# A TEST OF THE JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS: SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS, BLAME FOR VICTIMIZERS

by

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## ABSTRACT

The performance before personality subhypothesis specifies that victim devaluation only occurs when witnesses cannot find the victim responsible for the suffering on the basis of any performed act. Devaluation consists of attributing negative personality traits to a victim and claiming that he deserved to suffer. The Just World Hypothesis attempts to provide a motivational explanation for the phenomenon. In so doing, it attributes two needs to the observer. First, the victimization evokes inequity anxiety which must be reduced. It can be reduced by construing the victimization as justified. Second, observers are therefore hypothesized to have a need to believe that the world is just. Consequently, observers devalue victims thereby denying the occurrence of injustice. Since this preserves the just world belief, it also helps reduce inequity anxiety.

In the only published experiment correlating Just World Belief (JWB) scores with victim devaluation (Rubin and Peplau, 1973), uncontrollable confounds and equivocal results prevented any conclusive data interpretation. The present research used items for two independent sources to assess subjects' JWB. The scores were combined to produce a third, highly homogenious index of JWB.

After a critical literature review, two addenda, and one alternative, to the performance before personality subhypothesis

were presented. The alternative was the blame-sympathy hypothesis. The predictions of both hypotheses were compared. Several possible meanings of the term "responsibility" and the dependent variables designed to assess them were discussed.

Sixty-three subjects completed two JWB scales three to four weeks before participating in the experimental sessions along with 31 unpretested volunteers. Among the 12 to 19 subjects assembled for each session was a female confederate. The experimenter stated that in order to study people's perceptions of other people in stress it would be necessary to select one person to receive shocks in a verbal learning task which would be broadcast over closed circuit T.V. By a contrivance, the confederate-victim appeared to be randomly chosen to be the "learner". She left the room before the experimenter began playing one of two versions of a videotape on which the victimizer-experimenter (another confederate) shocked the victim either contingently upon wrong responses (CS condition) or non-contingently (NCS) at random intervals throughout the task. At the end of the videotape subjects completed a questionnaire which measured personality evaluations and attributions of responsibility for the victim and the victimizer.

The Just World Hypothesis was not supported. JWB predicted nothing. No victim devaluation occurred. JWB may be related to victim devaluation but the Just World Hypothesis is not detailed enough to predict when it will occur. The absence of victim devaluation may be a result of an interaction between

information provided by post-test items and the perceived unfairness of the shock contingency conditions. The fact that, in the responsibility items, an experimenter was asking subjects to comment on his own research ethics may have created demand characteristics especially in the condition where the victim suffered greater inequity (NCS). Inequity anxiety does, at least, influence the intensity of reactions to both victims and victimizers. There are many alternate pathways along which the inequity anxiety might be manifested. It was suggested that a move towards more mundane realism in this line of research might eliminate some of the pathways which arise primarily from artifactual sources of information embedded in the context of the psychology experiment itself.

The performance before personality subhypothesis received no support. The alternative blaming hypothesis was strongly supported. There was a significant main effect for shock contingency. In the NCS condition the victimizer was blamed while the victim received sympathy.

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# A TEST OF THE JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS: SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS, BLAME FOR VICTIMIZERS

The study of observers' reactions to innocently suffering victims has bearing upon a number of current topics of investigation in social psychology. Attribution theory in general, and more directly, attributions of responsibility may help explain observers' reactions to victims. Moreover, the study of these reactions themselves can provide new perspectives on the attributional process. The observer's reaction to an incident of victimization is also inextricably bound up in the phenomenon of bystander non-intervention. The type of victimization emphasized in the bystander research usually involves some type of crisis or emergency event. There are, however, other kinds of victimization which do not transpire in emergency situations. These are of a more general nature and probably constitute the bulk of victimization incidents a person is likely to encounter in his daily life. In this category we find such phenomena as unfair laws and institutional regulations as well as the abuse of authority by various officials and bureaucrats. The poverty in Black ghettos and Indian reserves in North America reflect an extremely complicated process of exploitation representing a form of victimization which does not occur in emergency situations. It was the indifference of New York medical students to the tremendous problems facing ghetto dwellers attempting to obtain adequate

medical services which led Melvin J. Lerner to stop teaching community medicine and begin doing research on the phenomenon of victim devaluation.

