

**Vicious Attitudes:
Attitude Psychology as a Framework of Vice
Epistemology**

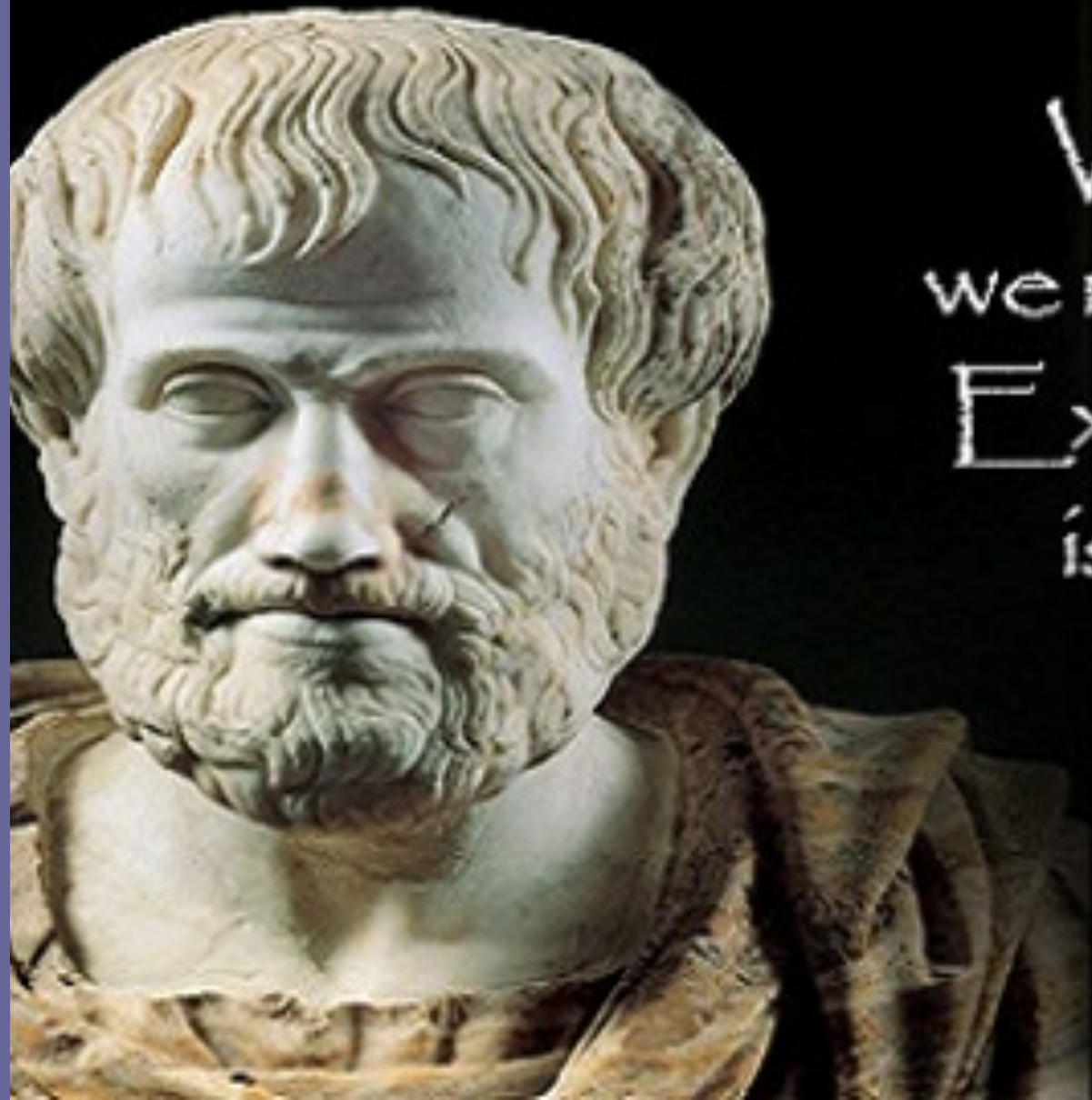
2017

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Virtues and Vices

- Generosity,
Inquisitiveness,
Humility, Open-
Mindedness,
Perseverance
- Meanness,
Incuriosity,
Arrogance,
Dogmatism,
Closed-
mindedness,
Laziness



Virtues and Vices as Character Traits

- Virtue and vices are said to be traits because they
 - are stable over time and across situations
 - are multitrack dispositions to behave
- They are said to be character traits because they would be traits that are defining of a person's character.
- In addition, some think that virtues and vices have characteristic motivations.

