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(8)

INTRODUCTION

Emperor Constantius II was in a quandary: Should he execute his cousin Julian—a potential rival? He summoned Julian to the Court of Milan, so he could decide. The Empress Eusebia was charmed by the personable Julian and interceded on his behalf. Julian was spared. In 361 A.D. Julian challenged Constantius II and became Julian the Apostate, Emperor of Rome.

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Piliavin and Scott (1964) accompanied Berkeley police on their rounds for three weeks. They found that polite, deferential youths were rarely arrested for minor crimes, while arrogant, sassy youths very frequently were.

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Peter Abelard (1079–1142) was a brilliant . . . and much despised . . . theologian and philosopher. His views were unpopular and he was unpopular. After violent intellectual disputes with his masters, he was forced to leave Paris and Lyon. He didn't get on very well at St. Denis either. Then Abelard made a fatal mistake. He fell in love with one of his students, Heloise. They had a child and were then secretly married. Such affairs were not unusual in that period, but the vindictiveness of Abelard's colleagues was. Accomplices of Heloise's uncle castrated Abelard. The Council of Soissons ordered his theological work burned. The Pope and the Council of Sens condemned him. Monks from St. Gildas de Ruys in Brittany tried to murder him.

The moral of these stories is simple: A person who is liked by his comrades will amass enormous benefits; a person who is hated is in trouble.

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Interpersonal Attraction

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INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION: A DEFINITION

A Conceptual Definition

Scientists, by training and by inclination, tend to be compulsive and stubborn. When eminent authorities and common sense both dictate that the sun must revolve around the earth, young Keplers are always around to point out that the ancients have made a few calculation errors. To make matters worse, they insist on explaining their half-baked hypotheses in precise, minute, and agonizingly lengthy detail.

Many social scientists have speculated about interpersonal attraction. Given what we know about scientists, we should not be surprised to discover that they could not even agree on what they were studying. Almost all felt compelled to modify the "slightly inaccurate" definitions of interpersonal attraction which their predecessors had proposed. Thus, by now, an extravagant number of definitions of attraction exist.

Most of the definitions share a core of meaning, however. Almost all theorists agree that interpersonal attraction is an attitude toward another. Interpersonal attraction (or interpersonal hostility), then, can be defined as an individual's tendency or predisposition to evaluate another person or the symbol of the person in a positive (or negative) way. Our *conceptual definition* of interpersonal attraction states in general terms what we mean by attraction. This conceptual definition allows us to quickly delineate the general area we plan to discuss.

Operational Definitions

Scientists, however, need both a general conceptual definition of interpersonal attraction and an accompanying precise operational definition of their concept. They need a definition that will allow them to state unequivocally how

Person A's attraction to Person B should be assessed. They need an *operational definition* of attraction, i.e., a definition which consists of the operations or procedures employed in distinguishing the object referred to from others.

Potentially, attraction could be operationally defined in an infinite number of ways. Attraction could be defined as subjects' scores on the Interpersonal Judgment Scale of liking (IJS), or the frequency with which they have lunch with others, or how wildly the pupils of their eyes dilate when they gaze at others. When a scientist chooses an operational definition, he is not arbitrarily deciding what attraction really means. He is simply settling on a standard operational procedure for defining the term. How has interpersonal attraction been operationally defined? Have social scientists settled on a single operational measure of attraction—or several?

Most social scientists insist that interpersonal attraction must be operationally defined in a single way. An eloquent spokesman for this position, Donn Byrne (1971), states:

A necessary, though hardly sufficient, condition for progress in research is consistency of operations across experiments. . . . A meaningful and cumulative increase in knowledge is possible only if identical or equivalent operations serve as connecting links across experiments. (pp. 44–47)

Byrne's philosophy of science has guided his research. He has consistently (and profitably) utilized the Interpersonal Judgment Scale as his operational definition of attraction.

Other eminent social scientists staunchly oppose Byrne's point of view. For example, Webb et al. (1966) insist that scientists should settle on several equivalent operational definitions of interpersonal attraction. They argue that one should be less convinced by three experiments demonstrating that "similarity

breeds attraction" as measured by the IJS than by three experiments demonstrating that similarity breeds attraction as measured by (1) respondent's reaction to the other on the IJS, (2) his willingness to loan the other money, and (3) his pupil size when looking at the other. They argue that any single measure of attraction is bound to be inadequate in some ways. For example, the three operational measures we cited are likely to reflect both the subject's interpersonal attraction and such irrelevant variables as (1) how the respondent thinks he should answer the IJS in order to make a good impression on the experimenter, (2) how much money he has, and (3) whether he has just come from a dark movie or a bright beach.

Webb et al. say:

The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes. If a proposition can survive the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures, with all their irrelevant error, confidence should be placed in it. (p. 3)

Whether for good or ill, interpersonal attraction has been operationalized in a variety of ways. If social scientists have found it difficult to agree on a conceptual definition of attraction, they have found it impossible to agree on an operational one. Let us examine some of the measures that have been used by researchers as indicants of attraction:

Self-report Questionnaires. The easiest way to find out whether an individual likes another person is to ask him. Usually people are not only able to tell you how they feel about others, but they are eager to describe, at length, the kindnesses of their friends and the despicable acts of their enemies. Thus, the self-report questionnaire is a popular technique for assessing liking.

Three popular self-report scales (the Thur-

stone Scale, the summative or Likert Scale, and the Guttman Scale) have already been described in Chapter 6. Here we will give a detailed description of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, one of the earliest and most widely used measures, and Byrne's Interpersonal Judgment Scale, one of the most recently developed.

The Bogardus Social Distance Scale. The Bogardus Scale measures Social Distance, i.e., how close the respondent is willing to permit members of various social groups to get to him.

Individuals are shown the following scale:

1. Would exclude from my country.
2. As visitors only to my country.
3. To citizenship in my country.
4. To employment in my occupation and my country.
5. To my street of neighbors.
6. To my club as personal chums.
7. To close kinship by marriage.

Then, they are asked to indicate to which groups they are willing to admit members of diverse ethnic groups. Bogardus makes the reasonable assumption that items in this scale are ordered along a continuum. For example, he assumes that if someone is willing to have Swedes as neighbors (i.e., item 5), he will be willing to allow them to visit the U.S. (item 2), to become U.S. citizens (item 3), and to be employed in his occupation (item 4). Presumably, from a knowledge of a respondent's total score, one can guess how he responded to each of the items in the scale. (A scale possessing this property is often labeled a *Guttman Scale*, in honor of Louis Guttman, a pioneer in the development of scaling techniques.)

In 1925, Bogardus asked young American businessmen and public school teachers to indi-

cate "in how many groupings may the members of any race, as a class, be admitted?" It is startling to discover how restrictive American society was perceived to be in 1925.

Americans thought that most of their fellow Americans would grant only rights to citizenship to Bulgarians, Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, and Turks. They would be willing to allow Czechoslovakians and Armenians to work in their occupations. Danes, French, and Germans could be accepted as close personal chums, but only the English and Canadians were "good enough" to be admitted to kinship by marriage.

The Interpersonal Judgment Scale. The Interpersonal Judgment Scale (IJS) was developed and tested by Byrne (1971). The IJS is comprised of six items. Respondents are asked to estimate another's (1) intelligence, (2) knowledge of current events, (3) morality, and (4) adjustment. They are also asked to indicate (5) their personal feelings toward the other, and (6) their feelings about working with him in an experiment.

(5) Personal Feelings (check one):

- ☐ I feel that I would probably like this person very much.
- ☐ I feel that I would probably like this person.
- ☐ I feel that I would probably like this person to a slight degree.
- ☐ I feel that I would probably neither particularly like nor particularly dislike this person.
- ☐ I feel that I would probably dislike this person to a slight degree.
- ☐ I feel that I would probably dislike this person.
- ☐ I feel that I would probably dislike this person very much.

(6) Working Together on an Experiment (check one):

- ☐ I believe that I would very much dislike working with this person in an experiment.
- ☐ I believe that I would dislike working with this person in an experiment.
- ☐ I believe that I would dislike working with this person in an experiment to a slight degree.
- ☐ I believe that I would neither particularly dislike nor particularly enjoy working with this person in an experiment.
- ☐ I believe that I would enjoy working with this person in an experiment to a slight degree.
- ☐ I believe that I would enjoy working with this person in an experiment.
- ☐ I believe that I would very much enjoy working with this person in an experiment.

These last two items (items 5 and 6) constitute Byrne's measure of attraction.

Byrne has also developed a version of the IJS which measures romantic attraction. On this extended scale, questions 7 through 10 ask respondents to estimate: (7) how much they would like to date the other person; (8) how much they think they would like the other person as a spouse; (9) how sexually attractive the other person seems to them; and (10) how physically attractive the person is.

Unobtrusive Measures. Although most researchers have assessed interpersonal attraction via self-report questionnaires, other nonconforming researchers have utilized a variety of other indicants.

In their delightful book, Webb et al. (196) describe a plethora of ways the wily researcher can quickly and unobtrusively assess a person's liking for another. Some of these measures have been used—and some could be used—as indicants of attraction.

Proximity. By systematically analyzing how much time people spend in close contact, we can get a rough gauge of their liking for one another.

Clustering. Campbell, Kruskal, and Wallace (1966) used the "clustering" of blacks and whites in various classrooms as an index of interracial attitude. They argued that if blacks and whites randomly mix together in a classroom, it is reasonable to conclude that friendship preferences are only minimally influenced by race. If, on the other hand, blacks always sit with blacks and whites always sit with whites, one suspects that race is a potent determinant of friendship choices. The authors found significant racial clustering in all the schools they studied. Aggregation by age, sex, and race has also been observed on elevated trains and at lunch counters (Sechrest, 1965).

A photographic record of clustering. A profoundly simple measure for assessing children's interactions was devised by Clore and Johnson (1971). A council for interracial projects invited 48 children (from 8 to 12 years of age) to a one-week summer camp. At the beginning of the week, directors gave half of the children cameras and rolls of film to use as they pleased. At the end of the week, the remaining children were given cameras and film. As the director developed the children's film, he recorded the race of each child appearing in a camper's pictures. He found that during the first half of the camp, 32% of the children's pictures were of children of a different race. By the end of the week, 45% were of children of a different race.

