

## Discovering the Enemy Within: An Exercise in Unintended Thought

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This experiential exercise addresses a complex and many faceted problem in organizational psychology that is sometimes referred to as false consciousness. By bringing the subconscious into focus, we learn how we got where we are, and more importantly, we learn that while our environment may affect our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, we are in no way helpless pawns of our socialization. The exercise is a fun house of mirrors, providing opportunities to address myriad organizational behavior issues. We explore how much of our current behaviors are due to socialization, conscious thought, and context. We investigate intended versus actual behaviors, our unconscious attributions, associations, perceptions, stereotypes, and self-honesty. Finally, we ask ourselves, "Just who is making up my mind for me?"

**Keywords:** unconscious influence, bias, espoused vs. actual behavior, experiential exercise

### Introduction

An important element of individual decision-making is how much conscious control we have over our judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Researchers have long argued that this is one of the most basic and important questions of human existence (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Posner & Snyder, 1975). Contemporary social psychologists stress the importance of dual-process models in which the phenomenon in question is said to be influenced simultaneously by conscious (control) and non-conscious (automatic) processes (e.g., Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Logan & Cowan, 1984; Neely, 1977, 1991). Social psychology thus accepts both the existence of conscious or willed causation of mental and behavioral processes and the existence of automatic or environmentally triggered processes. For a comprehensive review of dual-process models see Chaiken and Trope (1999).

In our teaching experience, students appear receptive to the decision-making models built on conscious rational processes. Indeed, students seem to embrace the notion that their decisions and subsequent behaviors result from objective and rational thought processes. Alternatively, these same students appear hesitant to believe that environmental factors operating outside of conscious awareness might also be influencing their attitudes and behaviors. In an effort to make salient the impact of external stimuli and/or internal, unconscious forces, we developed this active learning exercise in unintended thought.

## Objective

We designed this exercise to generate, in general terms, a classroom discussion about the contributing role our beliefs play in our attitudes and how those attitudes relate to human behavior. We hoped to set the stage within which the class could explore a variety of related concepts of special interest to human behavior in organizations (e.g., individual decision-making, selective perception, stereotypes, attributions and other biases, and self-management). Our aim was to awaken the realization that unconscious associations can and often do influence our daily lives. We also wanted to stress that while the world does affect our lives, we are in no way helpless pawns. Instead, mindfulness empowers us to control the societal impact of such influences. We cannot always choose our experiences. Sometimes, things just happen. However, we can choose to retain the positive influences and discard the negative influences that emanate from those experiences.

We use the students' reactions to gendered story characters to quantitatively demonstrate the influences of unconscious associations. The exercise is intended to be illustrative. We do not claim any cause and effect. Rather, we emphasize that students consciously consider where their attributions about the characters come from (why they think the way they do). Our intent is to bring the subconscious into focus. Doing so, allows us to explore how we got where we are, and more importantly, how our environment affects our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors so we can mindfully determine where we want to go. The exploration of concepts is our main concern. However, since some classes are too small for the numeric results to portray enough information for meaningful discussion, we sometimes use cumulative numbers (see appendices D & F) to "get at" the tendency towards unconscious biases.

The stories are an adaptation of an old case, "The Alligator River Story," which was originally designed to teach young children values clarification (Simon, Howe, & Kirshenbaum, 1978, p. 290-292). In the original exercise, the authors recommended a discussion based on a G-rated story for children in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or lower, or an X-rated story for older children and adults (see Appendix C and D for adaptations of these stories). We added stories B and C for use in this exercise. We use gendered names to illustrate the effect of unconscious associations on beliefs, attitudes, and resultant choices. However, the exercise can be adapted to demonstrate other biases (e.g., race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation). We then added a societal crime scene survey to illustrate changes of the illustrated values out of context. Most people are aware of the negative effects stereotyping can have on day-to-day behaviors and decision-making processes. However, while students routinely acknowledge the existence of societal biases (in others) and the need to control them in organizations, they seem hesitant to acknowledge the impact of those same influences on their own behaviors.

We understand the difficulty of accepting the impact of such influences. As humans, we like to believe that we consciously and actively choose and control (through free will) the impact outside experiences have on our everyday life. Imagine yourself doing human subject research on conscious awareness. You succeed in administering undetected manipulations that alter your subjects' emotions, attitudes, and/or judgments. However, the subjects have no clue as to why they behave or feel a certain way. How do you think they would respond when you try to explain what you did? According to Bargh and Chartrand (1999), there is a good chance they will not believe you and, in fact, may even argue with you. Consider these questions: If I am

unaware of an influence, will I have any conscious memory of the experience? If I am then told that my behavior was intentionally manipulated, will I believe it if I could not recall the experience? These questions illustrate the challenge instructors' face when teaching students about implicit influences on their own judgments, emotions, and behaviors. To circumvent this problem, we designed this exercise so that students can actually experience the consequences of their unconscious thoughts on their consciously made decisions.

