

Social psychology observation paper assignment

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Mass media, stratification's, listening and comprehending – these are all parts of social psychology and influence how we interact with each other and behavior, whether we realize it or not. We participate in these actions of listening and silently forming responses, or get swayed by advertisements for things we don't need, and are never really aware of it. In this paper I hope to be able to explain five concepts/ideas brought forth from my readings in Social Psychology and how they have impacted my life in the past and going forth.

Some of these ideas I have experienced before, but did not necessarily know that they were part of the field of social psychology and now feel that am gaining a deeper understanding (to some degree) of how so much of our interaction is socially constructed. On page 15 of Social Psychology the text discusses mass media and the idea of communication as culture and shows how we are all influenced and affected by marketing. I think most people would agree that they know advertising in the media is all around us, but how many of actually realize how often we fall prey to it.

The text illustrates that the media wants the people who view their advertisements to become consumers, meaning they target a particular group of people to send their message too, so that those people then become the consumers of the product. The media does this in a way, though, that allows the consumer to think that they had free-will in choosing this particular product. You do not have to just watch television to be surrounded by these advertisements, they are on magazines at the checkout in a super market, all over internet, the radio (even internet radio stations such as Pandora) – basically, they are all over our social world.

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The media affects everyone, and it starts at an early age targeting children and enforcing the idea that they won't be "cool" unless they have this new Barbie or remote control car. In elementary school and even into middle school there was a line of school supplies by Lisa Frank, and if you had any of her stuff you were the coolest girl. Of course the pencils didn't write any better, the notebooks weren't any different than a plain one, but I just had to have them because on TV the girls that did were the prettiest and had the most friends.

I would like to believe that I have gotten better at recognizing the force of media as I have aged, but I think am just lying to myself. As a woman, I'm aware that in a lot of advertisements by mass media we are shown images of women who are naturally thin and told that that is the norm, we should all strive to be that size 2 super model. Just because I'm aware of it however, does not make it any easy as we are always shown new products that will make us thinner and more beautiful - here, take this diet pill and apply this lip stick and you will look like whoever is hot at that moment. I recently absentmindedly flipping through a magazine in a doctor's office when I happened to stop on an ad for new mascara featuring a model with the most gorgeous eye lashes; I mentally took note of the name of the mascara and kept looking through the magazine. Later on that week when I was in the store I wandered into the makeup section and was looking for that mascara that would give me full, gorgeous lashes. It was not until I arrived home with my new purchase that I realized I did not even need new mascara and had fallen prey to the allure of mass media telling me what need.

As humans believe that can view ourselves very differently, Social Psychology raises the thought on page 60 that we have the ability to see Ourselves both as actors/performers as well the observer, in the acting stage we are participating in the real world, but on the flip side we can observe it as well. This would mean that while you are talking to someone you are able to step out of your own body (figuratively) and observe yourself, to hear how you are talking, your body language, what you're doing with your hands.

At times this action might not be taking place 50/50, if you are in an uncomfortable situation where you're out of your comfort zone you might be more likely to observe how you're acting and constantly be evaluating it, if on the other hand you're in the middle of a fight with someone you might not be taking the time to observe yourself as you're caught up in the moment.

This acting and observing takes place because we live in a socially constructed world where we create reality, and we are able to distance ourselves from this reality in order to understand it and make sense of it. Live that most of us can say that we have experienced being the actor/observe in our lifetime, whether or not it was done consciously. I know when I am in uncomfortable situations, such as starting a new job and I'm not in my comfort zone I am more likely to step outside of myself and think about my posture, how I'm holding my hands, if I speaking enough or talking to quietly. See myself from the outside and try to make adjustments where necessary. The idea of three separate worlds arises on page 61 of Social Psychology and discusses how we, as humans, live in these different worlds, every day of our life.

There is reality (the real world), the private world, and our cultural roll. The reality world always exists, no matter what you might think about it. The private world is more subjective, as it means we are in our own “ world” or in our own head. The third world is culture, this is shaped by society, and this is where we receive our beliefs, thoughts, behavior and even language. The second world, is subjective and harder to convey messages to others because it comes from your private experiences and world, not every person will have the same kind of shared knowledge or experience as you – even if they are a part of your group and culture.

This third world, in comparison to private subjective second world, is objective, as our beliefs, thoughts and behaviors will vary by group and culture, but we still consider them to be real. Was taking a drawing class and having the hardest time shutting down the left side of my brain and just drawing, in other words, tuning out the third world of culture. I called one of my friends who had graduated from the Art ; Design program and begged him to tell me his secrets and how on earth he managed, his answer was to just “ tune out the world” and I could not understand how to do that.