Other Measures of Associations. Webb et al. (1966) remind investigators that archive information also yields some clues as to who associates with whom. They note: "So humble a

document as a desk calendar might be checked. This record might provide information on who lunched with whom, with what degree of frequency, and across which departments" (p. 94). Some analysts have systematically observed how much time politicians, U.N. delegates, and student radicals spend socially with people of various political persuasions in order to get some clues as to who is in secret sympathy with whom.

Physical propinquity as a measure of attraction. People habitually stand a set distance from others when conversing. A child soon learns how far away from others it is "correct" to stand; he learns to adjust his standing distance smoothly as he and his partner gesture and move about.

If you want to get a profound impression of how important maintaining a correct speaking distance is in social interaction, try a quick experiment. Try standing extremely close to or extremely far away from your partner the next time you're engaged in a discussion. As you move your nose to within inches of your friend's, he will quickly and instinctively back up. If you persist in speaking "eyeball to eyeball" he will become acutely uncomfortable and/or irritated. The same thing will happen (in reverse) if you persist in carrying on a long-distance conversation. At first your partner will relentlessly pursue you. If you persist in moving away, he will probably abandon you to seek out a better socialized conversationalist.

The norms about how close one should stand to others vary for acquaintances and friends. People stand slightly closer to those they like than to those they abhor. Byrne, Ervin, and Lamberth (1970) demonstrated that propinquity can serve as a useful index of interpersonal attraction. They introduced 44 student couples to one another and sent them out on a 30-minute "blind" coke date. Eventually, the

couples wandered back to the experimental office to report on their date. As the two students stood together in front of the psychologist's desk, he unobtrusively recorded how close to one another they were standing. He rated their closeness on an ordinal scale ranging from 0 (touching one another) to 5 (standing at opposite extremes of the desk). Byrne found that the couple's expressed liking for one another, as measured by the Interpersonal Judgment Scale, correlated $-.36$ (females) and $-.48$ (males) with the physical distance measure. The more the couple liked one another, the closer they stood.

One's "inclination" toward another. Galton (1884) was intrigued by the idea that one could assess another's character and personality without the other ever realizing that he was being scrutinized. Galton conceived of an amazing array of schemes for invading privacy. Fortunately for his hapless potential victims, he never had time to carry out his luxuriant schemes. He states:

The poetical metaphors of ordinary language suggest many possibilities of measurement. Thus when two persons have an "inclination" to one another, they visibly incline or slope together when sitting side by side, as at a dinner table, and they then throw the stress of their weights on the near legs of their chairs. It does not require much ingenuity to arrange a pressure gauge with an index and dial to indicate changes in stress, but it is difficult to devise an arrangement that shall fulfill the three-fold condition of being effective, not attracting notice, and being applicable to ordinary furniture. I made some rude experiments, but being busy with other matters, have not carried them on, as I had hoped. (p. 184)

Eye contact as a measure of liking. When two people are engaged in conversation, they intermittently look one another in the eye. Argyle

(1967) found that the amount of time individuals gaze at one another as they talk is influenced by interpersonal attraction. Individuals have been found to glance at those they like (or love) more than at those they feel cool toward (see Exline, 1963; Argyle, 1967; Efrain 1968; and Rubin, 1970).

Sociometric measures. Moreno and Jennings developed the Sociometric Measure, a technique for assessing individuals' preferences for associates.

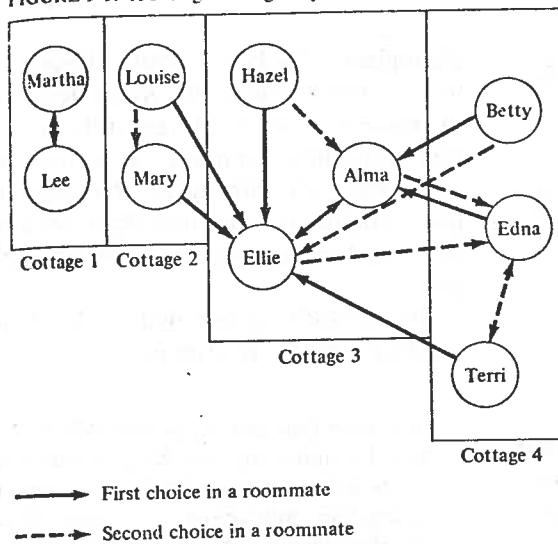
In a classic study, Jennings (1943) recorded the friendship choices of girls, who were committed to the New York State Training School for Girls. Jennings asked the girls who range in age from 12 to 15 to "write the name of whatever girls there are, anywhere on the campus or in your own house, whom you would prefer to live with." She also asked them to record their preferences in work partners, recreation partners, and study partners. On the basis of this information, she drew a sociogram—a visual depiction of who likes whom. (See Fig. 9-1).

The sociogram shown in Figure 9-1 enables one to see at a glance how girls feel about one another. One can see that Louise, Hazel, and Betty are social isolates; no one is willing to room with them. Ellie, on the other hand, seems to be the first choice of a number of girls.

During the post-depression and World War II era, sociometric measures thrived. Researchers doggedly charted the sociometric choices of grade school, high school, and college students; of orphans, delinquents, and prison inmates; of Air Force bomber crews; the inhabitants of El Cerreto, New Mexico, small farm and *hacienda* communities in Latin America, of woodcutters in Sofia, Bulgaria, and of Nazis, Communists, and Social Democrats in Hanover, Germany.

The sociometric measures had one flaw which led to their decline, however. As the

FIGURE 9-1. A sociogram of girls' preferences in roommates.



group under study gets larger and larger, a sociogram becomes more and more complicated. For example, Loomis' (1960) sociogram of visiting relationships in Dyess Colony, Arkansas, a New Deal resettlement community which then consisted of only 484 families, is almost unintelligible.

From the preceding discussion, it is obvious that a wide variety of measures have been conceived and utilized as operational definitions of an individual's attraction toward another. However, whether the experimenter uses the Interpersonal Judgment Scale, physical proximity, or eye contact as his operational definition of attraction, he intends to assess the same hypothetical construct, interpersonal attraction.

THE REINFORCEMENT MODEL OF INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

The reinforcement paradigm is the theory which is most often invoked to explain interpersonal attraction. Essentially, reinforcement theory states that:

A person who rewards us (or who is merely present when we are rewarded) comes to be associated with pleasure; thus, we like him. A person who punishes us (or who is merely present when we are punished) comes to be associated with pain; thus, we dislike him.

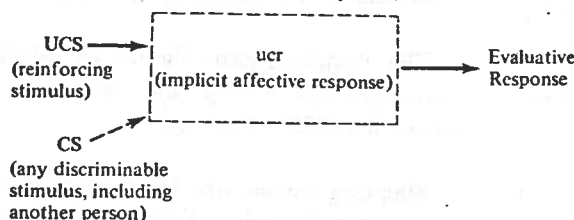
The reinforcement theory of interpersonal attraction has a long and venerable history. Aristotle (1932) observed:

Men love anyone who has done good to them . . . men like those who are able and inclined to benefit them in a pecuniary way, or to promote their personal safety . . . those who are pleasant to live with, and to spend the day with. . . . we like those who praise our good qualities, and especially if we are afraid we do not possess them . . . we like those who take us seriously—who admire us, who show us respect, who take pleasure in our society. . . . (pp. 103–106)

An impressive array of social psychologists have accepted the reinforcement paradigm. Such luminaries as Doob (1947), Staats and Staats (1958), Thibaut and Kelley (1959), Homans (1961), Albert and Bernice Lott (1965), and Byrne (1971) have used reinforcement theory to derive predictions as to who will be attracted to whom.

Based on the reinforcement paradigm, Byrne and Clore (1970) articulated a precise model of liking. According to these authors, "any stimulus with reinforcement properties functions as an unconditioned stimulus (UCS) for an implicit affective response." (That is, when a person receives a reward or is denied a reward, he has an emotional reaction. This affective reaction may be "pleasure" or "pain.") "Any discriminable stimulus, including a person, which is temporally associated with the unconditioned stimulus can become a conditioned stimulus (CS) which evokes the implicit affective response. The implicit affective

FIGURE 9-2. Evaluative responses as a function of reinforcing stimuli associated with a conditioned stimulus. CS, conditioned stimulus; UCS, unconditioned stimulus; UCR, unconditioned response (after Byrne & Clore, 1970, p. 107).



tive response is conceptualized as mediating the relationship between the CS and subsequent evaluative responses." (That is, if a person is present when you are denied reward, you associate him with pain, and you dislike him.) The Byrne-Clore formulation is graphically depicted in Figure 9-2.

The Impact of Specific Reinforcements on Liking

Presumably, a computer could calculate all the rewards a stimulus person provides us and all the punishments he inflicts and compute an Index of the Total Outcomes he provides for us (i.e., Rewards minus Costs). Psychologists could test the reinforcement model by assessing whether this Index of Outcomes was linearly related to Liking. Such an experiment is not practical, however. A multitude of things may be rewarding or punishing to any individual at a given time.

Researchers have chosen to test reinforcement theory in a simpler way. They have specified stimuli that most people, in most situations, most of the time, find rewarding. They then test whether or not people who provide such "transituational reinforcers" are better liked than people who do not.

Similarity: A Transituational Reinforcer. The idea that people tend to like those similar to themselves did not originate with social psy-

chologists. "Birds of a feather flock together" was a tired truism in Aristotle's time. A impressive amount of research demonstrate that attitudinal similarity is a transituational reinforcer; the discovery that someone has ideas similar to our own does generate pleasure, and does generate interpersonal attraction.

Byrne (1961) agreed that similarity should be a transituational reinforcer:

Any time that another person offers us validation by indicating that his percepts and concepts are congruent with ours, it constitutes a rewarding interaction. . . . Any time that another person indicates dissimilarity between our two notions, it constitutes a punishing interaction. . . . Disagreement raises the unpleasant possibility that we are to some degree stupid, uninformed, immoral, or insane. (p. 713)

Similarity and affect. Several experiments have demonstrated that when we discover others have similar attitudes, we feel pleasure when we discover others disagree with us, we feel distress. In one study, Clore and Gormly (1969) asked two students to give their opinion on a variety of subjects. One student was a plant; one was a real subject. Half of the time the imposter pretended to share most of his partner's convictions. Half of the time, he pretended to share few of them. The experimenter continuously recorded the student's autonomic activity during the interview. As predicted, the student showed a lower arousal (as measured by skin conductance) when his partner shared his beliefs than when he did not. Other research has demonstrated that a person who purports to share our attitudes generates more pleasure than does a person who does not. Similar attitudes induced "comfortable, high, happy pleasant, and positive" feelings, while dissimilar attitudes generated "uncomfortable, low sad, unpleasant, and negative" feelings.

