Seventh Canadian Edition

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

MYERS | JORDAN | SMITH | SPENCER

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Mc Graw Hill Education

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SEVENTH CANADIAN EDITION

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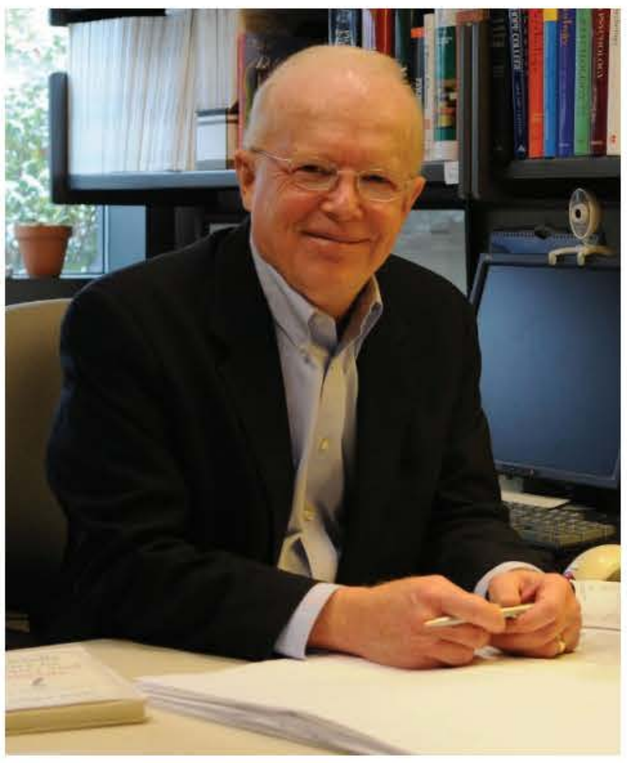

David G. Myers, since receiving his PhD from the University of Iowa, has spent his career at Michigan's Hope College, where he is a professor of psychology and has taught dozens of social psychology sections. Hope College students have invited him to be their commencement speaker and named him "outstanding professor."

Dr. Myers also communicates psychology science to the general public. His writings have appeared in four dozen magazines, from *Today's Education* to *Scientific American.* His 17 books include *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils.*

His research and writings have been recognized for the Gordon Allport Prize, for an "honored scientist" award from the Federation of Associations in the Brain and Behavioral Sciences, and for the Award for Distinguished Service on Behalf of Personality-Social Psychology.

Christian H. Jordan is a professor in the psychology department at Wilfrid Laurier University. He teaches lecture courses and seminars in social psychology and research methods at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Dr. Jordan is also an active researcher, studying self-esteem, narcissism, and self-enhancement processes. His work has been published in a number of scholarly handbooks and journals, including the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Experimental Psychology, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Self and Identity,* and *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology.* He has also written popular instructional pieces on how to effectively read journal articles and how to conduct and report persuasive psychology experiments.

In his spare time, Dr. Jordan spends time with his family and friends, reads, listens to music, and exercises outdoors or at the gym. He enjoys cycling during the summer months. Christian and Lynne Jordan have two sons, Grayson and Hayden, and a daughter, Reilly, whom they lost to leukemia.

Steven M. Smith is a professor of psychology and the dean of science at Saint Mary's University in Halifax. He completed his BA (honours) at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec, and his MA and PhD in social psychology at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Dr. Smith regularly teaches courses in social behaviour, attitudes and persuasion, and psychology and law. His lectures are well received, and he has been nominated for the Saint Mary's University Student Association Faculty of Arts Teaching Award.

Dr. Smith is an active researcher and is dedicated to applying his theoretical work to real-world concerns. His research has been supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation, the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation, and a number of private organizations. His work has appeared in journals such as the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Law & Human Behavior*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Social Psychology and Personality Science*, and *Psychophysiology*.

Dr. Smith has lent his expertise to a number of community organizations, advising on communication and social marketing issues. His wife, Isabel, is a clinical developmental psychologist, and together they have two fantastic but heavily analyzed children, Sydney and Dylan.

Steven J. Spencer is a professor and chair of the social psychology division at the University of Waterloo. He teaches popular classes in introductory psychology, social psychology, and social cognition. He is known for his lively lectures and engaging classroom demonstrations.

Dr. Spencer also maintains an active research program that investigates self-image maintenance processes, motivated social perception, stereotyping, and social norms. In particular, he has examined how threats to the self-concept can lead people to stereotype others and how being stereotyped by others can threaten people and undermine their performance on academic tasks. His work has been published in the *Psychological Bulletin, Psychological Science, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* and *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology.* He has served his discipline as a consulting editor to the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and as an associate editor to the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology.*

In his spare time, Dr. Spencer enjoys running half-marathons and spending time with his family. He has a daughter and a son.

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Preface

Welcome to the seventh Canadian edition of *Social Psychology*. We have a slightly new team now, building on the fabulous foundation created by Steve Spencer in previous Canadian editions. We were both (Steven Smith and Christian Jordan) excited to write this new edition but also knew it would be a challenge. We are thrilled to be working with David Myers. He is known for his wonderful textbooks, which are solidly scientific and warmly human, factually rigorous, and intellectually provocative. His texts are simply the best.

Steven Smith is the latest addition to our writing team, but he has already done an incredible job writing the Canadian edition of *Exploring Social Psychology* with David Myers. Steven is a highly accomplished social psychologist, teacher, scholar, and writer. He is also a warm and generous person. I cannot think of anyone better suited to take over Steve Spencer's role in producing this text. I was thrilled when I learned that Steven would be working on the latest edition and am thoroughly impressed with his fantastic work on it.

We continue to meet the challenge of creating a comprehensive Canadian social psychology text. How does one select the material for inclusion in a "reasonably comprehensive" introduction to one's discipline—a text long enough to allow rich narrative (to weave a story) but crisp enough not to overwhelm? Further, what Canadian content will most capture the imaginations of Canadian students? We have sought to present theories and findings that are not too esoteric but that capture the fundamental concepts of the field in a scientifically rigorous manner. In doing so, we have sought to balance classic findings with significant current Canadian research. We think you will find that as the book emphasizes the Canadian context, it also has a strong research focus presented in an understandable and engaging style.

