

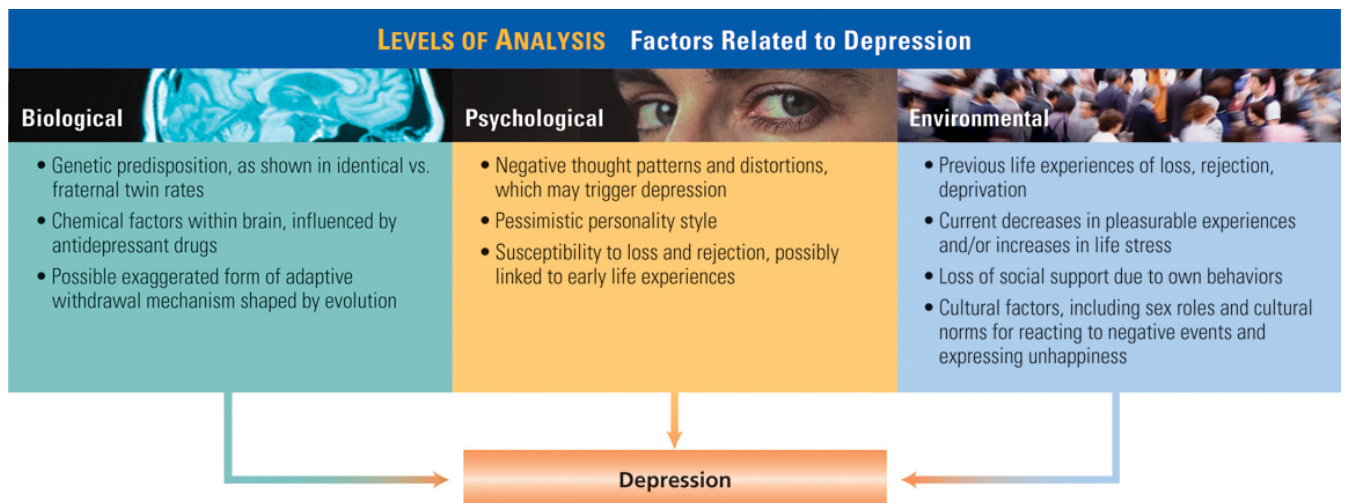
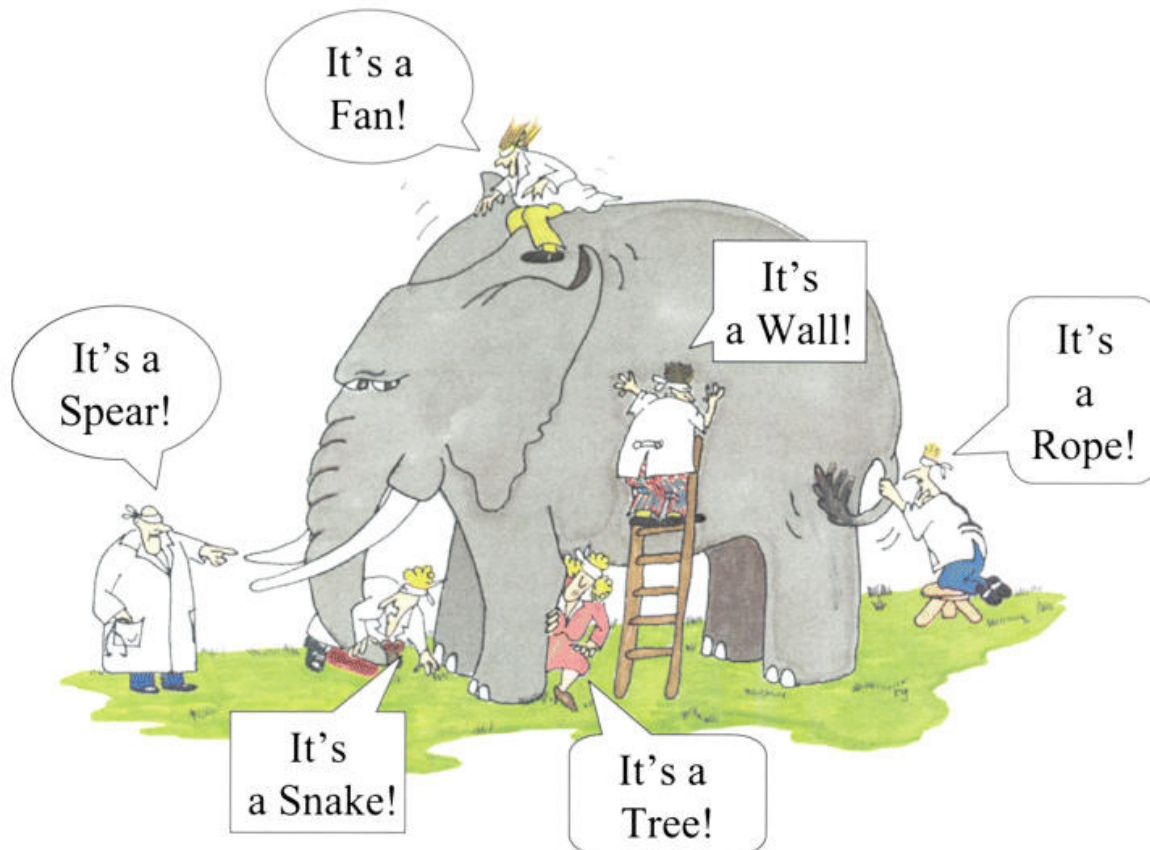
## **Social Psychology**

