the negative (Sedikides & Green, 2000). We believe we are more altruistic than others (Epley & Dunning, 2000), we think we are happier than others, and less biased (Klar & Giladi, 1999; Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002).

There may be times when we acknowledge that we are less than perfect.

However, in our efforts to maintain self-esteem we tend to think that the negative in our performance is less important than the positive (Campbell, 1986; Greve & Wentura, 2003). Not surprisingly we are less likely to falsely enhance when we can get caught in our little self-enhancing lies. If we are poor students we are less likely to boast to our professors about our previous achievements, if we are poor lovers our partners will eventually know. When the truth can not be hidden permanently we are more likely to be modest in our self-aggrandizement (Armor & Taylor, 1998).

9.6 Self-enhancement and stress

The exaggerated self-conceptions produced by self-enhancement can encourage better mental and physical health (Taylor, Kemeny, Reede, Bower, & Grunewald, 2000). That illusions can have positive consequences runs counter to many ideas in psychology. From the perspective of existential psychology self-enhancement is a form of defensive neuroticism, and distorts the real world. Since neurotic behavior is associated with continuous anxiety and stress, self-enhancement should be maladaptive. In one study (Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage & McDowell, 2003) students were asked for their self-assessed personal traits like intelligence and physical attractiveness as compared to their peers. Participants who self-rated higher than their ratings of peers were considered self-enhancing. Later the participants performed tasks designed to create stress as manifested by higher heart rates and blood pressures measures. The results showed that the self-enhancing group had lower heart rates and blood pressure responses, and recovered to normal measurements more quickly. Self-enhancers also had lower cortisol levels than did the comparative group of non-enhancers. In short the self-enhancers had healthier responses, tended to be more optimistic, had feelings of personal control, and a supportive social group that all contributed to the lower cortisol levels. These experimental results support the contention that self-enhancement leads to healthier physiological and endocrine functions.

9.7 Threat and self-enhancement

When people are confronted with threats to self-worth they typically shore up self-worth by reaffirming in other unrelated attributes of the self (Steele, 1988; Aronson, Blanton, & Cooper, 1995; Koole, Smeets, van Knippenberg, & Dijksterhuis, 1999). Self-affirmation theory applies only to those respondents who have high self-esteem. In one study students high and low in self-esteem were led to believe they had either failed or succeeded on a test of intellectual ability.

Respondents who were high in self-esteem, but who had been led to believe they had failed, exaggerated their positive social qualities. Respondents with low self-esteem generalized their failure experience as one already consistent with what they believed about themselves. Since those with high self-esteem believe they have many other positive traits they immediately seek to reaffirm their strengths in an unrelated area after perceived threat (Dodgson & Wood, 1998). The healthy nature of self-affirmation can be observed by the fact that the respondents feel good about themselves in the aftermath, and are strong enough to entertain potential negative information about the self. (Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000).

There is no greater threat than that of personal annihilation. Terror management theory asserts that the threat of death leads people to seek ways to minimize or manage this vulnerability (Greenberg, Porteus, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1995). The threat of personal annihilation is kept in control by two mechanisms. First of all self-esteem helps the individual feel a valued person in a meaningful universe and this controls to some degree the threat of death. In the face of imminent death people have a need to reaffirm the importance of their lives, and the legacy they have created including assessments of meaningful work, and personal relationships.

Secondly, in a world-view that provides hope for the future, or at least makes some sense of the present assists in controlling threats to mortality. Conformity to cultural expectations and values is another means by which people control fear (Greenberg, Lieberman, Solomon, Greenberg, Arndt, & Simon, 1992). The familiar is soothing and allows the individual to see continuity even when personal existence is ending. At the same time when confronted with the fear of death, people also seek affiliation (Wisman & Koole, 2003). We can observe that need in the increasing popularity of the hospice movement. From anecdotal experiences (KSL) death threat is lowered when the patient is under the care of hospice, and the individual feels less lonely or isolated through the efforts of volunteers accompanying the patient on the last journey.

When people are scared by threats to mortality they are also more likely to act with aggression toward those who challenge their world-view (McGregor et al, 1998). Hostile reactions can be observed in the anger displayed by people who are related to soldiers serving the US army in Iraq or other theaters. The slogan "support the troops", flag waving, and shrill denunciations of war opponents, emerge most likely from the perceived threat to mortality to the loved one.

Nations mobilizing for war have known how to manipulate the threat of mortality in order to energize the war effort, and demonize the enemy. That story continues throughout the world today.