Organization

The book opens with a single chapter that includes our methods of inquiry. The chapter also warns students about how findings can seem obvious—once you know them—and how social psychologists' own values permeate the discipline. The intent is to give students just enough background to prepare them for what follows.

The book then unfolds around its definition of social psychology: the scientific study of how people *think about* (Part One), *influence* (Part Two), and *relate to* (Part Three) one another.

Part One, on *social thinking,* examines how we view ourselves and others. It assesses the accuracy of our impressions, intuitions, and explanations; and it examines the relation of our behaviour and our attitudes.

Part Two explores *social influence.* In this edition, we begin by discussing how social influence can shape attitudes—that is, how persuasion occurs. This structure allows instructors to focus on attitude formation and change in a unit that covers Chapter 5, Chapter 6, and Chapter 7. We continue to examine social influence by examining the nature of persuasion, conformity, and group influence.

Part Three considers the attitudinal and behavioural manifestations of both negative and positive *social relations.* It flows from altruism to aggression and attraction to prejudice. Notably, in this edition we have maintained the split of the material on prejudice into two chapters, focusing on the causes of prejudice in Chapter 11 and the consequences of prejudice in Chapter 12. Research on prejudice has grown considerably in the past decade, and there is simply too much research at this point to cover in a single chapter. We have also added, to Chapter 12, a section on overcoming prejudice.

Applications of social psychology are both interwoven throughout every chapter and highlighted in the four concluding modules: Module A: Social Psychology in Conflict and Peacemaking, Module B: Social Psychology in the Clinic, Module C: Social Psychology in Court, and Module D: Social Psychology and the Sustainable Future. These modules are not meant to be comprehensive treatments of these issues but to focus on interesting and engaging issues. They are meant to be included as supplements to the other chapters in the book when instructors want to emphasize these issues.

This book also has a multicultural emphasis that we seek to stress in every chapter. All authors are creatures of their cultures, and we are no exceptions. Yet by reading the world's social psychology literature, by corresponding with researchers worldwide, and by examining Canada's extensive research on the many cultures represented in this country, we have sought to present a multicultural text to a Canadian audience. The book's focus remains the *fundamental principles of social thinking, social influence, and social relations as revealed by careful empirical research.* However, hoping to broaden our awareness of the human family, we aim to illustrate these principles multiculturally.

To assist readers, we have organized chapters into three to six readable-length sections. Each begins with a preview and ends with a summary that highlights the organization and key concepts.

In agreement with Thoreau's beliefs that "anything living is easily and naturally expressed in popular language," we have sought, paragraph by paragraph, to craft the most engaging and effective book possible. A bright, four-colour design complements the text revision and enhances the impact of the photos and figures. The definitions of key terms appear both in the text and in the Glossary.

Highlights of the Seventh Canadian Edition

- **Current research.** The text is updated throughout, with more than 750 new citations, to include the most cutting-edge research in social psychology. The latest findings on automatic processing, evolutionary psychology, video games and aggression, perceptions of media bias, counter-arguments and attitude inoculation, culture and helping strangers, motivational sources of prejudice, and misperceptions of out-groups are just some of the examples of updated research in this new edition.
- **Application of social psychology**. Social psychology is a very applied discipline. Yet sometimes there is a gap between the research described on the page and how it might roll out in real life—the connection can be a bit abstract. In this edition of the text, we have tried hard to bridge that gap. Each chapter and module has a new feature—a set of insights or a hands-on activity that applies the science you are learning to the real world and teaches you how to apply what you have learned to your everyday life.
- **Additional coverage of gender.** Research on gender continues to evolve. Gender is examined by a number of different researchers in a number of different contexts. As such, it seems that gender is less a subfield of social psychology and more a very important variable that is studied in many contexts. Given this evolution, gender is covered throughout the book in many subsections.
- **Additional coverage of social cognitive neuroscience.** New developments in brain imaging and recording have provided a number of new insights in the field. These findings make a substantial contribution to a number of chapters.
- **Strong pedagogy.** Readers benefit from features designed to engage interest while encouraging understanding of core concepts. Pedagogical elements include section previews; numerous photos, figures, and tables; a running glossary; Focus On

boxes highlighting applied concepts; The Inside Story vignettes, written by leading researchers; a summary of each major section within the text; the Summing Up sections moved to the end of each chapter, to become a source for students reviewing for exams; and an index that highlights coverage of concepts such as culture, ethics, gender, law and justice, and sexuality.

- **Relevant examples.** Drawn from the arts, business, sports, and current events, the text's examples appeal to students from a variety of majors and academic backgrounds.

What's New in the Seventh Canadian Edition

Highlights of new and updated material in the seventh Canadian edition include the following.

Chapter 1: Introducing Social Psychology

- New chapter opener
- New discussion of correlation and causation
- New activity exploring potential causes for correlations
- Updated and recent research incorporated throughout the chapter

Chapter 2: The Self in a Social World

- Chapter reorganized to bring together topics related to positive self-views (self-esteem, narcissism, self-serving bias) and to cover self-control separately
- New material on social comparison and self-presentation on Facebook
- New material on individualism by region and class, and through culture change
- New material on self-compassion vs. the pursuit of self-esteem
- New material on whether narcissists realize they are narcissistic

Chapter 3: Social Beliefs and Judgments

- Updated coverage of System 1 and System 2 to explain unconscious, fast thinking compared with conscious, slow thinking
- Reorganized topics to bring together coverage of System 1 thinking (priming, intuitive judgments)
- Updated coverage on embodied cognition

Chapter 4: Behaviour and Attitudes

- New Activity box that asks readers to explore how they can understand, use, and defeat compliance tactics
- Updated coverage of topic
- New research in multiple sections

Chapter 5: Persuasion

- New chapter opener
- Activity box that asks readers to deconstruct ads and understand the principles underlying their construction
- New research and recent studies
- New explanations and current examples for elements of persuasion

Chapter 6: Conformity

- New chapter and section openers
- Substantial updates of conformity and obedience examples
- New Activity box that asks readers to reflect on personal experiences of conformity
- Enhanced discussion of conformity issues in online contexts
- Discussion on conformity in hazing and "frosh week" situations