Social Psychology is the scientific study of the feelings, thoughts and behaviors of individuals in social situations (page 7).

The scientific study means that there are hypotheses about behavior that are assessed with empirical data instead of using logical arguments and intuition. Logic and intuition are limited and may lead to false beliefs. Logical arguments and intuition are important in a science, but to see how the real works, you need empirical data.

## Social Psychology: One Approach of Many

Understanding behavior from a social psychological perspective is only one aspect of understanding people.



## **Aggression**

### **Biological:**

- Low levels of serotonin, high levels of norepinephrine
- Abnormal activity in the hypothalamus

### **Psychological:**

- Reinforcement of aggressive behavior
- Observation of people modeling aggressive behavior

### **Environmental: Social**

- Temperature
- Crime
- Poverty
- Social Norms

## **Chapter 1: An Invitation to Social Psychology**

### Characterizing Social Psychology

- Explaining Behavior
- Comparing Social Psychology with Related Disciplines
- Proximal and Distal Influences in Social Psychology

### The Power of the Situation

- The Milgram Experiment
- Seminarians as Samaritans
- Channel Factors
- The Fundamental Attribution Error

### The Role of Construal

- Interpreting Reality
- Schemas
- Stereotypes

### Automatic versus Controlled Processing

- Types of Unconscious Processing
- Functions of Unconscious Processing

### Evolution and Human Behavior: How We Are the Same


- Human Universals
- Group Living, Language, and Theory of Mind
- Evolution and Gender Roles
- Avoiding the Naturalistic Fallacy
- Social Neuroscience

### Culture and Human Behavior: How We Are Different

- Cultural Differences in Self-Definition
- Individualism versus Collectivism in the Workplace
- Dick and Jane, Deng and Janxing
- Who Are You?
- Culture and Gender Roles
- Some Qualifications
- Culture and Evolution as Tools for Understanding Situations

## Explaining Behavior: Collection of Empirical Data

Once a scientist has a hypothesis and operationally defined their variables, the hypothesis must be tested, and empirical evidence collected.

A testable hypothesis is one that can be assessed. When assessing a hypothesis, scientists rely on the collection of empirical evidence to assess claims (think  ).

### Empirical evidence:

Evidence that is based on objective observation, measurement, and or experimentation, versus evidence based on logical arguments, authority, or intuition.



The belief that dogs dream, but can't tell the difference between dreams and reality isn't testable and empirical evidence cannot be collect to support or dispute the claim.