9.8 Group membership and false self-esteem

The German people after the First World War were a morally defeated people, on the battlefield, and in estimation of the international community. The great depression that followed created economic insecurity and a loss of faith in contemporary society. It was a perfect time for the great manipulators of history to gain power by appeals to false self-esteem and false pride. The Nazi's sought to restore false self-esteem by use of in-group symbols and by being willing to find scapegoats for social frustrations. Although the Nazi's appearance on the stage of history was extreme in destruction and victimization, fundamentally they were no different than any other genocidal group. The genocide in Rwanda and Darfur were caused by similar in-group identification and the demonization of adversaries. The concentration camp that the Palestinian people have lived in the past half a century is motivated by the similar fears that caused the victimization of the Jewish people by the Nazi's. We seem to have learned nothing from history and so repeat the crimes derived from in-group based false self-esteem.

In contemporary society the phenomenon of gang violence takes a similar path. Gang members typically come from poor and deprived environments ripe and ready for exploitation by misleaders. Typically gang membership is compensation for all that is missing in a young person's life. As a result self-esteem is derived from gang pride emphasized by the use of symbols and colors. The Bloods (red color) and the Crips (blue color) are common criminal gangs in the US. Typically gang members display an elevated sense of self-worth and grandiosity not supported by achievements or good works (Wink, 1991). The fact that gang members possess false self-esteem can be observed in their sensitivity to any perceived insult or denigration. Children are shot dead in the streets of the US for imagined insults to the colors of another gang, revealing the fundamental insecurity underlying gang enhancement.

In fact psychopaths possess the same grandiose sense of self-worth (Hare, 1993) and are responsible for a majority of violent crimes. Psychopathic criminals also have inflated views of self-worth combined with hypersensitivity to perceived threats or denigration. The murders and bullies emerging out of gang culture have no genuine self-esteem, but rather are narcissistic and arrogant individuals.

Is it a coincidence that members of the White prison gang “Aryan brotherhood” use Nazi symbols? This false sense of self-esteem is historically responsible for genocidal deeds whether slavery, modern forms of terrorism, or other forms of violent behavior (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). In fact all gangs of history, from those led by Hitler to the military fascists led by Pinochet, have in common grandiose feelings of superiority and arrogance and a deficit in real genuine self-esteem.

10. A sense of well-being: How do we reach that blessed state?

In traveling to other countries one can often observe the apparent sense of well-being expressed by people poor in material possessions. Yet in our modern world we are taught that consumption is the road to happiness, and having money to consume produces life satisfaction. However, even in modern capitalist societies money makes little difference to a sense of well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). People adjust to whatever the economic and social circumstances that are present within some degree of latitude. Of course, if people live with deprivation from poverty in the form of hunger or untreated health issues, well-being is impacted. Well-being is related to the quality of our life experiences (van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). The here and now is important to the enjoyment of life. Many people delay living to some point in the inaccessible future. They perpetually look for the joy of weekend, the vacation, the retirement, and eventually a place in heaven, but fail to enjoy the journey itself.

Realistic expectations play an important role in well-being. If expectations are too high, or if you do not have the resources necessary, frustration may follow. Being able to withdraw from unrealistic goals and move in a different direction is related to satisfaction (Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz, & Carver, 2003). A sense of well-being probably is a consequence of the person you are. Some people see a glass half empty; others see the wine bottle next to the glass is still nearly full. We can focus on aspects of life that are going well for us, or we can concentrate on reliving all our failure. Important to well-being is the pursuit of goals that reflect who we are, and which are consistent with basic human values.

Those who live in poverty in third world countries may never have the same degree of freedom that we possess, but that in and of itself does not prevent a meaningful life. Regardless of where we live in the World we all have basic needs for self-directed lives, for autonomy, for establishing competence in mastering the social environment, and having supportive social network (Kang, Shaver, Sue,

Min, & Jing, 2003). Being optimistic obviously matters, and maintaining positive emotions over time is associated with a greater sense of well-being (Updegraff, Gable, & Taylor, 2004).

10.1 The route to well-being: Complexity of attributes and self-efficacy

Central attributes have a significant affect on the sense of well-being. Some of us put all our achievement eggs into one or few baskets. For students whose self-esteem is bound up with academic performance and little else, a low grade may be devastating. Others look to achievements in a number of areas to sustain positive feelings about the self. Students can also have hobbies, special talents, a wide-ranging mind, may participate in athletics, and much more. As noted for respondents with complex self-concepts setbacks in any one area produce less vulnerability since they have other achievements to sustain positive feelings. On the other hand respondents with simple self-concepts are vulnerable when experiencing setbacks, as they have nothing else to sustain their self-concept (Linville, 1985). People with simple self-conceptions may feel good when successful, but are likely to be depressed in cases of failure (Showers & Ryff, 1996). Self-complexity produces a buffer against the inevitable setbacks and adversity of life. That is true for those holding complex positive self-concepts. Those with negative self-views are not going to feel better by having more complex negative self-concepts, since that just provides more reasons to stay depressed.