Virtues as excellences and vices as defects



- Virtues contribute to flourishing
 - Moral virtues and ethical excellence
 - Intellectual virtue and intellectual excellence
- Intellectual excellence requires possessing the right relation to epistemic goods such as truth and understanding.
- Vices are defects which are obstacles to flourishing

Attitudes: Objects And Contents

- Attitudes are summary evaluations directed at a target object. They can be thought as preferences, as likes or dislikes . (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010).
- The attitude is an associative state between the object and a valence (positive or negative).
- Attitudes are cognitive shortcuts.
- The content of an attitude is the informational basis from which attitude is formed. This basis includes evaluative beliefs or other cognitive states, feelings and other affective states, and memories of past behaviours as well as behavioural dispositions (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010; Fazio & Olson, 2007).

Attitudes: Strength and Functions

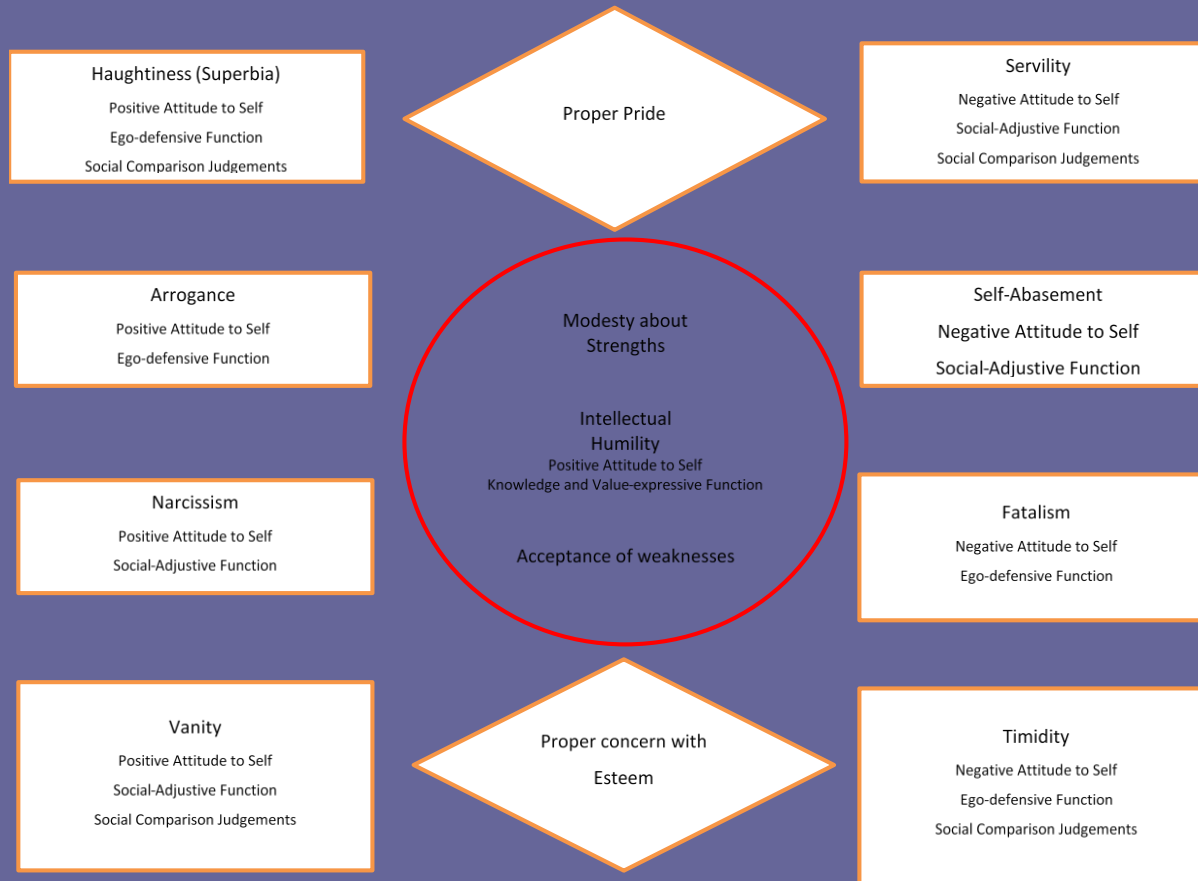
- The strength of an attitude is the strength of the association between the object and the valence.
- The accessibility of an attitude is the ease with which it can be activated or made occurrent.
- The function(s) of an attitude are individuated in terms of the need(s) satisfaction.
- These include:
 - Knowledge: acquiring knowledge and understanding (Katz, 1960)
 - Utilitarian: satisfying one's preferences
 - Object Appraisal: usually thought to combine knowledge and utilitarian functions
 - Social-adjustive motivation: gaining social acceptance
 - Ego-defensive motivation: defending the self from threats
 - Value-expressive motivation: expressing one's values
- An attitude can serve more than one function at the same time and can change its function(s) overtime. (Maio & Olson, 2000a; Watt et al. 2008)