In the following literature review, we present our rationale for choosing an active learning approach. Additionally, we provide a summary of the research on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, followed by a review of the literature on unconscious stereotyping and judgment. Within this section, we provide our conceptualization of a model that explains how we got where we are today (our actual behaviors), and how we can get where we want to be (our intended behaviors), by mindfully controlling subconscious associations that may influence our behaviors.

## Literature Review

### Why Use an Active Learning Approach?

Active learning (also referred to as “action learning,” or “experiential learning”) is a process by which students actively engage in applying, analyzing, and synthesizing course content (Thomas, Prater, Luckner, Rhine, & Rude, 1998). Kolb (1984) asserts that active learning approaches create a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Thus, active learning methodologies are highly participatory. Students learn from experience through cycles of action and subsequent reflections on that action linking concepts with their own experience(s). This internalization provides students with something practical that they can readily draw upon (Yorks, Marsick, Kasl, Dechant, 2003).

Pedagogically, such teaching methods are successful because they provide students with opportunities to experience concepts and they promote the involvement of values, attitudes, and/or emotions in the learning process. On a more basic level, the process of *doing* requires the involvement of many senses and the coordination of movement with thought, thereby forcing students to coordinate motor and mental skills (Chavez & Poirier, in press). Raelin (1997) suggested that action-learning programs produce students who extend critical thinking beyond self-interests, to include the purposes, values, and actions of their organizations. Therefore, we designed this active learning exercise to involve the “whole person”: to include emotions, values, and attitudes, while creating an experience that had personal meaning.

### Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavior

To help explain the connection between beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors we rely on the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). While this theory is over 20 years old, it is a useful tool for looking at the individual decision-making process. The theory uses hypothetical constructs such as beliefs, values, and expectancies. Fishbein and Ajzen, (1975) defined an *attitude* as being the degree of positive or negative feelings (or affect) a person has towards a particular attitude object. An attitude object can be a place, thing, or other person. To

understand our attitudes, we must look to the nature of beliefs (our value system) in order to understand what causes us to feel particularly good or bad about specific things or people.

According to the theory of reasoned action, affective reaction lies in the beliefs we hold about the attitude objects in question. A *belief* is a person's "subjective probability judgment concerning a relation between the object of the belief and some other object, value, concept, or attribute" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 131). As a person forms a belief about an object, s/he automatically and simultaneously develops an attitude toward that object. The general attitude a person has toward an object is an aggregation of all the beliefs that s/he holds about it, each weighted by the positive or negative evaluations s/he places on the various beliefs (Pinder, 1998). In summary, if a person has positive associations with an object or person, s/he will tend towards a positive general attitude toward that object or person. Likewise, if a person has negative associations with an object or person, s/he will tend towards a general negative attitude toward that object or person.

Several researchers have found the stability of human beliefs and attitudes to be relatively permanent predispositions toward attitude objects such as other people, jobs, organizations, or whatever (Fiske, 1993; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Levine, Resnick, & Higgins, 1993). They also recognize that the social contexts in which people exist heavily influence attitudes. For Olson and Zanna, (1993), an attitude is an integration of the evaluative thoughts a person holds in memory. They stress the importance of the storage in memory concept, as this approach considers both long- and short-term memory so that new information being processed by short-term memory becomes integrated with the information in long-term memory. Thus, despite the relative stability of beliefs and ensuing attitudes, new experiences (behaviors) can change the shape of an attitude and strengthen or weaken a belief. The power lies within each of us to reform our attitudes and beliefs, should we choose to activate that capacity.

### **Unconscious Stereotyping and Judgment**

A major reason researchers became interested in the concept of attitudes is its relevance to stereotypes and prejudice (Olson & Zanna, 1993). Much evidence indicates that stereotypes and attitudes often operate unconsciously (Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman 1993; Bargh, 1992; Bargh, Chaiken, Govender, & Pratto 1992; Brewer, 1988; Devine, 1989; Fazio, Powell, Sanbonmatsu, & Kardes, 1986; Fiske, 1989; Gilbert & Hixon, 1991). Observations and experimental discoveries indicate that unconscious influences on behavior are common rather than rare (Banaji, et. al, 1993; Jacoby & Kelley, 1987). Therefore, by examining the processes involved in unconscious learning and memory, we can advance the understanding of social behavior (Bargh, 1984; Lewicki & Hill, 1987).