Similarity and liking. A multitude of well-controlled laboratory studies demonstrate that attitudinal similarity produces interpersonal attraction. For example, in the Clore and Gormly study already described, subjects liked the confederate who pretended to share their convictions far more than they liked the confederate who "marched to a different drummer."

A staggering number of correlational studies demonstrate that in daily life people select friends, lovers, and spouses on the basis of similarity. For example, Newcomb (1961) found that if he assessed the attitudes of new college students he could accurately predict which students would become chums after long acquaintances. Birds of a feather did come to flock together.

Burgess and Wallin (1943) discovered that individuals tend to become seriously involved with dates who are similar to themselves. Young adults generally chose fiancés who were born and raised in similar localities and who had childhoods similar to their own. They tended to pick partners who had siblings of the same sex, were equally gregarious, preferred the same leisure-time activities, drank equally heavily, had comparable numbers of friends, had been previously engaged the same number of times, dated comparable numbers of people, and so on. Engaged couples even had parents who were similar; generally, they had comparable educations and comparable incomes, and their marriages were similar in happiness (or unhappiness).

Individuals have been found to prefer spouses who are similar to them in height (Pearson and Lee, 1903), mental health (Murstien, 1967), physical health (Harris, 1912), intelligence (Reed and Reed, 1965), and education (Garrison, Anderson and Reed, 1968).

It appears that, like Narcissus, most of us do tend to fall in love with our own reflections.

Interpersonal Attraction: A Transsituational Reinforcer. An observer from another planet would

have little trouble discovering a second transsituational reinforcer. A glance at a few television commercials, newspaper advertisements, and advice-to-the-lovelorn columns would make it evident that people are willing to spend appalling amounts of time, effort, and money to obtain the esteem of others. Advertisers assume they can sell cough drops, tanks, eye-wash, and cake mixes, if they can convince the desperate consumer that the product will help him win admiration and affection—or, at the very least, allow him to avoid offending others and reaping their scorn. If it is true that we tend to like those who reward us and if esteem is indeed a reward, it follows that we should like people who like us.

To test the hypothesis that one will come to like those he discovers like him, Backman and Secord (1959) asked groups of students to come to a meeting. Before the first meetings of the groups, they informed each student that personality test analyses revealed that certain members of his group would probably like him very much. Each group then met for informal discussion. After the initial meeting, the experimenter informed the group members that the group might eventually be subdivided into two-person teams. Members were asked to indicate their first, second, and third choices in a team partner. As would be expected, members preferred to work with the person they had been told would probably like them. These, and other data, provide support for the notion of reciprocal liking.

As Hecate (2nd century B.C.) stated, "I will show you a love potion without drug or herb or any witch's spell; if you wish to be loved, love." . . . or pretend that you do.

Deprivation and satiation. Learning theory would advise us that, if we deprive a person of social approval, when he finally receives approval from another person, he will experience unusually strong positive affect. Similarly, if we satiate a person with approval, he should

experience only weak positive affect when he receives yet another helping of social approval. These and similar hypotheses have been tested by a number of investigators. Gewitz and Baer (1958a, 1958b), for example, demonstrate that if a teacher socially isolates a child before asking him to perform a task, the child's performance will be unusually shaped by his teacher's approval or disapproval. They interpret their results as indicating that the effectiveness of a social reinforcer is increased by its own deprivation.

Romantic liking. Jacobs et al. (1971) tested the impact of deprivation versus satiation on an individual's liking for a romantic partner. The authors hypothesized that if a date finally expressed love and affection for a suitor who had recently suffered intense social rejection, he would experience unusually intense pleasure and feel unusual liking for her. (Of course, if the recently rejected suitor was rejected by the date, he should experience unusually intense pain and feel unusual hatred for her.) Thus, the authors proposed that deprived individuals should have more volatile social relations than their satiated counterparts.

Jacobs et al. tested their hypothesis in the following way: The authors invited college men to participate in a computer dating project. The men took a battery of personality tests. A few weeks later they were given a psychiatrist's analysis of their personality. This analysis was bogus. One half of the time the men were given a very approving analysis. The psychiatrist seemed to like everything about them. One half of the time the analysis was very negative.

The men then were given a chance to become acquainted with a coed. The coed was an actress. Half of the time she was warm and affectionate. Half of the time she was cold and rejecting. The men were then asked about their reactions to her.

As predicted, if the college man had been rejected before entering the dating situation, he

was unusually appreciative of and unusually attracted to the warm, affectionate girl and unusually resentful of the rejecting girl. If the man had been laden with praise before entering the dating situation, he was only moderately appreciative of the affectionate girl and moderately resentful of the rejecting girl.

Other Transituational Reinforcers. Other researchers have documented the wide variety of ways in which human beings can reward one another. Those people who reassure us when we are frightened, entertain us when we are bored, keep us company when we are lonely, make love to us when we are passionate all provide valuable rewards, and cause us to like or love them for the favors they provide.

Do We Like Those Who Are Merely Associated with Reward?

There appears to be compelling evidence that we like people who provide us with reward. But, the student with a long memory will recall that reinforcement theory made a more startling prediction: Lott and Lott (1961) point out that according to Hullian reinforcement theory a person should come to like not merely those who provide him with rewards but also those who are merely physically present when he is rewarded. Is there any evidence that people like those who happen to be present at the time they are rewarded? Yes.

Lott and Lott divided grade-school children up into three-member groups. Each group then played a game called "Rocket Ship." The object of the game was to move past four "danger zones" and to successfully land a cardboard rocket ship on a planet. Half of the children reached the planet safely and returned to class with their prize, a small auto model. Half failed to reach the planet.

At the end of the school day, the teacher administered a sociometric test. She asked "Suppose your family suddenly got the chance

to spend your next vacation on a nearby star out in space. . . . Which two children in this class would you choose to take with you?" Children who won a reward in the "Rocket Ship" game chose members of their three-person group (who were present at the time of reward) significantly more often than did unrewarded children. Children came to like those who had been present when they won and to dislike those who had been present when they lost, even though the other children had in no way promoted their reward or loss.

The Reinforcement Model: Problems and Limitations

The reinforcement paradigm is the most comprehensive and most compelling paradigm for organizing what scientists know about interpersonal attraction. And yet, this paradigm is not totally satisfying. Major problems perplex researchers who try to use this paradigm to derive predictions about interpersonal attraction. For example:

What Is "Rewarding?" What Is Not? While we can readily accept that "people will like those who reward them and dislike those who punish them," we must admit that this statement does not, to any great extent, increase one's ability to predict precisely to whom a given person will be attracted.

We have no equation which will permit us to add up all the rewards Person A provides, subtract all the punishments he inflicts, and thus arrive at a Total Outcome index that will tell us how much Person A will be liked. A multitude of things may be rewarding or punishing to any individual at a given time. In addition, it is often the case that "one man's meat is another man's poison"; individuals disagree about what is rewarding or punishing at a given time.

If it were to be maximally useful, the reinforcement paradigm would include a set of

rules which would tell us (1) which, if any, stimuli are transsituational reinforcers for all human beings and (2) which stimuli are rewarding to individuals in a given culture under given conditions. Then we could predict which stimuli will lead to interpersonal attraction and which will lead to interpersonal hostility.

Of course, such specifications do not yet exist, but they might not be so impossible to develop as it appears on the surface. When clusters of individuals—all competing to maximize their rewards—congregate, certain social structures must evolve. From an examination of these inevitable core structures, it might be possible to discover certain behavioral patterns that every society will reward or punish. But, at present, such analyses do not exist.

Are Rewarding People Always Liked? Even when researchers think they can specify the major rewards operating in a situation, reinforcement theory sometimes falters in predicting human behavior.

Simple reinforcement theory is embarrassed by two facts:

1. Individuals do not inevitably strive to maximize their immediate material rewards.
2. They do not always prefer people who provide large material rewards to people who provide small rewards.

Individuals do not always strive to maximize immediate reward. Sometimes individuals voluntarily perform altruistic acts, which bring them little reward and great personal suffering (Rubin, 1973). In fact, altruistic behavior is generally defined as behavior that benefits another more than oneself. But such a definition flies in the face of reinforcement theory, which states that that behavior will be performed which enables one to maximize his rewards and minimize his costs. It is, of course, possible to postulate that an altruistic person gains some intense inner satisfaction from help-

ing others and thus argue that his behavior is reward motivated. But this sort of analysis smacks of circular reasoning such that prediction is no longer possible. It is reasoning like "Rats work for reinforcement" and "A reinforcement is what rats will work for." If one wishes to understand "altruism," "compromise," "sharing," and other "unselfish" behaviors as being under the control of rewards and punishment, one needs to find some independent way of specifying when these rewards will be greater and lesser and of predicting when such "unselfish" behavior will or will not occur.

Nor do individuals always prefer people who provide maximum material reward at minimum cost. Simple reinforcement theory is also embarrassed by the unnerving discovery that individuals do not always seem to prefer to associate with individuals who provide them with the maximum reward at minimum cost.

Some people are attracted to friends who allow them to monopolize almost all available rewards. The fact that they are luxuriously benefited while their friends are destitute does not disturb these "natural" men. However, most people feel distinctly uncomfortable when they are granted an inordinate share of the resources. They are less comfortable in monopolistic, unequal relations than in equitable, egalitarian ones.

In the next section we will describe a theory—equity theory—that attempts to transcend some of the limitations of the simple reinforcement theory just described.

EQUITY THEORY

The Heart of Equity Theory

Equity theory is a strikingly simple theory. The theory formulated by Walster et al. (1973) is comprised of four simple, interlocking propositions:

Proposition I: Individuals will try to maximize their outcomes (where outcomes = equa rewards minus costs).

Proposition IIA: Groups can maximize collective reward by evolving accepted systems for equitably apportioning resources among members. Thus, groups will evolve such systems of equity, and will attempt to induce members to accept and adhere to these systems.

Proposition IIB: Groups will generally reward members who treat others equitably, and generally punish (increase the costs of) members who treat others inequitably.

