

Social Psychology

S E C O N D E D I T I O N



J O H N S A B I N I



SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

SECOND EDITION

John Sabini

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



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To Debbie, thanks.

PREFACE

The newspaper reporter and the mystery writer are both storytellers. But they tell their stories in quite different ways. The reporter's discipline is, to mix clichés, to put the bottom line right up front. The story starts with a strong lead paragraph, one that tells the who, what, where, when, and why of what happened. The remaining paragraphs provide detail and background—things the reader can decide to pursue or ignore, depending on her interest in the topic. Whether the reader reads on or not, she has gotten the most important facts from the first paragraph. The reporter's aim is to give the reader as much information as he can, as economically as possible. But putting the most important facts in the lead paragraph is the *last* thing a mystery writer would do. The mystery writer expects—demands—her reader to read the whole piece; her aim is to lead, and even mislead, her reader's thinking along the path to the resolution. *How* the reader gets to the criminal is the crucial issue for the mystery writer. Textbooks can be written either way. This one is modeled on the mystery novel.

Behind this decision to borrow from Agatha Christie lies a conception of science and of liberal education. It is a cliché that the satisfaction scientists derive from pursuing truth is much the same as Sherlock Holmes's; the reason it has become a cliché is that it is true. The satisfaction of science *is* the satisfaction of a detective. I hope that you as a reader can share that satisfaction. Given this idea of what science is, I was drawn to the style of a mystery novel.

A second reason to prefer the detective story model is a conception of what a liberal education is about. One thing it is about is conveying to the student some small fraction of the knowledge our culture, and for that matter our species, has accumulated. This aim could easily, perhaps more easily, be accomplished in a newspaper format. But there is another aim of a liberal education: to train the student to think about whatever the subject matter of the course happens to be. One way to do that is by tracing the thinking of the people who created the field. And this means following the detective's reasoning, rather than merely remembering the who, what, when, where, and why of what he discovered.

The discussions in this text, then, move from question to answer, but the path traveled from one to the other is not always the most direct one. Where it digresses from the direct path, it is to follow actual inquiry. These digressions embody the logic used by practicing scientists; they do so better than do direct paths—which are known primarily to crows.

When I wrote the first edition of this text, there was one Soviet Union and two Germanies. Things change. It is the responsibility of textbooks to chronicle the changes in the part of the world the textbook calls its own. I have attempted in this second edition to chronicle the changes that have occurred in social psychology over the last three years. But at the same time, I have tried not to lose the historical approach that guided the first edition.

In addition to bringing each of the chapters of the first edition up-to-date, I made two important changes in the second edition. The first has to do with gender. In the first edition, there was a chapter on gender that discussed psychological differences between men and women, gender roles, and gender stereotypes. It made sense to collect these phenomena in one place. Unfortunately, however, that organization meant that gender stereotypes were treated in a different chapter from other stereotypes—for example, racial stereotypes. But many social psychologists believe that the same mechanisms are involved in all stereotypes, and that therefore the material on gender stereotyping should be in the same chapter as the material on racial stereotyping.

Putting everything to do with gender in one place has another unfortunate consequence—it also divorced gender roles from sex, and it makes sense to think about gender roles in relation to sexual behavior.

To solve these problems, in this second edition the chapter on gender has been removed. The material on gender stereotypes is now to be found in the prejudice chapter (Chapter 4), and the material on gender roles is in a chapter called “Sex and Gender” (Chapter 12). I, like many authors before me, wish I could have arranged the material both ways! Perhaps one day books will be published in such a way that this will be possible.

The second major change has to do with culture. Since the first edition, there has been an increasingly forceful movement within social psychology to examine our discipline in cross-cultural perspective. In the first edition, I responded to this impulse by including an epilogue on just that topic. But in the interim, it became increasingly clear to me that culture deserved a more complete treatment. So this second edition contains a chapter about culture, specifically focused on the question: Is the Western conception of a self broadly shared, or is it a uniquely Western idea?

COVERAGE

This book is intended to be a fairly complete account of what appears in the literature of social psychology. As such, it contains too much material to be covered in a one-semester course—or, at least, I have not been able to cover everything in my one-semester course. There is room, then, for individual taste in which topics to cover and which to leave to the curiosity of the student.

In deciding what to include, I have tried to avoid believing that only the latest findings of social psychology are worth thinking about. The classic studies are, to my mind, just as interesting. Thus I have tried to include both.

This book is organized into five parts. Each part addresses some broad subarea of social psychology. How these five parts are arranged follows from the emphasis of the text. The emphasis is distinctly on the *social* in social psychology. For that reason, the text begins with the material traditionally known as *group dynamics* (Part One: Social Influence, Groups and Task Performance, Intergroup Conflict). It ends with a discussion of what is, perhaps, the most individual topic in social psychology—*attitudes* (Part Five: Attitudes and Attitude Change, and Attitudes and Behavior). So the movement is from the social to the individual.

The second part of the book is about *the self*; consistent with the book's emphasis, it first treats the self from a social perspective. The opening chapter of that part explores how people think about other people. Chapter 6 focuses on the self in social interaction—that is, on self-presentation—and Chapter 7 focuses on emotion. The final chapter in this part treats the self in cultural perspective.