Among the various processes that need understanding is the influence of subconscious associations on everyday behaviors (Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993; Hilton & von Hippel 1996; Paul 1998). Smith and Branscombe (1988) speculated that the experiences shared among members of particular social groups could affect later reactions to people, without the perceiver being aware of the influence or even being able to retrieve the earlier associations as explicit memories. The result is that our behaviors are partially determined by unintended thought. For example, consider how many of us chose a religion or political preference. Few of us actually

rationally made an informed choice—we just accepted such beliefs based on our unique life’s experiences (associations).

As children, we have no cognitive abilities to form our own beliefs. Therefore, we have no choice but to accept the messages we receive (Paul, 1998) some of which may be stereotypical. These messages become networks of subconscious associations (Carlston & Skowronski, 1994; Manis, Nelson, & Shedler, 1988; Paul, 1998) since connections made often enough in the conscious mind become unconscious. Such associations weave their way into our belief system. They become part of who and what we are. These connections enter our mind through language, movies, books, experiences, etc. They come from our parents, our friends, everything we see, everything we hear, and everything we do. It is unlikely that any two people will undergo the same experiences in the same contexts throughout life. Hence, each person possesses a unique value system that influences the way s/he behaves. Our value system helps determine how we see others and ourselves in the world. Therefore, to understand fully our own behaviors, we must recognize the importance of external influences in how we got where we are.

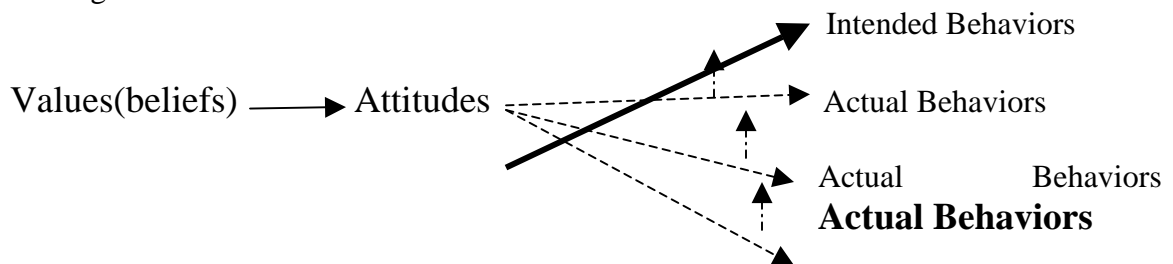
Argyris and Schon (1974) differentiated between intended behaviors and actual behaviors. They termed verbal accounts of how a person says they will behave “espoused theory.” They pointed out that espoused theory and actual observed behavior are often very different. People determine their intended behaviors through a conscious or cognitive process by which they see themselves behaving in a manner that is congruent with their espoused values. We may say that we are not biased (espoused value) and we truly believe that we do not make biased decisions (espoused behavior). However, if quantified, we may find that we continually promote females over males, indicating a difference between actual behavior and intended behavior. Many studies indicate that implicit stereotyping does unconsciously influence actual behaviors (Banaji et. al. 1993; Bargh, 1992; Bargh, Chaiken, Govender, & Pratto 1992; Brewer, 1988; Devine, 1989; Fazio et al., 1986; Fiske, 1989; Gilbert & Hixon, 1991). Paul (1998) refers to the external influences through which implicit stereotyping occurs as very subtle, insidious types of unconscious biases that automatically influence our behaviors. She calls this phenomenon the automaticity of thought.

To summarize the above literature, beliefs and values influence attitudes, which in turn inform behaviors. However, there is a difference between intended behaviors and actual behaviors. Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort felt when one realizes that one’s actual behavior differs from one’s intended behavior (Festinger, 1957). Intended behaviors are relatively conscious determinations of how we see ourselves behaving within our social environment, while actual behaviors are the resulting actions of both conscious and unconscious influences within our social environment. Thus, one process by which we can control unconscious bias associations is through the recognition of this difference in behaviors (i.e., cognitive dissonance). This discomfort then stimulates a desire to bring our behaviors in line with intended behaviors. The following is a graphic depiction of this process.

