

Unit 14

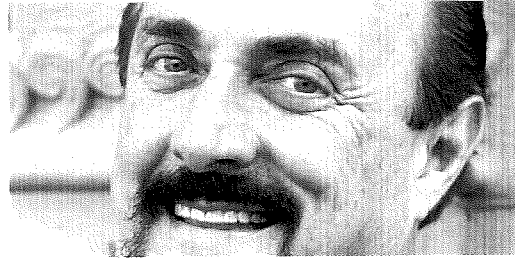
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Myers Psychology for AP Text- p.642-695

"Thinking is easy, acting difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action, the most difficult thing in the world." - German Poet Goethe (1749-1832)

Topics Covered:

1. Social Thinking
2. Social Influence
3. Social Relations

**Vocabulary Terms to Know:**

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Social Psychology | 19. Ingroup Bias |
| 2. Attribution Theory | 20. Scapegoat Theory |
| 3. Fundamental Attribution Error | 21. Just-World Phenomenon |
| 4. Attitude | 22. Aggression |
| 5. Foot-in-the-door Phenomenon | 23. Frustration-Aggression Principle |
| 6. Cognitive Dissonance Theory | 24. Conflict |
| 7. Conformity | 25. Social Trap |
| 8. Normative Social Influence | 26. Mere Exposure Effect |
| 9. Informational Social Influence | 27. Passionate Love |
| 10. Social Facilitation | 28. Companionate Love |
| 11. Social Loafing | 29. Equity |
| 12. Deindividuation | 30. Self-Disclosure |
| 13. Group Polarization | 31. Altruism |
| 14. Groupthink | 32. Bystander Effect |
| 15. Prejudice | 33. Social Exchange Theory |
| 16. Stereotype | 34. Superordinate Goals |
| 17. Ingroup | 35. GRIT |
| 18. Outgroup | |

Social Psychologists to Know:

1. Solomon Asch (1955)
2. Stanley Milgram (1933-1984)
3. Philip Zimbardo (Stanford University)

A) SOCIAL THINKING:

How do we explain people's behaviour? How do we form our beliefs and attitudes? How does what we think affect what we do?

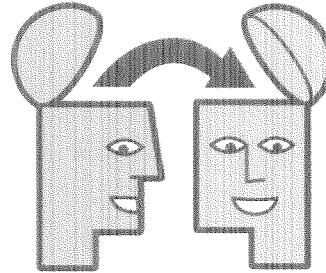
a. Attributing Behaviour to Persons or to Situations

Fritz Heider (1958) proposed the **ATTRIBUTION THEORY** suggesting that we tend to give a casual explanation for someone's behaviour (ie: situation or disposition)

However, people also tend to underestimate other's behaviour because of the situation or the disposition of the person.

This is known as the **FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR**.

The real question is WHY? Is someone acting grouchy because you think they are a 'snob' OR is it because they lost sleep last night, and got a flat tire on the way to work? Do our attitudes and actions play a part in our thinking?



b. Attitudes and Actions

1. Do our attitudes guide our actions?

2. Do our affect our attitudes?

Many streams of evidence now show that attitudes follow behaviour. Cooperative actions, such as those performed on sports teams, feed mutual liking. Such attitudes, in turn, promote positive behaviour.

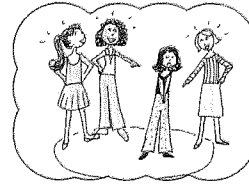
- **FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR PHENOMENON:** the tendency for people who have first agreed to a small request to comply later with a larger request.

Without a doubt, actions can affect attitudes which is why sometimes doubters become believers. But why? When we are aware that our attitudes and actions don't coincide, we experience tension called **COGNITIVE DISSONANCE**. To relieve this 'tension' in our thinking, Leon Festinger introduced the **COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY** to bring our attitudes in line with our actions.

QUESTION: Do you have an attitude or tendency you would like to change? Using the attitudes-follow-behaviour principle, how might you go about changing that attitude? Explain.

B) SOCIAL INFLUENCE

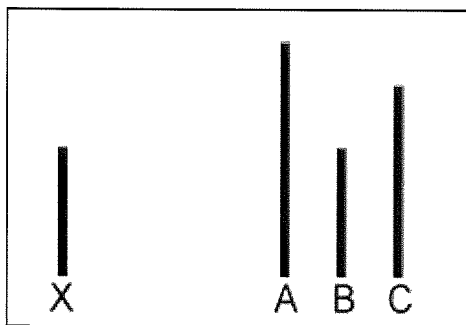
How do we influence each other? How are we affected by pressures to conform and obey, and by group interaction?



a. Conformity and Obedience

Behaviour is contagious. Think about giggling, yawning, coughing, etc. Suicides, bomb threats, and UFO sightings all tend to come in clusters. Laughter is infectious. Sickness can also be contagious. So...people are natural mimics (also known as the "Chameleon Effect") ☺ People also tend to 'go with the group majority' and often go along with peer influence/pressure in looks, trends, and tastes.

SOLOMON ASCH: in 1955 Asch devised a simple test to study the effects of *conformity*.

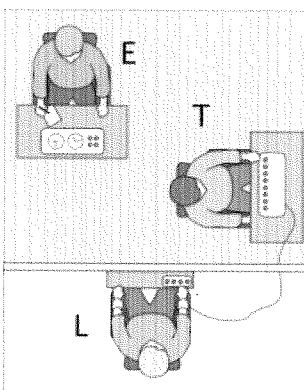


Which line is the same as line 'x'?
(Asch Experiment)



What Asch found was that the experimenter tended to look for others for assurance of the correct answer. They convinced the lone experimenter to answer 'Line C'. So why did he conform and agree with the 'group' even though clearly it was incorrect?

