

READINGS ABOUT

Fourth Edition

The Social Animal

EDITED BY

Elliot Aronson

Fourth Edition

READINGS ABOUT

The Social Animal

Edited by

Elliot Aronson

University of California, Santa Cruz



W. H. Freeman and Company

New York

Cover drawing by Tom Durfee.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Readings about the social animal.

Includes indexes.

1. Social psychology—Addresses, essays, lectures.

I. Aronson, Elliot.

HM251.R36 1984 302 84-1545

ISBN 0-7167-1607-0

ISBN 0-7167-1608-9 (pbk.)

Copyright © 1973, 1977, 1981, 1984 by W. H. Freeman and Company

No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic, or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic recording, nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or otherwise copied for public or private use without written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MP 8 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

READINGS ABOUT
The Social Animal

A Series of Books in Psychology

EDITORS: Richard C. Atkinson
Gardner Lindzey
Richard F. Thompson

*To the Memory of David Mettee (1939–1976),
One of My Favorite Students*

*“The most incomprehensible thing about
the world is that it's comprehensible.”*

—Albert Einstein

Preface

In my textbook *The Social Animal*, Fourth Edition, I attempted to paint a clear picture of the current state of our social-psychological knowledge and how such knowledge might be applied to alleviate some problems plaguing us in the world today. *The Social Animal* was intended to be concise, brisk, and lively. It was almost totally unencumbered by graphs, charts, tables, statistical analysis, or detailed methodological discussions. Although that kind of presentation provided an easy and even enjoyable introduction to the world of social psychology, many readers expressed a need to delve more deeply into the details of the research that formed the backbone of *The Social Animal*. To meet that need, I have edited this book, *Readings About the Social Animal*, Fourth Edition.

I have selected the readings that appear in this book in such a way that they both complement and supplement the material contained in *The Social Animal*. Not only are the sections organized so as to coincide with chapters in *The Social Animal*, but the specific readings also represent an attempt to amplify and elaborate on the major themes covered in that book. Moreover, I have been especially careful to choose readings that provide a mixture of classic and contemporary research. Some of the articles were already classics when I first read them as a stu-

dent. At the other end of the continuum are articles that I recently encountered in the form of prepublication reports. This combination will provide the reader with a historical sweep as well as with the most contemporary ideas in the field. In the third edition I have retained such classics as Solomon Asch's studies of conformity and Stanley Milgram's research on obedience. But some relatively recent studies have been replaced by works that are even more current, in an attempt to keep the collection up to date. These newer additions are more than simply new. In my judgment they will stand the test of time and will eventually become classics in their own right.

There is another way of classifying the articles in this collection. Most of the articles are reports of specific research as originally published in technical journals; others are more general pieces summarizing several studies on a given topic written by one of the major contributors to that area. A specific report, though not always easy to read, has the advantage of providing the detail necessary for enabling the reader to gain some understanding of exactly what goes into a piece of research. The summary article is usually less technical and, therefore, easier to read, offering a more panoramic overview of the area by the people who know it best. In effect, it enables the reader to look over an investigator's shoulder and see how he or she views an array of research on a given topic.

For the third edition, my research assistant, Neal Osherow, was an extremely helpful consultant in the selection of new articles. Patti Fox once more helped put the whole thing together, and Julie Sweedler did the indexing.

For the fourth edition, I am pleased to acknowledge the excellent assistance of Martha Hope Gonzales, who made many valuable suggestions.

October 1983

Elliot Aronson

An Open Letter to the Reader

Welcome backstage. As mentioned in the Preface, there are two kinds of articles contained in this volume. Some selections are descriptions of research programs. These make exciting reading in that they describe in some detail a series of experiments aimed at explicating or extending a single idea. Other selections are reports of individual pieces of empirical research. These are equally exciting but sometimes get rather technical. I'm sure some of you (teachers, graduate students, statisticians, and other dedicated types) will want to understand thoroughly every sentence of every article on the following pages, perhaps in the hope of planning some research of your own. *Bon voyage!* For your benefit, I have not abridged or changed a line of the original.

My guess is that most of you do not require that amount of detail. Chances are, what you would like to get out of these articles is an understanding of what the investigator was trying to find out, how he or she went about his or her task, and how successful the outcome was. There is no better way to understand the research process than to read original reports. The adventure of reading an original report lies in your ability as the reader to put yourself in the shoes of the investigator as he or she transforms an idea into a viable set of research operations and

tries to make sense of the results, which occasionally do not conform precisely to the predictions. Each of the original research reports contains four principal sections: (1) First there is an *introduction*, in which the author states the idea, where it came from, and why it's important, and distills the idea down to a hypothesis or series of hypotheses. (2) This is followed by a *procedure* section, in which the author tests the hypothesis by translating the idea into a concrete set of operations. In social psychology this frequently becomes a full-blown scenario designed to provide the participant (or subject) with a reasonable justification for responding to events without being allowed to know the true purpose of the procedure. The procedure section of a good piece of research is often the most interesting part, because it requires a great deal of ingenuity for the investigator to achieve precision without sacrificing realism or impact. (3) In the *results* section the investigator states as clearly and succinctly as possible what the findings were. The investigator uses various statistical procedures to ascertain the extent to which the data are reliable. (4) Finally there is a *discussion* section, in which the researcher evaluates and interprets the data presented in the preceding section and tries to make sense of them in the context of previous research. The creative researcher can also use this section to speculate about the implications of the data and to point the way toward future research.