**How we got where we are:**



**How we get where we want to be:** First we must create cognitive dissonance (dissatisfaction) with the difference between our intended behaviors and our actual behaviors through honest observation and honest reflection. Then we can change our actual behaviors in the direction of our intended behaviors, which in turn provides us with new experiences that reshape our value and attitudes. This progression can be a continuous lifelong growth process, or we can stop changing behaviors when we become satisfied with our actual behaviors and we no longer experience cognitive dissonance.



Unfortunately, humans often take other approaches to eliminating cognitive dissonance, which helps explain why good people sometime do bad things (Bersoff, 1999). One approach is through selective perception, which allows our minds to validate that which we want to think. Other explanations include the mental gymnastics we use to disassociate moral thinking from moral acting so that we can avoid feeling guilt or remorse over our actual behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Such psychological justifications include diffusion of blame, moral justification, advantageous comparison, and disregard or distortion of consequences, among others. Sadly, when we take the latter approaches we cease to get where we want to be and remain where we are. In other words, we stagnate.

To illustrate these concepts to students, we developed the following exercise. The exercise places students in a safe, eye-opening application of attributions that illuminates the influence of automatic stereotyping within their own culture.

### Overview of the Exercise

The exercise uses an adapted version of an old case, “The Alligator River Story” (Simon, Howe, & Kirshenbaum, pp. 290-292). In the first story (see Appendix A) we used gendered names to portray the behaviors of four males and one female. We then modified Story A to create Story B (See Appendix B) by reversing the gender of each character so that there are four females and one male. Finally, we adapted the original story to a non-gendered version (See Appendix C) by using non-gendered names. In all conditions, the behaviors deployed and the basic stories remained the same.

Based on anonymous, written student responses to the exercise, we developed a Societal Crime Survey (Appendix E) as a validity check in case students assigned gender to the non-gendered names. The survey consists of a general list of crimes against society extracted from student explanations of why each character’s behavior was bad, immoral, or unethical. We then added six additional crimes in order to camouflage the intent of the survey. There are no names or context assigned to the crime list.

At the beginning of the semester, students rank order the list of crimes according to the most offensive (#1) to the least offensive crime (#13). Our instructions were: “We are gathering information to be used in an exercise later in the semester.” Students gave one or two sentence explanations for their choices. Surveys were anonymous and participation was voluntary. The respondents were business school students from three major State Universities in the Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest regions of the United States. We counted the number of times each crime was listed as number one or two (most offensive) on the Societal Crime Survey and converted those numbers into percentages for comparative purposes. The percentages presented here are based on 221 student responses.

Later in the semester (two weeks minimum), we present the class with one of the stories, A or B or C and ask students to rank order the characters from the most offensive (#1) to the least offensive (#5). Students are told there was no right or wrong answer. We take an informal count, by a voluntary show of hands, of how many students listed each character in the # 1 or # 2 position. We then engage everyone in a discussion of why people chose the rankings. Instructors record explanations on flip charts under the name of each character. Our goal at this point is simply to get all the perceived infractions listed on flip charts. While there are no wrong answers, students do try to convince each other of why their answer is the correct one. They get very excited during the discussion as the stories tap into their subconscious beliefs. Of particular note for the debriefing is the participants’ tendency to create facts not presented in the story (the mind trying to justify one’s unconscious values through selective perception). Likewise, they select some facts for inclusion in their argument while ignoring others.

Following the discussion, we present students with the data from the Societal Crime Survey, which typically significantly differs from the gendered story results obtained in the classroom. The rankings students assign on the Societal Crime Survey represent their espoused behavior based solely on their perception of which crimes are the most offensive. The survey is devoid of context and any stereotypical associations. When we present them with the actual behaviors of characters within a context, they assign significantly different rankings (actual behavior). We then discuss the difference in terms of experience, values, attitudes, perceptions, etc. At this point, students are starting to see the differences among themselves. We then read the other stories to the class. Students quickly recognize that everything is the same except that we switched the gender of the characters. At this point mayhem breaks out—but in a good way.

Finally, we show them the difference between the statistics collected from other classes to Stories A, B, and C. In stories A and B, the resultant student rankings for most offensive crimes move with gender for four of the five characters. Specifically Abigail’s character is more offensive than when Gregory is the name of the character. Sheba’s character is more offensive than when the character is Sinbad, and they see Helen as more offensive than when Ivan is the name of the character. The only character that does not change according to gender is Cindy versus Slug. This character gets into a fight. Apparently, students do not see a fight between two women as being any more offensive than a fight between two men. Story C, which completely controls gender but places the characters within the same context, generally validates the assigned student rankings of the societal crime survey.

