

Politics and Knowledge

ToK 11 optional theme 2

2021-2022

1.

Based on this article, how is what people “know” about politics different from what people “know” about other more generalized topics (like the weather, math, or science)? Try to make your response as specific as possible with references to the article.

2.

What is Beck's argument about causes of the current information crisis? In other words, what is this problem really about? What does she argue is not the problem? Try to support your response with quotes from the article.

3.

Beck refers to the concepts of motivated reasoning and selective exposure. What do these concepts mean? How are these concepts illustrated but the 1967 study described on page 2? Can you think of examples from your own experience that illustrate these concepts?

(Brock, T. C., & Balloun, J. L. (1967). Behavioral receptivity to dissonant information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6(4, Pt.1), 413–428. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0021225>)

4.

Beck quotes Brendan Nyhan, a professor of government at Dartmouth, describing a phenomenon he terms “cognitive tribalism.” What does Nyhan mean by this term and how does it relate to the question of disinformation and Beck’s larger argument?

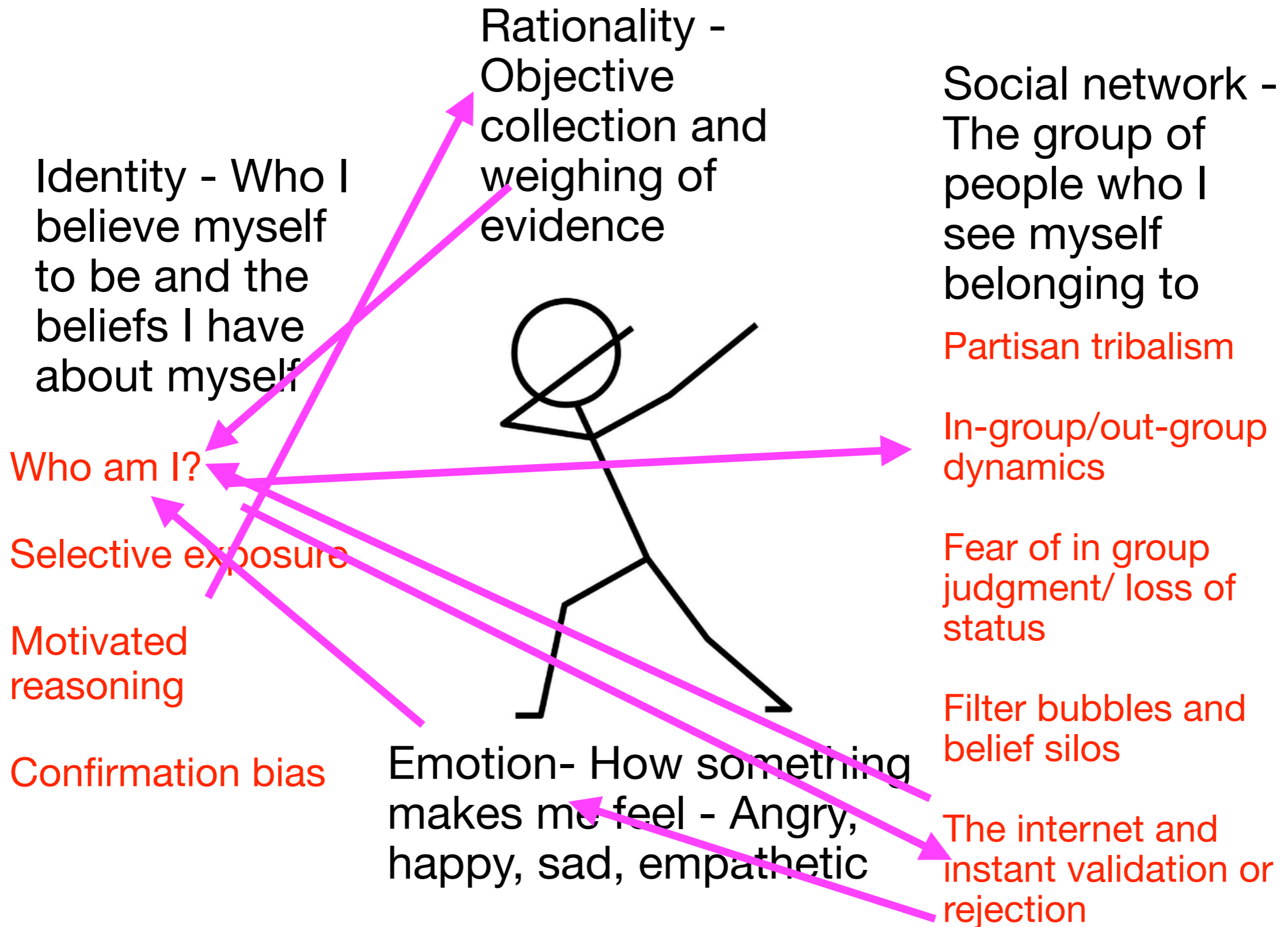
5.

On page 9 Beck draws a distinction between generalized trust and particularized trust. What is this distinction? Why does she argue that particularized trust destroys generalized trust? Can you think of any examples that illustrate this?

6.

A lot of Beck's argument comes down to issues of identity and group membership. Discuss with your group and offer a psychological explanation for mis/disinformation using a socio-cultural lens. Your explanation should be crafted by the group, use information from the article and be no more than 100 words. Please record this response on your small group sheet.

The psychology and sociology of knowledge and politics



The challenge . . .

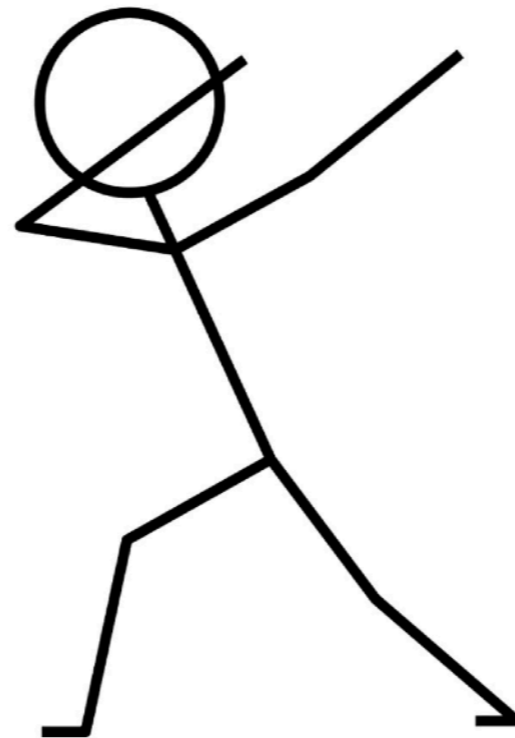
Analyzing others is easy. Putting ourselves under the microscope is hard.

Real understanding only comes when we understand our own motivations and have the capacity to look at the motivations (and the beliefs and ideas they engender) reflectively.

Reason

Identity

Social network



Emotion