

KENNETH J. GERGEN AND MARY M. GERGEN  
**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

SECOND EDITION



# **Social Psychology**

**Second Edition**

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*For the future-*  
to Laura, Erika, Lisa, Stan, and Michael

# Preface to the Second Edition

## Contours of a Second Edition

Writing a textbook is a risky venture. Thousands of hours are exhausted in the effort; thousands of difficult decisions are confronted—what to include, how to organize, how best to express, how to balance new and old, and so on. And amidst the array of concepts, arguments, propositions, and research findings, we cling to the hope that the passionate concerns that excited the venture—indeed, that prompted the professional commitment—are not lost or buried. And then we confront the greatest risk of all—presenting the volume to our colleagues and to many of their students. For it is they, after all, who will determine whether the risk was well taken. And so it was with the first edition of our book. What was the reaction? Perhaps it is enough to note that here we are again. Indeed, it was especially gratifying to us that the volume could be appreciated by such a diverse audience. We found that it could challenge students at the most competitive schools, and yet was sufficiently clear and interesting that students at less competitive institutions could also find it enjoyable. There were adoptions in all geographic sectors of the United States and Canada; a soft-cover edition enjoyed popularity in England, Germany, and Switzerland. We were especially pleased when other scholars initiated translations of the book into French and Italian. The risk seemed well taken and, with the urgings of Springer-Verlag, excited us to undertake a second edition.

How does our second edition differ from the first? The major differences are as follows:

1. *All chapters updated:* None of the present chapters is an exact duplicate of our earlier effort. This is not to say that the chapters are completely different; we have retained almost all the discussions of classic work and more recent work of enduring importance. However, in every chapter we have attempted to integrate significant theory and research published since our first edition. Thus, for example, you will find in the second edition new discussions of such topics as meta-analysis, social traps, historical social psychology, pornography and aggression, emotions as social performance, rape, aggression as social drama, social representation, and eyewitness testimony, among others.

2. *Two new chapters:* Two entirely new chapters have been added to this volume. Inquiry into the self has been of such central concern to social psychologists over the past decade that we felt a special chapter was merited on this topic. This chapter also includes a much more extensive treatment of emotion than our last edition. Further, research into the social aspect of health and illness has increased at a furious pace during the past decade. Much of this work is exciting, and we felt it essential to share it in a more complete way in the present volume. Because texts are geared to a standard semester, this also meant that we had to delete two chapters—specifically the earlier chapter on morality in thought and action, and the chapter on power, leadership, and control. Some of this material is dear to our hearts, and we did the best we could to integrate it into other relevant sections of the present volume.

3. *Greater sensitivity to European work:* We have long felt very close to European social psychology, and the European responsiveness to the first edition suggested that we were communicating with this audience. Further, there has been a steadily increasing awareness among American and Canadian social psychologists of significant work in Europe. We thus made a special effort in the second edition to reflect this work. No, we did not succeed in capturing all the work of importance. Space limitations and organizational requirements also meant that work of many worthy colleagues in the United States and Canada was not included. However, we do feel that the present volume is superior to all others in its integration across continents.

There are additional changes of lesser significance. For example, teachers and students have complained that many textbooks include too many graphics at the expense of substance; fun and games replace important content. To give students their money's worth we have thus reduced the number of photographs and cartoons and expanded on the coverage of the field. Other students complained that there are too many references in social psychology texts; the flow of argument is too often interrupted. We have thus reduced the number of references in the present volume by roughly a third. There are also two additional pedagogic aids. First, we have added at the end of each chapter a list of key terms within the chapter; each of the key terms has also been set out in boldface type within the chapter itself. Thus, students can more easily discriminate between major and minor concepts. Second, we have added a longer set of suggested readings at the end of each chapter and have annotated the list as a further aid.

### Basic Aims and Structure

As with the first edition, our chief concern in this volume is with relationships among people—their beliefs, decisions, passions, and actions—their successes, their failures, and so on. We believe that no other field of psychology

can cut common experience so close to the bone. In the present volume we wish to share what we believe to be some of the most significant and stimulating insights to emerge from social psychology, from its birth to the present. Our writing has been guided in particular by the following concerns:

***Theoretical coherence*** The emphasis on theoretical ideas begins in the first chapter; we compare the behaviorist, cognitive, and rule–role orientations. We believe that these paradigms form the generating context for subsequent chapters. We show how these perspectives have influenced the questions that have been asked and the explanations that have been offered for various kinds of social behavior. In all of the chapters we try to furnish an integrated view of the field. Typically we begin each chapter with a central question and then build the subsequent material around various attempts to answer the question.