## Results and Discussion

Students are in awe first, at the different perceptions among themselves—great fodder for discussions on value/belief systems, attitudes, and intended behaviors. However, the real insight comes when they see the statistics implying that attributions of blame are at least partially based on gender biases. This leads to a discussion on implicit stereotyping, selective perception, societal norms, and cultural influences (both conscious and subconscious). Students begin to actively seek explanations as to why this occurred and how they can control these unconscious stereotypes. Hence, a very spirited discussion ensues that creates many new associations in students' minds based on their own behaviors (espoused and actual). The immediate debriefing evolves around the implicit stereotyping that permeates our belief systems at a very young age. We discuss where the influences came from and how to control their impact on our decisions and behaviors now that we do have the cognitive ability to make choices. We point out that environmental influence can not NOT happen as we are always influenced by our surroundings (sounds, thoughts, colors, contrast, etc.), this experience included, and all that each of us had and will say in the classroom. We discuss conscious behavioral change as a method of obtaining congruency between actual and intended behaviors.

We were surprised at the richness of the exercise to discussions about myriad organizational behavioral concepts such as values/beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, attributions, perceptions, selective perception, stereotyping, projection, halo, cognitive dissonance, self-leadership, and free will. The impact this exercise has on participants, and the many OB concepts to which it links, encourages a semester long discourse. Students often cite the exercise in student evaluations, as being a valued and effective learning experience.

### TEACHING NOTES FOR THE UNINTENDED THOUGHT EXERCISE

#### Teaching Objectives

- 1). To make salient the importance of external and often unconscious influences on our decisions and behaviors;
- 2). To awaken the realization that while the world does affect our lives, we can control how it affects us;
- 3). To introduce a variety of subjects: Biases, selective perception, values, attitudes, intended vs. actual behavior, cognitive dissonance, moral reasoning, attributions, rational vs. value-laden decisions, attribution theory, etc.

#### Time for Survey (advance preparation): 10 minutes

At the beginning of the semester, have students fill out the non-gendered Societal Crime Survey. Allow enough time (two or more weeks) to elapse between collecting this information and introducing the stories so that students do not make a connection between the two activities.

**Instructor note:** Administer this exercise before students read sections on values, attitudes and behaviors, or perceptions and biases. The exercise provides a good segue into these subjects.

We have also noted (via quality of comments on student journals) that the students are better able to internalize the readings after the exercise.

**Exercise: 45 - 60 minutes depending on class size.**

### **Step 1: 10 minutes**

Pass out Story A, B, or Story D. Instruct students to read the story and then to rank order the characters from most offensive to least offensive. Tell students to jot down the reasons they rank the characters as they do. Make sure students know that this is not a graded assignment and is being used only for discussion purposes. Inform students that there are no right or wrong answers. However, if you want to collect the results for comprehensive statistics, instruct students to leave their names off of the form.

### **Step 2**

While students are reading the stories, write the names of the characters on the board or flip charts. Leave space to record student explanations under each name.

### **Step 3: 5 minutes**

Tally the rankings by asking students to raise their hand if they placed a character in the first or second position. Example: Please raise your hand if you ranked Gregory as the most offensive character. Please raise your hand if you ranked Gregory as the second most offensive character.

**Instructor Note:** In large classes, you can ask for those who placed a character in the first position only. However, in smaller classes (< 35), students may not place every character in the first position. We find it easier to ask for both first and second placements so that we get the opportunity to discuss all characters.

### **Step 4: 20 - 30 minutes** (Depending on class size and how much the instructor wants to probe.)

Begin a discussion by asking students to share their reasoning if they placed Abigail in the first or second position. Paraphrase all explanations and list them under that character's name. After every student who desires to contribute has done so, move on to the next character. You are trying to list the many different reasons students provide while stressing that all answers are correct. During the discussion, many students will start arguing with each other. This provides the instructor an opportunity to point out the many different perceptions of the same occurrence among the students.

An example of explanations of why students perceive Abigail in Story A to be the most offensive include that she cheated on her boyfriend, had sex without love, was unfaithful, etc. Students are trying to be politically correct in their condemnation language. It may be helpful to loosen the class up so that students start expressing value laden emotional thoughts rather than trying to "soften" their explanations. For example, I have asked, "Are you calling Abigail a slut?" and then listing "slut" as a valid criticism. Alternatively, instructors can use the G-rated version of

the story if they do want to address sex as a value. However, most text books and the authors of the original stories recommend Story X for students above the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Students often make up conditions and facts to justify and rationalize their own perceptions. Examples include, she could have built a bridge, or waited for the water to go down, etc.—knowledge that is not provided in the story. Many students neglect the fact that her male sex partner also had sex without love.