Are intellectual virtues and vices attitudes?

- Strong attitudes have several features usually attributed to virtues and vices.
 - Have emotional component
 - Direct visual attention
 - Predictive of/cause behaviour
 - Sensitive to novel evidence (albeit patchily)
 - Stable over time and across situations
- Promises unity to the apparent variety in kind of vice
 - Character traits: Arrogance, Timidity, Closed Mindedness
 - Attitudes: Prejudice, Arrogance,
 - Ways of thinking: wishful thinking,

Putting the framework to work

Humility: A Case Study



Intellectual Humility

- Humility has two aspects:
 - Modesty about one's successes
 - Acceptance of one's own shortcomings
- Humility as having the measure of oneself intellectually (one's skills, abilities, the extent of one's knowledge)
- Humility as a summative evaluation of aspects of the self serving the need for epistemic goods.

Intellectual Haughtiness (Superbia)

- A feeling of superiority accompanied by a desire to do others down
- As lack of intellectual modesty
- As excessive pride in one's intellectual achievements
- Behavioural Manifestations:
 - Bragging and boasting
 - Arrogating special entitlements in debate (e.g., not to be challenged)
 - Dismissing the views held by others, silencing or putting them down
 - Humiliating others
 - Quickness to anger
 - Aggressiveness
 - Defensiveness
- Other Manifestations:
 - Holds oneself in high regard
 - Feels intellectually superior to others
 - Cares a lot about comparative judgements of smartness

Intellectual Arrogance

- It is a deepening of haughtiness, moving away from the desire to do others down and toward hubris and a feeling of total self-reliance and hyper-autonomy
- Behavioural Manifestations:
 - Irresponsible risk taking
 - Aloofness
 - Arrogating special entitlements in debate (e.g., not to be accountable)
 - Defensiveness
- Other Manifestations:
 - A feeling of invulnerability and independence
 - Thinking that one owes no intellectual debts to others
 - Commitment to complete self-reliance
 - Conviction that one's successes are due exclusively to one's own efforts and talents

Arrogant and Haughty Attitudes

- Crucial to both haughtiness and arrogance is being full of oneself.
- These vices are mismeasures of the self because they are self-evaluations which are not responsive to the intellectual worth of oneself but to a different psychological motive.
- The motive is ego-defence.
- Thus these vices are underpinned by clusters of positive strong attitudes toward the self and features of one's cognitive make-up serving an ego-defensive function.
- Haughtiness may be grounded on contents which are largely concerned with social comparisons.

Arrogance in Debate

- Arrogance and haughtiness may be underpinned by defensive high self-esteem (Haddock and Gebauer, 2011).
- Defensive high-self esteem is positively correlated with
 - arrogant responses to threats (Mc Gregor et al, 2005);
 - tendencies to self-enhancement (Bosson et al., 2003);
 - boasting (Olson et al., 2007);
 - higher levels of prejudice toward members of other ethnic groups (Jordan, Spencer, & Zanna, 2005);
 - Heightened defensiveness (Haddock and Gebauer, 2011);
 - Prone to anger (Schröder-Abé et al., 2007);
 - higher levels of self-deception in general than those whose high self-esteem is congruent (Jordan et al 2003);
 - a propensity to overestimate the extent to which other people agree with their views (McGregor et al, 2005);
 - A propensity to react badly to negative feedback by derogating the views of out-group members (Jordan et al., 2005).
- These tendencies have an obvious negative impact on collective enquiry including on debates