# CHAPTER ONE: AN EXPLICATION OF THE JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS

Under the general rubric of the "Just World Hypothesis" Lerner (1970) presents experimental results and hypothesized explanations which are fundamental enough to apply to all types of victimization. Without referring to any specific experimental results, this chapter provides a brief summary of the concepts involved in the Just World Hypothesis and how they are interrelated. The empirical validity of the hypothesis is dealt with in Chapter 2.

In the present chapter the description of the phenomenon to be explained is followed by its hypothesized explanation. Then, some of the important moderating variables are discussed. Finally, an important qualification of the hypothesized explanation is examined.

## A. The Victim Devaluation Phenomenon

The Just World Hypothesis purports to explain the phenomenon of victim devaluation. Victim devaluation is a set of attributions made by an observer about a victim. These attributions fall into two main classes. First, the observer often derogates the personal worth of the victim. That is, he attributes to the victim any variety of negative personality traits such as stupidity, immaturity, selfishness, and so on. Second, the observer is simultaneously prone to making judgements about the justness of the victim's predicament. More explicitly, he tends to say that the victim deserved his fate.

There are two hypothetical preconditions for victim devaluation. It only occurs when the victim is innocent and the observer needs to believe that the world is just. These conditions, however, are not sufficient. Several empirically discovered factors are also necessary. The observer, for example, must be unable to help the victim. Further, the observer must perceive no alternative targets for blame besides the victim. A number of other variables have also been found to determine the occurrence of victim devaluation. Generally, it could be said that the phenomenon occurs only under fairly unusual circumstances. Nevertheless, Lerner and his colleagues have succeeded in reproducing these circumstances many times in the laboratory.

Before articulating the details of the Just World Hypothesis, an attempt is made to highlight its underlying assumptions by contrasting it with another possible approach to explaining the victim devaluation phenomenon.

## B. Information vs. Motivational Explanations

There are two basic approaches that one may take. The informational approach tries to specify what information led to the observer's reaction. It assumes that the observer makes attributions towards persons being victimized according to the same processes through which he makes attributions to anyone else in any other situation. Once normal attribution processes are understood, the problem of explaining victim derogation reduces to one of isolating the items of information

that produced these particular attributions about the victim and about the circumstances.

The motivational approach, on the other hand, seeks to account for the phenomenon by identifying exceptions to the normal attributional process when it is applied to observers' reactions to victims. These exceptions derive from certain needs or motives which are aroused in people when they observe incidents of victimization. This approach assumes that the information available and assimilated for processing is uniform for all observers. The Just World Hypothesis falls into this class of explanation.

The Just World Hypothesis is recursive insofar as it turns the attributional process back onto the observer of the victim. It proposes that all observers perceive the victim as innocent but then deny that perception. From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, denial is always explained in terms of a subconscious need or desire. The Just World Hypothesis suggests that this need is the need to believe that the world is just. This motive is attributed to the observer on the basis of inferences made from his behavior. The reasoning may be characterized as follows:

(a) It is obvious to everyone that the victim is innocent.

(b) This inequity creates inequity anxiety in everyone who observes the victimization.

(c) Overtly, the observer denies the inequity by saying that the victim deserved his fate.

(d) Since the observer's attributions contradict the facts presented to him, he must be engaging in some form of cognitive distortion.

(e) It is hypothesized that the cognitive distortion arises from a conflict between what the observer wants to perceive and what he actually does perceive.

(f) The observer asserts that what he wants to be true, is true.

(g) The observer then (apparently unconsciously) reformulates his perception of the situation to make it consistent with how he wants the situation to be.

All that remains is to specify in statement (e) what it is that the observer wants to perceive. Since this is apparently an unconscious desire it cannot be observed directly. We can, however, observe the observer's reformulated perception of the situation and then extrapolate backwards. Since the observer has reformulated his perception of the situation to be consistent with a belief that the world is just, he must want to believe that the world is just. That is, he wants to believe that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. This is a concept of justice based on the principle of equity. A person's "equity ratio" is a measure of the proportionality of his inputs into a situation to his outcomes from the situation. The Just World Hypothesis proposes that the observer needs to believe that everyone's, particularly the victim's outcomes appropriately reflect his inputs. This belief is valued and guarded because it has the power to reduce

inequity anxiety. All observers are attributed with an even more fundamental need than Just World Belief. Specifically, everyone needs to reduce inequity when it has been aroused.