Proposition III: When individuals find themselves participating in inequitable relationships, they will become distressed. The more inequitable the relationship, the more distress individuals will feel.

Proposition IV: Individuals who discover they are in an inequitable relationship will attempt to eliminate their distress by restoring equity. The greater the inequity that exists, the more distress they will feel, and the harder they will try to restore equity.

Let us now attempt to understand these crucial propositions. Proposition I is an old friend by now. It simply reminds us of the most fundamental assumption of reinforcement theory that all men are motivated by self-interest. We can summarize all the research reported in the previous section in a few terse sentences: "Individuals try to maximize their outcomes. When they succeed in doing so, they experience pleasure and like their associates. When they fail to maximize their outcomes, they experience frustration and dislike their associates." So far equity theory and reinforcement theory are in accord.

In Proposition II, however, equity theory pushes into new territory. Reinforcement theory treats individuals as if they were in isolation. They are not. A society is comprised of many individuals, all eager to attain the same goal, to possess all the good things in life. If

these individuals were unrestrained in their pursuit of pleasure, life would be frightening, violent, and unstable. As soon as a man captured community resources, a coalition of ruthless rivals would try to wrench back these resources. The only way a group can avoid continual warfare and maximize collective outcomes is by working out a compromise. Thus, as Proposition IIA states, societies eventually must hammer out a set of rules for allocating community resources.

How can the group entice its citizens to accept its equity rules? There is only one way to control human behavior. As is acknowledged in Proposition IIB, the only way a group can induce its members to accept and to adhere to equity norms is to reward members who treat others equitably and to punish those who do not.

What Constitutes an Equitable Relationship? Although all societies develop some system for equitably apportioning resources among members, they differ startlingly in what they think is equitable. Some societies assume a good family name entitles one to large rewards; thus, "He who has, gets." Others assert, "To each according to his needs." Still other societies contend that "all men are created equal" and thus are entitled to identical outcomes.

A principle to be presented shortly portrays the widely diverse conceptions of equity that societies have evolved. However, to understand this principle, the student will have to input a little work; but it will be repaid by the forthcoming outcomes.

Definition of terms

Inputs (I_A or I_B) are defined as "the participant's contributions to the exchange, which are seen (by a scrutineer) as entitling him to reward or cost." In different settings, people assume that different inputs entitle one to reward or punishment. In industrial settings, they assume that assets such as capital or manual labor

entitle one to reward. In social settings, they assume that assets such as beauty or kindness entitle one to reward, while liabilities such as boorishness or cruelty entitle one to punishment (costs).

Outcomes (O_A or O_B) are defined as "the positive and negative consequences that a scrutineer perceives a participant has received in the course of his relationship with another." The participant's total outcomes, then, are equal to the rewards he obtains from the relationship minus the costs that he incurs.

Now, you should be able to understand the statement that: "An equitable relation exists if a person scrutinizing the relationship concludes that all participants are receiving equal relative outcomes from the relationship; i.e., when $\frac{O_A - I_A}{|I_A|^{k_A}} = \frac{O_B - I_B}{|I_B|^{k_B}}$, where I_A and I_B designate a scrutineer's perception of Person A and Person B's Inputs.

O_A and O_B designate the scrutineer's perception of Person A and Person B's Outcomes. $|I_A|$ and $|I_B|$ designate the absolute value of their Inputs (i.e., the perceived value of their inputs,¹ disregarding sign).

The exponents k_A and k_B take on the value +1 or -1, depending on the sign of A and B's inputs and A and B's gains (Outcomes - Inputs). [$k_A = \text{sign}(I_A) \times \text{sign}(O_A - I_A)$ and $k_B = \text{sign}(I_B) \times \text{sign}(O_B - I_B)$.] The exponent's effect is simply to change the way relative outcomes are computed: If $k = +1$ then we have $\frac{O - I}{|I|}$, but if $k = -1$, then we have $|I| \cdot (O - I)$. Without the exponent k , the formula would yield meaningless results when $I < O$ and $(O - I) > O$, or $I > O$ and $(O - I) < O$.

A participant's relative outcomes will be zero if his outcomes equal his inputs. His rela-

¹There is one restriction on inputs: The smallest absolute input must be ≥ 1 , i.e., $|I_A|$ and $|I_B|$ must both be ≥ 1 .

tive outcomes will be positive if his outcomes exceed his inputs ($O > I$) and negative if his outcomes are less than his inputs ($O < I$). Thus, the sign and the magnitude of this measure indicate how "profitable" the relationship has been to each of the participants.

Mathematically sophisticated students may find the detailed description of the logic underlying the formula for relative outcomes, which is presented in Walster (1975) helpful.

Let us practice using this formula. Consider this example: Al and Bob agree to make dinner for two very special dates. They agree to spend two hours apiece preparing steak, Sauce Bearnaise, and a Caesar salad. Al arrives on time, completely drunk; he contributes less than nothing to the dinner. Bob puts Al to bed and prepares dinner from scratch. In the end, Bob contributes +5 units to the dinner; Al contributes -2 units.

If, at the party, both Al and Bob had an equally good time (say, 20 units worth of fun), Bob might justifiably feel exploited:

$$\frac{O_{Bob} - I_{Bob}}{|I_{Bob}|^{k_{Bob}}} = \frac{20 - (5)}{|5|^{+1}} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.00$$

$$[k_{Bob} = +1 \text{ since } I_{Bob} > 0 \text{ and } (O - I)_{Bob} > 0]$$

$$\frac{O_{Al} - I_{Al}}{|I_{Al}|^{k_{Al}}} = \frac{20 - (-2)}{|-2|^{-1}} = \frac{22}{1/2} = 44.00$$

$$[k_{Al} = -1 \text{ since } I_{Al} < 0 \text{ and } (O - I)_{Al} > 0]$$

$$\text{Thus, } RO_{Bob} < RO_{Al}.$$

Only if Bob enjoyed the party 225 units would he feel equitably treated;

$$\frac{O_{Bob} - I_{Bob}}{|I_{Bob}|^{k_{Bob}}} = \frac{225 - (5)}{|5|^{+1}} = \frac{220}{5} = 44.00$$

$$\text{Thus, } RO_{Bob} = RO_{Al}.$$

Alternatively, Bob would also feel equitably treated if Al had only a miserable -.5 units of fun at the party;

$$\frac{O_{Al} - I_{Al}}{|I_{Al}|^{k_{Al}}} = \frac{(-.5) - (-2)}{|-2|^{-1}} = \frac{1.5}{1/2} = 3.00$$

$$\text{Thus, } RO_{Bob} = RO_{Al}.$$

Who Decides Whether a Relationship Is Equitable? Proposition II points out that societies develop systems of equity and insure that their members adhere to them. In simple societies there may be a consensus as to what really constitutes equitable relationships. Even in these societies, however, there will always be slight disagreements in detail as to what is fair. A scrutineer's assessment of how equitable a relationship is depends upon his assessment of the value of the participants' inputs and outcomes. If observers assess participants' relative outcomes differently, and it is likely that they will, it is inevitable that they will show slight disagreements as to whether or not various relationships are equitable.

Do People Generally Behave Equitably? Some critics of equity theory have scoffed at the proposal that people will voluntarily behave equitably; they deny that people will voluntarily cede material benefits to their deprived companions. These critics insist that people will monopolize everything they can get. We agree. We acknowledge (Proposition I) that man is motivated by self-interest. We agree that we would all monopolize resources if we knew we would not be caught and punished. The point is that all of us have learned, albeit painfully, that if we always take without ever giving, we will get caught and punished. We soon learn that the most profitable way to be selfish is to be "unselfish."

There is some evidence that individuals do generally behave equitably. Individuals who secure more reward than they feel they deserve voluntarily share their unearned benefits. Individuals who secure less reward than they deserve quickly demand additional benefits

(Leventhal, Allen, & Kemelgor, 1969; or Schnitt & Marwell, 1970).

Occasionally, individuals realize that in a particular situation they can maximize their outcomes by exploiting their partners. In such cases, equity theorists would expect them to behave exploitatively but to feel badly about it.

Proposition II points out that society punishes those who are caught behaving inequitably. Children and adults learn, again and again, that the man who dares to take too much and gets caught can expect venomous retaliation: the man who accepts too little is not only deprived of material benefit, but he may reap derision as well. Proposition III points out that as a consequence of inevitable and repeated socialization experiences, individuals who find themselves in inequitable relationships come to experience distress.

Experimental evidence (Austin & Walster, 1974) provides compelling support for the contention that both the beneficiary and the victim in an inequitable relationship experience intense distress. Those who are unjustly benefited feel guilty. Those who are unjustly deprived are angry. Both are distressed.

In Proposition IV the authors propose that individuals who are distressed by their inequitable relations will try to eliminate their distress by restoring equity. There are two ways that a participant can restore equity to an inequitable relationship: He can restore either actual equity or psychological equity to the relationship.

A participant can restore actual equity by appropriately altering his own or his partner's relative outcomes. For example, a laborer who discovers that his boss has been paying him less than the minimum wage can reestablish actual equity in four ways: He can become a slacker (thus lowering his inputs), steal from the company (thus raising his own outcomes), make so many mistakes that his employer must work far into the night rectifying them (thus raising his employer's inputs), or sabotage

company equipment (thus lowering his employer's outcomes). The ingenious ways individuals contrive to bring equity to inequitable relationships are documented by Adams (1963).

A participant can restore psychological equity to a relationship by appropriately distorting reality. He can try to convince himself that an inequitable relationship is, in fact, equitable. For example, an exploitative employer may convince himself that his relationship with his underpaid and overworked laborer is in fact equitable in four ways. He can restore psychological equity to their relationship by minimizing his inputs ("You wouldn't believe how stupid he is"), exaggerating his outcomes ("Work gives him a chance to see his friends"), exaggerating his own inputs ("Without my creative genius the company would fall apart"), or minimizing his outcomes ("The tension on this job is giving me an ulcer").

Applications of Equity Theory

Researchers have applied equity theory to four major types of human relationships: business relationships, exploitative relationships, helping relationships, and intimate relationships. The research in these last three areas is of special interest to students of interpersonal attraction.

Equity Theory and Exploitative Relationships. Relationships between exploiters and their victims are easily analyzed within the equity framework. An exploiter (or harm-doer) can be defined as "a participant who seizes more relative outcomes than he deserves." A victim is "the participant who is deprived of some of the relative outcomes he deserves."