**Instructor note:** Keep reminding students that all perspectives are valued. Students become involved in trying to convince each other of the correctness of their own perceptions.

### **Step 6: (Optional)**

Have students vote again following the discussion. Student votes will often change. This prompts a discussion about gathering knowledge from different perspectives before making final decisions, the danger of assuming that others think as we do (projection), and open-mindedness. Many students will dig in their heels and defend their positions. That is, the discussion does not influence the student to change their vote. For those students, Step 7 comes as an “eye opener.”

### **Step 7: 10 minutes**

Show students the results of the non-gendered Societal Crime Survey they completed at the beginning of the semester. We use the cumulative numbers rather than data from just one class. The difference between the survey rankings and the gendered story illustrate how implicit stereotyping influenced their decisions without their realization. However, some students will deny any bias by arguing that the context rather than the gender is what made the difference. For those students, Step 8 is a revelation.

### **Step 8: 10 minutes**

The Instructor reads Story B aloud. Students quickly realize that it is exactly the same story with the gender of the characters reversed. We then share the results of Story B. Of interest is the difference in rankings depending on whether or not gender is introduced (social crime survey versus either story). Of striking interest is the change in rankings when gender is changed (story A versus story B). In all cases (except the Slug/Cindy character), students perceive the character as significantly more negative when female. At this point, students have a hard time ignoring that an externally imposed subconscious gender bias does exist that may negatively influence their judgment and behaviors.

**Instructor Note:** You may replicate and use our results in the classroom.

Finally, read Story C (non-gendered, in context) and compare the statistical results with those from the non-gendered, no-context, societal crime survey. These statistics sometimes illustrate the same pattern of results as those revealed in the societal crime survey. When this occurs, we discuss the possibility that something other than context is operating to influence decisions. We also probe the class to elucidate the next point.

We found that students have a tendency to assign gender to the names based on the

character's behavior, the student's own experiences, and/or the student's gender. This illumination comes from the statements students make about why they ranked the characters as they did. Students automatically revert to using gendered pronouns (e.g., him/her or he/she). This tendency provides an interesting class discussion about stereotypes, expectations, and perceptions within the perceiver, and helps explain why the statistical results for the non-gendered stories vary according to the norms of the class.

### **Caveats and Optional uses:**

- Results obtained in the classroom may vary as a function of the sample size and class makeup. When class size is too small to use in illustrating concepts, we use the compilation of statistics.
  - No statistically significant results emerged when we compared the rankings by respondent gender for Stories A and B or the Societal Crime Survey. It appears that both females and males share the same subconscious bias, which leads to discussions about cultural influences, expectations, and self-fulfilling prophecies.
  - Instructors can split the class and assign both stories in large classes. Engage each half of the class in separate discussions and then compare results.
  - Instructors can obtain a self-reported bias survey from students at the beginning of the semester and return these to individuals to illustrate the difference between intended and actual behavior at an individual level.
  - Stories can be adapted (via names) to represent implicit stereotypes about race, nationality, religion, or sexual preference. We are currently developing stories with the intent of exploring these subjects.
  - We ran the exercise in an online WebCT Organizational Behavior course using a discussion board. While the ranking of the characters was similar to those obtained in the classroom, there was much less emotional involvement in the discussion. Students seemed to be less emotionally involved in the exercise. They seemed to take more time to construct politically correct responses using rational cognitive processes.

Perhaps we could elicit the excitement experienced in the classroom by running the exercise in a "chat" room. However, time restrictions are one of the main reasons that students enroll in online courses. Not surprisingly, we were unable to find a time that was acceptable for all students to visit the chat room.

### **Final Thoughts**

This exercise addresses a complex and many faceted problem in organizational psychology sometimes referred to as false consciousness. Running the exercise is much like stumbling into a fun house with many mirrors. The exercise is enjoyable and creates some lively discussion among students. However, good faith prohibits attributing the results to objective science. This is perhaps a good thing as it allows us to explore possibilities about where, when, and why such gender biases might occur. How much is due to socialization, conscious thought, or context? If cognitive biases are culturally embedded, to what extent do they influence our behaviors? Are values functioning as motivators or are they functioning as rationales for past behaviors? Can we change our values by changing our behaviors? Which battles are worth fighting and which are not worth fighting? Does free will exist if influences are automatic and unconscious?

Finally, do we say what we mean . . . or mean what we say . . . or is there something unintended operating in our thought processes?