C. Just World Belief and Inequity Anxiety

According to Lerner, what motivates a person to protect his belief in a just world is the need to avoid the anxiety that would accompany the alternative belief. Novak and Lerner (1968, p. 147) explain this need as follows: "If people were not able to believe they could get what they wanted and avoid what they dislike by performing certain appropriate acts, they would be anxious and, in the extreme, incapacitated."

Thus, people try to protect the belief that they have control over their own fates and are responsible for what happens to them. The suffering of an innocent victim is an example of someone receiving an undeserved negative fate and as such is a threat to the Just World Belief. In order to restore the perception of justice, people devalue the victim's personality, thereby making it possible to claim that no injustice has transpired because the victim was a bad person and therefore "deserved" to suffer. The observer, therefore, can allay his anxiety about receiving undeserved punishment (i.e. inequity anxiety) by reminding himself that since bad things only happen to bad people, he (being a good person) has nothing to fear.

The victim devaluation phenomenon is hypothesized to occur among those individuals who deal with the arousal of

inequity anxiety by denying the existence of the inequity. According to Lerner, these Just World Believers are more predisposed to reinterpret inequitable suffering as deserved suffering. All that is hypothesized with respect to people who do not need to believe that the world is just is that they engage in less victim derogation. No account is offered regarding how they deal with their inequity anxiety. Nonetheless, the response to inequity anxiety differs among individuals on at least one dimension, that of Just World Belief.

Inequity anxiety, however, is manifested not only as a trait but also as a state. Some situations are so inequitable that everyone, no matter how just or unjust he believes the world to be, is troubled by the injustice he observes. Thus, situations can be contrived which will arouse varying degrees of inequity anxiety. The effects of inequity anxiety on victim evaluations can be studied by arousing it directly. When this is the aim of the research, there is no need to take any account of individual differences in Just World Belief since the manipulation of the victim's equity ratio in a situation will arouse varying levels of inequity anxiety in everyone.

Once the relationship between high state inequity anxiety and high victim devaluation has been established, however, the mediating function of Just World Belief becomes important. Just World Belief is a hypothetical mechanism explaining the relationship. When the purpose of the research is to establish the adequacy of Just World Belief as a mediating variable, a

change in strategy is required. Since Just World Belief is a trait-like construct it cannot be directly manipulated as can inequity anxiety. We can only measure its variation from person to person. If Just World Belief does in fact translate anxiety into victim devaluation then Just World Belief should be highly correlated with victim devaluation. Before Just World Belief can even be correlated with victim devaluation, they must both be measured.

D. Important Moderating Variables

The variables which have most often been shown to moderate victim devaluation deal with the intensity and duration of the victim's suffering. Essentially, these variables reflect degrees of inequity or injustice. Thus, those variables are quantifications of a central concept in the Just World Hypothesis, the concept of inequity. The effects of one other variable, however, have necessitated the formulation of a subhypothesis to account for them. This is the "performance before personality" subhypothesis. It is concerned with the effects of victim responsibility and is dealt with later.

First let us consider the variables which influence the intensity of the victim devaluation. Since the observer needs to believe that the victim's outcomes from the situation appropriately match his inputs, any evidence to the contrary would threaten the observer's Just World Belief by evoking inequity anxiety in him. The amount of the inequity anxiety aroused should be a function of the amount of inequity suffered

by the victim. Given two victims who made equal inputs into the same situation, the victim with the more negative outcome would arouse more inequity anxiety in observers. Hence, the observers would devalue that victim more vehemently. Victim outcomes are evaluated along dimensions such as the duration and the intensity of the suffering. Longer and more intense suffering leads to greater devaluation (Lerner, 1971b; Hardy, 1972). Likewise, a victim who received monetary compensation for his suffering would be devalued less than one who received no compensation (Lerner, 1971b; Lerner and Simmons, 1966).