Chapter 7: Group Influence

- New chapter and section openers
- Enhanced discussion of group polarization on the Internet and in terrorist organizations
- New Activity asking readers to reflect on their own experience of group influence
- Updated and recent research incorporated throughout the chapter

Chapter 8: Altruism: Helping Others

- New chapter and section openers
- Updated and recent research incorporated throughout the chapter
- New Activity box that asks readers to consider their definition of *altruism* as experienced by them
- New discussion of iconic Kitty Genovese case that launched this line of research
- Discussion of how the reader can encourage people to help in an emergency situation

Chapter 9: Aggression: Hurting Others

- New coverage of bullying and cyberbullying
- New coverage of physical aggression and social aggression
- New material on sleep and aggression
- New material on the effects of testosterone
- New material on diet and aggression
- New material on media exposure and aggression/bullying
- New material on violent video games and aggression
- New strategies on how to reduce aggression

Chapter 10: Attraction and Intimacy: Liking and Loving Others

- Revised definitions of secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment
- Key term *insecure attachment* changed to *anxious attachment*
- New material on mere exposure
- New research on the effects of physical attractiveness
- More thorough discussion of the correlates of avoidant behaviour
- New discussion of couples' compatibility based on attachment styles

Chapter 11: Sources of Prejudice

- Updated opening examples focused on prejudice based on age, weight, and immigration status
- Added coverage of research on effects of media portrayal of stereotypes

- Updated research on under-reported feelings of prejudice
- Expanded coverage of the role of conflict and competition in prejudice
- New research on effects of multiculturalism

Chapter 12: Consequences of Prejudice

- Updated research on the Implicit Association Test (IAT)
- Added research on microaggression
- Updated data on changing gender attitudes
- New research on values affirmation
- New section titled "Can We Overcome Prejudice?"

Module A: Social Psychology in Conflict and Peacemaking

- Information on effects of contact on prejudice relocated to new section on overcoming prejudice in Chapter 12
- More discussion of and examples of prejudice against and between Muslims
- Added research on effects of perspective taking and empathy

Module B: Social Psychology in the Clinic

- New bulleted list and discussion of studies comparing clinical and statistical predictions
- Updated discussion on the vicious cycle of depression
- Updates in the discussion of loneliness
- New bulleted list and discussion of marital quality predicting health

Module C: Social Psychology in Court

- New opener with examples of Canadian cases of miscarriages of justice
- New research into multiple areas
- Activity asking readers to consider their own views of eyewitnesses
- Discussion of false confession
- Revised coverage of training for police interviewers
- Revised coverage of minimizing false lineup identifications
- New section examining the physical attractiveness of the defendant and the judge's instructions during a trial

Module D: Social Psychology and the Sustainable Future

- Fully updated to include the newest research on creating a sustainable future
- New statistics and data regarding the environment
- New research on changing attitudes and behaviour
- New openers and examples
- Activity exploring people's level of satisfaction with their lives

Features

In addition to the authors' renowned engaging and personal writing style, which reflects their enthusiasm for the subject, *Social Psychology,* Seventh Canadian Edition, also offers pedagogical elements designed to help students get the most out of the text.

Section Previews

These previews introduce each major section within a chapter, bringing forward the concepts and issues to be discussed in the ensuing pages.

How Well Do Our Attitudes Predict Our Behaviours?

To what extent, and under what conditions, do attitudes drive our outward actions? Why were social psychologists at first surprised by a seemingly small connection between attitudes and actions?

Key Terms

Key terms are highlighted in the text and defined in the Glossary.

What Is Social Psychology?

What are the parameters of social psychology?

Social psychology is a science that studies the influences of our situations, with special attention to how we view and affect one another. More precisely, it is the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another (Figure 1–1).

Quotations

Found throughout the text, quotations from philosophers, writers, and scientists highlight how social psychological concepts relate to many aspects of everyday society.

now and when they were 16, they both believed the students had improved, on a variety of traits (see Figure 2–8). These evaluations, however, could simply indicate a developmental trend—maybe people just get better with time. But Wilson and Ross (2001) also had students, at the end of term, recall what they were like at the beginning of term. The catch was that they had actually surveyed the students at the beginning of term and could compare their two sets of ratings. The students remembered being much worse off at the start of term than they actually rated themselves as being at the time—their sense of improvement, it seems, was more wishful thinking

"The past is to be respected and acknowledged, but not to be worshipped. It is our future in which we will find our greatness."

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, *Canadian Museum of History Library*

The Inside Story

In their own words, prominent social psychologists explain the motives and methods behind the studies conducted in their areas of expertise. These vignettes give students a first-hand account of studies cited in the text.

THE INSIDE STORY

I vividly remember the afternoon I began to appreciate the far-reaching implications of physical attractiveness. Graduate student Karen Dion (now a professor at the University of Toronto) learned that some researchers at our Institute of Child Development had collected popularity ratings from nursery school children and taken a photo of each child. Although teachers and caregivers of children had persuaded us that "all children are beautiful" and no physical-attractiveness discriminations could be made, Dion suggested we instruct some people to rate each child's looks and correlate these with popularity. After doing so, we realized our long shot had hit home: Attractive children were popular children. Indeed, the effect was far more potent than we and others had assumed, with a host of implications that investigators are still tracing.

Source: Getty Images.

Ellen Berscheid *University of Minnesota*

Focus On

In these boxes, a point–counterpoint approach to issues encourages students to apply the concepts of social psychology to their real-world experience.

FOCUS ON

Money, Happiness, and Helping

Imagine that you won a million dollars in the lottery. How would you spend it? Do you think that spending the money would make you happy? If you are like most people, you probably thought about buying some nice things for yourself with the money. Recent research by University of British Columbia researcher Elizabeth Dunn and her colleagues (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008), however, suggests that one of the common ways that we mispredict our future emotional reactions is that we think that spending money on ourselves will make us happy when usually it does not. In contrast, we think that spending money on other people will bring us little joy when, in fact, spending money on others usually makes us quite happy.

To test the impact of spending money on oneself versus others, Dunn and her colleagues gave students an envelope with a fresh new bill (either a 5 or a 20) and told them either to spend the money on a gift for themselves or to spend the money on a gift for someone else or a charitable donation. Later that evening, they called the students and asked them how happy they were. Students who had spent the money on themselves (regardless of the amount they had spent) were less happy than those who had spent money on others. These experimental findings mirror what is seen in correlational data as well. When people make more money, on average, this only has a small effect on their happiness; but if they spend money on others—regardless of how much they make—they tend to be a lot happier.