Is there any evidence that when exploiters and their victims find themselves enmeshed in exploitative relationships, they feel distress? Yes. Numerous theorists support the contention that exploiters feel distinctly uncomforta-

ble after exploiting others. Theorists have labeled this distress as "guilt," "conditioned anxiety," "fear of retaliation," "dissonance," or "empathy"—but all theorists agree that harm-doers experience acute distress. Common sense suggests that if inequity is distressing to harm-doers, it should be even more distressing to their victims. There is compelling evidence that exploitation causes victims to become acutely distressed.

Theoretically, participants in an inequitable relationship can reduce their distress in one of two alternative ways: They can restore actual equity or they can restore psychological equity to their relationship.

The harm-doer's response to inequity

RESTORATION OF ACTUAL EQUITY: When a harm-doer is caught up in an injustice he will often try to reestablish a truly equitable relationship. Numerous studies verify the fact that harm-doers do often try to "do the right thing" and compensate their victims (Berscheid & Walster, 1967; Berscheid, Walster, & Barclay 1969).

RESTORATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EQUITY: As we noted earlier, a harm-doer can restore psychological equity to his relationship with the victim by appropriately distorting reality. Instead of actively working to make things right, the exploiter merely needs to convince himself that things are right. Exploiters, disturbed by guilt, have been detected using a variety of comforting rationalizations. The most soothing self-deceptions seem to be minimization of the victim's suffering, denial that one was responsible for the victim's suffering, or derogation of the victim.

MINIMIZATION OF THE VICTIM'S SUFFERING: An exploiter can sometimes soothe his balky conscience by protesting to himself that the victim suffered little harm or, his delusions escalating, that the victim even reaped sizable benefits from their association. Sykes and Matza (1957) and Brock and Buss (1962) dem-

onstrate that harm-doers will consistently underestimate how much harm they have done to another. Brock and Buss, for example, found that college students who administered electric shock to other students soon started to markedly underestimate the painfulness of the shock they are delivering.

DENIAL OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACT: The harm-doer can convince himself that it was not his cruelty but some other malignant influence that caused the victim's suffering, then the relationship with the victim becomes an equitable one. That harm-doers will often deny the responsibility for harm-doing has been documented by Sykes and Matza (1957), Brock and Buss (1962; 1964), and Katz et al. (1973). In daily life, denial of responsibility seems to be a favorite strategy of those who feel pangs of guilt about exploiting others. I was "only following orders" is the stereotyped excuse of war criminals.

DEROGATION OF THE VICTIM: An exploiter can mollify his conscience by righteously insisting that the victim deserves his deprived state. That harm-doers often derogate their victims has been demonstrated by Berkowitz (1962), Glass (1964), and Walster and Pressholdt (1966). In a typical experiment, Davis and Jones (1960) found that students who were hired to humiliate other students (as part of a research project) ended up by convincing themselves that the students deserved to be ridiculed. Sykes and Matza (1957) found that juvenile delinquents often defend their brutalization of others by arguing that their victims are really homosexuals, bums, or possessors of other traits that make them deserving of punishment. In tormenting others, then, the delinquents can claim to be the restorers of justice rather than harm-doers.

Some harm-doers get to be so skilled at self-deception that they can rationalize injustice in advance. Genesirac, an ally of Attila the Hun, trusted "that the winds would bear him to land the inhabitants of which had provoked th

divine vengeance." Thus, his Vandals could murder, burn, and rape—confident that they were serving as God's avengers.

The preceding findings both startled and fascinated students of interpersonal attraction. The reinforcement paradigm led us to believe that liking for another is simply determined by the extent to which the other rewards or punishes us. The preceding equity research adds a startling amendment to that conclusion. Equity research demonstrates that how we treat another person is as important in determining our liking for him as how he treats us. Equity research demonstrates that we often come to dislike people we exploit and come to like people we benefit as well as the other way around.

The victim's response to inequity. If he can, a victim will induce the exploiter to restore actual equity and to make restitution to him. Sometimes, however, the impotent victim is not able to elicit restitution. In such cases, the hapless victim is left with only two options: He can acknowledge that he is exploited but that he is too weak to do anything about it, or he can justify his exploitation. Often, victimized individuals find it less upsetting to distort reality and justify their victimization than to acknowledge that the world is unjust and that they are too impotent to elicit fair treatment (Austin & Walster, 1974; Lerner & Matthews, 1967).

Startlingly, in such cases, victimized individuals have been found to restore psychological equity in exactly the same ways exploiters favor! Victims sometimes console themselves by imagining that their exploitation has brought compensating benefits. ("Suffering brings wisdom and purity" . . . or at the very least "natural rhythm.") They may console themselves that in the long run, the exploiter will be punished as he deserves. ("The mill of the Lord grinds slowly, but it grinds exceedingly fine.") Victims may also convince themselves that their exploiter actually deserves the enormous

benefits he has seized, because he possesses previously unrecognized inputs. Recent data demonstrate that the exploited will justify the excessive benefits of others. Jecker and Landy (1969), Walster and Prestholdt (1966), and Hastorf and Regan (personal communication) pressured individuals into doing a difficult favor for an unworthy recipient. They found that the abashed favor-doer tried to justify the inequity by convincing himself that the recipient was especially needy or worthy.

Long before equity theory existed, Benjamin Franklin (published in 1916) was well aware of the fact that people come to like those they are induced to benefit, and he cunningly used this fact to political advantage. For example, once Franklin became disturbed by the enmity of a member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. He decided to make his opponent like him.

I did not . . . aim at gaining his favour by paying any servile respect to him but . . . took this other method. Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book I wrote a note to him expressing my desire of perusing that book and requesting he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately and I return'd it in about a week with another note expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the House he spoke to me (which he had never done before), and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends and our friendship continued to his death. This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says, "*He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged.*" (pp. 216–217)

Franklin knew that when a person is led to help an "undeserving" recipient, he is likely to end up concluding that the recipient deserved his help after all.

Reformers who have worked, at great personal sacrifice, to alleviate social injustices are often enraged when they hear the exploited themselves vehemently defend the status quo. Black militants encounter "Uncle Toms" who defend white supremacy. Women's liberation groups must face angry housewives who threaten to defend to the death the traditional status of women. Reformers might have more sympathy for such "Uncle Toms" and "Doris Days" if they understood the psychological underpinnings of such reactions. When one is treated inequitably but has no hope of altering one's situation, it may be less degrading to deny reality than to face up to one's humiliating position.

What Determines Whether Individuals Restore Actual or Psychological Equity to Their Relationships?

We pointed out that individuals can respond to injustice in two startlingly different ways, with demands for justice or with justification. The student's next question is, obviously, "What factors determine how individuals respond?" When he asks this question, the student bumps up against the frontier of equity research. Walster et al. (1973) suggest that two variables will determine how an individual responds to inequity. They suggest that a harm-doer will be especially likely to compensate his victim if adequate and noncostly compensation is available. However, few studies have been conducted to test these hypotheses.

Here is a place where students' insights may well surpass those of established researchers. Give it a try. Take out a piece of paper. Imagine that you are living in the Middle Ages, and are dedicated to promoting social reform. The local lord is piqued by guilt. How would you pressure him to free his serfs and make restitution to them? What factors do you think would induce this "exploiter" to behave with justice rather than with justification?

Equity Theory and Altruistic Relationships

"A certain man . . . fell among thieves . . . which . . . wounded him . . . leaving him half dead. . . there came down a certain priest. . . when he saw him he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite. . . passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan . . . came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him . . . and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more . . . I will repay thee.'" (Luke 10:30-35)

People routinely volunteer to help one another. Parents care for their children, Boy Scouts help elderly ladies across the street, Congress aids underdeveloped nations, and eager suitors urge gifts on overdeveloped maidens.

Can equity theory give us any insight into philanthropic relations? Theorists have thought so. Equity theorists categorized three different kinds of "helping relationships." Although all three are ordinarily labeled "helping relationships," they are, in fact, strikingly different types of relationships.

Exploitive relationships. Sometimes a philanthropist is not really a philanthropist; he helps another merely to help himself. In fact philanthropist/recipient relationships of this type are best labeled "exploitive relationships."

$$\frac{(O_A - I_A)}{|I_A|^{K_A}} > \frac{(O_B - I_B)}{|I_B|^{K_B}}$$

where

A = The philanthropist

B = The recipient

Reciprocal relationships. Sometimes, participants alternate between being the "philanthropist" and the "recipient." Philanthropist/recipient relationships of this type are best labeled "reciprocal relationships."

$$\frac{(O_A - I_A)}{|I_A|^{k_A}} = \frac{(O_B - I_B)}{|I_B|^{k_B}}$$

Altruistic relationships. Sometimes the philanthropist is truly a philanthropist. He offers the recipient greater benefits than the recipient could ever hope to return. For the moment, we will label relationships of this type "altruistic relationships."

$$\frac{(O_A - I_A)}{|I_A|^{k_A}} < \frac{(O_B - I_B)}{|I_B|^{k_B}}$$

This relationship has fascinated generations of social psychologists.

To the man in the street, altruistic relationships evidence man at his best. The social workers who help their clients, the Schweitzers who give up a luxurious life to live among the lepers, the church members who donate turkeys to poor families at Thanksgiving are assumed to be good people. Their needy recipients are expected to be grateful. Equity theory, however, suggests that we must be slightly more skeptical of altruistic associations.

Equity theorists have pointed out that "noble" altruism should produce mixed feelings in both the benefactor and the recipient. After all, the benefactor who gives and gives and gives and gets little in return is a participant in an inequitable and unprofitable relationship. Equity theory leads us to expect that benefactor and recipient should experience at least some discomfort when they discover they are participating in an inequitable relationship. The only way they can alleviate their distress is by restoring actual equity, or psychological equity, to their relationship.

The potential for alienation: the altruist's response. One of society's most perplexing problems is to decide how the needy should be treated. People feel that if their fellow is so young, so disabled, so sick, or so old that he is unable to care for himself, society should care for him. On one hand, then, people define "need" as a legitimate input which entitles a citizen to the minimum outcomes he needs. And, people do help the needy to a remarkable extent. People give the "time of day" to passers-by, dole out change at bus-stops, return lost wallets to their owners, and fix flat tires for stranded motorists.