***Research importance*** In each chapter we have tried to create a framework that gives structure to the wide range of data that has been amassed by researchers in the field. Research findings are essential, we believe, in lending strength to theoretical insights. And the student should gain from the book a basic understanding of the place of research both in social psychology and in society.

***Broad implications*** Throughout the book we have tried to make clear that social psychology is a discipline with significant application to major areas of social life. We emphasize the contributions that social psychology can make to the way in which people manage their lives and to the solution of social problems.

***Clarity of presentation*** For a textbook to be useful, it must engage the reader. We hope that our writing style, including our use of anecdotes and examples, will draw the reader in and maintain his or her interest. We have chosen the cartoons by English artist Tony Hall and the

photographs with loving care. Each is worth at least 1,000 words!

***Ease of learning*** We have tried very hard to ease the course of learning for the student. This is accomplished in part by raising interesting questions, and unfolding subsequent arguments in a clear and coherent way. We also add frequent summaries at the end of major sections in each chapter and major summaries at the end of each chapter. Key terms are indicated within the text in boldface type and are listed again at the chapter's end. A glossary of these terms, plus author and subject indexes, are provided at the back of the book. For the student wishing to explore further, we have included numerous references within each chapter and an annotated list of suggested readings at each chapter's close.

A specific logic underlies the organization of the book. We start by introducing the student to the field, discussing the nature of theory and research as well as specific theories and methods. In the next five chapters we focus on the individual, looking at the processes of thought and feeling that are of greatest consequence in relationships with others. In their concern with psychological process, these chapters on social perception, the self, attraction, prejudice, and attitude change form the building blocks for the remainder of the volume. We then begin to shift emphasis outward toward social conduct. In chapters on altruism, aggression, and social influence we explore the relationship between psychological processes on the one hand and social action on the other. The next two chapters shift the emphasis from the individual to the relationship. In these discussions of social exchange and group life, our central concern is with the interdependency of people's actions—how each person's behavior depends on the actions of others. The two final chapters deal with the application of social psychology to real-world problems—first to problems of physical well-being and then to issues of the physical environment, the law, and social prediction. Whereas we first channeled interest inward toward the subject of

social psychology, we end by turning the student's interest again toward problems in the society more generally.

The within-chapter presentation has its own organization as well. We begin each section with major ideas and findings. At the close of these discussions we often suggest possible qualification of the major arguments. Students learn best when discussions are clear-cut and simple. Nevertheless, social psychology is anything but simple-minded, and its conclusions are anything but final. We feel that it would be a disservice to the student and the profession to omit indications of the continuous questioning and creating that are central to scholarly life.

All of the above considerations—from logic of the organization to strategies of presentation—have influenced our choice of materials. We have tried to choose work that has interest and relevance as well as scholarly merit. We give full attention to the classic work, to the theory and research that form the foundation of the discipline. We also explore the more exciting areas of contemporary research. And for those concerned with the discipline's future, we include discussions of new departures in thinking and research.

## Acknowledgments

For whatever virtues one may find in the volume, we can hardly take full credit. This book is truly the result of a collective effort. In part, such efforts have been indirect. Our students have taught us much; these lessons are reflected on every page. Similarly, past teachers and colleagues have furnished wisdom and inspiration. Many others have had a direct impact on the volume.

We cannot overestimate the effect of the editorial staff at Springer-Verlag on the present volume. The enthusiasm and creative counsel were invaluable from the initial reconception to the final rendering of the page proofs. We also appreciate their contributions to the design and editing of the book.

For their intellectual input at various stages of the text's development we are also grateful to Richard Ashmore, Ellen Berscheid, Jim Bryan, Robert Cialdini, Ed Donnerstein, Alice Eagly, Jeffrey Fisher, Russell Geen, George Goethals, Martin Greenberg, Karl Hakmiller, David Hamilton, Jerome Kagan, David Kipnis, George Levinger, Darwyn Linder, Daniel McGillis, Norman Miller, Jill Morawski, Walter Neff, Paul Paulus, James Pennebaker, Harry Reis, Kelly Shaver, Harold Sigall, Ivan Steiner, Abraham Tesser, Ladd Wheeler, Russell Wiegel, and Lauren Wispe.

In the production of the volume we have relied on the expert services of a number of friends and colleagues. Nicole Feldman was largely respon-

sible for distilling the contents of the book into the glossary. The secretarial services of Lisa Gebhart proved essential at every turn. Sharon Younkin is credited with the arduous task of preparing the reference section.

Finally we wish to thank those family members, friends, and acquaintances who have brought many of the ideas in the book vividly to life; we hope you will be pleased to find your experiences captured throughout these pages.

Kenneth J. Gergen  
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February, 1986



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