This line of research is a dramatic example of how the internal rewards for helping others can have a larger impact on happiness than even a powerful external reward like money.

Applying Social Psychology

As we noted above, in most chapters and in modules C and D we have added a new feature—a hands-on Activity box that applies the science you are learning to the real world and teaches you how to apply what you have learned to your everyday life.

Activity: Is Common Sense Really That Common?

For each statement, please determine whether you think it is true or false.

1. **T F** Although women's salaries in 1994 were approximately $14 000 less than men's, women's incomes have gradually increased so that today we are seeing women's salaries at wages comparable to those of their male counterparts.
2. **T F** Due to the high cost of living, the number of full-time workers in a single household has increased dramatically over the past 10 years.

Summing Up

Found at the end of each major section within a chapter, this feature summarizes key concepts and draws connections between important issues.

SUMMING UP

How Well Do Our Attitudes Predict Our Behaviours?

- Attitudes do not predict behaviour as well as most people believe.
- Attitudes are better predictors of behaviour, however, when social influences are minimal, attitudes are specific to behaviours, and attitudes are potent (strong and on one's mind).

When Does Our Behaviour Affect Our Attitudes?

- When taking on a role, our actions in that role often shape our attitudes.
- When we state a belief (even if we do not initially believe it), our words often shape our attitudes.

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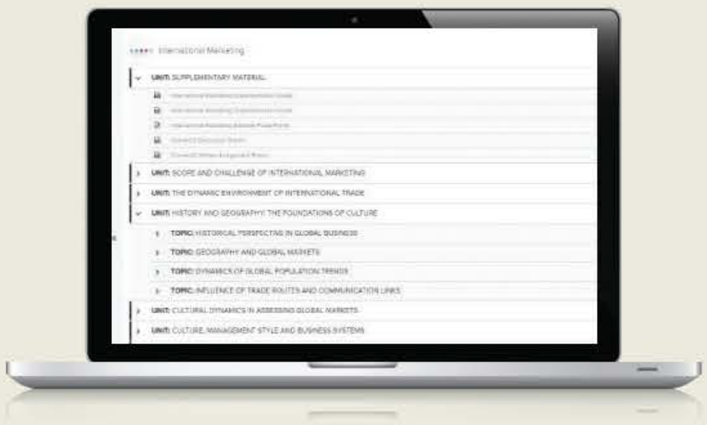

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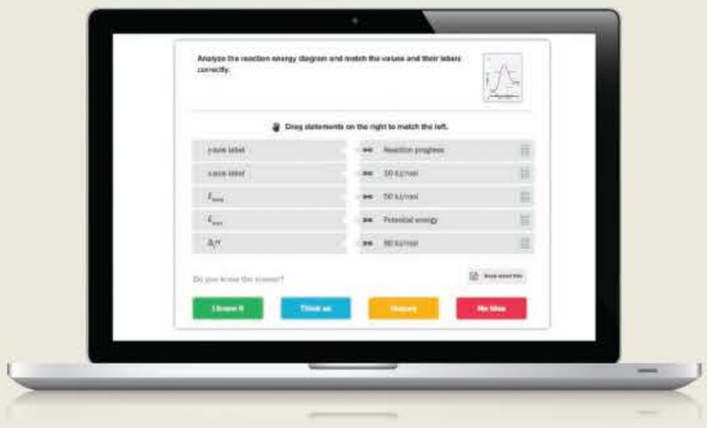

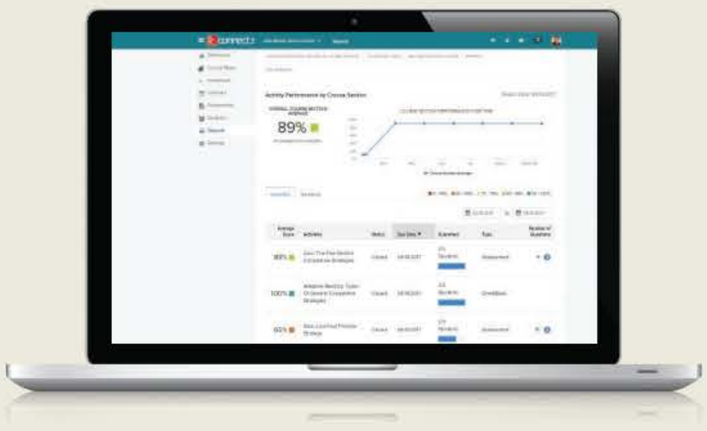

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CHAPTER 1

Introducing Social Psychology

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CHAPTER OUTLINE

What Is Social Psychology?

What Are the Major Themes of Social Psychology?

How Do Values Affect Social Psychology?

Is Social Psychology Merely Common Sense?

Research Methods: How Do We Do Social Psychology?

With the number of blended families these days, the following scenario should be easy to imagine. Indeed, you may have lived it!

Your mother has remarried. Your stepfather has a child, a few years younger than you, who complains about chores, his or her new room, your pets—everything. Even worse, your new step-sibling goes to the same school as you and wants to follow you everywhere.

Although you are only reasonably popular, you manage to get invited to the "party of the year" being thrown by the most popular person in school, whom you have had your eye on for months. Your new sibling wants to come. "No way," you respond.

You arrive at the party, things are going great, and just when you are about to start to make your move on your crush, an interloper shows up in a borrowed limo, dressed to kill, music blaring. The new arrival grabs all of the attention, including that of your host, who now has no time for you. As the two of them leave together in the limo, you suddenly realize that the intruder is your step-sibling!

Does this story sound even vaguely familiar? If so, it might be because this is simply a retelling of a classic folk tale ("Cinderella") but told from the perspective of one of the wicked step-sisters. Isn't it interesting that the person you root for changes depending on the perspective being taken? That is the power of the situation and the power of perspective.

The French philosopher-novelist Jean-Paul Sartre (1946) would have had no problem accepting the Cinderella premise. We humans are, he believed, "first of all beings in a situation, we cannot be distinguished from our situations, for they form us and decide our possibilities" (pp. 59–60).