On the other hand, people do not consider "need" to be an entirely legitimate input. They often resent the obligation to help (Berkowitz, 1972a). Often people begrudge the help they accord others and feel that the help should be considered a loan rather than a gift. They feel the recipient is obligated to repay them in whatever ways he can.

The potential for alienation: the recipient's response. It is easy to see why the altruist has mixed feelings about being forced to contribute benefits to another with no hope of return. A little thought, however makes it clear that help is a mixed blessing for the "lucky" recipient as well. The altruistic relationship is an unpleasant relationship for the recipient for three different reasons:

1. *The altruistic relationship is an inequitable relationship.* When the benefactor bestows undeserved benefits on a recipient, he places the recipient in an inequitable relationship. As we indicated in Proposition III, inequitable relationships are unpleasant relationships.

2. *The altruistic relationship is a potentially exploitative relationship.* When a philanthropist grants benefits which his recipient cannot repay in kind, the recipient may well feel that he has become obligated to repay his benefactor in unspecified ways for an indefinite period.

The recipient might reasonably fear that his benefactor may attempt to extract a greater repayment than the recipient would have been willing to give, had he been warned of the conditions of the exchange ahead of time.

3. *The altruistic relationship is a potentially humiliating relationship.* The recipient may be hesitant to accept "charity" for still another reason. He may fear that the benefactor's gift will establish the benefactor's moral and social superiority to the recipient. The recipient may be unwilling to accept such a menial status.

Observational evidence suggests that recipients fear that by accepting help they risk being assigned to a menial status; fears which are probably well founded. Social observers have noted that in a variety of cultures gift-giving and humiliation are linked. Small wonder then that men have learned to "look a gift horse in the mouth" (Joffe, 1953; Oliver, 1967; Homans, 1961).

When we contrast equitable helping relationships (relationships in which altruist and recipient periodically trade favors) with totally altruistic relationships, it becomes clear that a single factor seems to have a critical impact on the benefactor/recipient relationship, i.e., the beneficiary's ability to make restitution.

Researchers who have investigated the interactions of Christmas-gift givers and kindness between neighbors have dealt with donors and recipients who know that eventually their helpful acts will be reciprocated in kind. Researchers who have investigated the interactions of welfare workers versus their clients, developed versus underdeveloped nations, and the medical staff versus the physically handicapped have dealt with recipients who know they will never be able to repay their benefactors. The differing reactions of participants in reciprocal and nonreciprocal relations underscores the importance of the recipient's ability to repay in determining how help affects a relationship. Ability to repay seems to determine

whether favor-doing generates pleasant social interactions or resentment and suffering.

An abundance of research supports a single conclusion: Undeserved gifts produce inequity in a relationship. If the participants know the recipient can and will reciprocate, the inequity is viewed as temporary, and thus it produces little distress. If the participants know the recipient cannot or will not reciprocate, however, a real inequity is produced; the participants will experience distress and will therefore need to restore actual or psychological equity to the relationship.

Evidence in support of this conclusion comes from four diverse sources:

1. On the basis of ethnographic data, Mauss (1954) concludes that three types of obligations are widely distributed in human societies in both time and space, (1) the obligation to give, (2) the obligation to receive, and (3) the obligation to repay. Mauss (1954) and Dillon (1968) agree that while reciprocal exchanges breed cooperation and good feelings, gifts that cannot be reciprocated breed discomfort, distress, and dislike.

2. There is evidence that individuals prefer gifts that can be reciprocated to gifts that cannot be repaid (Gergen and Gergen, 1971).

3. There is evidence that individuals are more eager to accept gifts that can be reciprocated than gifts that cannot (Krebs and Baldwin, 1972).

4. Most importantly, there is evidence that a benefactor is liked more when his beneficiary can reciprocate than when he cannot.

Gergen and his associates (Gergen, 1969) investigated American, Swedish, and Japanese citizens' reactions to reciprocal and nonreciprocal exchanges. Students were recruited to participate in an experiment on group competition. Things were arranged so that during the course of the game, the subject discovered that he was losing badly. At a critical stage (when the student was just about to be eliminated

from the game) one of the "luckier" players in the game sent him an envelope. The envelope contained a supply of chips and a note. For a third of the subjects (low-obligation condition subjects), the note explained that the chips were theirs to keep, that the giver did not need them and that they need not be returned. One third of the subjects (equal-obligation condition subjects), received a similar note, except that the giver of the chips asked the subject to return an equal number of chips later in the proceedings. The remaining subjects (high-obligation condition subjects), received a note from the giver in which he asked for the chips to be returned with interest and for the subject to help him out later in the game.

At the end of the game, subjects were queried about their attraction toward various partners. The results support our conclusion: Those partners who provided benefits without ostensible obligation or who asked for excessive benefits were both judged to be less attractive than were partners who proposed that the student make exact restitution later in the game.

Gergen et al. (in preparation) conducted a variation of the preceding study. Just as subjects were about to be eliminated from a game because of their consistent losses, another player in the game loaned the subject some resources. The donor loaned the chips with the expectation that they would be paid back. However, in subsequent play, only half of the subjects managed to retain their chips. Thus, half of the subjects were unable to return the gift; half were able to do so. In subsequent evaluations of the donor, recipients that were unable to repay the donor evaluated him less positively than did recipients that were able to repay. These results were replicated in both Sweden and the United States.

Equity Theory and Intimate Relations. When equity theorists argue that business or casual

social relationships will endure only so long as they are profitable to both participants, few demur. Yet, if one argues that intimate relations—relations between husband and wife, parent and child, or best friends—might be similarly dependent on the exchange of rewards, objections are quickly voiced. People insist their intimate relations are "special" relations, relations untainted by crass considerations of social exchange.

For example, Simmel (1950), an esteemed sociologist, states:

The fact is that whatever the participants in the gathering may possess in terms of objective attributes—attributes that are centered outside the particular gathering in question—must not enter it. Wealth, social position, erudition, fame, exceptional capabilities and merits, may not play any part in sociability. (pp. 45–46)

More poetic writers insist that the beauty of familial and romantic relationships is that in their intimate relations individuals transcend selfish concerns. For example, Liebow (1967) points out that cynical ghetto blacks have very romantic ideas about the nature of friendship:

The pursuit of security and self-esteem push him to romanticize his perception of his friends and friendships. . . . He prefers to see the movement of money, goods, services, and emotional support between friends and according to need, rather than a mutual exchange resting securely on a *quid pro quo* basis. (pp. 176–177)

Anticipating inevitable opposition, then, equity theorists contend that even in the most intimate of relations, equity considerations determine both how viable and how pleasant a relationship will be.

One equity hypothesis which has received thorough investigation is the "matching

hypothesis." Equity theorists contend that when each partner contributes approximately equal inputs to an intimate exchange, both participants should be maximally satisfied, and their relationship should be maximally enduring. When marked inequalities in inputs exist, the short-changed partner should be frustrated and unhappy and tempted to look for a better bargain on the marriage market. The over-benefited partner should be nervously apprehensive that his partner will desert him and may be tempted to look for a more secure relationship himself.

On the basis of such reasoning, Homans (1961), Backman and Secord (1966), Walster et al. (1966), and Blau (1967) proposed the matching hypothesis. They proposed that partners of similar "value" will be most compatible and will tend to pair up and to stay paired up.

It is in this area that equity theory receives the weakest support. Several studies find no support for the matching hypothesis; a very few find compelling support for this hypothesis. In an early experiment, Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, and Rottman (1966) proposed three hypotheses: (1) The more "socially desirable" a suitor is (i.e., the more physically attractive, personable, famous, or rich he is), the more socially desirable a romantic partner he will feel he deserves; (2) Couples who are similar in social desirability will like one another better than will markedly mismatched couples; and (3) Couples who are similar in social desirability will be more likely to continue to date one another. Figure 9-3 depicts graphically the prediction that participants will prefer dates of approximately their own attractiveness.

These hypotheses were later tested in the field. Entering college freshmen were invited to attend a get-acquainted dance. They were told that dates would be assigned by computer. Physical attractiveness was chosen as the indicant of participants' social desirability. (Data indicate that physical attractiveness is strongly

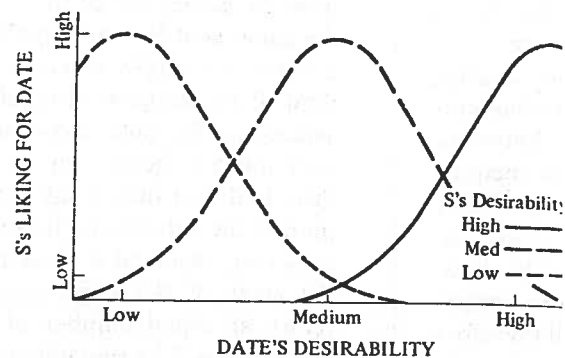


FIGURE 9-3. Amount of liking unattractive, average, and attractive subjects are predicted to feel for dates of various attractiveness.

correlated with popularity, self-esteem, and other indices which comprise "social desirability.") The freshmen's physical attractiveness was evaluated by four college sophomores who "happened" to be present while they were purchasing a ticket.

Whether or not students expected and preferred partners of approximately their own social desirability was assessed in several ways: First, when freshmen signed up for the dance, they were asked how socially desirable they expected their date to be. (They were asked how physically attractive, how personally attractive, and how considerate they expected him or her to be.) Equity theory predicts that the more attractive the freshman, the more desirable he should expect his date to be. This prediction was confirmed.

Second, freshmen were randomly assigned to a date. Then they met for the first time at the dance. Equity theory predicts that the more similar the dates are in attractiveness, the more viable their relationship will be. The viability of the dates' relationships was assessed in three ways: During intermission, students were asked (1) how much they liked their partner and (2) how eager they were to continue the dating relationship. (3) Whether or not couples actually continued to date was determined by inter-

viewing all participants six months after the dance.

Once partners had met one another, equity theory predictions were not supported. Everyone, regardless of his or her own social desirability, best liked and most often attempted to continue to date the most desirable dates available. Equity considerations seemed not to limit the participants' aspirations in any way. To make things even worse for the theory, these nonfindings were replicated by Brislin and Lewis (1968).