Having feelings of self-efficacy also creates a sense of well-being. The lack of self-efficacy is probably the reason that most dieters fail to stay with the program. Many people have little confidence that they can achieve the weight loss they want, and they then behave appropriate to these expectations of failure. Others have had experiences of success upon which to build self-efficacy. This is the time of year when one of the authors goes on an annual diet called the “keep your mouth shut diet”. Based on past success experiences there is confidence that this approach will work again and bring down weight to a more optimal level. There is no doubt that this success story will be repeated.

Self-efficacy probably grows out of early experiences with parents and teachers. Early success leads to stable self-conceptions of efficacy in a variety of areas. Self-efficacy produces a sense of personal control giving encouragement to a person's planning for the future. Feelings of self-efficacy also help in coping with possible setbacks by self-regulating and changing behavior (Pham, Taylor, & Seeman,

2001).

Self-efficacy reduces the stress of life and produces more optimism about the future. In the long run self-efficacy produces basic approach or avoidance orientations to life. Some develop a behavioral activation system based on positive happenings of the past. Others with negative experiences develop an inhibition system that prevents the individual from undertaking important challenges for lack of confidence (Gable, Reis, & Elliott, 2000). Some think of these basic approaches as stable personality traits. For example, extraversion is a behavioral activation based on social intelligence and success. On the other hand neuroticism is an extreme example of avoidance (Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000).

10.2 Positive illusions: Another road to well-being

Self-knowledge can affect our well-being. We need realistic self-conceptions to make good decisions and be successful. However, positive illusions about the self can be enhancing, and encourage and motivate behavior (Taylor & Brown, 1988; 1994). Many psychologists in humanistic and existential psychology (including Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow) have encouraged us to accept life as it is and believe that self-illusions are fundamental in neurotic behavior.

Contrary to existential views it appears that unrealistic positive self-concepts are in fact related to well-being. Most people think that positive traits describe them better than negative dimensions. In accepting negative self-descriptions we dilute the effect on the self-concept by asserting that we share these negative attributes with many others. We reason that the flaws we possess are not important since we share them with many people, whereas our positive traits are distinctive.

Those who are well adjusted tend to have an exaggerated sense of control over their lives. People often think that ritual will affect the outcome of life. On game shows one can hear the player “command” the game to perform in the winning direction when in fact the outcome is based on randomness. In a study on lottery tickets (Langer, 1975) the experimenter tried to buy back lottery tickets which all had the exact same probability of yielding a winning result. Those buyers who had chosen their lottery ticket based on some superstition, held out for a larger return when asked to sell the ticket prior to the drawing. On the other hand depressed people are more accurate in their appraisals of control, but are of course less happy (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989).

Self-enhancing perceptions are adaptive (Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003). Even if our optimism is not justified we feel better about the future based on positive illusions. Positive illusions give us feelings of control where in fact we have none. Believing in the heaven to come may be a positive illusion that nevertheless helps the believer cope with randomness and absurdity. Should we encourage people to have positive beliefs even if they are illusionary? Some research has supported the idea that optimism and false sense of control may help people feel better about themselves and feel happier (Regan, Snyder, & Kasson, 1995). Do we need a new psychology based on positive illusions since at least in some areas they are adaptive and not neurotic?

When we feel good about ourselves it has positive consequences for our social relationships. You must have noted that when you feel good about life you are more open and agreeable. Positive self-regard fosters relationships, within some limits (Taylor et al, 2003). However, people will get tired of the self-promoter, and self-aggrandizement can also lead to alienation. As in the cases of most other behavior, self-enhancement is an issue of balance. Have you ever met perpetually happy people so self-enhancing that you shake your head and tell yourself “that can’t be for real”?

People living in the West are likely to have unrealistic optimism about the future (Aspinwall & Brunhart, 1996; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Seligman, 1991). The optimism is personalized since they believe positive events will happen to them, but not necessarily to others. Unrealistic optimism emerges out of people’s egocentrism, where most people focus on their own outcomes and ignore happenings to others (Kruger & Burros, 2004).

In any event, having unrealistically positive self-perceptions lead to exaggerated sense of control and unrealistic optimism. Overall these illusions improve well-being by creating positive moods, healthier social relationships, and by promoting goal directed behavior. Few of us would start any journey, even an easy one, if we did not believe the outcome would be positive. In struggling against tyranny like in Burma where the state holds all the power, few people would work for reform or change unless they had the positive illusions that in the near future or historically their efforts would be crowned with success.