What Is Social Psychology?

What are the parameters of social psychology?

Social psychology is a science that studies the influences of our situations, with special attention to how we view and affect one another. More precisely, it is the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another (Figure 1–1).

Social psychology lies at psychology's boundaries with sociology. Compared with sociology (the study of people in groups and societies), social psychology focuses more on

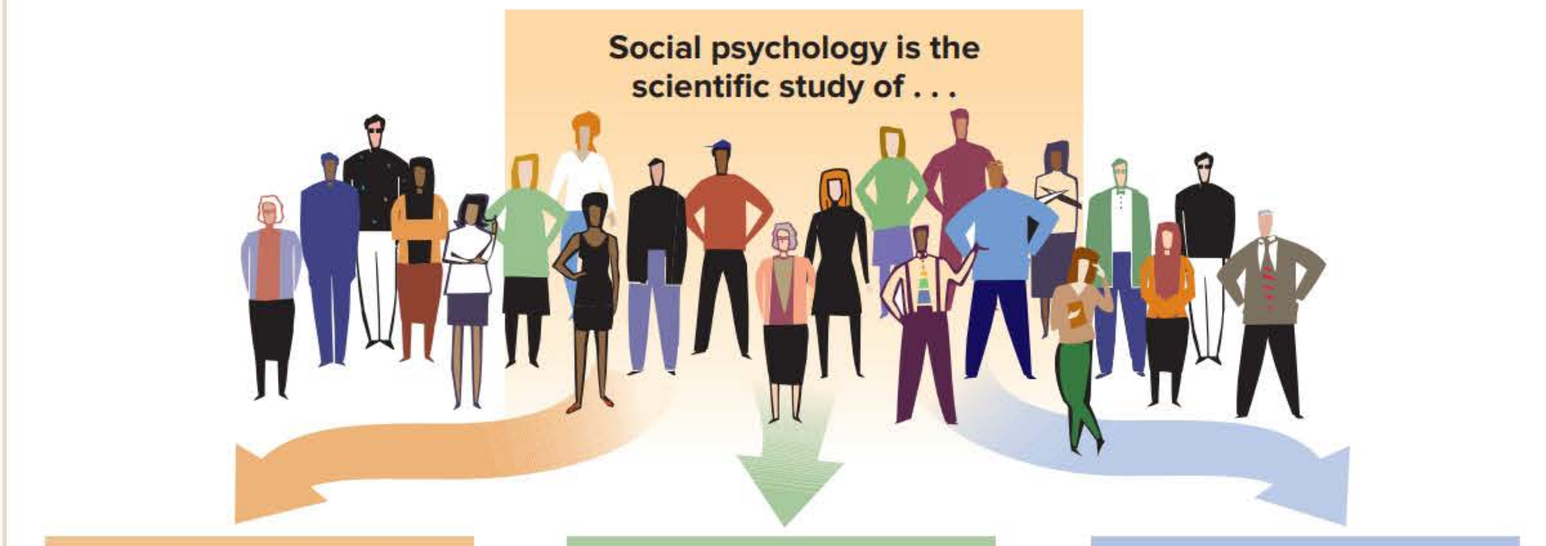

FIGURE 1–1 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IS . . .

individuals, employing methods that more often use experimentation. Compared with personality psychology, social psychology focuses less on differences among individuals and more on how individuals, in general, view and affect one another.

Social psychology is still a relatively young science. Indeed, the first social psychology experiments were performed just over a century ago (1898), and the first social psychology texts did not appear until just before and after 1900, in France, Italy, and Germany (Smith, 2005). Not until the 1930s did social psychology assume its current form. And not until the Second World War did it begin to emerge as the vibrant field it is today.

Social psychology studies our thinking, influence, and relationships by asking questions that have intrigued us all. Here are some examples:

How Much of Our Social World Is Just in Our Heads?

As we saw with the story that opened this chapter, our social behaviour varies not just with the objective situation but with how we construe it. Social beliefs can be self-fulfilling. For example, happily married people will attribute their spouse's grumpy "Can you *please* put that where it belongs?" to something external ("It must have had been a frustrating day"). Unhappily married people will attribute the same remark to a mean disposition ("Wow, that's hostile!") and may, therefore, respond with a counterattack. Moreover, expecting hostility from their spouse, they may behave resentfully, thereby eliciting the hostility they expect.

If You Were Ordered to Be Cruel, Would You Comply?

Sadly, history is filled with unconscionable acts of genocide: in Nazi Germany, in Rwanda, in Sudan, in Syria, and even in Canada, against our own Indigenous people. These unspeakable acts occurred because thousands of people followed orders. In Germany, *people* put the prisoners on trains, *people* herded them into crowded showers, and *people* poisoned them with gas. How could ordinary people engage in such horrific actions? To investigate this, Stanley Milgram (1974) set up a situation where people were ordered to administer increasing levels of electric shock to someone who was having difficulty learning a series of words. As we will see in Chapter 6, the experimental results were quite disturbing.

Would You Help Others? Or Help Yourself?

As bags of cash tumbled from an armoured truck on a fall day in 1987, $2 million was scattered along a Toronto, Ontario, street. The motorists who stopped to help returned $100 000. Judging from what disappeared, however, many more stopped to help themselves. When similar incidents occurred in San Francisco, California, and Columbus, Ohio, the results were the same: passersby grabbed most of the money (Bowen, 1988). A YouTube video of the August 2011 riots in London, England, showed young people approaching a man who had been injured; one young man seemed to help him while another took the opportunity to rob him.

A memorial to Robert Dziekanski, who died at the Vancouver International Airport after he was tasered by authorities. He became confused and agitated after a long flight and could not understand authorities as they tried to deal with his behaviour. Police tasered him, and, tragically, he died. Social psychologists ask these questions: Could such an incident have been averted if rules allowed more flexible responses to altercations with authorities? Did the police officers' pre-existing biases influence their actions?

Source: The Canadian Press/Jonathan Hayward.

Throughout this book, sources for information are cited parenthetically and then fully provided in the References section at the end of the book.

What situations trigger people to be helpful or greedy? Do some cultural contexts—perhaps villages and small towns—breed greater helpfulness?