Kiesler and Baral (1970) did find support for the equity theory predictions. The authors recruited Yale students for a study on intelligence tests. The experimenter told the men that he was perfecting a new intelligence test that had already been successfully used on hundreds of students. Men were then given a difficult test. Men in the high self-esteem condition were led to believe that they were doing extremely well on the test. (The experimenter nodded and smiled at their answers and mentioned that other men had much more trouble with the questions.) Men in the low self-esteem condition were led to believe that they were doing badly on the test. (The experimenter made it apparent that he was displeased with their performance. He frowned, looked away, and mentioned that other subjects had performed better.)

During a break in testing, the experimenter and the subject visited a nearby canteen. When they entered the canteen, the experimenter recognized a woman (actually an experimental confederate). In one condition (the attractive condition), the confederate was made up to be very physically attractive. She wore becoming make-up and fashionable clothing. In the unattractive condition, she was far less attractive. She wore no make-up, heavy glasses, and had her hair pulled back with a rubber band. Her skirt and blouse clashed and were arranged sloppily.

The woman sat down and chatted with the experimenter and the subject. After a minute, the experimenter excused himself to make a phone call. While he was gone, the woman continued to engage the Yale student in conversation for half an hour.

The dependent variable was the extent to which the male indicated to the female confederate that he was romantically interested in her and the effort which he expended to prolong their relationship. The confederate kept track of whether the man asked her for a date, asked for her phone number, offered to buy her a snack or coffee, offered her a cigarette, complimented her, or finally, ignored her when at the end of the prescribed time she said that she should get back to work.

Kiesler and Baral found strong support for the matching hypothesis. When the man's self-esteem had been lowered, he behaved most romantically toward the unattractive confederate. When the man's self-esteem had been raised, he behaved in a far more romantic way with the attractive confederate than with the unattractive one. Berscheid et al. (1971) provide additional support for the matching hypothesis.

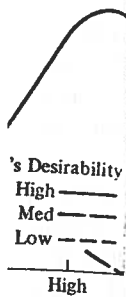
At the present time, then, data do not consistently support either equity theory or the notion that individuals' intimate social choices are unchecked by reality. The best summary of results would seem to be as follows:

Individuals' romantic choices are somewhat influenced by equity considerations.

Individuals tend to choose and prefer partners of approximately their own "social worth." However, there is a constant upward bias in one's choices.

Individuals persist in trying to form relations with partners who are somewhat more desirable than themselves.

One's romantic choices thus seem to be a delicate compromise between the insistent



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demands for an ideal partner and one's realization that one must accept what he deserves.

The conclusion that one's social choices are a compromise between fantasy and reality seems to be consistent with our own observations in the daily world.

Sometimes individuals talk and act as if they have unlimited social inputs and thus are deserving of perfection. They talk as if the fact that they had to compromise in selecting a marriage partner is an inequity. For example, we can all think of prestigious but aging professors who leave their wives and marry beautiful young graduate students. Often, within a short time, our professor begins to lament his protégée's shortcomings. "If only she were more intelligent and more considerate," he complains. Observers sometimes smile, because they are more attuned to the operation of exchange processes in determining social pairings than is the participant in the relationship. They are smugly aware that if his lady were smarter, she would not have to settle for the company of the aging professor.

Sometimes, however, individuals are aware of equity considerations. The man with the undeservedly beautiful wife often manifests vague unease. Whether the unease is generated by his own recognition that he has married a better woman than he deserves, or whether his unease is generated by the fact that she constantly reminds him that he has married too well, we do not know. Intimate relations, then, seem to be influenced in part by equity considerations and in part by fantasy.

CURRENT STATUS OF INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

The interpersonal attraction area is in the midst of a lively Renaissance. One cluster of researchers is wholly engaged in deriving and testing predictions from the reinforcement par-

adigm. They argue compellingly that only by establishing a mini-Manhattan Project² and painstakingly testing all aspects of the reinforcement paradigm will interpersonal-attraction research flower. Donn Byrne (1971) and his associates are typical of these researchers.

First, the Byrne group set out to painstakingly prove that the similarity-attraction relationship was a general one. They found it was. They discovered that attitudinal similarity breeds friendship, racial tolerance, romantic attraction, and marital happiness. Then they set out to discover exactly how the similarity-attraction link works. For example, they attempted to ascertain whether it is the number of attitudes that people share that determines liking or whether it is the proportion of similar attitudes to dissimilar ones that is important. After clever and lengthy research, they concluded that: "Subjects respond not simply to the number of similar or dissimilar attitudes expressed by the stranger but to the relative number of the two types of attitudes, regardless of the total number of topics involved." They even became convinced that the base relationship between attitude similarity-dissimilarity and attraction was so regular that it could be expressed in mathematical form [i.e., $Y = 5.44X + 6.62$ (where Y = attraction and X = proportion of similar attitudes)].

Other enclaves of researchers are roughly pushing forward the frontiers of interpersonal-attraction research. For many years researchers contented themselves with studying only the mildest forms of interpersonal attraction. They limited their curiosity to the genesis of tepid friendships, since to study more intense and fascinating feelings was taboo. Government granting agencies, sensitive to the feelings of the public, were nervous about awarding money to projects concerned with such trifling

²The mammoth World War II project which developed the atomic bomb.

matters as passionate love, sex, or hatred. Psychologists, with their blinders on, rationalized that to study these taboo topics was not only impossible but undesirable. A scientist wishing to cultivate information in these exotic areas must be softheaded, unscientific, and obsessed with the trivial. Suddenly a revolution occurred. The humanists invaded psychology and forced psychologists to acknowledge that tender and brutal emotions are important human concerns. Masters and Johnson's pioneering research made it obvious that a daring researcher could even study *Human Sexual Response*. In the last five years more psychologists have begun to study and investigate love, sex, and hatred than explored these phenomena in the history of psychology.

The work of Driscoll et al. is representative of the fascinating research into the nature of love that has begun. Driscoll et al. attempted to determine what effect parental interference has on the intensity of a heterosexual love affair. The authors observed how frequently parental opposition and intense love are pitted against one another in literature. (For example, Romeo and Juliet's short but intense love affair took place against the background of total opposition from the two feuding families. The difficulties and separations which the family conflict created appear to have intensified the lovers' feelings for each other.)

The authors tested the hypothesis that parental opposition would deepen romantic love in the following way. Ninety-one married couples and 49 dating couples (18 of whom were living together) were recruited to participate in a Marital Relations Project. During an initial interview, all the couples filled out two scales, (1) an assessment of parental interference scale which measured the extent to which the couple's parents interfered and caused difficulties in their relationship, and (2) a romantic love scale which measured the extent to which participants loved, felt they cared about and

needed their partner, and felt that the relationship was more important than anything else.

The authors found that parental interference and passion were related. Parental interference and romantic love were correlated .50 for the unmarried sample and .24 for the married sample.

Next, the authors investigated whether increasing parental interference would provoke increased passion. Six to ten months after the initial interview, the authors invited all of the couples back for a second interview. During this second interview, the participants once again completed parental interference and romantic love scales. By comparing participants' initial interview responses with their later ones, the authors could calculate whether the participants' parents had become more or less interfering in the relationship and how these changes in parental interference had affected the couples' affair. The authors found that as parents began to interfere more in a relationship, the couple appeared to fall more deeply in love. If the parents had become resigned to the relationship and had begun to interfere less, the couples began to feel less intensely about one another. (Changes in parental interference correlated .30 with changes in romantic love and also .34 with changes in conjugal love.)

Data indicating that parental interference breeds passion are fascinating. When parents interfere in an "unsuitable" match, they interfere with the intent of destroying the relationship, not of strengthening it. Yet, these data warn that parental interference is likely to boomerang if the relationship survives. It may foster desire rather than division.

Other clusters of researchers have begun to apply theories of interpersonal attraction to social problems. They are confident that, by propagating existing theoretical knowledge, psychologists can insure that the world will become a more fulfilling, pleasant, exciting, or

relaxing place. These activists have applied attraction (and equity) theory to improve dating and marital relations, helping relations to the development of "social indicators" (i.e., indicators of human happiness), to the reformation of homes for delinquent children and prisoners, to reducing international tension, and the like.

A fourth cluster of researchers have begun chopping away at the tidy borders which have conventionally existed between social psychology (and interpersonal attraction) and other disciplines, such as political science, economics, law, anthropology, and history. For example, one team of psychologists and lawyers merged forces in an effort to determine whether the legal structures existing in the United States do in fact push harm-doers to make voluntary restitution to those they injure. Other teams of psychologist-lawyers have tried to determine whether judges and jurors' "curious" reluctance to adhere to prescribed procedures and "the letter of the law" in assigning sentences may, in fact, reflect the fact that they are more concerned about restoring equitable relations between defendant and plaintiff than with following legal prescriptions.

THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Only recently have psychologists fully assimilated the profound truth of Lewin's contention that: "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." Many young activists—always the first to be swept forward by social change—are now scrutinizing theory, in order to uncover the best way to promote profound social changes. Other activists are busily engrossed in applied research.

Equity theory was developed to explain interpersonal attraction. Yet, activists soon found that the equity approach was useful in

understanding a variety of diverse human problems. Let us review a potpourri of these recent developments.

The Impact of Power on Justice

Philosophers, who contemplate the evolution of social justice, seem eventually to come to the unsettling conclusion that Man's social philosophy is inevitably a mere rationalization of the status quo. For example, Sampson (1968) notes: "... it is a truism that political philosophy has traditionally concerned itself with the search for some kind of moral justification for the power and coercion of governments. Powerful groups survey their inputs and unfairly come to the conclusion that it is just these resources which entitle one to monopolize community resources. Deprived groups have little choice but to accept their reasoning (see Walster, 1975).

Theories of social justice have an unvarying history. The current generation becomes aware of the pressure of emerging groups for "fairer" treatment. The current generation concludes that it is the first generation blessed with clear vision. They correctly perceive the "fair thing" to do and work toward amending the social order.

Then a new generation comes along. They too become sensitive to the fact that the power balance has shifted. The masses of serfs, merchants, second sons, migrant workers, middle Americans, youths, or elderly now assert the claims, and the new generation again realizes that the principles of justice that their fathers found so compelling were, in fact, merely a response to the prevailing power balance.

It is easy for us to feel appalled at the way nobles "exploited" their serfs, slaveowners "exploited" their slaves, or men "exploited" their women. But these landowners, slaveowners, and male chauvinists were not fundamen-

ally different people than we are. They were simply responding to different pressures, and to a different status quo.