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## Appendix A

### Alligator River Story (A)

There lived a woman named Abigail who was in a loving relationship with a man named Gregory. Gregory lived on the shore of a river. Abigail lived on the opposite shore of the same river. The river that separated the two lovers was teeming with dangerous alligators. Unfortunately, a heavy flood had washed out the bridge the previous week. Abigail wanted to cross the river to be with Gregory. So she went to ask Sinbad, a riverboat captain, to take her across. He said he would be glad to if she would consent to go to bed with him prior to the voyage. She promptly refused and went to a good friend named Ivan to explain her plight. Ivan did not want to get involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Sinbad's terms. Sinbad fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her into the arms of Gregory.

When Abigail told Gregory about her amorous escapade in order to cross the river, Gregory cast her aside with disdain. Heartsick and rejected, Abigail turned to Slug with her tale of woe. Slug, feeling compassion for Abigail, sought out Gregory and beat him brutally. As the sun set on the horizon, people heard Abigail wailing.

Pease rank order the characters in this story from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most offensive character, and 2 being the second most offensive character . . . and 5 being the least offensive character. Briefly state your reasons.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

## Appendix B

### Alligator River Story (B)

There lived a man named Gregory who was in a loving relationship with a woman named Abigail. Abigail lived on the shore of a river. Gregory lived on the opposite shore of the same river. The river that separated the two lovers was teeming with dangerous alligators. Unfortunately, a heavy flood had washed out the bridge the previous week. Gregory wanted to cross the river to be with Abigail. So he went to ask Sheba, a riverboat captain, to take him across. Sheba said she would be glad to if he would consent to go to bed with her prior to the voyage. Gregory promptly refused and went to a good friend named Helen to explain his plight. Helen did not want to get involved at all in the situation. Gregory felt his only alternative was to accept Sheba's terms. Sheba fulfilled her promise to Gregory and delivered him into the arms of Abigail.

When Gregory told Abigail about his amorous escapade in order to cross the river, Abigail cast him aside with disdain. Heartsick and rejected, Gregory turned to Cindy with his tale of woe. Cindy, feeling compassion for Gregory, sought out Abigail and beat her brutally. As the sun set on the horizon, people heard Gregory wailing.

Please rank order the characters in this story from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most offensive character, and 2 being the second most offensive character . . . and 5 being the least offensive character. Briefly state your reasons.

Name	Reason
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

## Appendix C

### Alligator River Story (C)

There lived a person named Yeneg who was in a loving relationship with a person named Galley. Yeneg lived on the shore of a river. Galley lived on the opposite shore of the same river. The river that separated the two lovers was teeming with dangerous alligators. Unfortunately, a heavy flood had washed out the bridge the previous week. Yeneg wanted to cross the river to be with Galley. So Yeneg went to ask State, a riverboat captain, for a ride across the river. State said yes, but only if Yeneg consented to go to bed with State prior to the voyage. Yeneg promptly refused and went to a good friend named Voom to explain the dilemma. Voom did not want to get involved at all in the situation. Yeneg felt that the only alternative was to accept State's terms. State fulfilled the promise to Yeneg and delivered Yeneg into the arms of Galley.

When Yeneg told Galley about the amorous escapade in order to cross the river, Galley cast Yeneg aside with disdain. Heartsick and rejected, Yeneg turned to Beng with the tale of woe. Beng, feeling compassion for Yeneg, sought out and delivered a brutal beating to Galley. As the sun set on the horizon, people heard Yeneg wailing.

Please rank order the characters in this story from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most offensive character, and 2 being the second most offensive character . . . and 5 being the least offensive character. Briefly state your reasons.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

## Appendix D

### Alligator River Story (G-rated Version)

Once there was a girl named Abigail who was in love with a boy named Gregory. Gregory had an unfortunate mishap and broke his glasses. Abigail, being a true friend, volunteered to take them to be repaired. But the repair shop was across the river, and during a flash flood the bridge was washed away. Poor Gregory could see nothing without his glasses, so Abigail was desperate to get across the river to the repair shop. While she was standing forlornly on the bank of the river, clutching the broken glasses in her hands, a boy named Sinbad glided by in a rowboat.

She asked Sinbad if he would take her across. He agreed to on condition that while she was having the glasses repaired, she would go to a nearby store and steal a transistor radio that he had been wanting. Abigail refused to do this and went to a friend named Ivan who had a boat. Ivan did not want to get involved at all in the situation. Abigail felt her only alternative was to accept Sinbad's terms. Sinbad fulfilled his promise to Abigail and delivered her to Gregory.