E. Performance Before Personality Subhypothesis

The degree of victim devaluation can also be influenced by the extent of the victim's responsibility for his own suffering. This seemingly straight forward observation has led to complications for the Just World Hypothesis. Ultimately, the problems arise from the difficulties associated with objectively determining a person's guilt or innocence without first making some value laden assumptions about when it is appropriate and just to hold someone responsible for the outcomes of his actions. The performance before personality subhypothesis is a step in the direction of a value free, objective decision rule. It is a preliminary step towards operationally defining what types of inputs, given equal outcomes, distinguish "innocent victims" from people who do in fact bring their suffering upon themselves. It is, therefore, a move towards defining the limits of applicability for the Just World Hypothesis.

That is because the Just World Hypothesis only seeks to explain reactions to innocent victims.

People who are responsible for their own suffering have made negative inputs into a situation. Since these inputs are appropriately matched with negative outcomes, no inequity anxiety is aroused and therefore no victim devaluation occurs. The observer's Just World Belief is only threatened by innocent victims, victims who are not responsible for their own suffering. The observer copes with this threat by claiming that the innocent victim is not innocent. In order to substantiate this claim the observer must discover some hitherto unnoticed negative input that the victim makes in the situation. Furthermore, this negative input must be of the type that will most effectively reduce the observers inequity anxiety.

The performance before personality hypothesis divides inputs into two types. A victim can be construed as deserving his fate on the basis of either what he did or what he is like. Responsibility for the suffering can be seen as a function of either type of negative input; a performed act which precipitates the suffering, or an undesirable personal trait which invites retributive justice. Succinctly, the performance before personality subhypothesis is that observers will only attribute responsibility on the basis of personality when they cannot find any performed act that made the victim responsible. What follows is a personal interpretation of this subhypothesis.

The subhypothesis can be thought of as an extension and a refinement of the inequity anxiety concept. Inequity anxiety

is a reaction to the belief that one cannot get what one wants or avoid what one dislikes by performing appropriate acts. It is not a reaction to the belief that one cannot get goodies or avoid nasties simply by virtue of personal worth independent of acts. Personal worth is only tangentially relevant. The performance before personality hypothesis implies that to the observer, personality based responsiblity for goal attainment is a more abstract and tenuous causal factor. It is a hastily ascribed attribute which summarizes any type of performance based efficacy habitually displayed by a particular individual. Therefore, inequity anxiety is more effectively reduced by matching negative outcomes with negative acts rather than with negative personality traits.

Generalizing this to the victim, the observer will therefore try to preserve his perception of a just world by first looking for an act which made the suffering equitable. Only when this is impossible will the observer devalue the victim's personal worth. Hence, the performance before personality subhypothesis implicitly defines an "innocent" victim as one who has not performed any observable act to bring the suffering upon himself.

It should be noted in passing that what this subhypothesis fails to make clear is how the observer arrives at his attributions of specific personality defects in the victim. If negative attributions are like most other attributions, they are inferred from observable performed acts. If inferences from performed acts form the content of victim devaluation, one

wonders why the observer would bother to infer personality defects when he could more effectively reduce his inequity anxiety by relating the victim's behavior directly to the suffering. What the performance before personality subhypothesis seems to imply is that the negative characteristics attributed to the victim when devaluation occurs are inferred from observable behaviors which constitute neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for subsequent suffering. For example, they may be behaviors in the realms of body language or speaking style. These will be referred to as "personality revealing behaviors".

F. Summary

The performance before personality subhypothesis specifies that victim devaluation will only occur when observers cannot find the victim responsible for his suffering on the basis of any performed act. The devaluation consists of attributing negative personality traits to the victim. The Just World Hypothesis attempts to provide a motivational explanation for victim devaluation. In so doing it attributes two needs to the observer. First, the incident of victimization evokes inequity anxiety and the need to reduce it. The inequity anxiety can be reduced by construing the world, and the victimization, as just. Therefore, observers are hypothesized to have a second need, the need to believe in a just world. In order to meet that need observers devalue victims thereby denying the occurrence of injustice. Since this

preserves the belief in the just world, it also maintains an avenue for inequity anxiety reduction. Other possible avenues are not dealt with by the hypothesis.