The ego-centrism can go too far (Colvin & Block, 1994). The narcissist typically endorses extreme self-enhancement illusions. However, self-promotion turns off

most people in the long run. Narcissists have the tendency to blow their own horn too long and people reject such behavior (Paulhus, 1998). Longitudinal studies have shown a further downside of positive illusions. Students who exaggerate their academic abilities eventually come up against reality and experience failure at school and loss of self-esteem (Robins, & Beer, 2001; Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995). So not all forms of positive illusions serve the function of well-being. It would appear that we need some positive illusions to become motivated to reach goals, but not so illusory that we experience constant failure. A balance must be created between the positive illusions and accurate self-concepts.

10.3 Culture and positive illusions

Cultures show significant differences in the endorsement of positive illusions. Westerners are more likely to endorse these when compared to Asian peoples (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). In considering academic abilities Japanese hold fewer positive illusions compared to Western students, and display less unrealistic optimism when compared to Canadian students (Heine & Lehman, 1995; Heine, Kitayama, Lehman, Takata, Ide, Leung, Matsumoto, 2002). In a study of 42 nations Sastry and Ross (1998) found that Asians were less likely to feel they had complete control over their lives, whereas people from Western societies displayed unrealistic optimism.

So from a cultural perspective we must conclude that positive self-delusions do not automatically lead to well-being. In independent societies well-being is a construct closely tied to positive views of self, control, and optimism. In Asian societies well-being is tied more to interdependent self-conceptions. The fulfillment of social roles and expectations is fundamental to self-construal in Asia, and satisfaction in these areas is more likely to bring a sense of well-being (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998).

11. Impression management: We are actors on the stage of life

Have you noticed that your behavior changes depending on the person with whom you converse and the objectives of the interaction? With your parents you act with a measure of love and social obligation, with teachers you are courteous trying to produce a favorable impression, with a baby you are natural and feel no need to impress. These varying responses can also be called situational conformity. Before interaction we have an awareness of the person, the situation and the objectives. We mold our behavior to make a correct and useful impression,

especially on those who have status and power. The psychopath is perhaps the most skillful in impression management. How did Bundy, the serial killer, create enough trust in young women, so they accompanied him to his car where they were overpowered. He did it by putting his arm in a sling, and looking helpless he appealed for help from sympathetic coeds.

In a broader way we want to be accepted by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). As noted there is psychologically nothing more painful than social exclusion. Some societies use that knowledge to torture prisoners whether at Guantanamo in Cuba, or in special penitentiaries in the US, where prisoners sit in a cage like cells for 23 hours a day with no social interaction. We can think of the death penalty as the ultimate form of social exclusion and torture that on the face is both cruel and rather unusual. As noted earlier in this chapter social exclusion is related to self-esteem. Researchers have also demonstrated that social exclusion is among the most painful and stressful conditions known to humanity (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; Twenge, Cantanese, & Baumeister, 2003). We self-monitor so that our behavior is acceptable and we will be included.

We can see by these examples that there is a significant difference between people's public and private selves. Much that we have discussed in this chapter pertains to the private self, the executive "I" as decision maker or regulator of behavior and how it is influenced by the social context. We operate in a social context of no small importance, and learn early that others have power to make life better or worse. The public self is devoted to impression management, where we try to convey an image and convince others that this image is our true self. We work hard to get other people to see us the way we want to be seen (Goffman, 1959; Knowles & Sibicky, 1990; Spencer, Fein, Zanna, & Olson, 2003).

We are actors on the stage of life concerned with self-presentation and the monitoring of our behavior. Impression management is about convincing others to believe in the "face" we are presenting. We try to control what others think of us because doing so has utility in terms of material, relational, and self-relevant advantages. Goffman was probably the first to systematically examine how we construct our identities in public. He maintained that much of our public behavior is governed by claims we make in an effort to maintain a positive face. The image we want to convey Goffman calls face (see also Baumeister, 1982; Brown, 1998; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Impression management follows a certain script we have memorized to be used whenever we interact with others. We also expect others to play their roles and to respect the identity we convey. This is a mutual support society since other people depend on us to honor the claims they make. To lose face is very painful, and in Asian cultures can be unbearable. We want other people to respect, not the private self, but the one we present to the world. We are all actors trying to be convincing to our audience.

11.1 Ingratiation

In the process of impression management we can employ several strategies (Jones & Pittman, 1982). The term “brownnosing” is used to describe those who try to ingratiate themselves to gain advantage with powerful others. Ingratiation is a frequently used strategy to make ourselves more likeable with the powerful (Gordon, 1996; Vonk, 2002). Nothing is more effective than sincerely meant praise in promoting liking relationships. On the other hand if the praise is for ulterior motives, and most of us can feel that, the ingratiation may backfire (Kauffman & Steiner, 1968).