A common thread runs through these questions: They all deal with how people view and affect one another. And that is what social psychology is all about. Social psychologists study attitudes and beliefs, conformity and independence, love and hate.

What Are the Major Themes of Social Psychology?

What are social psychology's big lessons—its overarching themes?

In many academic fields, the results of tens of thousands of studies, the conclusions of thousands of investigators, and the insights of hundreds of theorists can be boiled down to a few central ideas. Biology offers us principles, such as natural selection and adaptation. Sociology builds on concepts, such as social structure and organization. Music harnesses our ideas of rhythm, melody, and harmony.

What concepts are on social psychology's list of central ideas? What themes, or fundamental principles, will be worth remembering long after you have forgotten most of the details? At a broad level, the fundamental principles of social psychology can be captured by a classic statement by one of its founders, Kurt Lewin, who said, "behaviour is a function of the person and the situation" (1952). From this general principle, we have developed a short list of "great ideas we ought never to forget," each of which we will unpack in chapters to come (Figure 1–2).

We Construct Our Social Reality

We humans have an irresistible urge to explain behaviour, to attribute it to some cause, and, therefore, to make it seem orderly, predictable, and controllable. You and I may react differently to similar situations because we think differently. Your perception of the world you live in and the experiences you have depend on whether you are Cinderella or her step-sister.

In a way, we are all intuitive scientists. We explain people's behaviour, usually with enough speed and accuracy to suit our daily needs. When someone's behaviour is consistent and distinctive, we attribute their behaviour to their personality. For example, if we observe someone who makes repeated snide comments, we may infer that that person has a nasty disposition and then we might try to avoid the person.

Our beliefs about ourselves also matter. Do we have an optimistic outlook? Do we see ourselves as in control of things? Do we view ourselves as relatively superior or inferior? Our answers influence our emotions and actions. How we construe the world, and ourselves, matters.

Our Social Intuitions Are Often Powerful but Sometimes Perilous

Our intuitions shape our fears (Is flying dangerous?), impressions (Can I trust him?), and relationships (Does she like me?). Intuitions influence leaders in times of crisis; gamblers, at the table; eyewitnesses, in front of a lineup of suspects; jurors, in their assessments of guilt; and human resources professionals, when assessing applicants. Such intuitions are commonplace.

Indeed, psychological science reveals a fascinating nonconscious mind—an intuitive backstage mind—that we often don't realize is guiding our thoughts and behaviour. As we

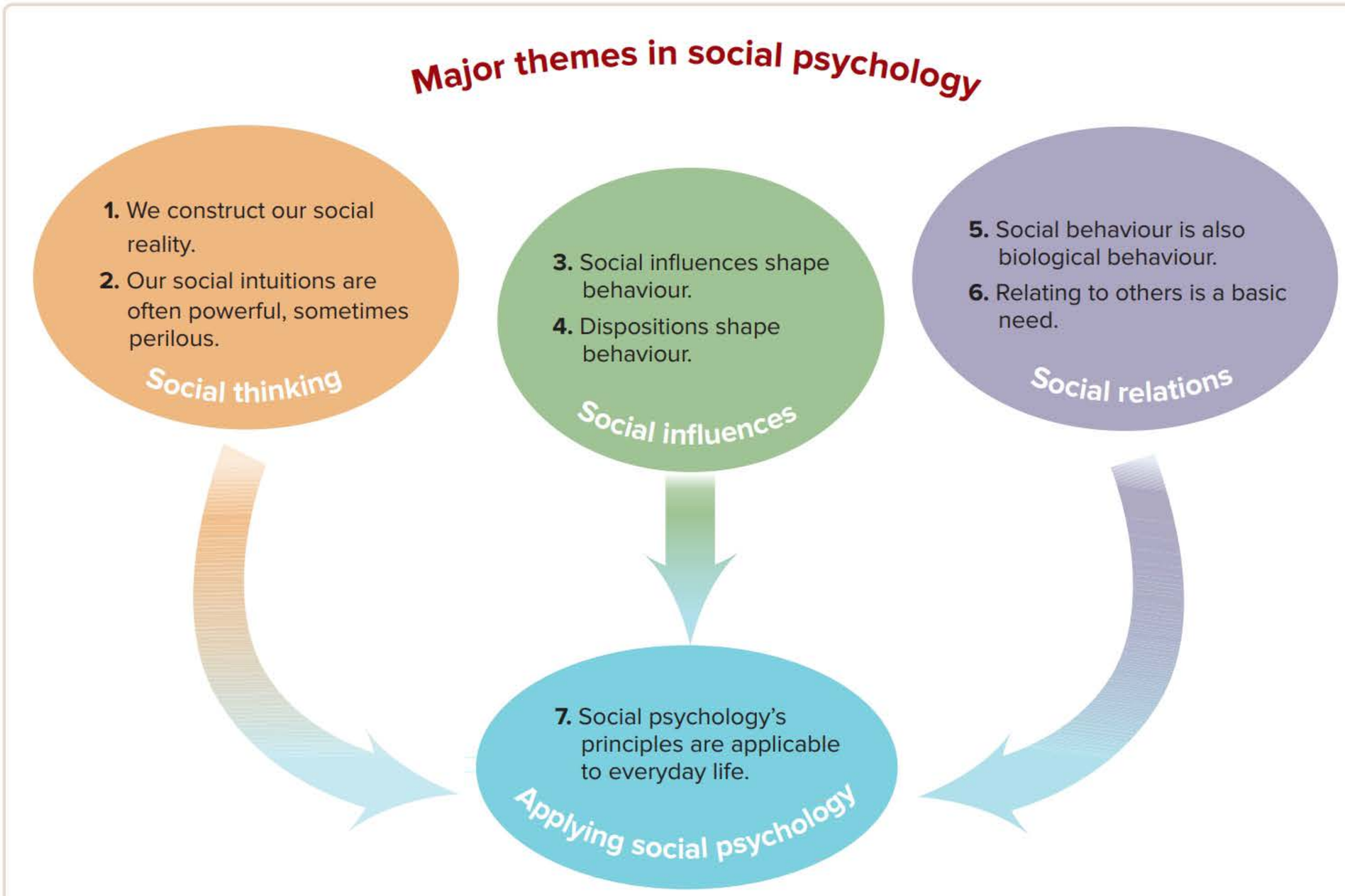

FIGURE 1–2 **MAJOR THEMES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.**

will see, studies of automatic processing, implicit memory, heuristics, spontaneous trait inference, instant emotions, and nonverbal communication unveil our intuitive capacities. Thinking, memory, and attitudes all operate on two levels—one conscious and deliberate, the other nonconscious and automatic—which today's researchers call "dual processing." We know more than we know we know.