Any attempt to test the Just World Hypothesis must meet two requirements. First, it must present observers with a victim who performed no act to bring about his fate. When contrasted with a less innocent victim this would constitute a manipulation of inequity anxiety. Second, it must measure the observer's Just World Belief. Just World Belief should predict victim devaluation under conditions of inequity anxiety arousal.

## CHAPTER TWO: TESTING THE JUST WORLD HYPOTHESIS

This chapter is a critical review of the major studies on the Just World Hypothesis to date. The criticisms proposed provide the rationale for the design of the present experiment. None of the earlier experiments in the Just World literature actually measured Just World Belief. The initial attempt to measure Just World Belief was made by Rubin and Peplau (1973). This study yielded equivocal results. The present research attempted to circumvent some of the methodological problems that might have hampered Rubin and Peplau.

The performance before personality subhypothesis never adequately defines its key concept, responsibility. Moreover, the findings which supposedly support the subhypothesis are open to numerous alternative interpretations. One alternative, the blaming hypothesis, is examined. This is followed by a discussion of dependent and independent variables intended to assess the internal validity of the present experiment. Finally, the formal hypotheses of this experiment are presented.

### A. Research Extrapolating From Situationally Aroused Inequity Anxiety to Just World Belief

Most of the evidence supporting the Just World Hypothesis comes from studies in which the victim's equity ratio was manipulated by changing the severity of his outcomes in a situation. Note that this approach does not permit any

conclusive inferences about Just World Belief as a mediating mechanism between inequity and victim devaluation. In the typical paradigm the punishment takes the form of feigned electric shock delivered to a videotaped female confederate-victim who is presented as a participant in a paired associate verbal learning experiment being broadcast over closed circuit T.V. If the observers believe that they are only watching a videotape, or if they believe that the victim is only acting as if she were being shocked (which is, in fact, the case), then they devalue her less, if at all (Lerner, 1971b). Lerner explains this by noting that feigned shocks are less "unjust" than real shocks and therefore present less of a threat to the observer's need to believe that the world is just. Since there is little threat to this belief, there is little need for victim devaluation. In the same experiment the amount of victim devaluation was positively related to the expected duration of the victim's suffering. Lerner noted that longer durations of suffering are more unjust than shorter durations, given equal inputs by the victim. This greater injustice produced a greater threat to the observer's Just World Belief and therefore required more adamant victim devaluation in order to restore the perception of justice. In another experiment (Lerner and Simmons, 1966) victim devaluation was inversely related to the amount of monetary compensation she received. Since more compensation seemed to the experimenters to be less unjust and since it produced fewer attributions of victim deservingness from observers, the investigators inferred that

it had presented a lesser threat to the observer's Just World Belief. Again, neither these experiments nor any other early "Just World" study was designed to test the actual efficacy of Just World Belief itself. Its importance was based on nothing but conjecture.

All of the above experiments had two things in common; (a) the manipulation of outcomes to create inequity, and, (b) the use of Just World Belief as an explanatory concept.

With regard to the former commonality it may be seen that in the interpretations of the results, the concept of injustice was used instead of "inequity". This might have obscured the fact that, in all those studies, only one method of producing inequity was used. Inequitable injustice, however, can be created in three ways.

First, inputs can be held constant while outcomes are made more or less negative. This is what was done in all of the above studies.

Second, outcomes can be held constant while the value of the inputs vary. This was attempted in a number of later studies pertinent to the performance before personality sub-hypothesis. They are critically discussed later.

Third, both inputs and outcomes can be held constant while only the connection between them is varied. Outcomes can be made more or less contingent upon inputs. The present study employed this method in contrasting a condition where suffering was contingent upon performance with a condition where it was not at all related to the same performance.

Inputs and outcomes were identical in both conditions. In the high inequity condition, however, the suffering (electric shocks) occurred randomly no matter what acts the victim performed. This captures the essence of inequity anxiety because it is not simply that inputs and outcomes are disproportionally matched, it is that they are not matched at all.

Most of the early experiments dealing directly with the Just World Hypothesis had a second thing in common. Although the experimental manipulations were designed to create a state of situationally induced inequity anxiety, the results were interpreted in terms of a dispositional motivational concept. The trait concept of Just World Belief was substituted for the state concept of inequity anxiety. Furthermore, there was no attempt in any of these studies to measure the observer's need to believe in a just world. These studies were all published at least three years before the publication of the first scale to assess Just World Belief (Rubin and Peplau, 1973).