### Apply the idea of empirical evidence to these hypotheses:

- If we make cars more fuel efficient, then it will make them less safe.
- If we have our employees wear backbelts, then we can reduce the number of workplace injuries.
- Driving while using a hands-free cell phone increases the risk of accidents
- Drug testing reduces workplace accident.
- Magnets ruin credit cards.

## Explaining Behavior: Collection of Empirical Data

Why collect empirical data to assess claims—why do we take so much care in collecting data?

We can be easily fooled. The following, it is easy to see the illusion and how we are fooled, but sometimes, we don't know the illusion.


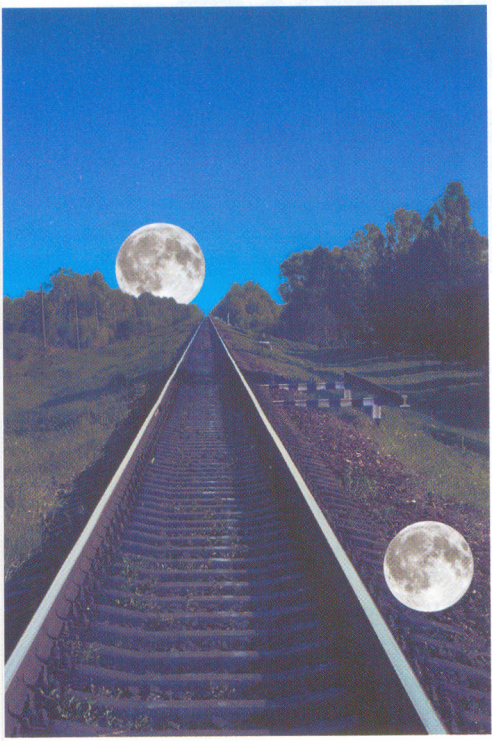
Mullen Lyer Illusion	Moon Illusion
 An illustration of the Mullen-Lyer illusion. It shows a room with a red wall and a doorway. A man in a white shirt and dark pants is pointing at the wall. Another man in a white shirt and dark shorts is standing in the doorway, holding a blue bowl. A large brown dog is in the foreground. The room is lit with a warm, orange light.	 An illustration of the Moon illusion. It shows a perspective view of a road or railway tracks receding into the distance under a clear blue sky. A large, bright full moon is positioned at the horizon line, appearing much larger than a smaller full moon in the lower right foreground.
	<p><b>FIGURE 4.19</b> <i>Visual Perception</i> <b>MOON ILLU- SION.</b> Distance cues make the moon look bigger at the horizon.</p> <p>research suggests ence from smaller This perspective : how perceptual s of information. A rides our percepti</p>

Image source (right): Feist

## Explaining Behavior: Collection of Empirical Data

Even experience can shape our perception without our knowledge. If we make judgments outside our realm of experience, we may have difficulties.

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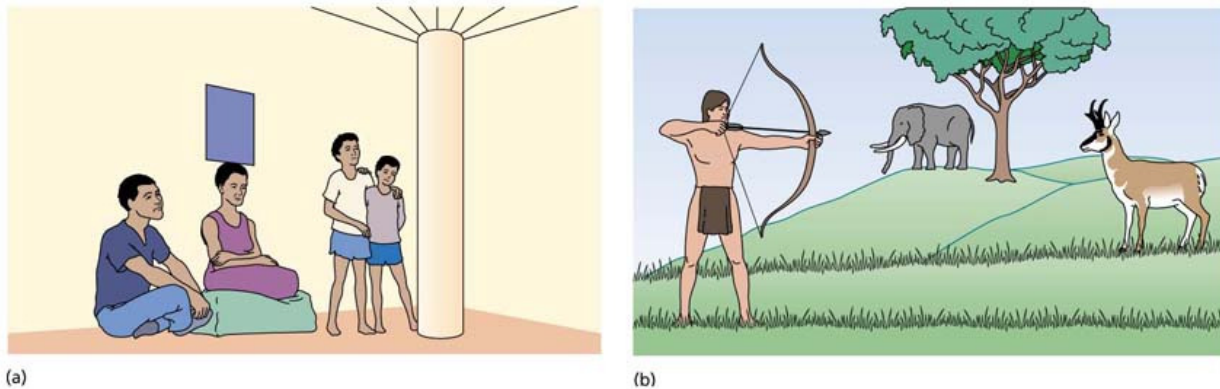


Image source: Psychology: Science and Practice ( ), Passer and Smith

Western cultures see a window above the woman's head (left image) and see the archer as shooting at the antelope (right image).