11.2 Self-handicapping

Another strategy to protect face is self-handicapping. Our face is so important that we often engage in self-defeating behaviors to avoid losing face. In self-handicapping we set up excuses prior to any performance, so if we do poorly we have an excuse that exonerates the public self (Arkin & Oleson, 1998; Thill & Curry, 2000). Students may self-handicap prior to an important exam. Spending the night drinking with friends provides the alibi for poor test performance, and therefore does not reflect on the image created among fellow students. In one study (Berglas & Jones, 1978) students were offered a chance to either take a performance enhancing drug, or one that would impair test taking. The respondents were placed in one of two conditions. One group was led to believe that they were going to succeed on the test, the other group were led to believe that failure was likely. The participants who thought failure was likely preferred the performance-inhibiting drug even though that would result in poor test performance. From the point of view of self-handicapping, students would rather fail, but have a good alibi for failure, than take the chance for success, but have no excuse if they failed.

Self-handicapping can have serious consequences for health. Condoms have proven an effective preventive of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases,

yet from 30 to 65 percent of respondents reported that they were embarrassed when buying these health-promoting devices. Somehow buying condoms violates many people's self-presentations as perhaps non-sexual or at least not promiscuous. In this day of increasing skin cancer many continue to sunbathe to excess to meet a self-presentation of beauty and ironically of health. Social approval continues as a basic motivation for impression management (Leary & Jones, 1993).

Some self-handicapping is not so obvious. We may simply prepare within ourselves ready-made excuses for poor performance. We know the material, in fact we feel that we are experts, but we attribute poor performance on tests as due to test anxiety, headaches or being in a bad mood on the day of performance. In the process of self-handicapping we may become self-fulfilling prophecies and come to believe in our excuses. Self-handicappers may become permanent poor performers and fail to establish the parameters for a successful life. It is ironic that the concern underlying self-handicapping, i.e., to be liked for the face being conveyed, may in fact have opposite results. Most people see through the charade and do not like those who spend their efforts at self-handicapping rather than working (Hirt, McCrea, & Boris, 2003).

11.3 Self-promotion

Impression management is all about making a "good" impression (Schlenker, 1980). Some people use the direct route and self-promote, never tiring in telling others of their many and varied accomplishments. The self-promoter is primarily interested in other people's perceptions of their competence (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Self-promotion depends on the norms of social interaction. In athletic competition a norm of modesty prevails. Therefore it is not in good form to boast of one's own performance, but rather attribute success to the efforts of teammates, coaches, and fans. Normative modesty works best when it is false, and the athlete has cause to boast. Then modesty is a strategy of positive impression management (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989).

Other forms of self-promotion are vicarious. We like to enjoy "the reflected glory of others". By associating with successful others we obtain positive associations (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989). Oregon State University had a terrible record in football across many decades. During that time few fans attended the games or wore clothing identifying with the team. That all changed when a new coach created a team with a winning record. Now thousands of cars approach the city on

game day, with banners, and team symbols. Vicarious self-promotion contributes to positive impressions associated with winning and status, at least in the western world.

11.4 Private versus public self-consciousness

The aforementioned discussion supports the difference between a public self (known to others) and a private self (known only to the self), (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Being publicly self-conscious encourages people to engage in face saving and impression management. The ironic aspect about public self-consciousness is that nearly everyone is conscious of his or her audience and painfully aware that others are observing. However, since everyone is focused on the affect of the audience there is really little time left over to actually observe others. A lot of face saving and impression management efforts are wasted because while we are aware of others the focus is on the effect internally. There are individual differences. Those with fragile egos are overly concerned about what others might think about them (again a wasted effort). Insecure people tend to think of themselves in terms of social popularity and approval (Fenigstein, 1984). In public self-consciousness awareness is directed toward what others think, however since everyone shares that attribute, the focus is internally on the effects of the audience and people really do not observe others. Then why be publicly self-conscious?

Some people have private self-consciousness and a greater awareness of internal feelings and thoughts. Those with a private self tend to think of themselves more in terms of their own independent thoughts and feelings. Those with private self-consciousness care little about what others think, but are a rare breed. Due to the long dependency period of humans beings, and the nature of the social self formed by social interactions, private self-consciousness is not only rare, but probably also affected by what others think.

Since we want to be accepted we spend energy and time on self-monitoring (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Most people want to be socially acceptable and therefore monitor behavior to see if they fit the requirements of the situation. People high in self-monitoring are the true actors on the stage of life. They are situational conformist, switching behavior as required from one situation to the next. Low monitors are more likely to respond to internal impulses or demands, and are less dependent on the social context. Is monitoring adaptive? In one study (Snyder, 1974) patients in a mental hospital scored low on self-monitoring. That

finding suggests that to cope effectively with life requires at least some awareness of surroundings and the social demands for appropriate behavior.

