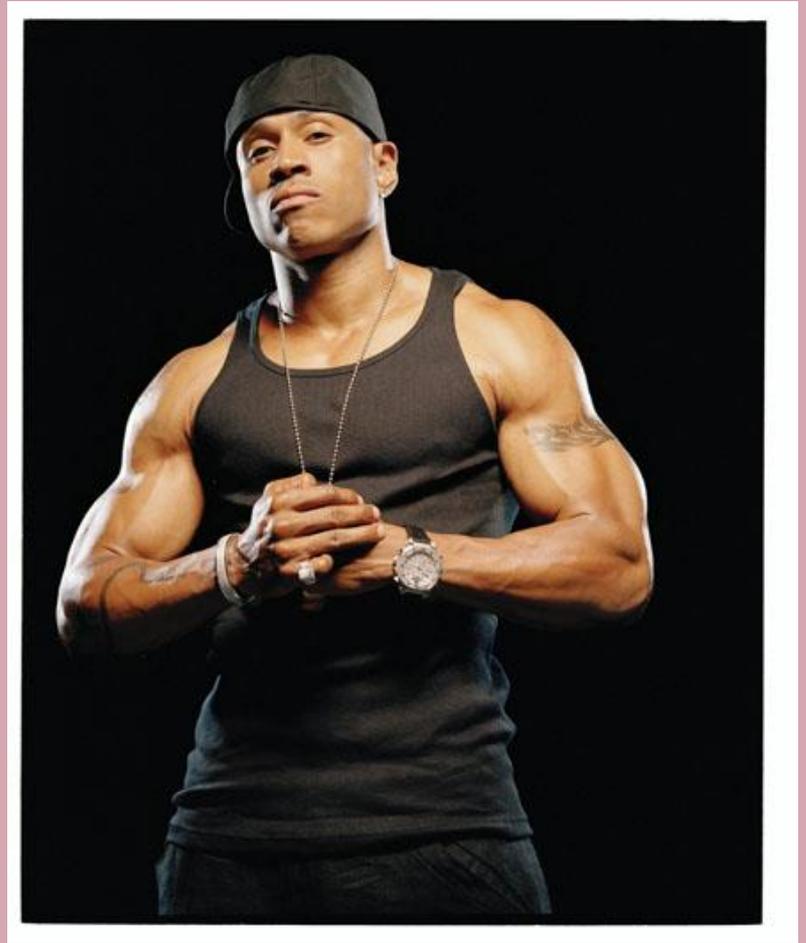


# Physical Attractiveness: The Hottie Factor

- Affects one's first impression of another more than any other single factor.
- Positively correlated with popularity / dating frequency.
- Unrelated to self-esteem and happiness
- They are perceived as healthier, happier, more honest and successful than less attractive counterparts.



Does physical attraction effect how we act toward others?  
The Halo Effect - We perceive attractive people as also having more attractive personalities.



# Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?

Across cultures, men prefer youthful looking women, reportedly because this is a sign of their future fertility.



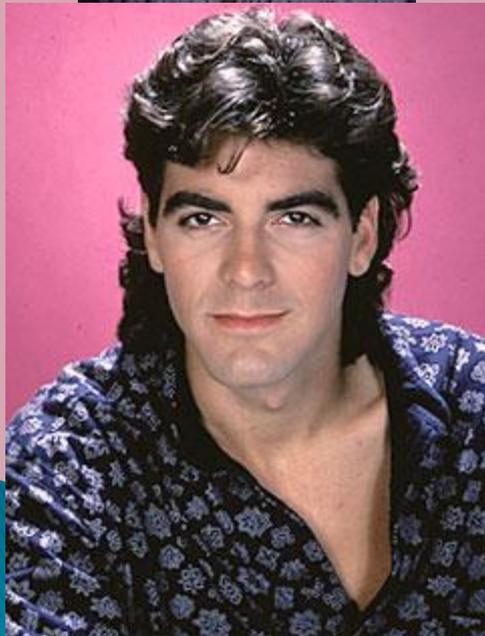
Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?

Across cultures, women prefer men with maturity and financial resources to provide for them and children.

Discovery



1980s



2010s



# Evolutionary Theory

- ▶ Primary motive is reproductive success.
  - People who make bad mate choices will have little success.
  - Mate preferences should be shaped by natural selection.
    - We are instinctively attracted to features associated with reproductive success
- ▶ Parental Investment Theory
  - The sex that invests more is more selective.
  - Females look for mate that could
    - Provide resources
    - Was willing to invest resources
    - Protect family
  - Males look for mate that
    - Had good reproductive potential
      - (Young and healthy)
    - Would be faithful
    - Nurturing

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?

Facial and body symmetry appear to be key elements in attractiveness. Symmetry seems to be correlated with genetic health.