When Abigail returned the repaired glasses to Gregory, she told him what she had had to do. Gregory was appalled at what she had done and told her he never wanted to see her again.

Abigail, upset, turned to Slug with her tale of woe. Slug was so sorry for Abigail that he promised her he would get even with Gregory. Slug then went to the playground where Gregory was playing ball and beat up Gregory.

Please rank order the characters in this story from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most offensive character, and 2 being the second most offensive character . . . and 5 being the least offensive character. Briefly state your reasons.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

## Appendix E

### Societal Crime Survey

We are gathering information to be used in an experiential exercise later in the semester. Participation is voluntary.

Please provide the following demographic data:

Check one: \_\_\_Female\_\_\_Male. Age Group: \_\_\_18-28 yrs.\_\_\_28-35 yrs.\_\_\_35-45 yrs.\_\_\_45 +

Below are 13 statements that represent violations of societal norms. Please rank order them from the most offensive (#1) to the least offensive (#13). Place a 1 by the behavior that you believe to be the most offensive; a 2 by the behavior that you believe to be the second most offensive . . . ending with a 13 by the behavior that you think is the least offensive.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Failing to try to help a friend in need
- \_\_\_\_\_ Calling someone offensive names
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physically hurting another person while defending your property
- \_\_\_\_\_ Telling lies to your friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sexually cheating on a partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having sex with a person—not your partner—just because you want to
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spreading negative rumors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physically hurting (beating up) a person whom you do not like
- \_\_\_\_\_ Selling your body for something you want
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copying a book rather than paying for it (violation of copyright laws)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cheating on an exam
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dumping a girlfriend/boyfriend who was sexually taken advantage of (by someone else)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demanding sex as payment for something that another person desperately wants/needs (e.g., information, a ride, advice, etc.)

In one or two sentences, please explain your reasoning for choices number 1 through number 5.

## Appendix F

### Societal Crime Survey Results

Crime(s)	% of respondents
Demanding sex as payment for something that another person desperately wants/needs. (Sinbad in Story A and Sheba in Story B)	27%
Physically hurting (beating up) a person whom you do not like (Slug in Story A and Cindy in Story B)	24%
Dumping a girl/boy friend that was sexually taken advantage of by a third person. (Gregory in Story A & Abigail in Story B)	24%
Failing to try helping a friend in need (Ivan in Story A & Helen in Story B)	16%
Having sex (with someone other than your partner or trading sex for something you want). (Abigail in Story A & Gregory in Story B)	14%

**Note:** Percentages indicate how often each crime category was ranked in the top two positions on the crime survey.

### Appendix G

#### Crime Survey, Story A, Story B, Story C rank order results (N = 221 students)

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
Crime Survey	Captain	Fighter	Lover 2	Friend	Lover 1
Story A	Sinbad	Slug	Gregory	Ivan	Abigail
Story B	Sheba	Cindy	Abigail	Helen	Gregory
Story C	Varied results (see teaching notes)				

#### Story A

	<u>Abigail</u>	<u>Gregory</u>	<u>Sinbad</u>	<u>Ivan</u>	<u>Slug</u>
Most Offensive:	103	10	88	3	17
(1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> place)	(47%)	(5%)	(40%)	(1%)	(8%)

#### Story B

	<u>Gregory</u>	<u>Abigail</u>	<u>Sheba</u>	<u>Helen</u>	<u>Cindy</u>
Most Offensive:	18	55	95	37	16
(1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> place)	(8 %)	(25%)	(43%)	(17%)	(7%)

**Note:** In all cases except one (Slug and Cindy character) students perceived the character as more negative when female than when male.

## Appendix H: Statistics on Transparency

### Story C: Non-Gendered, in Context

<u>Yeneg</u>	<u>Galley</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Voom</u>	<u>Beng</u>
<u>Crime Survey (Non-gendered, No Context)</u>				
<u>Lover 1 This Side</u> 16%	<u>Lover 2 Other Side</u> 14%	<u>River Boat Captain</u> 29%	<u>Do Nothing Friend</u> 14%	<u>Fighting Friend</u> 27%
<u>Story A (Gendered, in context)</u>				
<u>Abigail</u> 47%	<u>Gregory</u> 4%	<u>Sinbad</u> 35%	<u>Ivan</u> 1%	<u>Slug</u> 13%
<u>Story B (Gendered, in context)</u>				
<u>Gregory</u> 8%	<u>Abigail</u> 25%	<u>Sheba</u> 43%	<u>Helen</u> 17%	<u>Cindy</u> 7%

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