As mentioned above, the strategy of inducing state inequity anxiety does not provide the evidence needed to conclude anything about a need to believe that the world is just. There are simply too many other ways that observers could deal with their situationally aroused inequity anxiety than to devalue victims. Therefore, Lerner's hypothesis about victim devaluation being a result of attempts to protect the just

world belief have about the same epistemological force as the attributions which observers make about victims. Observers see a victim suffer and subsequently state that he deserved to suffer. Psychologists see an observer construe the incident as just and subsequently state that he had a need to see it as just. One reliable conclusion that these studies to justify, however, is that more inequitable suffering produces more victim devaluation. The intermediary process remains unknown. The effects of other methods of inducing state inequity anxiety remain unknown.

B. Research Measuring Just World Belief

The speculative interpretations which Lerner placed on his results would carry more weight if Just World Believers devalued victims more than Unjust World Believers. This is the crucial piece of evidence needed to adequately test the Just World Hypothesis. Apart from the present experiment, only one other study has attempted to provide this type of evidence. This attempt (Rubin and Peplau, 1973), however, met with a number of difficulties which the present study tries to overcome.

Rubin and Peplau's Just World Belief Scale has 16 items and a Coefficient Alpha of .79. Its validity was tested within the context of a naturally occuring type of victimization. Subjects were participants in the 1971 U.S. national draft lottery. The results, however, lent only equivocal validation to the scale. Only four of the seven dependent

measures produced victim devaluation among high Just World Believers. Those who were unlucky in the lottery probably received sympathy because the current cultural sentiments among college students were opposed to the war in Viet Nam. Rubin and Peplau commented, "This may have increased the possibility that subjects would reject the lottery itself rather than its victims" (p. 87). Also, by absolute standards of lottery probabilities, the sample of lucky "observers" was small. Fifty-eight percent of the subjects received numbers that were in the first third of the priority list for being drafted. Because of this skewedness, the overall distribution of lots differed significantly from the chance expectation of equal numbers in each third $\chi^2 = 13.50$, $p < .01$. Since this may have led to a high number of observers who anticipated a fate similar to their less fortunate counterparts, the sympathy effect may have been compounded. Sorrentino and Boutilier (1974) have shown that the anticipation of a fate similar to the victim's leads observers to evaluate the victim very positively. Results more consistent with Just World predictions might be obtained if (a) the sample contained more unvictimized observers and (b) the nature of the victimization were less generally viewed with contempt. The present study was an attempt to test the predictions for this scale in a situation which met these desiderata.

There are two additional possible reasons for Rubin and Peplau's failure to confirm the Just World Hypothesis. First, the hypothesis might be wrong. Second, their Just World Belief

Scale might lack adequate validity to identify true Just World Believers. The present study employed two measures of Just World Belief. Moreover, a third set of Just World Belief scores was generated by mathematically combining the two original sets of scores.

Collins (1974) factor analysed the Locus of Control Scale and found that the second factor seemed to measure Just World Belief. There were eight items which loaded on this factor. The analysis was performed on Likert agreement ratings given to the 46 alternatives from Rotter's (1966) forced choice scale format. These items have never before been used to predict victim devaluation.

Rather than choosing between two measures of Just World Belief, it was possible to combine the scores on both scales in such a way as to isolate and quantify the commonality of response variance between them. To do this principle component scores were calculated for each subject based on a weighted linear combination of their scores on the two Just World Belief scales. Since the first principle component represents the most internally consistent dimension underlying the input variables, the component scores generated in this analysis yielded a Just World Belief score which incorporated the commonality between the scales by Collins and by Rubin and Peplau. This new measure of Just World Belief will be referred to as the COMJWB score.

