

The Self

- I. Definition
 - A. A symbol using individual who can reflect in her or his own behavior
- II. The origins of the self
 - A. Mead and Development of the Self
 - B. James and the Self as a process of identification
- III. Mead
 - A. We are constantly interacting through symbols
 - B. We are constantly reacting to the symbols others send us as well
 - 1) Communicating, language
 - C. Stages of Self Development:
 - 1) **Preparatory stage:** occurs before language has been learned, infant (18 months or less), uses symbols but only imitating
 - a) Learn self exists with red dot mirror thing
 - 2) **Play stage:** self emerges as language is learned, pre-school age, kids start to play make believe, take on the role of others, but only one role at a time
 - 3) **Game stage:** can assimilate all roles at one time, knows how they fit together to define "me"
- IV. James and the Self as a process of identification
 - A. Biggest concern was the emotional identification and the concept of "me"
 - B. How do we emotionally identify with something?
 - 1) **Spiritual me:** non-tangible, how we think/feel, motives, personality traits
 - 2) **Social me:** how others see you, who we are to other people
 - 3) **Material me:** possession, parts of body
- V. Self as a knowledge Structure
 - A. The **Twenty Statement Test** developed by Kuhn and McPartland in 1954: Had people answer the "I am..." 20 times in efforts to determine the definition of the self.
 - 1) Statements into **Four Main Categories of Self-descriptors**
 - a) Physical (blonde)
 - b) Social (daughter) Most were social at first, in Asia this is still true
 - c) Attributive (happy) Long term and short term, now most are attributive
 - d) Global (human)

- e) In the 1950's the majority of Americans were focused on social descriptors, by the late 1970's most were attributive or physical
- 2) Cultural construction of self-concept
 - a) Self-concept is culturally constructed (like a folder, any info about the self goes in) and always changing
 - b) Individualist v. Collective cultures
 - In individualist cultures, what's important in defining the self is the self (attributive self-descriptors)
 - For collectivist cultures, others are important when defining the self (social self-descriptors)
- B. Self-schemas
 - 1) **Self-schema** is an organized system of beliefs (part of self-concept)
 - a) to be **aschematic** is to have no schema
 - b) If you have a schema then you can attach to things easier, and make faster decisions about the situation
 - c) Markus: People who had a schema for their gender made decisions more quickly (when asked questions about themselves) than those who did not- schema is a short cut
- C. **Self-esteem** is the evaluative portion of self-concept
- D. **Spontaneous self-concept**
 - 1) Suddenly learn something about yourself (maybe in a different situation that brings it out)
- E. Social identities
 - 1) Group performance and social identification: **Ingroups** (us) vs. **Outgroups** (them)
 - a) **Outgroup homogeneity**: everybody in the out group are fairly alike
 - b) **Ingroup**: members of your group seems unique
 - Always changing: if your ingroup is successful, they are part of your identity
BIRGing: Basking in Reflected Glory
 - If the ingroup fails, we disown them and distance ourselves from them, **CORFing**: Cutting Off Reflected Failure
 - o Example: Cubs win, you say, "We won!" = BIRGing, Our son
 - o They lose, you say, "They suck!" = CORFing, Your son

- c) Helps with self-esteem
- 2) Ethnic identity of minority groups (Clark and Clark)
 - a) you cannot cut yourself off from your ethnic identity

VI. Clark and Clark

- A. Unexamined ethnic identity can breed **self-hatred**. Not being aware of whom you are and interpreting the messages of others can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies—internalizing messages about your group.
- B. If you don't examine your ethnic identity, you incorporate what everyone else thinks of it into your life
- C. Results: lower self-esteem for you and your group.
- D. Stages:
 - 1) Unexamined Ethnic identity
 - 2) Ethnic identity search- often sparked by some incident
 - 3) Achieved ethnic identity- comfortable accepting/rejecting info about your culture
- E. They did a study about Racial Doll Preference
 - 1) African American girls interviewed about playing with black and white dolls by a black person
 - 2) After racial recognition in the 1970's more liked the black dolls
 - 3) Many didn't want to play with the black doll in the 1930's when forced to.