11.5 Cultural differences in impression management

In all cultures the social self emerges from social interactions and is formed by the socialization of varying social values. The fundamental difference in cultural values as noted previously is the predominant emphasis on independence in Western cultures, and interdependence in Asian and some other developing societies. The term “saving face” has been associated with Asian cultures and reflects a special sensitivity in maintaining face in these societies. To lose face is to lose identity for interdependent people. Appearance is of great importance. For example, if it is important to have many wedding guests, and if one has an insufficient number of friends attending, one can rent guests (Jordan & Sullivan, 1995). If there are insufficient lamenters at a funeral one can hire professional lamenters to produce appropriate grief display.

In Asian cultures, impression management concerns the measuring up to social roles and expectations whereas in the West there is a greater desire for individual enhancement (Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003). In fact self-enhancement is ubiquitous in all Western societies while relatively uncommon in interdependent cultures. The various terms discussed in this chapter like self-consciousness and self-regulation take different forms depending on culture (Simon, Pantaleo, & Mummedy, 1995). Yet these cultural differences must be taken with a grain of salt. Culture may account for small amounts of the behavioral variance, and societies are changing as the world is becoming more convergent. At the same time if we want to improve intercultural communications we must have some awareness of cultural values.

Summary

This chapter discusses several dimensions of the social self, self-knowledge and self-esteem. Self-awareness starts at an early age, perhaps as early as nine months, and certainly by age two the child recognizes the self as distinct. Over time we accumulate knowledge about the self from experiences with family, school, and culture. As our interactions become more complex, a belief system about the self emerges, and along with that an understanding of our more complex attributes. Self-esteem is our judgment of personal morality, and the satisfaction with our performance relative to ideal and ought selves. People who are low in self-esteem need constant approval and reaffirmation. High self-esteem

is functional in setting goals and persisting in our goal directed behaviors. Those with low self-esteem are more pessimistic and do not believe they have self-efficacy.

The building blocks of the self point to five basic traits as being universal: namely conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The research literature supports the heritability of personality traits. We use these traits in judging others and ourselves. Since the traits are understood everywhere they must have a biological evolutionary basis growing out of needs to adapt and survive. The heritability of traits is supported by studies of fraternal and identical twins. Also, traits identified early in children, like shyness, tend to have lifelong consequences. Neuroticism is associated with subjective stress, and on the opposite side extraversion is associated with the presence of the neurotransmitter Dopamine. It is impossible to separate the self from biological inheritance. Recent research points to the complex interaction between genetic inheritance and specific environments in producing predictable behavior. Perhaps some traits like neuroticism were adaptable in early human history in the struggle for survival, but are non-adaptable now in our complex society.

Scientists and philosophers have long discussed the nature of the self. As science has progressed we understand more and more the so-called “easy” problem that links thought to brain function. The “hard” problem is trying to understand the “knower” the subjective experience that someone is in charge, an executive “I” or decider. Why does it feel like we have a conscious process, and how does that subjective experience emerge from neural computations in the brain? When scientists use MRI’s they can practically map thought processes in the brain, but there is no convincing evidence of an ethereal soul. Is the “knower” nothing but an illusion required by the information overload in the brain, and the need to evaluate stimuli? Can the knower be understood solely as brain activity? Certainly believing in a soul construct has not supported moral behavior as is evidenced by all human history. The hard problem remains and may never be solved. All we can say with certainty is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The development of the social self is produced by the consistent reactions of socialization agents. These reactions influence the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem. It is the consistent treatment by early socialization agents such as family that is the basis of what we believe about ourselves and that knowledge guides our behavior for the rest of our lives. The family is central in the creation

of the possible self, the self of the future. Other factors that influence the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem are birth order and group memberships. Birth order has an effect as children learn to occupy various niches in the family that are functional and rewarding. Group memberships are also a key to understanding the self because groups socialize values that have motivational significance. Research has shown that even nonsensical groups may have profound effects on decisions and history shows that group categorization itself is responsible for much of the mayhem in the world. Minorities for example have to deal with special challenges as they cope with mainstream cultures. Although in general, strong ethnic identity combined with positive attitudes toward the larger society is associated with high self-esteem.

Culture is a major source of the self-concept. The main differences discussed in this chapter and in what follows are the reliable differences found between interdependent and independent societies introduced in chapter 1. For the interdependent societies of Asia and elsewhere, the social context of family and society matters greatly in the development of the self-concept. The independent societies of North American and Europe have more independent self-construal where the self is seen as autonomous, distinct, and separate from others. Whether we achieve for personal reasons or for group goals is to some extent determined by culture. One's culture might also affect the choice of career; and whether we seek to enhance the self or society. In independent societies self-esteem is ego based, whereas in interdependent cultures it is more related to family and social approval. As always we must remember that cultural differences are abstractions, that people differ within cultural models, and that the world is becoming more convergent.