I knew what he meant, but not how to apply it to myself resorted to trying music. Turning my music up loud in order to drown out my thoughts and distractions seemed like the solution to my problem, but in fact I ended up just singing along and getting completely distracted. It turns out music was the key for me, but it was classical piano music, I took piano lessons for eleven years and could get lost for hours just playing, in my own world.

When I started listening to classic piano music while drawing, I was able to focus on the task at hand and stop thinking about everything else.

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I went back to my friend a few weeks later and told him had found what seemed to be helping my drawing he looked at me with a very quizzical facial expression and couldn't understand how I could handle even listening to that kind of music, but because it was something that stemmed from my private world I could not properly explain it to him, and because of his own experiences and realities this idea was totally foreign to him. Trying to convey this experience to my friend required speech and the ability to listen and comprehend, which is brought up on page 102 in Social Psychology.

Listening and comprehending are not something that are done passively, nor is it one sided. While you are having a conversation with someone, there are several things happening all at once: if you are the one speaking, you're analyzing what you are saying or what you want to say and making sure that your message will be conveyed to the other person and that they will understand; however, if you are the one that is listening you will probably be having a silent conversation with the person remarking on what they are saying, if you agree or not.

In order to comprehend what someone else is going to say, we must have a mastery of the language in which we are speaking first, but we must also comprehend what we mean to say before we actually start speaking. For example, you need to have a clear idea what you're trying to say before you start trying to talk. There was one specific time had just gotten done working a 10-hour shift, my head was pounding and I was exhausted, I called my mom to discuss something with her, but it did not go so well. As trying to talk to my mom about a business plan I had to do for school and get her opinion on the direction I was trying to take it, UT she did not understand what I was

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trying to say to her. I explained it around four times before finally got so frustrated I angrily hung up the phone while saying " I don't even know what I'm trying to say but why don't you understand? " so in this example I did not even fully have what I wanted to say articulated clearly in my head, so how could I expect her to understand what was saying.

Later that day I called my mom back and told her I didn't know what was trying to say, so it wasn't her fault that she couldn't understand what I meant. What I did not know at the time, was there Was another reason my mom couldn't comprehend what was saying, she had had surgery the week before and had taken a pain pill and it was affecting her thinking as well. She couldn't translate what I was saying into something that made sense to her, she was not able to critique what I was saying and have an internal conversation because she had taken a pain pill that was dulling her reactions.

When you are having a real and honest conversation with someone, communication is taking place, but what if you are in a situation where you are required to talk to someone or are doing so just to be polite? According to page 111 of Social Psychology it would be considered stratification's. Stratification's can occur in different ways, one of those ways in which is tends to emerge is when an argument is taking place and each one of you is convinced that you are right and the other person has absolutely no idea what they are talking about.

What actually might be occurring however, is that you are both saying the exact same thing, you just have different words to describe it by or not be

thinking of the same definition as the other person, and in those situations you tend to talk over each other and not truly try to hear what the other person is saying. The text goes on to describe social ritual as a form of stratification's, where you speak to someone, but not really for the purpose of communication.

It's the fake smile and " Hey, how's it going? " you say to someone you see on the street that you know, or the idle chit chat you have while checking out at store. The purpose of these encounters is not necessarily to communicate something, as much as it is to express some form of communication. Work at the front desk of a hotel, stratification's happens all of the time, we have a script we are supposed to follow when answering the phone or checking in a guest.

We do follow the script, we answer the phone the way we're supposed to and when checking guests we all make sure to include the important details (where the room is located, what time breakfast is and so on), and it is so easy to just ask how the drive was or mention the weather, because those are safe easy topics and you don't really need to listen to the response – this would be a prime example of social ritual and stratification's.

With working in customer service, and then actually serving a customer this has been something that I picked up on even before reading this section of the textbook, but now I have a greater understanding of it and have been trying to change my interactions at work. Perhaps instead of asking the guest how their drive was, I could ask what's bringing them to town as a conversation starter. In summary, believe that because we live in a socially

constructed world we are taking place in and practicing so many of the perspectives and theories brought up within the field of Social Psychology, without ever really realizing it.

Before taking this class and eating this textbook I had very little knowledge that I was so effected by our society. Of course I could have told you that sure sometimes I Was able to see myself from outside of my body, but had no concept of being able to be an actor/observer to one's self. I realized that there were times was talking to someone (or someone was talking with me) but communication was not really taking place, so in a sense I knew stratification's existed, but not that that was the exact term for it. I have become more aware of these actions in my life and hope to be able to be more critical and observant of my actions.