STANLEY MILGRAM: knew that people often comply with social pressures but he wondered how would they respond to outright commands? He designed the Yale University's Psychology Experiment for 'teachers' to use electric shock.



Volunteers arrive- person becomes 'teacher'.
Study is on 'effect of punishment on learning'.
Learner 'strapped' to electrical volts. Teacher has controls.
Teacher must 'teach' word pairs. When wrong, zap the learner.
Each shock gets higher. The instructor (evaluator) makes you continue. How far did people go?

(63% of people complied to 450 volts!!)

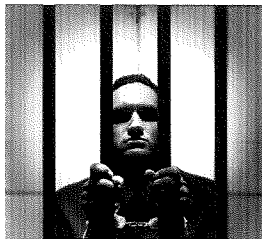


PHILIP ZIMBARDO: Stanford Prison Experiment

The Stanford Prison Experiment was a study of the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner or prison guard. The experiment was conducted in 1971 by a team of researchers led by psychologist Philip Zimbardo at Stanford University.

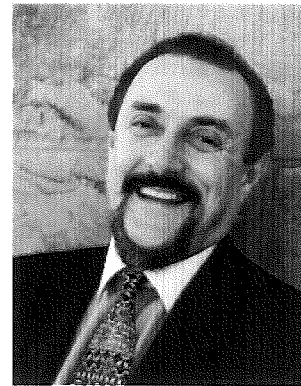
Twenty-four undergraduates were selected out of 70 to play the roles of both guards and prisoners and live in a mock prison in the basement of the Stanford psychology building.

Prisoners and guards rapidly adapted to their roles, stepping beyond the boundaries of what had been predicted and leading to dangerous and psychologically damaging situations. One-third of the guards were judged to have exhibited "genuine" sadistic tendencies, while many prisoners were emotionally traumatized and two had to be removed from the experiment early. After sensing that everyone had been too absorbed in their roles, including himself, Zimbardo terminated the experiment after six days. (ethical reasons)



Images from the Stanford experiment

(with thanks to Philip Zimbardo)



As much as we see the power of social influence, do not forget or overlook the power of the individual as well. Social control (the power of the situation) and personal control (the power of the individual) interact. When pressured, many respond by doing the opposite of what is expected, thereby reasserting our sense of freedom.

Examples: Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Rosa Parks, etc..

QUESTION: You are organizing a Town-Hall style meeting of fiercely competitive political candidates. To add to the fun, friends have suggested handing out masks of the candidates faces for supporters to wear. What phenomenon might these masks engage?

C) SOCIAL RELATIONS

What causes us to harm or to help or to fall in love? How can we transform the closed fists of aggression into the open arms of compassion?

a. Prejudice

Prejudice means 'prejudgement' and it is an unjustifiable and usually negative attitude toward a group- often a different culture, ethnic, or gender group. Like all attitudes, prejudice is a mixture of beliefs (often called stereotypes), emotions (hostility, fear, envy), and predispositions to actions (to discriminate).

Social Roots of Prejudice

Why does prejudice exist? Inequalities, social divisions, and emotional scapegoating are partly responsible.

1. Social Inequalities
2. Us and Them: Ingroup and Outgroup
3. Scapegoating

b. Aggression

The most destructive force in our social relations is aggression. In psychology, aggression is any physical or verbal behaviour intended to hurt or destroy. But why are people so aggressive?

- * Biology of Aggression
- * Genetic Influences
- * Neural Influences
- * Biochemical Influences



So does the brain have an 'aggression or violence center'? No. The brain does not have one spot that controls aggression because it is a complex behaviour that occurs in particular contexts. However...violent criminals tend to be muscular young males with lower-than-average intelligence scores, and low levels of serotonin and higher levels of testosterone.

Impact of Society on Aggression

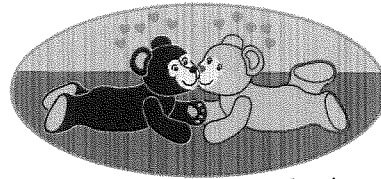
How does TV violence, media, pornography, and video game violence affect aggression and violence in society? Is there any correlation?

c. Conflict

Did you know the world spends \$2 billion a day on arms? Money that could be used for housing, food, education and health. Psychologists know that wars begin in human minds, and they have wondered what in the human mind causes destructive conflict?

1. Social Traps- a situation in which the conflicting parties, by each rationally pursuing their self-interest, become caught in mutually destructive behaviour.

2. Enemy Perceptions- people in conflict have a curious tendency to form diabolical images of one another that are completely distorted.



d. Attraction

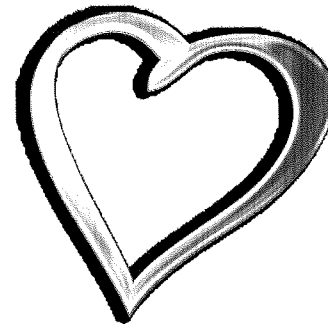
Think about a friend and then think about someone who stirred in you feelings of romantic love. What leads to friendship and to romance?

The Psychology of Attraction

1. Proximity & the mere exposure effect
2. Physical Attractiveness (in the eye of the beholder)
3. Similarity (what do you have in common) Opposites tend to NOT attract in real life.

TWO KINDS OF LOVE:

1. Passionate Love
2. Companionate Love



e. Altruism

Altruism is the unselfish regard for the welfare of others.

Terms: Bystander Intervention & the Social Exchange Theory

f. Peacemaking

Sometimes enemies become friends, especially when the circumstances favour cooperation to achieve Superordinate goals, understanding through communication, and reciprocated conciliatory gestures.

Key Terms/Concepts:

Cooperation, Subordinate goals, Communication & Conciliation, GRIT