Gender plays, along with family, groups and culture, a vital role in development of the self-concept. All cultures treat males and females differentially with lifelong consequences. Women become more interdependent and connected to intimate relationships. Men are more affected by larger social groupings. Socialization through the efforts of families, society, and educational processes produce these predictable differences. Gender differences probably evolved early in human history in response to survival demands that required role specialization. A few theories have been discussed in this chapter.

Social comparison theory asserts that we learn about ourselves by comparing our behavior to that of others. We enhance ourselves when we compare downward,

and inspire ourselves for achievement when comparing ourselves to high achieving models. At times, e.g. when facing a crisis or in response to uncertainty, we compare in order to bond with other people.

Self-perception theory suggests that we derive the meaning of emotions from self-observation of our own behavior. At times we meet with novel situations or the unfamiliar and do not know what we are supposed to feel. In these cases our objective behavior becomes the guide for understanding our emotions. We attribute meaning by ascribing the cause for our feelings to either the situation or to personal volition. Self-perception theory has been applied to education, and supports the importance of intrinsic motivation in producing lasting learning. Schacter used self-perception theory in his two-factor model of emotion. He states that people note their internal physiological reactions to stimuli and then look in the environment for a plausible cause to explain these feelings. This has been demonstrated in research that showed that emotional labels may be arbitrary and can be manipulated. For example, happiness or anger can be attributed from the same physiological reactions depending on environmental factors. Misattribution of arousal is possible as more than one source can explain what we feel. Research shows that misattribution for arousal can also easily be manipulated. In relation to this cognitive appraisal theories point out that sometimes we experience emotions after we think about and understand the situation. The meaning of the situation, the good or bad it implies for our well-being brings on emotions after we have thought about these consequences.

We can also learn about the self-concept by introspection although introspection is not reliable. Most people spend little time thinking about themselves because it is, at times painful, especially if we are aware of shortcomings in meeting ideal or ought selves. We seek escape in drugs, excessive television viewing, or dogmatic religion that tells us all we need to know. Also, introspection may not tell us the real reasons for our feelings as we may rely on causal theories derived from society that offer plausible but false causes.

A major organizational function of the self is the constricting and narrowing of our perceptions. Research shows that the self affects memory, as recall of material is more efficient if related to self-relevant schemas. Self-schemas refer to the basic dimensions we employ in cognizing about the self, it is our organized thinking about important self-relevant dimensions. Self-schemas are readily available in memory, and are a fundamental organizing tool. We develop self-

schemas because we cannot attend to everything, and therefore focus selectively on information considered most relevant. At the same time self-schemas restrict information by removing from awareness information that is inconsistent from that which we already believe. Self-schemas are stable over time, precisely because we act consistently and selectively to new information.

A major function of self-schemas is self-regulation. We think about the future and envision a possible self, what we can become, and this motivates our planning and behavior. The self serves regulatory functions in determining plans and choices for creating the future that we expect and want. It is important to keep in mind that energy for self-regulation is finite. This fact makes us vulnerable when trying to stay on diets or refrain from taking up bad habits once discarded. The stable self provides a sense of continuity throughout the lifespan. At times we are faced with novel situations like soldiers in wartime, and develop working temporary selves to cope with demands. Sadly, these temporary working self-concepts can become part of the permanent self when the behavior varies widely from the stable self, and the situation is traumatic and powerful in its effects.

The self has motivational properties. Our current behavior is determined by our plans for the future and our possible selves. Possible selves also include religious and cultural standards, and are often associated with feelings of guilt and shame. The ideal self refers to our aspirations in life, whereas our ought self describes our obligations and duties. Discrepancies between ideal and ought and what is real causes anxiety, and produces for some the motivation necessary to change. Most alcoholics feel the discrepancy eventually, and many seek help.

In judging others we use our self-image bias. Whether we accept others is related to how similar others are to ourselves. Culture plays here a role as well. For example in the West others are judged according to criteria of the independent self where the ideal self plays a primary role. In interdependent cultures others become standards for judgment, and the ought self including obligations and duties is the primary evaluative tool.

We are motivated by consistent and accurate self-conceptions. Especially feedback that is consistent with our self-conceptions is motivating. We seek primarily self-affirmation in our interactions with others and this in fact influences our choice of friends. We select those friends who will confirm our self-concepts. This selection is to some degree modified by self-esteem: Persons with high self-

esteem are more likely to be receptive to both negative and positive self-confirming information than persons with low self-esteem. An accurate self-concept is adaptive since plans and success in the future depend on accurate self-assessments.

