

In portrait of abuse,  
cognitive dissonance  
is the gateway to  
women  
discrimination...

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In the movie “Portrait of Abuse” the women in the movie live in social environments much different than our own. Within the social contexts that we live, abuse seems uncommon and within Northampton people seem more open to speaking up to that type of thing. The people interviewed so much older than us meaning they live in a different social demographic than us. These women live in a social context in which speaking up about things within relationships is against the norms and avoid doing it. They live in an environment in which they are told that violence is okay or that they deserve it. The reward theory of attraction says that we should be more attracted to people that make them feel good and have good things to offer, and not many bad things. Abusive relationships seem to contradict this, because the people in them aren’t getting rewarded and are getting hurt. It seems that usually reward theory holds true during the beginning of an abusive relationship with both people offering something good to the relationship but then they turn bad when one of the people in the relationship begins abusing the other. One thing that people in abusive relationships do to justify staying in the relationship is cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance occurs when someone does something irrational against their beliefs, usually trying to rationalise it or make excuses. People in abusive relationships especially in “Portrait of Abuse” try to justify their being in an abusive relationship. They know they are in a bad situation and that rationally they should get out of it but they don’t, so they make excuses for themselves and that is cognitive dissonance.

The people talked about in “America’s angriest white men” are mostly all southern, rural American, lower middle class, white men in their thirties or

forties. They own farms or small businesses or at least used to. All of them lean to the right politically because of various reasons. This social environment is very different from our very left leaning fairly mixed town and high school of mostly upper middle class people. The contrast is stark, it would be hard for our social environment to be more different from that. The reason the “ Angry white men” are so angry and prejudice is the social norms and situation they grew up with. They feel like who they are is being destroyed and their property is being taken from them. Due to this they hate the people they think are taking their things and threatening their well-beings. That is carved out by the media and news which portrays minority groups as scapegoats for the problems that the men face. Prejudice is the thoughts that a person in a group of people is inferior to you or other negative things based on their belonging to that specific group or background. The men in the article generalise the bad things that may or may not have been done to them to the entire group and dislike all of them because of it. They also want to separate themselves from that group of people and be better than them, so they look down upon them.

Discrimination is acting on those thoughts of prejudice usually in a violent or physical way. When the men group up and gather weapons and form hateful speeches they are discriminating by acting out against the people they are prejudice against. Cognitive dissonance also plays a role in their anger. In many cases the men lost their possessions because of themselves and they don't want to believe that so they blame it on someone else. They take their own mistakes or the mistakes of their parents and push them on other because they don't match up with their perspective of the world.