The message, then, is clear. There is little chance that the majority will recognize the claims of exploited minorities unless these minorities can amass sufficient power to press for equal treatment. Minority members can and have used a variety of techniques to make majority members realize that sharing with them will be a more profitable strategy than hoarding. The exploited can use praise, passive resistance, sabotage, or moral opprobrium or approbation. But unless they have some real power to affect the outcomes of the majority, their case is hopeless. The powerful can always generate a satisfying, justifying philosophy.

Kipnis (1972) has been fascinated by the impact that power has on men's social relations. He argues that as soon as men acquire power, they are tempted to use that power to enrich themselves. Inevitably they succumb to temptation. Power thus leads to corruption, of several sorts. According to Kipnis, the powerful (1) monopolize resources, (2) are tempted to develop an exploitative morality (and soon conclude that they are exempt from ordinary morality), (3) develop an exalted and vain view of their own worth, (4) become alienated from their fellow man, and (5) come to despise him. In a series of laboratory experiments, Kipnis (1972) amasses evidence in support of the sequence he proposes.

Kipnis, too, would surely agree that minority members have no hope of wrenching equal rights from the majority unless they gain sufficient political, economic, or physical power to enforce their claims.

Equity and the Law

Legal philosophers have insisted that a wise society would structure its institutions so that

its citizens find it profitable to be good. In Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, Thomas More rightly observes: "If we lived in a State where virtue was profitable, common sense would make us good, and greed would make us saintly." But society has not yet arranged its institutions so neatly. In our time, as in More's, humility, chastity, fortitude, justice, and thought are often less profitable than avarice, anger, envy, pride, sloth, lust, and stupidity. Yet, the goal of a sensible society is clear. Goodness should be profitable.

This principle would suggest that social institutions should be designed to promote justice and discourage derogation and justification. When human relationships become alarmingly inequitable, society should intervene and attempt to persuade harm-doers to voluntarily compensate their victims. Everyone benefits when harm-doers volunteer to compensate those they have injured. The harm-doer becomes more profoundly committed to the equity norm (see Mills, 1958) and serves as a good behavioral model for others (see Bandura and Walters, 1963).

If it becomes evident that state agencies are not going to be able to prod the harm-doer into restoring equity, legal and religious agencies might escalate their activities and insist that the harm-doer make restitution. Such agencies can pressure a harm-doer to make restitution in a variety of ways. For example, in the Hungarian and Norwegian legal systems, the harm-doer's willingness to make restitution is taken into account when determining his sentence. When a prisoner's sentence is contingent on whether or not he "chooses" to make restitution, restitution is clearly not voluntary. However, the Hungarians consider it better, from a rehabilitative point of view, to elicit semivoluntary restitution than none at all. Macaulay (in Macaulay and Walster, 1971) points out that in the United States, formal and informal tech-

niques are used to pressure individuals to make restitution:

On its face, American law is consistent with the goal of supporting compensation. . . . the common-law of torts consists of rules which say a wrong-doer must compensate his victim. In addition, the legal system in operation provides more avenues to restitution than are available in its formal rules. A wide variety of informal procedures encourage compensation. For example, criminal sanctions are sometimes used as leverage to induce restitution. A police officer may decide not to arrest a shoplifter if the wrongdoer is not a professional thief and if the stolen items are returned; a district attorney may decide not to prosecute if the amount embezzled is returned. (p. 179)

The psychological literature (Brehm & Cohen, 1962) and the anecdotal evidence of penal theorists (Spencer, 1874; Del Vecchio, 1959; Schafer, 1960) provide some support for the contention that if society induces "fair" behavior, "fair" attitudes will follow.

Sometimes social agencies cannot elicit restitution. (For example, harm-doers are often unknown or indigent.) In such cases it may be wise for society to acknowledge that an injustice has been perpetrated and for welfare agencies and insurance agencies to intervene to alleviate the victim's suffering. Such intervention is consistent with our notion of fairness (as the innocent victim is recompensed) and is expedient (as the legitimacy of equity norms is affirmed by society). For a lengthy and fascinating discussion of this point, see Fry (1956).

The student who is interested in the way legal rules and processes encourage or discourage harm-doers from making restitution should see Macaulay in Macaulay and Walster (1971) or Austin and Walster (1974).

The Participants in Inequity—the Exploiter and the Victim

When one examines the current status of interpersonal attraction, a curious anomaly appears. Equity theory presumably deals with the reactions of two participants to a relationship—the exploiter and his victim, the innocent bystander and the innocent victim. Yet, virtually all of the equity research focuses on the reactions of only one participant, the one who has managed to amass excessive relative outcomes. We know a great deal about exploiters and bystanders to an emergency; we know very little about the exploited and innocent victim. Theoretically, we would predict that the exploiter's and the exploited's reactions should echo one another, but evidence to document this prediction is virtually nonexistent.

Why have psychologists been so fascinated by harm-doers and so disinterested in victims? Perhaps psychologists, like everyone else, prefer speculating about the lives of the powerful and rich to those of the weak and poor. We do not know. In any case, the advancing era of humanism has generated a sudden curiosity about the feelings of victims. Research is now underway to test whether or not our theories about how victims feel are valid. Let us describe just one of these numerous research enterprises.

The Making of an Uncle Tom. According to equity theory, when a victim perceives that he is being exploited, he has two options: (1) He can become angry and demand justice. (2) He can suppress his anger and justify his own deprivation, becoming an apathetic "Uncle Tom."

One team of researchers (Austin and Paterson) has proposed three variables that they predict will determine whether individuals caught up in the wake of injustice will insist on justice or accept justification.

1. Previous Expectations. Austin (1972) proposed that individuals will be more enraged when they encounter unexpected, startling injustices than when they finally encounter a long expected injustice. Austin argued that when one knows he faces eventual exploitation, he is tempted to gain tranquility by minimizing the seriousness of the injustice. Thus, he hypothesized that unexpected injustice should provoke a far more emotional response (and more vigorous demands for restitution) than should long-awaited and thus well-rationalized injustice. Austin and Walster (1974) found compelling support for Austin's contentions.

2. Hope. If a citizen who is victimized is confident that if he makes a fuss his fellow citizens will see to it that equity is restored, he should be likely to allow his righteous anger full expression. He should demand compensation. However, a victim who has learned through crushing experience that "you can't fight city hall" should try to dampen his sense of outrage and to justify his exploitation.

3. Previous Commitments. If an individual repeatedly suffers discrimination, he eventually develops some strategy for coping with his pain. Some deprived blacks declare themselves to be black militants; others become Uncle Toms. Some women who encounter discrimination become unwavering women's liberationists; others join "MOM" ("Men Our Masters"). Once a person becomes committed to a specific strategy for coping with inequality, he should find it embarrassing and difficult to adopt a new strategy, should the world change.

The data that will tell us whether or not these researchers' hunches about "the making of an Uncle Tom" are correct are not yet in. If they are correct, their discoveries may have a revolutionary impact on the relations between militants and reactionaries. It may be easier for militants to understand Uncle Toms, and for

Uncle Toms to understand militants, once they become aware that they are simply coping with the same pain in different ways.

SUMMARY

This chapter has progressed from a *Remembrance of Things Past* to an *Intimations of the Future*.

First we explored the reasons why men have always been eager to uncover the antecedents of interpersonal attraction. The reason why people are so unfailingly eager to be liked soon became clear: A person who is liked by his comrades can amass enormous benefits; a person who is hated is in trouble.

We then sketched the ingenious techniques observers have used to gain information about who likes whom. We discovered that social scientists are not limited to blatant devices such as self-report questionnaires if they want to find out how people feel about one another. Social psychologists have used such unobtrusive indicants as how close one stands to another, how often he gazes at another, or how much his pupils dilate when he looks at another, in order to detect how people really feel about one another.

Next, we described the reinforcement theory of attraction. Numerous studies lead to the conclusion that people come to like those who reward them (or who are merely present when they are rewarded) and come to hate those who frustrate them (or who are merely present when they are punished). For example, if a person claims to share our convictions or reveals that he finds us fascinating, we will like him. If he frustrates our desires, we will dislike him.

The reinforcement paradigm raises problems that have long plagued psychologists and students. It sometimes falters in predicting human behavior and is embarrassed by two facts: (1) Individuals do not inevitably strive to maxi-

mize their immediate material rewards. (2) They do not always prefer people who provide large material rewards to people who provide small rewards.

The most recent reinforcement theory, equity theory, is a general theory designed to integrate the numerous existing theories of interpersonal attraction. Equity theory, a strikingly simple theory, consists of four basic propositions: Men try to maximize their outcomes (Proposition I). A group of individuals can maximize their total outcomes by agreeing on some equitable system for sharing resources. A relationship is defined as equitable when a scrutineer perceives that all participants are securing equal relative outcomes from the relationship.

Groups try to insure that members can maximize their outcomes by behaving equitably; they reward members who behave equitably and punish members who behave inequitably (Proposition II). When individuals socialized by this system participate in inequitable relationships, they experience distress (Proposition III). Participants reduce their distress either by restoring actual equity or by restoring psychological equity to the relationship (Proposition IV).

Researchers have applied equity theory to various types of human relationships such as business relationships, exploitative relationships, helping relationships, and intimate relationships. The research in these last three areas was discussed in terms of its relevance for interpersonal attraction.

Finally, the direction of future research in attraction was surveyed. Interest in interper-

sonal attraction has burgeoned and some of the most intriguing equity research may still be forthcoming.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. *Interpersonal attraction*. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

This volume provides a broad overview of recent theorizing and research on love, interpersonal attraction, interpersonal hostility, and hatred.

Homans, G. C. *Social behavior: Its elementary forms*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961.

Homans succinctly reviews the Skinnerian learning paradigm and then details the effect that rewards and punishments should have on an animal's behavior, including man's. Homans then proposes the original exchange model. He observes that animals' activities reciprocally influence one another. Thus, social relations inevitably become exchange relations. Homans demonstrates the truth of his contentions with persuasive anecdotes and research data.

Walster, E., Berscheid, E., & Walster, G. W. New directions in equity research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1973, 25, 151-176.

This article presents an up-to-date summary of equity theory and existing equity research. It describes the equity research advances in four major areas of human interaction: business relationships, exploitative relationships, helping relationships, and intimate relationships. The authors point out the relevance of equity theory for various social problems.