Non-western cultures see the square sitting on a woman's head (left image) and see the archer shooting at a baby elephant (right image).

In many illusions, we can actually test our claims (are the lines longer, are the moons of different sizes). There is a physical reality. However, when it comes to psychological reality, we may fool ourselves into believing something that is not true.

## **The Power of the Situation: The Milgram Experiment**

### **Public Announcement**

## **WE WILL PAY YOU \$4.00 FOR ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME**

### **Persons Needed for a Study of Memory**

\* We will pay five hundred New Haven men to help us complete a scientific study of memory and learning. The study is being done at Yale University.

\* Each person who participates will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50¢ carfare) for approximately 1 hour's time. We need you for only one hour: there are no future obligations. You may choose the time you would like to come (evenings, weekdays, or weekends).

\* No special training, education, or experience is needed. We want:

Factory workers	Businessmen	Construction workers
City employees	Clerks	Salespeople
Laborers	Professional people	White-collar workers
Barbers	Telephone workers	Others

All persons must be between the ages of 20 and 50. High school and college students cannot be used.

\* If you meet these qualifications, fill out the coupon below and mail it now to Professor Stanley Milgram, Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven. You will be notified later of the specific time and place of the study. We reserve the right to decline any application.

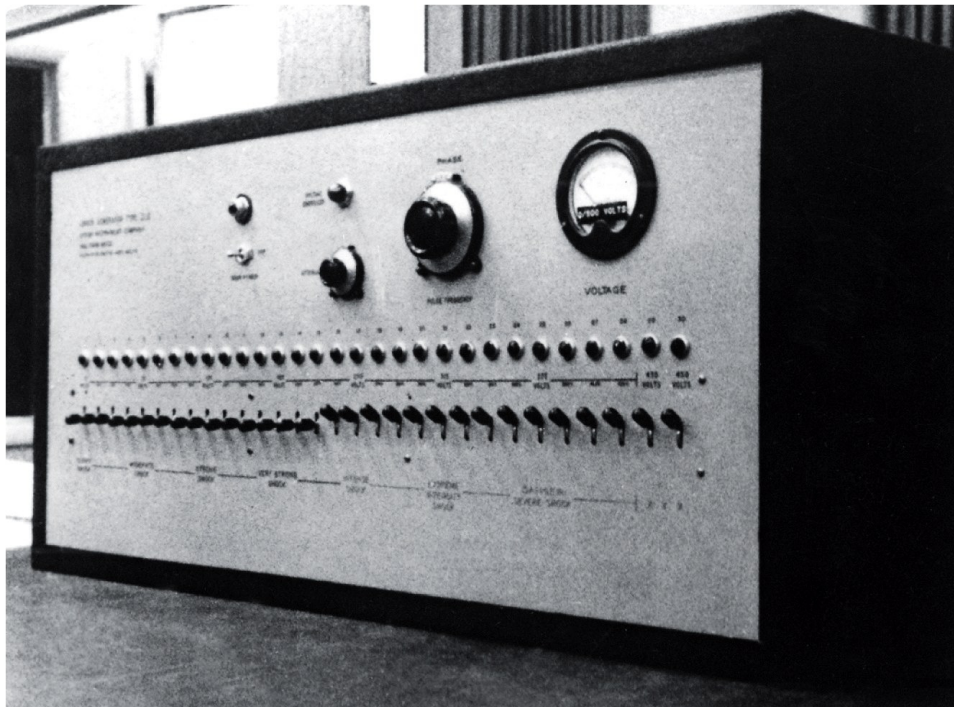
\* You will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50¢ carfare) as soon as you arrive at the laboratory.



