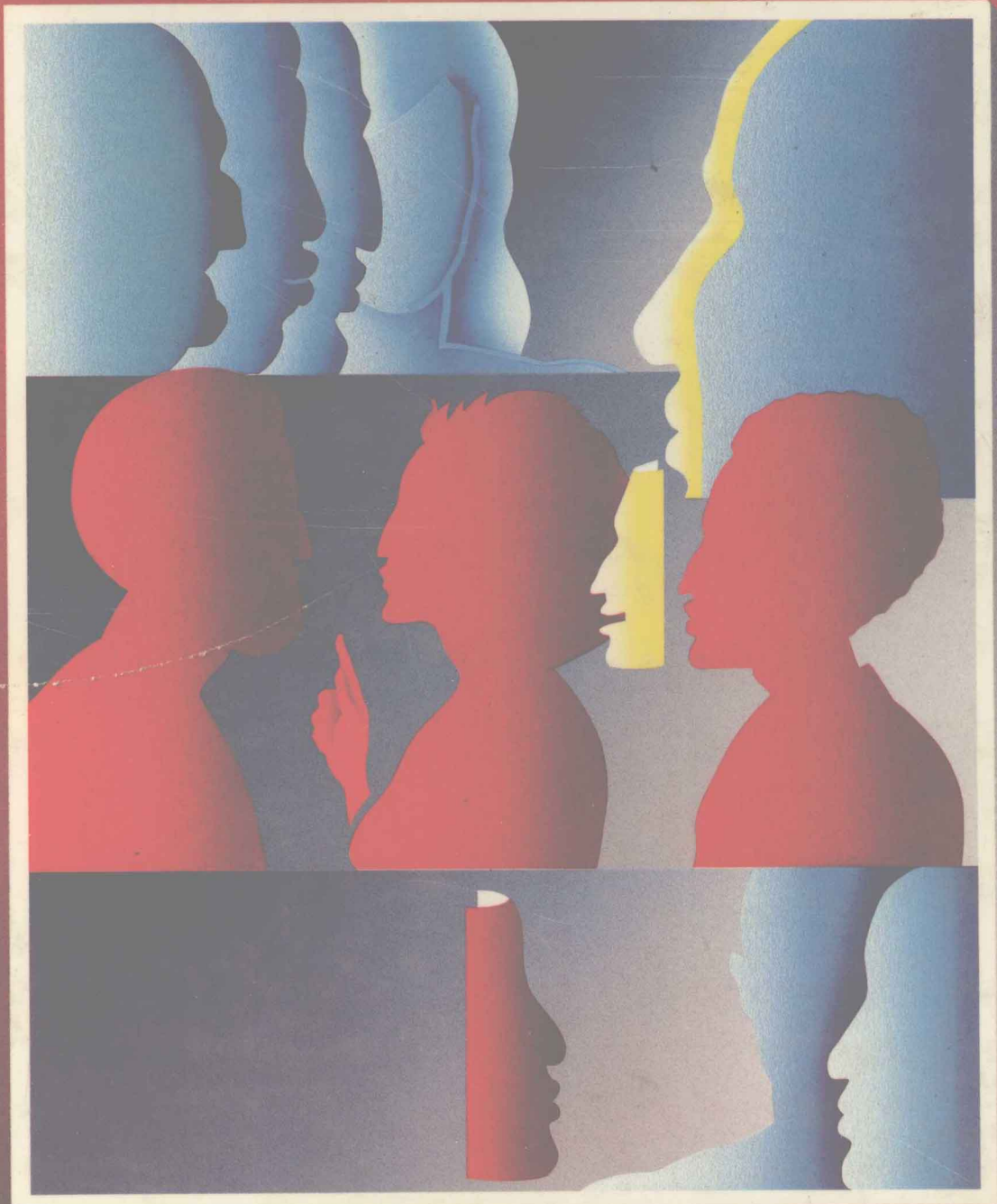


DAVID G. MYERS

Social Psychology

SECOND EDITION



Social Psychology

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DAVID G. MYERS

*Hope College
Holland, Michigan*

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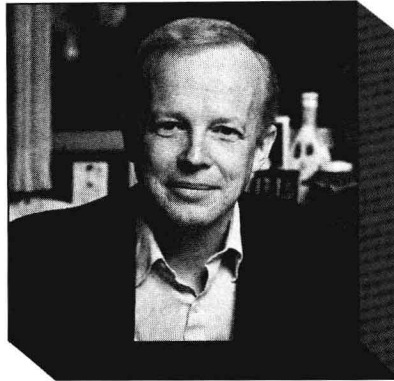
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About the Author

David G. Myers is the John Dirk Werkman Professor of Psychology at Hope College. An award-winning researcher, Dr. Myers received the Gordon Allport Prize from American Psychological Association Division 9 for his work on group polarization. He is a fellow of APA Divisions 2, 8, 9, and 36 and is on the future fellows' roster of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Myers's scientific articles have appeared in more than two dozen journals, including *Science*, *American Scientist*, and *Psychology Bulletin*. He is a Consulting Editor to the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* and the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Dr. Myers's love of teaching psychology is evident in his many articles for the lay public in magazines such as *Saturday Review*, *Psychology Today*, *Today's Education*, and *Science Digest*. In tribute to his teaching excellence, the students at Hope College voted Dr. Myers their Outstanding Professor Award.

PREFACE

In all of history, human social behavior has been scientifically studied in only one century. That century is ours. Considering that we have barely begun, the results are, I believe, gratifying. Social psychologists have gleaned significant insights into belief and illusion, love and hate, conformity and independence. Although much mystery remains, we can now offer partial answers to such questions as: Will people act in new and better ways if we can first persuade them to adopt new attitudes? Do males and females differ? How? Why? When are people most likely to help another? What kindles social conflict, and what steps can be taken to transform closed fists into open arms? Learning even tentative answers to such questions can stimulate our thinking about social behavior. Moreover, becoming sensitive to the social forces at work upon us can help free us from susceptibility to unwanted manipulation. I hope that such will be among the benefits of studying social psychology.

When invited to write this book I immediately envisioned a text that would present social psychology as an intellectual adventure. This text was to be at once solidly scientific and warmly human, factually rigorous and intellectually provocative. It would be reasonably comprehensive in its coverage of the discipline, yet it would also stimulate students' *thinking*. In short, this text would present social psychology as an investigative reporter might, providing an up-to-date summary of important phenomena of social thinking and social behavior, and of how such phenomena have been revealed and how they are being explained. It would also cul-

tivate students' abilities to think like competent social psychologists—to inquire, to analyze, to relate principles to everyday happenings.

To stimulate thinking, one must describe selected concepts concretely enough to give students some proficiency in working with the ideas. Students should understand concepts well enough to relate them to other concepts and to their own experiences and observations. The time required to stimulate such thinking prohibits an exhaustive catalog of theory and research. But for the undergraduate who is being introduced to social psychology this is no great sacrifice. An introductory text prepares one not to be a social psychologist, but to understand the field and its relation to one's life. Those who gain an enduring interest in the discipline may then go on to further study.

But how does one select material for inclusion in a "reasonably comprehensive" introduction to the discipline? I sought to present theories and findings that are neither too esoteric for the typical undergraduate nor better suited to other psychology courses. I chose instead to present material that casts social psychology in the intellectual tradition of the liberal arts. By the teaching of great literature, philosophy, and science, liberal education seeks to expand people's thinking and awareness and to help free them from the confines of their current social environment. Social psychology can significantly contribute to these goals of liberal education. Many undergraduate social psychology students are not psychology majors; virtually all will enter professions other than social psychology. By focusing on humanly significant issues, one can present much of the fundamental content that preprofessional psychology students need, but in ways that are also stimulating and useful to all students.

The book opens with a single chapter that introduces research methods and forewarns students of how findings can seem obvious—once you know them—and of how social psychologists' values penetrate the discipline. The intent is to give students just enough to prepare them for what follows.

The remainder of this second edition is organized around its definition of social psychology: the scientific study of how people *think about* (Part One, Social Thinking), *influence* (Part Two, Social Influence), and *relate to* (Part Three, Social Relations) one another.

Part One on social thinking examines how we view ourselves and others. For example, Chapter 3 introduces attribution theory and then looks in greater depth at three concepts that are both intellectually provocative and theoretically controversial: the fundamental attribution error, the self-serving bias, and the benefits of self-efficacy.

Part Two explores social influence. By appreciating the cultural sources of our attitudes, and by learning the nature of conformity, persuasion, and group influence, we can better recognize subtle social forces at work upon us.

Part Three considers both unpleasant and pleasant aspects of social relations—aggression and altruism, prejudice and attraction, conflict and peacemaking. Each chapter interweaves basic concepts with everyday applications. Additionally, each Part now ends with an applied chapter that relates the preceding material to an important social issue. One of these is a new chapter, “Social Thinking in the Clinic,” that describes the growing interface between social and clinical psychology.

In addition to this streamlined organization, the entire manuscript is thoroughly updated. Some 600 citations—nearly 30 percent of the references—are new to this edition.

Several other features are also worthy of note. Formal definitions appear in the text margin—when and where students need them and where they may easily be reviewed for study purposes. To communicate the human side of social psychology, all chapters present “Behind the Scenes” personal reflections by selected investigators.

This edition of *Social Psychology* is accompanied by a comprehensive teaching-learning package. Martin Bolt’s acclaimed *Teacher’s Resource Manual* contains a wealth of classroom ideas, including many ready-to-use demonstrations of text principles. Students will benefit from Bolt’s *Study Guide*, which provides review exercises for every chapter and progress tests that help students check their preparedness for exams. Finally, Ann Weber has provided an improved and enlarged test-item file—over 1,100 items that assess students’ *basic knowledge* of chapter content and their ability to *apply* chapter concepts to novel situations.

In Appreciation

Although only one person’s name appears on the cover of this book, the truth is that many people—a whole community of scholars—have invested themselves in it. None of these people agrees with everything I have written nor should any of them be held responsible for it. Yet their suggestions helped make this a better book than it would otherwise have been.

Mark Snyder, Elaine Hatfield, and Charles Kiesler consulted on the organization of the first edition and the content of selected chapters. The opportunity to meet and work with these esteemed colleagues added significantly to the pleasure of my efforts.

Several individuals read all or virtually all of the manuscript. Reflecting upon their comments heightened my respect for the professional competence and commitment of each of them. First edition reviewers included Martin Bolt, Calvin College; Ranald Hansen, Oakland University; William Ickes, University of Missouri at St. Louis; Edward E. Jones, Princeton University; Martin Kaplan, Northern Illinois University; Teru L. Morton,

University of Hawaii; Tom Tyler, Northwestern University; Kipling Williams, Drake University; Royce Singleton, Jr., College of the Holy Cross; and Gary L. Wells, University of Alberta—Edmonton.

In preparing this new edition I was encouraged first by letters and comments from dozens of colleagues and student readers, and also by more formal assessments of a sample of instructors who have taught from the book. The second edition manuscript was then painstakingly reviewed by colleagues whose wise counsel I gratefully acknowledge: Robert Arkin, University of Missouri; William Froming, University of Florida; Douglas Kenrick, Arizona State University; Arthur Miller, Miami University; Rhoda Unger, Montclair State College; and Ann Weber, University of North Carolina at Asheville.

Other professional colleagues willingly provided expert reviews of selected chapters or sections. Their constructive criticisms and suggestions averted numerous errors. I am grateful to each of these people: Anthony Doob, University of Toronto; Bert Hodges, Gordon College; Chester A. Insko, University of North Carolina; Billy Van Jones, Abilene Christian College; Norbert Kerr, Michigan State University; David L. McMillen, Mississippi State University; Darren Newton, University of Virginia; Paul Paulus, University of Texas at Arlington; Garold Stasser, Miami University; Homer Stavely, Keene State College; Elizabeth Tanke, University of Santa Clara; William C. Titus, Briarcliff College; and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, Calvin College.

Two institutions also deserve special mention. For the first edition, Hope College provided a wonderfully supportive intellectual community. The present edition was prepared during a sabbatical year at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. The beautiful medieval setting, the marvelous facilities, and the warm hospitality of psychology faculty members such as Malcolm Jeeves, Margaret Wetherell, and Jonathan Potter helped make the gestation of this new edition of *Social Psychology* a special pleasure.

Were it not for the initiative and encouragement of Nelson Black of McGraw-Hill, it never would have occurred to me to write a textbook. Alison Meersschaert, McGraw-Hill's Director of Basic Book Development, guided me through the first edition and sustained me with her unfailing enthusiasm. James D. Anker coordinated the second edition teaching package, the text portion of which was gently and sensitively nurtured by Kate Moran Aker. James Belsler patiently managed both editions from manuscript to finished book.

Finally, credit is due my friend and writing coach, poet-essayist Jack Ridl. His influence lies hidden on every page.

To each one of these persons, I am in debt. Collectively, they made writing this book a stimulating, gratifying experience.

David G. Myers

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