Most people are motivated to enhance a sense of self-worth. There are components of self-esteem that remain consistent as a personality trait throughout life. Momentary changes in self-esteem, however, may occur from developmental issues and as a consequence of significant events. A central issue in the need for self-esteem is the desire to be accepted and included. Isolation is therefore extremely painful, as penologists know. This preoccupation with approval derives from obvious social and evolutionary advantages. Our self-esteem may rise or fall with experience in domains key to the self. In turn culture determines to some extent what areas are considered salient domains. Research shows that self-esteem is more functional if based on more than one or a few domains. With many domains we can control the inevitable setbacks that life hands us.

Preoccupation with self-esteem is primarily a Western phenomenon. It is derived from the cultural focus on independence and personal distinctions. That Western respondents self-report higher levels of self-esteem, may be attributed to the greater modesty of interdependent peoples. Being rewarded or praised for achievement is more common in the West, whereas in interdependent cultures people are more motivated by common goals and self-improvement. Cultural differences in self-esteem are abstractions as again there are differences within cultures, and globalization is encouraging convergence in values.

False self-esteem is aggrandizement based on group memberships where the group operates by the scapegoating and demonization of outsiders. Gang violence is caused by false aggrandizement as compensation for all that is missing in the gang member's life. Gang member's display elevated self-esteem not justified by accomplishments or good works. Their fundamental insecurity is revealed by their sensitivity to perceived insults. Psychopaths possess grandiose conceptions of self-worth, but no genuine self-esteem.

The preoccupation with enhancement influences the way in which we associate with others. It leads to comparison between the self and the other for advantages looking downward or enjoying the reflected glory of the achievements of those

with whom we associate. Friendships are based on the need for enhancement. When we select our friends we ensure that we can compare downward in most salient domains. In Western cultures self-enhancement is of overriding importance, especially when we are threatened by failure. In general most people believe that their positive traits are more important than their negative attributes. Self-enhancement leads, in fact, to better mental health, and better physiological and endocrine functions.

When the self-concept is threatened we shore up self-worth by reaffirming in other unrelated attributes of the self. For example, there is no greater threat than mortality. We control this essential threat through self-esteem, we assert that our lives are worthwhile and we rely on a worldview that makes life meaningful. When people are threatened by mortality they are easily manipulated and provoked to aggression. Threat to world-views or to conventional society undermines the cultural meanings that controls death anxiety.

In a complex world how do we find a path to well-being? In Western societies people have been convinced that consumption is the road to follow. However, well-being is related to the quality of life, to the journey of life, and to realistic expectations. Furthermore, our personality also matters. For instance, for some people a glass is half empty, for others the glass is half full and next to a plentiful bottle. It is important to pursue self-relevant goals that reflect that which we value in life. Regardless of cultural differences we all have basic human needs for autonomy, for competence to deal with challenges, and for a supportive social network.

Research shows that a complexity of attributes and self-efficacy is necessary for well-being. Respondents who possess more complex self-concepts are not overcome when facing a setback in a singular dimension. Self-efficacy is the feeling of "can do", that we have the necessary competence to succeed. Self-efficacy grows out of early experiences with parents and educators. Our early success reduces experienced stress in life. Positive illusions refer to exaggerated optimism and sense of control in life. The well-adjusted often display positive illusions that can enhance, encourage, and motivate behavior. Those with positive illusions are happier and have better social relationships than the depressed that have more realistic conceptions. People in the West are especially likely to display unrealistic optimism about the future. The downside of positive illusions is that at times we must face unpleasant reality. Positive illusions are more likely endorsed

in Western societies. Well-being in interdependent cultures is more related to fulfillment of roles and social expectations.

Impression management suggests that people are actors on the stage of life. Most people mold their behavior according to situational demands, we are chameleons according to need. Psychopaths are especially skilled at impression management. Since we all want to be accepted we work hard to convince others that our self-presentation is true. We encourage others to believe in our public face. Ingratiation is a form of impression management where we try to make ourselves more likeable to the powerful through flattery. Self-handicapping promotes face saving by engaging in self-defeating behaviors prior to performance. Sometimes people take foolish chances with health in order to preserve their face and image. Self-promotion is a more direct path of impression management. We seek to impress others of our competence, and our associations with others of status and power. It is primarily the publicly self-conscious who engage in impression management. People with private self-consciousness are concerned with independent thoughts and feelings. The social self emerges from social interaction in all cultures. The self-concept is therefore a consequence of cultural values. Saving face is of particular importance to Asian cultures. Central to these societies is the concern about roles and expectations, whereas people in the West are more concerned about individual enhancement.