In the present study the predictions made by the Just World Hypothesis were tested in such a way as to avoid the

criticisms of previous studies mentioned above. Inequity anxiety was situationally aroused by the method of making outcomes non-contingent upon performance inputs. Just World Belief was measured. Subjects were divided into Just World Believers vs. Unjust World Believers according to their scores on two scales. These were Rubin and Peplau's scale and the COMJWB measure. Thus, the relative predictive validity of both measures could be compared. With this design it was hoped that the connection between Just World Belief and victim devaluation could be tested. It was predicted that, in the high inequity anxiety condition, Just World Believers would devalue the victim more than Unjust World Believers. Presumably the latter group would find other ways to deal with their inequity anxiety. This was the major hypothesis of the study. It was, in effect, the Just World Hypothesis.

## C. Evidence Bearing on the Performance Before Personality Hypothesis

One important qualification of the Just World Hypothesis, however, is the performance before personality subhypothesis. It gives the whole notion that counter-intuitive twist. Without this subhypothesis, the Just World Hypothesis might be assumed to apply to guilty victims only. One could state, for example, that people devalue guilty victims because they need to see the world as just. Such a common sensical statement, however, leaves one with the feeling that nothing new has been discovered. On the other hand, when it is claimed that people devalue

innocent victims because they want to see the world as just, considerably more interest is aroused. This makes the lack of empirical support for the performance before personality subhypothesis all the more critical. The present study did not include any independent variables aimed at testing this subhypothesis. Rather, in the form of dependent variables, it attempted to ask the questions whose answers might eliminate some of the uncertainties surrounding the interpretations of previous studies which did attempt to test the subhypothesis. Even if the subhypothesis were accepted, its meaning would be ambiguous at present. The following discussion examines the evidence for the subhypothesis and explores the many possible alternative interpretations of its meaning.

Lerner and Matthews: Lerner and Simmons point out that they did not test their "performance before personality" hypothesis directly. There was no condition where the victim's performance was intended to be seen as deserving of punishment. In a later article, however, Lerner (1970) writes as if the issue had been settled by the results of the subsequent experiment (Lerner and Matthew, 1967) in the series.

> When the person becomes aware of a victim who is clearly innocent of any act which might have brought about the suffering, he is confronted with a conflict. He can decide he lives in a cruel, unjust world where innocent people can suffer or that the only people who suffer in this world are those who deserve such a fate. The evidence supported the hypothesis that most people will persuade themselves that "innocent" victims are sufficiently undesirable people--that their suffering may be an appropriate fate. Even the apparently altruistically motivated victim tends to be seen as possessing undesirable attributes. (Lerner, 1970, p. 227).

This statement presumably receives its strongest support from the Lerner and Matthews (1967) experiment wherein subjects who rated the victim as more responsible for her suffering devalued her less than subjects who rated her as less responsible. The generalizability of this apparently confirmatory result is limited by the exclusive use of female subjects in that experiment. A more serious criticism, however, is that the exact psychological meaning of the obtained responsibility ratings is extremely ambiguous.

Lerner and Matthews had pairs of female students draw slips of paper to see who would be in the negative reinforcement (shock) condition and who would be in the control condition. When the victim picked first, she was rated as responsible for her own fate. Subjects who picked first devalued the victim more than those who were rating a victim who had picked first. These results were taken as support for the performance before personality hypothesis because the victim who performed an act leading to her own suffering was not devalued. Supposedly the "innocent" victim (subject picks first condition) posed a threat to the subject's belief in a just world and was therefore devalued.

The Lerner and Matthews experiment, however, does not constitute conclusive support for the performance before personality hypothesis because the fact that subjects made responsibility ratings, differing on the basis of who picked first does not necessarily imply that they held the subject responsible in any ordinary sense of the word. The demand

characteristics of the scales themselves may have been enough to lead subjects into attributing responsibility to someone on the basis of an act which would not ordinarily elicit such an attribution. A person who suffers as a result of blindly drawing a slip of paper from a drum cannot be construed as being responsible for his fate in the sense of having known the outcome of her act and having intended to produce that outcome. Nevertheless, Lerner and Matthews seem to be implying that a victim becomes less innocent (i.e. more deserving of suffering) even if he neither foresees nor intends the consequences of the act which is the precipitating cause of the suffering. This seems a very odd criterion for observers to use in distinguishing between innocence and deservingness. In one sense, then, the Lerner and Matthews results--rather than support the performance before personality subhypothesis--actually weaken it by over-extending the range of behavioral referents subsumed by the term "performance".