## The Power of the Situation: The Milgram Experiment



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*Social Psychology, 2/e* Unnumbered 1 p12b  
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Why would psychologists want to see if people would harm another person that they would not know?

## The Power of the Situation: The Milgram Experiment



*Social Psychology, 2/e* Unnumbered 1 p11  
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- This illustrates that psychology is not all common sense.
- People underestimate situational factors and overemphasize personality factors. This provides the false belief that “it can’t happen here” or “I’m not the type of person who would do that”.
- We need to collect empirical data to see if this is how the world works.



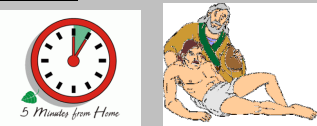
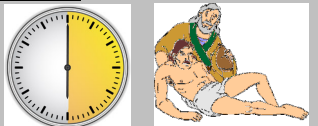
What are some other implications where people might harm strangers?

## The Power of the Situation: Seminary students as Samaritans

Seminary students are asked to give a lecture on the how to get a job as a seminary student **OR** the Good Samaritan parable. Due to scheduling constraints, they are told to give the lecture in five minutes **OR** 30 minutes across campus. As each student crosses campus, he encounters a slumped man coughing, groaning and head down. Does he offer help?

Which condition(s) had the highest rate of helping behavior?



		Time to give lecture	
		5 minutes	30 minutes
Topic of lecture	How to get a job	<p><b>(a)</b> You have <b>5 minutes</b> to give the lecture on <u>how to get a job</u></p> 	<p><b>(b)</b> You have <b>30 minutes</b> to give the lecture on <u>how to get a job</u></p> 
	Good Samaritan parable	<p><b>(c)</b> You have <b>5 minutes</b> to give the lecture on the <u>Good Samaritan parable</u></p> 	<p><b>(d)</b> You have <b>30 minutes</b> to give the lecture on the <u>Good Samaritan parable</u></p> 

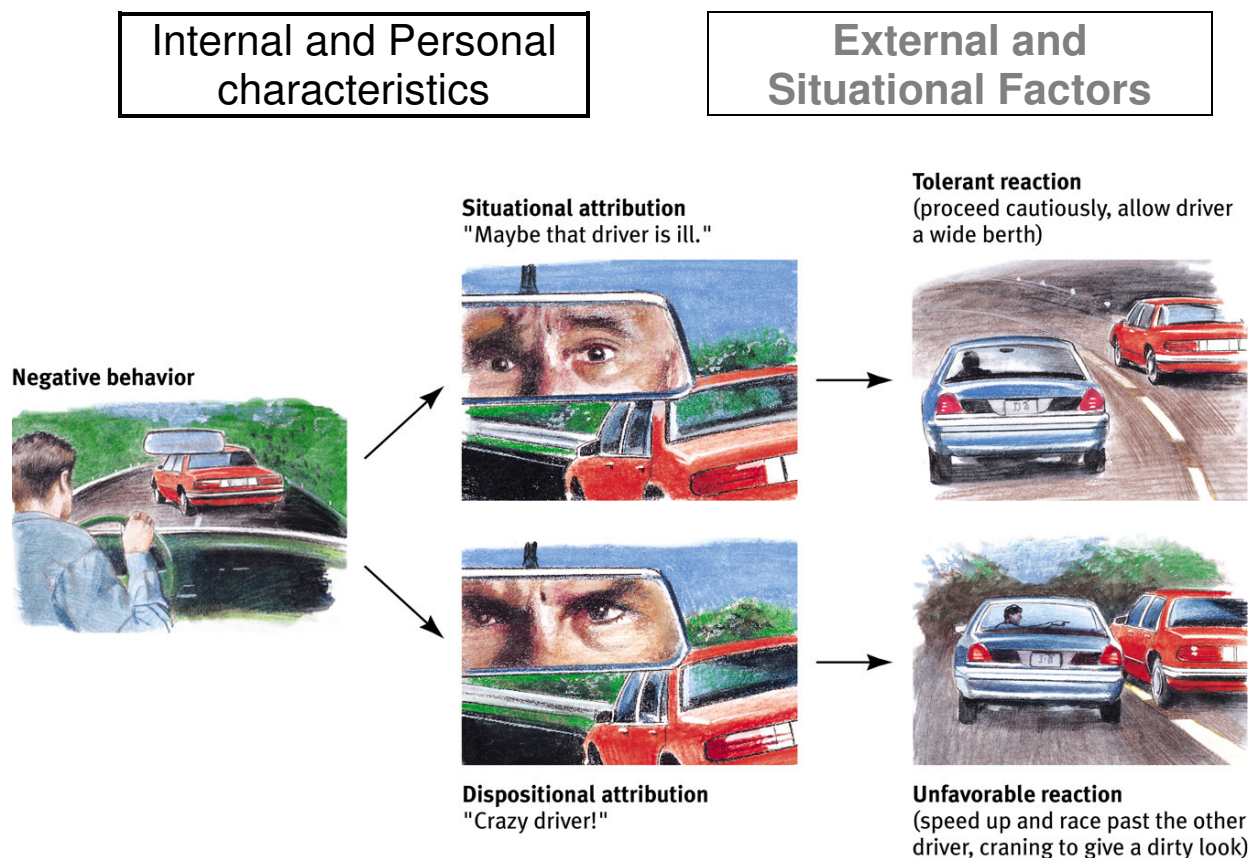
Do attitudes predict behavior?