VII. Self as a Target of Awareness and contemplation

- A. **Self-Awareness** (public vs. private)
 - 1) **Self-consciousness:** habitual self-awareness(aware that you are being seen)
- B. **Private Self-Awareness:** temporarily state of being aware of private self-aspects
 - 1) *Intensified feelings
 - 2) *Clarification of knowledge
 - 3) *Adherence to Personal Standards (aware of your feelings)
- C. **Public Self-Awareness:** being aware of public aspects(aware that other people are aware of you)
 - 1) Stick to social standards of behavior- when you know others are around
 - 2) Evaluation apprehension (get nervous; think others are judging you) when you notice someone is there whom you didn't think was there
 - 3) Momentary loss of self-esteem

D. **Self-Consciousness:** like self-awareness, except as a psychological trait, longstanding

- 1) **Private:** more likely to have behavior match personal standards as well as others expectations of them
 - a) *Intensified feelings
 - b) *Clarification of knowledge
 - c) *Adherence to Personal Standards (aware of your feelings)
 - d) Less likely to get sick because they are so aware of how they feel and act on precautions to prevent illness
 - e) Can't escape this awareness
 - f) Failing test, go to drinking experiment, and those with high self-consciousness tended to drink more to escape
- 2) **Public:** much more concerned with what others think of them and are more likely to judge a book by its cover
 - a) Paranoid
 - b) Teenagers feel like everyone is watching them

E. Motivations of the Self

- 1) **Self-enhancement or self-verification** (can be conflicting with those who have low self-esteem)
 - a) Hot: Some say we seek good information to enhance ourselves (Self enhancement)
 - b) Cold: Others say we seek good information to verify what we already know (Self verification)
 - c) **Self-enhancement:** (hot approach) people look for things to make them feel good
 - d) **Self-verification:** (cold approach) want to hear what matches with your thoughts (verifying your thoughts)
 - e) Always seeking compliments, for things that enhance ourselves
 - f) Seeking things that verify how we actually feel
 - g) Studies show more people like verification rather than enhancement
- 2) Higher Self-esteem and higher risk taking
 - a) People with lower self-esteem take less risks

F. Self-evaluation maintenance in social relationships (social comparison)

- 1) **Self-evaluation:** learn who we are when we compare ourselves to others
- 2) Self-esteem drops when compared to better competition all the time

- 3) **Reference group:** the group we reference ourselves too
- 4) Comparing up or down to certain groups in attempt to satisfy the self.
 - a) Upward comparison > low self-esteem
 - b) Downward comparison > high self-esteem
 - c) Downward comparison: comparing yourself to other people who are lower than yourself (changing your reference group)
- 5) **Self-affirmation:** Something you say to yourself to make yourself feel better about yourself

G. **Self-Regulation**

- 1) Real self (what you are) vs. ideal self (what you want to be): dejection related emotions
- 2) Real self vs “ought self” (should do): agitation and anxious related emotions that can result in either depression or anxiety
- 3) When under stress; hard to self-regulate

H. Regulation often means you let go in another area

- 1) (EX: study hard—reward—go shopping)

VIII. Presentation of the Self to Others

A. **Strategic vs. authentic self-presentations** (tell some people things and not others)

- 1) How we let out the info we have about ourselves.
- 2) Filter what we tell people

B. **Self- presentation failure** (embarrassing situation you can't get out of)

- 1) Something embarrassing happens to you. You first try to make excuses and when that fails you then try to enlist others into saving your self-esteem
- 2) Sympathy
- 3) Valid non-dwelling reasonable Excuse

C. **Self-handicapping** (when we don't want to face reality; do a behavior that sabotages it)

- 1) If you didn't do well on a test then you can say well I didn't study, or if you did well then you can be like, and I didn't **even** study!
- 2) Do something else that ruins performance later, therefore putting blame on other things and not yourself
- 3) Self- Sabotage

D. **Strategic self-presentations** (promotion of yourself)

- 1) Exemplification: full of integrity (great person)

- 2) Modesty: under representing yourself
- 3) Intimidation: some sort of a threat to look more powerful
- 4) Supplication: advertise weakness to get help; want people to feel sorry for you
- 5) Ingratiation: flattery will get you everywhere

E. Self-monitoring

- 1) tendency to use cues from others presentations for your own presentation (give people what they want to see)
- 2) Low- guided by attitudes and beliefs (not good actors), Guided by one's beliefs, don't care what other people think
- 3) High- actors/psychologists-like to read others behaviors and act in accordance to that behavior and who are very concerned about what people think, can alter one's behavior to the situation, give people what they want
- 4) Self-monitor handout
 - a) By Mark Snider
 - b) Honesty from a low self-monitor
 - c) Intermediate monitors vary on the situation