Intuitions are powerful, but they are also perilous. We misperceive others, and we often fail to appreciate how our expectations shape our evaluations. Even our intuitions about ourselves often err. We intuitively trust our memories more than we should. We misread our own minds: In experiments, subjects have denied being affected by things that did influence them. We mispredict our own feelings: how bad we'll feel a year from now if we lose our job, our relationship, or even a *hand*! Similarly, we are bad at predicting how good we'll feel a year from now if we win the lottery or get that job we want. And we often mispredict our own future: When buying clothes, people approaching middle age will still buy snug clothing, claiming, "I can lose this weight"; rarely does anyone say, more realistically, "I'd better buy a relatively loose fit."

Our social intuitions, then, are noteworthy for both their power and their perils. For example, during the 2016 U.S. presidential election, many people liked Donald Trump because his off-the-cuff responses and snap decisions made him seem more "authentic." But people mistake authenticity for truthfulness and competence when, in fact, the opposite is often true (Leary, 2016). Indeed, Nicolo Machiavelli wrote almost 500 years ago in his famous work *The Prince* (1532) that people's tendency toward uncritically believing what they are told, their instinct for self-preservation, and their desire to be part of a group could be used by a leader (or aspiring leader) to manipulate the populace to support him or her.

By reminding us of intuition's gifts and alerting us to its pitfalls, social psychologists aim to fortify our thinking. In most situations, "fast and frugal" snap judgments serve us well enough. But in others, where accuracy matters—as when needing to fear the right things and spend our resources accordingly—we had best restrain our impulsive intuitions with critical thinking.

Social Influences Shape Our Behaviour

We are, as Aristotle long ago observed, social animals. We speak and think in words we learned from others. We long to connect, to belong, to live in a society, and to be well thought of. For example, Matthias Mehl and James Pennebaker (2003) quantified their University of Texas students' social behaviour by inviting them to wear recording devices. Once every 12 minutes during their waking hours, the computer-operated recorder would record for 30 seconds. Although the observation period covered only weekdays (including class time), almost 30 percent of their time was spent talking. Relationships are a large part of being human.

As social creatures, we respond to our immediate contexts. Sometimes, the power of a social situation leads us to act in ways that depart from our espoused attitudes. Indeed, powerful situations sometimes overwhelm good intentions, inducing people to unspeakable cruelty: Under Nazi influence, many otherwise decent people became instruments of the Holocaust. Other situations may elicit great generosity and compassion: The Japanese tsunami in 2011, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and the 2016 fires in Fort McMurray, Alberta, for example, resulted in unprecedented generosity from Canadians across the country.

Your culture helps define your situation; your standards regarding promptness, frankness, and clothing vary with your culture. Here are some examples:

- Whether you prefer a slim or voluptuous body depends on when and where in the world you live.
- Whether you define social justice as equality (all receive the same) or as equity (those who earn more receive more) depends on whether your ideology has been shaped more by socialism or by capitalism.
- Whether you tend to be expressive or reserved, casual or formal, hinges partly on your culture and your ethnicity.
- Whether you focus primarily on yourself—your personal needs, desires, and morality—or on your family, clan, and communal groups depends on how much you are a product of modern Western individualism.

Social psychologist Hazel Markus (2005) summed it up: "People are, above all, malleable." Said differently, we adapt to our social context. Our behaviour, then, is shaped by external forces.

Personal Attitudes and Dispositions Also Shape Behaviour

Internal forces also matter. We are not passive tumbleweeds, merely blown this way and that by the social winds. Our inner attitudes affect our behaviour. Our political attitudes influence our voting behaviour. Our attitudes toward smoking influence our susceptibility to peer pressures to smoke. Our attitudes toward poor people influence our willingness to support them. (As we will see, attitudes also follow behaviour, which leads us to believe strongly in those things for which we have committed ourselves or for which we have suffered.)

Personality dispositions also affect behaviour. Facing the same situation, different people may react differently. Emerging from years of political imprisonment, one person

exudes bitterness and seeks revenge. Another, such as South Africa's Nelson Mandela, seeks reconciliation and unity with former enemies.

Social Behaviour Is Biologically Rooted

Twenty-first-century social psychology is providing us with ever-growing insights into our behaviour's biological foundations. Many of our social behaviours reflect a deep biological wisdom.

Nature and nurture together form who we are. Biology and experience together create us. As evolutionary psychologists remind us, our inherited human nature predisposes us to behave in ways that helped our ancestors survive and reproduce. We carry the genes of those whose traits enabled them and their children to survive and reproduce. Thus, evolutionary psychologists ask how natural selection might predispose our actions and reactions when we are dating and mating, hating and hurting, caring and sharing. Nature also endows us with an enormous capacity to learn and to adapt to varied environments. We are sensitive and responsive to our social context.

If every psychological event (every thought, every emotion, every behaviour) is simultaneously a biological event, then we can also examine the neurobiology that underlies social behaviour. What brain areas enable our experiences of love and contempt, of helping and aggression, of perception and belief? How do mind and behaviour function together as one coordinated system? What does the timing of brain events reveal about how we process information? Such questions are asked by those in **social neuroscience** (Cacioppo et al., 2010; Klein et al., 2010).

Social neuroscientists do not reduce complex social behaviours, such as helping and hurting, to simple neural or molecular mechanisms. Their point is this: To understand social behaviour, we must consider both under-the-skin (biological) and between-skins (social) influences. Mind and body are one grand system. Stress hormones affect how we feel and act. Social ostracism elevates blood pressure. Social support strengthens the disease-fighting immune system.

We are bio-psycho-social organisms: We reflect the interplay of our biological, psychological, and social influences. And that is why today's psychologists study behaviour from these different levels of analysis.