- Will those who are preparing a lecture on the Good Samaritan help a stranger?

In general (like multitasking) when the mind is busy (you are in a hurry), you are less likely to notice things in your environment.

## The Power of the Situation: Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE)

The fundamental attribution error is the tendency for individualistic cultures to attribute the behavior of other people to internal, personal characteristics, while ignoring or underestimating the effects of external, situational factors.



In this case, members of individualistic cultures like the United States tend to focus on the person and make a dispositional attribution (Crazy driver!). While those from a more collectivist culture like Japan tend to focus on the situation and make more situational attributions (Maybe that driver is ill).

For example:

- When people take note of ethnic neighborhoods, dominated by crime and poverty,
  - the personal qualities of the residents are blamed for these problems,
  - while other situational explanations, such as job discrimination, poor police service, etc. are downplayed.
- When employers are looking for new employees, some discourage the hiring of the unemployed because they must be not as skilled or else they would not have lost their job (see NPR story).
- When one fails to get a job,
  - people can underestimate (social) situational factors such as opportunity, unemployment rates and connections and
  - overemphasize dispositional factors and label people as incompetent or lazy.
- Americans used IQ tests to demonstrate that Caucasians were more intelligent than many immigrants at the turn of the century,
- When explaining why Americans interned the Japanese during WWII, we fail to consider situational factors
- When talking about terrorist,
  - we tend to make personality attributions (they are “evil”) and
  - discount American foreign policy.

## Why is recognizing the Fundamental Attributional Error important?

There are many factors influencing behavior. Not recognizing the fundamental attributional error (overestimating personality factors and underestimating situational factors) makes it difficult to address problems such as the following because we focus too much on the person.

- Student's cheating on exams: We tend to make personality attributions and focus on the person, and not take into account social pressures to do well.
- Enron/Worldcom's accounting practices: There is a tendency to focus on "bad individuals". However, there are institutional processes that reinforce an individual to manipulate the books.
- Driving: People tend to blame people for being bad drivers when they aren't allowed to merge in and ignore situational factors (such as another car not allowing that driver to merge).
- Drug abuse: The root causes of drug use are partially situational. Telling someone "just say no!" is (and was) an ineffective strategy to fight drugs abuse.
- Suicide: We tend to focus on the personality of the person, and underestimate situation factors such as (accessibility to the means of committing suicide, the situational factors affecting the mood and cognitions).
- Problems in Iraq: