

## **Week 2**

### **Basshametal 2008 chapter 1**

*“Logical thinking and psychology: non-rational forms of persuasion & barriers to critical thinking”*

#### Critical Thinking Standards

- **Clarity** – maximum clarity of language and thought
- **Precision** – to the point and not confusing
- **Accuracy** – passion for accurate and timely information
- **Relevance** -
- **Consistency**
- **Correctness**
- **Completeness**
- **Fairness**

#### Barriers to Critical Thinking

lack of relevant background information

- **poor reading skills**
- **bias**
- **prejudice**
- **superstition**
- **egocentrism (self-centered thinking)**
- **sociocentrism (group-centered thinking)**
- **peer pressure**
- **conformism**
- **provincialism**
- **narrow-mindedness**
- **close-mindedness**
- **distrust in reason**
- **relativistic thinking**
- **stereotyping**
- **unwarranted assumptions**
- **scapegoating**
- **rationalization**
- **denial**
- **wishful thinking**
- **short-term thinking**
- **selective perception**
- **selective memory**
- **overpowering emotions**
- **self-deception**
- **face-saving**
- **fear of change**

### Egocentrism

the tendency to see reality as centered on oneself. Egocentrics are selfish, self-absorbed people who view their interests, ideas, and values as superior to everyone else's.

- There are two common forms;
- 1. **Self-interested thinking** - the tendency to accept and defend beliefs that harmonize with one's self-interest
- 2. **Self-serving bias** - the tendency to overrate oneself-to see oneself as better in some respect than one actually is. "know-it-all"

### Sociocentrism

group-centered thinking. Just as egocentrism can hinder rational thinking by focusing excessively on the self, so sociocentrism can hinder rational thinking by focusing excessively on the group.

- There are two types
- 1. **Group bias** - the tendency to see one's own group (nation, tribe, sect, peer group, and the like) as being inherently better than others.
- 2. **Conformism** - our tendency to follow the crowd-that is, to conform (often unthinkingly) to authority or to group standards of conduct and belief.

### Unwarranted Assumptions

An assumption is something we take for granted, something we believe to be true without any proof or conclusive evidence. assumptions often prevent our seeing things clearly. The most common type of unwarranted assumptions are **stereotypes**

### Stereotypes

When we form an opinion of someone that is based not on his or her individual qualities but, rather, on his or her membership in a particular group, we are assuming that all or virtually all members of that group are alike.

- stereotypes are arrived at through a process known as *hasty generalization*, in which one draws a conclusion about a large class of things (in this case, people) from a small sample.

### Relativism

The view that truth is a matter of opinion

There are two forms of relativism

- **Subjectivism** - the view that truth is a matter of individual opinion. whatever an individual believes is true, is true for that person, and there is no such thing as "objective" or "absolute" truth, i.e., truth that exists independent of what anyone believes.
- **Cultural relativism** - view that truth is matter of social or cultural opinion. What is true for person A is what person A's culture or society believes is true.
  - **Example:** Drinking wine is widely considered to be wrong in Iran but is not generally considered to be wrong in France. To cultural relativism, therefore, drinking wine is immoral in Iran but is morally permissible in France.
- **Moral Subjectivism** - what is morally right and good for an individual, A, is whatever A believes is morally right and good.
  - **Example:** Thus, if Andy believes that premarital sex is always wrong, and Jennifer believes that it is not always wrong, according to moral subjectivism premarital sex is always wrong for Andy and is not always wrong for Jennifer.

- **Cultural moral relativism** - the view that what is morally right and good for an individual, A, is whatever A's society or culture believes is morally right and good. People find cultural moral relativism so attractive because of the nature of moral disagreement, and the value of tolerance.
  - **Example:** Thus, according to cultural moral relativism, if culture A believes that polygamy is wrong, and culture B believes that polygamy is right, then polygamy is wrong for culture A and right for culture B.

Wishful thinking

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