Relating to Others Is a Basic Need

We want to fit in with others, and our relationship with others can be an important source of stress and pain as well as joy and comfort. Kip Williams and his colleagues (Williams, 2002; Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000; Williams & Zadro, 2001) have shown that feeling left out can have dramatic effects on how people feel about themselves. They had university students play a simple computer game in which each player was represented by a cartoon figure on the screen and the figures passed a ball to one another. When confederates of the experimenter passed the ball to one another and left the real participants out of the action, the participants felt miserable and reported steep drops in their self-esteem. Apparently, even university students can feel the pain that many schoolchildren experience when they are not included. Acts of aggression and prejudice inflict this sort of pain.

Of course, relating to others is not all pain. When others help, when we form romantic relationships, and when we promote harmony between groups, interpersonal relations can be an important source of joy and comfort. In fact, according to Mark Leary and Roy Baumeister, our relationships with others form the basis of our self-esteem (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). They argue that our self-esteem is nothing more than a reading of how accepted we feel by others. In this view, relating to others is a basic need that shapes all of our social actions.

"You can never foretell what any [person] will do, but you can say with precision what an average number will be up to. Individuals may vary, but percentages remain constant."

Sherlock Holmes, in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, 1887

Social Psychology's Principles Are Applicable in Everyday Life

Social psychology has the potential to illuminate our lives, to make visible the subtle forces that guide our thinking and acting. It also offers many ideas about how to know ourselves better, how to win friends and influence people, how to transform closed fists into open arms.

Scholars are also applying social psychological insights to other disciplines. Principles of social thinking, social influence, and social relations have implications for human health and well-being, for judicial procedures and juror decisions in courtrooms, and for the encouragement of behaviours that will enable an environmentally sustainable human future.

As but one perspective on human existence, psychological science does not seek to engage life's ultimate questions: What is the meaning of human life? What should be our purpose? What is our ultimate destiny? But social psychology does give us a method for asking and answering some exceedingly interesting and important questions. Social psychology is all about life—your life: your beliefs, your attitudes, your relationships.

How Do Values Affect Social Psychology?

Social psychologists' values penetrate their work in ways both obvious and subtle. What are these ways?

Social psychology is less a collection of findings than a set of strategies for answering questions. In science, as in courts of law, personal opinions are inadmissible. When ideas are put on trial, evidence determines the verdict. But are social psychologists really this objective? Because they are human beings, don't their values—their personal convictions about what is desirable and about how people ought to behave—seep into their work? And, if so, can social psychology really be scientific?

Obvious Ways in Which Values Enter Social Psychology

Values enter the picture with our choice of research topics. These choices typically reflect social history (Kagan, 2009). It was no accident that the study of prejudice flourished during the 1940s as fascism raged in Europe; that the 1950s, a time of look-alike fashions and rows of identical suburban homes, gave us studies of conformity; that the 1960s saw interest in aggression increase with riots and rising crime rates; that the 1970s feminist movement helped stimulate a wave of research on gender and sexism; that the 1980s offered a resurgence of attention to psychological aspects of the arms race; that the 1990s were marked by heightened interest in how people respond to cultural diversity; and that the 2000s saw substantial research on extremism and terrorism. Social psychology reflects social history (Kagan, 2009).

Values differ not only across time but also across cultures. In Europe, people take pride in their nationalities. The Scots are self-consciously distinct from the English; and the Austrians, from the Germans. Consequently, Europe has given us a major theory of "social identity," whereas North American social psychologists have focused more on individuals—how one person thinks about others, is influenced by them, and relates to them (Fiske, 2004; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1984). Australian social psychologists have drawn theories and methods from both Europe and North America (Feather, 2005). Values also influence the types of people attracted to various disciplines (Campbell, 1975a; Moynihan, 1979). Have

you noticed differences in students attracted to the humanities, the natural sciences, or the social sciences?

Finally, values obviously enter the picture as the object of social-psychological analysis. Social psychologists investigate how values form, why they change, and how they influence attitudes and actions. None of this, however, tells us which values are "right."

Not-So-Obvious Ways in Which Values Enter Social Psychology

We less often recognize the subtler ways in which value commitments masquerade as objective truth. Consider these not-so-obvious ways in which values enter social psychology and related areas.

The subjective aspects of science

Scientists and philosophers now agree: Science is not purely objective. Scientists do not simply read the book of nature. Rather, they interpret nature, using their own mental categories. In our daily lives, too, we view the world through the lens of our preconceptions.

While reading these words, you have been unaware that you are also looking at your nose. Your mind blocks from awareness something that is there, if only you were predisposed to perceive it. This tendency to prejudge reality based on our expectations is a basic fact about the human mind.

Because scholars at work in any given area often share a common viewpoint or come from the same **culture**, their assumptions may go unchallenged. What we take for granted—the shared beliefs that European social psychologists call our **social representations** (Augoustinos & Innes, 1990; Moscovici, 1988, 2001)—are our most important but often most unexamined convictions. Sometimes, however, someone from outside the camp will also call attention to these assumptions.

> *"Science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves; it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning."*
>
> Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, 1958

During the 1980s, feminists exposed some of social psychology's unexamined assumptions, criticizing the ideas of scientists who favoured a biological interpretation of gender differences in social behaviour (Unger, 1985). Socialist thinkers called attention to the inherent support for the benefit of competition and individualism—for example, the assumptions that conformity is bad and that individual rewards are good. These groups, of course, make their own assumptions, as critics of "political correctness" are fond of noting. Social psychologist Lee Jussim (2005), for example, argues that progressive social psychologists sometimes feel compelled to deny group differences and to assume that stereotypes of group difference are never rooted in actual group differences but that perceived differences are just the result of racism.

In Chapter 3, we will see more ways in which our preconceptions guide our interpretations. What's crucial for our behaviour is less the situation-as-it-is than the situation-as-we-construe-it.

The hidden values in psychological concepts

Implicit in our understanding that psychology is not objective is the realization that psychologists' own values play an important part in the theories and judgments they support. Psychologists refer to people as mature or immature, as well-adjusted or poorly adjusted, as mentally healthy or mentally ill. They talk as if they were stating facts, when really they are value judgments. Here are some examples:

- *Forming concepts.* Hidden values even seep into psychology's research-based concepts. Pretend you have taken a personality test and the psychologist, after scoring your answers, announces, "You scored high in self-esteem. You are low in anxiety.