To those of you who do not yet have much experience in reading research reports, I offer a few suggestions about which parts of the study to read carefully and which parts to skim. If the article contains a summary (either at the beginning or at the end), I would read that first in order to familiarize myself with the general idea behind the piece of research and to learn quickly what the results were. Next, I would read the introduction carefully in order to learn the history of the idea and to understand the hypothesis thoroughly. I would then read the procedure section pretty carefully. I would skim the results section just to see the extent to which the findings agreed with the predictions. If the findings did not fit the predictions, I would look closely at the discussion section to see how the author had made sense of the results he or she did get and whether or not the explanation seemed plausible to me. Unless you are adept at and/or intrigued by statistical analyses, I would advise you to skim that section. For those of you who have little or no knowledge of statistical procedures, it would be terribly frustrating and would serve no useful purpose to bog yourself down in some of the details of the statistical analyses. These articles were selected because they were well done. It is probably safe for you to accept on faith that the analysis was performed competently.

The Authors

Paul R. Abramson
University of Connecticut

Teresa M. Amabile
Brandeis University

Dane Archer
University of California, Santa Cruz

Elliot Aronson
University of California, Santa Cruz

Solomon E. Asch
Rutgers University

Danny Axsom
Princeton University

Curtis Banks
Stanford University

Roberta L. Baral
University of Kansas

C. Daniel Batson
University of Kansas

Leonard Berkowitz
University of Wisconsin

Ellen Berscheid
University of Minnesota

Diana Bolen
Northwestern University

Philip Brickman
Northwestern University

Diane Bridgeman
University of California, Santa Cruz

Joel Cooper
Princeton University

James M. Dabbs, Jr.
Georgia State University

John M. Darley
Princeton University

Michael Jay Diamond
University of Hawaii

Scott C. Fraser
University of Southern California

Jonathan L. Freedman
Columbia University

Rosemary Gartner
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Russell G. Geen
University of Missouri, Columbia

Philip A. Goldberg
Connecticut College

Marc Gottesdiener
Connecticut College

Craig Haney
University of California, Santa Cruz

Sara B. Kiesler
National Academy of Sciences

John F. Layton
University of Utah

Howard Leventhal
University of Wisconsin

W. Charles Lobitz
University of Oregon

John Manzolati
Stanford University

David R. Mettee (late)
University of Denver

Stanley Milgram
City University of New York

Richard Miller
Northwestern University

Neal Osherow
University of California, Santa Cruz

Nancy Ostrove
University of Maryland

Thomas F. Pettigrew
University of California, Santa Cruz

Jane Piliavin
University of Wisconsin

Steven Prentice-Dunn
University of Alabama

Ronald W. Rogers
University of Alabama

Irwin Rubin
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Lynn Schmidt
University of Wisconsin

Jerrold Lee Shapiro
University of Hawaii

Muzafer Sherif
Pennsylvania State University

Gary L. Shope
University of Missouri, Columbia

Harold Sigall
University of Maryland

Lynn Stanley Simons
University of Utah

Mark Snyder
University of Minnesota

David Stonner
University of Missouri, Columbia

Elizabeth Decker Tanke
University of Santa Clara

Charles W. Turner
University of Utah

Elaine Walster (Hatfield)
University of Hawaii

G. William Walster
University of Wisconsin

Carl O. Word
Wright Institute

Mark P. Zanna
University of Waterloo

Philip Zimbardo
Stanford University

READINGS ABOUT

The Social Animal

Contents

PREFACE xiii

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE READER xv

THE AUTHORS xvii

I. INTRODUCTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS 1

1. Research in Social Psychology as a Leap of Faith 3
Elliot Aronson

II. CONFORMITY AND OBEDIENCE 11

2. Opinions and Social Pressure 13
Solomon E. Asch
3. Behavioral Study of Obedience 23
Stanley Milgram
4. "From Jerusalem to Jericho": A Study of Situational and Dispositional
Variables in Helping Behavior 37
John M. Darley and C. Daniel Batson
5. A Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison 52
Craig Haney, Curtis Banks, and Philip Zimbardo
6. Making Sense of the Nonsensical: An Analysis of Jonestown 68
Neal Osherow

III. MASS COMMUNICATION, PROPAGANDA, AND PERSUASION 87

7. Effects of Varying the Recommendations in a Fear-Arousing
Communication 89
James M. Dabbs, Jr. and Howard Leventhal
8. Attribution Versus Persuasion as a Means for Modifying Behavior 100
Richard L. Miller, Philip Brickman, and Diana Bolen
9. Television Criminology: Network Illusions of Criminal Justice
Realities 120
Craig Haney and John Manzolati

IV. SELF-JUSTIFICATION 133

10. Persuasion via Self-Justification: Large Commitments for Small
Rewards 135
Elliot Aronson
11. Compliance Without Pressure: The Foot-in-the-Door Technique 152
Jonathan L. Freedman and Scott C. Fraser
12. Reducing Weight by Reducing Dissonance: The Role of Effort Justification
in Inducing Weight Loss 164
Danny Axsom and Joel Cooper
13. Dishonest Behavior as a Function of Differential Levels of Induced Self-
Esteem 178
Elliot Aronson and David R. Mettee

V. HUMAN AGGRESSION 191

14. The Effects of Observing Violence 193
Leonard Berkowitz
15. The Facilitation of Aggression by Aggression: Evidence Against the
Catharsis Hypothesis 205
Russell G. Geen, David Stonner, and Gary L. Shope
16. Peacetime Casualties: The Effects of War on the Violent Behavior of
Noncombatants 215
Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner
17. Deindividuation and Anger-Mediated Interracial Aggression: Unmasking
Regressive Racism 227
Ronald W. Rogers and Steven Prentice-Dunn