# Proximity

- ▶ Geographic nearness

*Mere exposure effect:*

- ▶ Repeated exposure to something breeds liking.

- What was familiar was generally safe and approachable.
- What was unfamiliar was more often dangerous and threatening.



# Mere Exposure Effect



# Lookism

*Lookism* is discrimination against or prejudice towards others based on their appearance.



# Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?

- ▶ Cultural differences

- foot binding

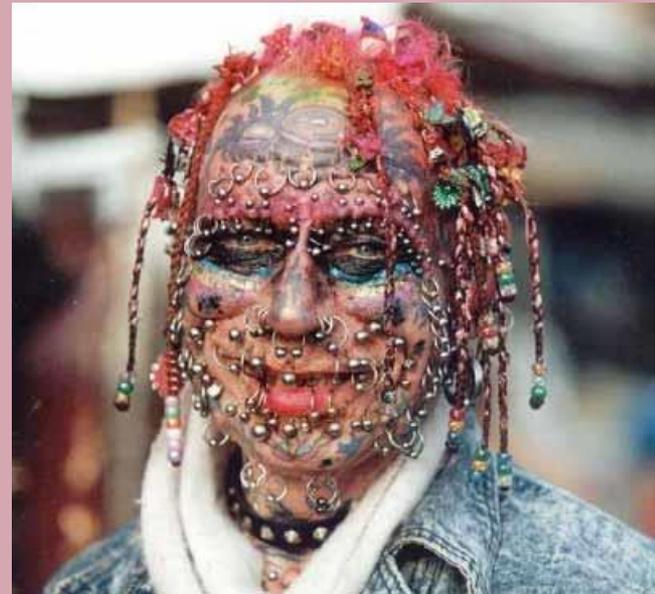
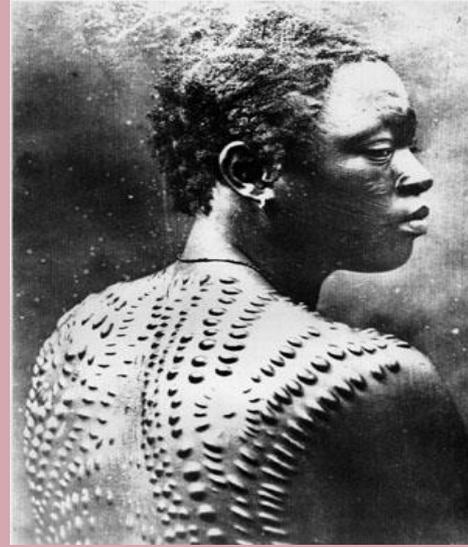
- Neck lengthening

- Piercing

- Chest size

- In the US: In the 1920s, thin was considered attractive for females. By the 1950s, a full figure had become the desirable body type. Currently, the trend seems to combine the two, valuing a thin build with a larger chest.

Are these cultures really that different?



*“We are attracted to individuals whose presence is rewarding for us”*

- ▶ There is reward value in proximity, exposure:
- ▶ Repeated interaction, coupled with physical attraction may be what is needed to begin a relationship. (However, more is needed to hold the relationship together over time.)
- ▶ There is reward in similarity:
- ▶ We tend to prefer and stay with, people and organizations who are most like us, share our ethnic background, social class, interest and attitudes.
- ▶ Reciprocal Liking - “I like you because you like me!” If you know someone likes you it makes you feel good and so is rewarding.

# Defining Love

## ▶ Companionate love

◦ the feelings of intimacy and affection we feel for another person when we care deeply for the person, but do not necessarily experience passion or arousal in his or her presence.

## ▶ Passionate love

◦ is the feeling of intense longing, accompanied by physiological arousal, we feel for another person; when our love is reciprocated, we feel great fulfillment and ecstasy, but when it is not, we feel sadness and despair.

# Romantic Love: The Thrill of It

- ▶ Romantic love requires:
  - A heightened state of physiological arousal; *and*
  - The belief that this arousal was triggered by the beloved person.
  
- ▶ Sometimes one can misattribute pure physiological arousal to romantic love.
  - Process known as excitation transfer.

# Passionate Love: Arousal and Attribution

- ▶ Love on a bridge (Dutton & Aron, 1974)



## Capilano Canyon Suspension Bridge:

...a tendency to tilt, sway, and wobble, creating the impression that one is about to fall over the side...

...230-foot drop to rocks and shallow rapids below the bridge...



## Control Bridge:

Constructed of heavy cedar 10 feet above a small, shallow rivulet high handrails and did not tilt or sway

# Romantic Love: Arousal and Attribution

- ▶ Love on a bridge (Dutton & Aron, 1974)



- Participants were approached on bridge by attractive female experimenter
- Asked to tell story about a relationship
- Told they could call experimenter for results in a few weeks, given number