Part Three is about four prominent *social motives*: altruism, justice, sex, and aggression. Also included in this third part is a chapter on strategic interaction (interpersonal competition). The reason for its inclusion along with the social motives also has to do with the social emphasis of the book. In treating the social motives, it was natural to turn to a discussion of their evolutionary roots, but a satisfactory understanding of the evolution of sexuality (or altruism) must itself be focused on natural selection as a *social* entity, as competition among members of the same species for reproductive success. As it happens, evolution from this perspective is itself a kind of strategic interaction—not among individuals, but among genes. The neat dovetailing of reasoning, and indeed findings, at these very different levels of analysis suggested that the chapter on strategic interaction (although it was not about a specific social motive) ought to be included with discussions of social motives.

Part Four focuses on *interpersonal relationships*. The first chapter discusses interpersonal attraction; the next discusses the development (and dissolution) of relationships, especially marriage.

This organization is, however, not the only one it makes sense to follow. Indeed, the chapters are meant to make sense no matter the order in which they are read. Certainly the order of the parts can be switched. Part Five, for example, can be covered as the second section (or even the first!) for those who would prefer to cover attitudes earlier in the course. Other chapters can also be moved about.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

As in the previous edition, Susan Rakowitz has prepared an Instructor's Manual and Test Item File, which has all sorts of useful information about how to put this book to good use. Maury Silver has prepared a Study Guide to help students master the material of the book; it covers the same ground but with a different pattern.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Now comes the time for me to pay back the many kindnesses I have received—not to mention criticisms—over the many years it took to write this book. The following reviewers helped on the previous edition: Teresa M. Amabile, *Brandeis University*; Craig A. Anderson, *University of Missouri-Columbia*; C. Daniel Batson, *University of Kansas*; Steven J. Breckler, *John Hopkins University*; Linda Carli, *College of the Holy Cross*; Martin Daly, *McMaster University*; Alan Fridlund, *University of California-Santa Barbara*; Theodore L. Gessner, *George Mason University*; James L. Hilton, *University of Michigan*; Lynn Kahle, *University of North Carolina*; Diane Mackie, *University of California-Santa Barbara*; Clark McCauley, *Bryn Mawr College*; David A. Schroeder, *Fullbright College at University of Arkansas*; R. Lance Shotland, *Pennsylvania State University*; Janet T. Spence, *University of Texas at Austin*; Mark P. Zanna, *University of Waterloo*; Dolf Zillmann, *Indiana University*.

For the Second Edition, a new group of professional reviewers was kind enough to offer their advice. I am, of course, terribly grateful to them, though I remain responsible for the errors they couldn't talk me out of. They are: David M. Buss, *University of Michigan*; Shelly Chaiken, *New York University*; Margaret S. Clark, *Carnegie Mellon University*; Joan F. DiGiovanni, *Western New England College*; Alan Fridlund, *University of California-Santa Barbara*; William K. Gabrenya, *Florida Institute of Technology*; William P. Gaeddert, *SUNY Plattsburgh*; James L. Hilton, *University of Michigan*; Larry A. Hjelle, *SUNY Brockport*; Marianne E. Jaeger, *Temple University*; Clark McCauley, *Bryn Mawr College*; Joan Miller, *Yale University*; Valerie J. Steffen, *University of Idaho*.

Next comes Mark Boggs, a friend of mine and of this book. He was always willing to give me his uncommonly wise advice—would I had taken it better.

Then comes Susan Rakowitz, who in preparing the Instructor's Manual read the book seriously enough to save me from so many embarrassments; thanks, Susan, thanks for taking it seriously.

And there is Paul Rozin, another friend of this book and its author, and a dear colleague, someone who repeatedly came to their aid just when they needed it most.

Loud thanks too go to Jay Schulkin for his support, encouragement, and enthusiasm over so many years. His loyalty is a great gift.

How can I repay Henry and Lila Gleitman? First there is their friendship—textbook authors need friendship badly, but there is so much more than that. There is their confidence in me, but there is more yet. Mostly there is their being examples of textbook writers, teachers, and intellectuals. What I am most grateful for is their being such wonderful exemplars.

Norton has been wonderfully generous in providing editorial help over the years; this project has profited mightily from the contributions of Ed Barber, Don Fusting, Sandy Lifland, and Hank Smith. Cathy Wick has added her talents to this second edition. It is a pleasure to thank her for her countless good ideas—especially the ones I first resisted and then took. As with the first edition, Deborah Malmud deserves most of the credit for the images that illustrate these pages; once again my book has profited much from her taste and creativity.

Now I get to thank the three people closest to the book. The first was Stanley Milgram. The book started out being his, then ours, and finally, with his untimely death, mine. He read early drafts, criticized prose, and kept critics at bay. But what he really did was mentor me in the broadest sense of the term. I thank him.

Now we come to two people who at times no doubt felt all too close to the book, Debbie Kossman and Maury Silver. They were called upon to do two things: keep me honest and keep me going. The first required critical eyes, minds, and ears; the second, the ability to offer encouragement. I thank them, and appreciate them, for being wonderful at one and adequate at the other.

John Sabini

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
August, 1994



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