The subhypothesis is cast even further into doubt by the results of an experiment by Chaikin and Darley (1973). They found that, at least in certain circumstances, victims who are derogated are also seen as more responsible for their suffering. To complicate the picture further, Lerner and Agar (1972) found that varying levels of victim responsibility had no effect on victim evaluations. Therefore, there are conflicting results to suggest that high victim responsibility for the suffering (a) means less victim devaluation (Lerner and Matthews, 1967), (b) means more victim devaluation (Chaikin

and Darley, 1973), or (c) has no effect on victim evaluations (Lerner and Agar, 1972). Alternative (c) is the null hypothesis. Alternative (b) can be expanded into what will be called the "blaming" hypothesis.

The Blaming Hypothesis: Standing in opposition to the performance before personality subhypothesis is the common sense view that observers either blame or sympathize with victims.

Webster's Third International (1964) defines the verb "to blame" as meaning, "1: to express disapproval of; find fault with: Reproach. 2a: to attribute responsibility to: make answerable to. b: to ascribed responsibility for: account for by placing culpability." The very fact that the acts of ascribing responsibility and disapproving are both unified under a single linguistic label suggests that the users of the language have some reason to conceptualize them as highly correlated activities. Perhaps this is because many acts can be used as the basis for both personality and responsibility attributions. Especially when we are concerned with negative personality attributions (i.e. devaluation), a responsibility laden act usually also reveals something of the actor's personality.

The positive relationship hypothesized between responsibility attributions and devaluation can actually be described in two ways. When the target person is both held responsible and devalued, he is being blamed. When the target is both exonerated of responsibility and evaluated positively, he is receiving sympathy. Sympathy and blame stand at opposite ends of the same continuum.

While the blaming hypothesis maintains the distinction between responsibility attributions and personality evaluations it does not make any distinction among types of responsibility. The ascription of responsibility in blaming may be based on performed acts, personality revealing behaviors, some combination of those two or some other criteria. The blaming hypothesis, then, does not attempt to use victim responsibility to define a priori either victim innocence or victim guilt. It therefore predicts somewhat less than the performance before personality subhypothesis because it does not specify which conditions will elicit victim blaming vs. victim sympathizing. Under the blaming hypothesis, this prediction about the direction of observers' responses is left as an empirical question.

## D. Assessment Strategies for the Performance Before Personality Subhypothesis and Alternative Hypotheses

In the research reported here, an attempt was made to test predictions made by the performance before personality hypothesis. This necessitated operationalizing the concept of responsibility for suffering in several ways. From trends and findings obtained in previous experiments using this paradigm a number of interpretations and operationalizations were made. The rationale for each meaning 'responsibility' will be given as the item is discussed. The items are listed in Table I.

The Responsibility Items: The first item (VR1 - victim's undifferentiated responsibility) asked the observer to rate the extent to which he thought the victim was responsible for her

Table I

| Type of Item | Item Code No. | Victim (V) Items — Item Label | Position on Questionnaire (Appendix B) Form: A | B | Item Code No. | Experimenter (E) Items — Item Label | Position on Questionnaire (Appendix B) Form: A | B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Responsibility | | | | | | | | |
| Global | VR1 | victim's (V's) undifferentiated responsibility | 5 | 1 | ER1 | experimenter's (E's) undifferentiated responsibility | 6 | 2 |
| Performance: | | | | | | | | |
| Unspecified | VR2 | V's unspecified act responsibility | 7 | 3 | ER2 | E's unspecified act responsibility | 8 | 4 |
| Specific | VR3 | V's responsibility for memorization rate | 9 | 5 | ER3 | E's responsibility for list difficulty | 10 | 6 |
| | VR4 | V's alternatives | 11 | 7 | ER4 | E's alternatives | 12 | 8 |
| | VR5 | V's responsibility for continued participation | 13 | 9 | ER5 | E's responsibility for V's continued participation | 14 | 10 |
| Personality | VR6 | V's dispositional (personality) responsibility | 17 | 13 | ER6 | E's dispositional (personality) responsibility | 18 | 14 |
| Addendum | | | | | | | | |
| Situational | VS7 | control of V by situation | 15 | 11 | ES7 | control of E by situation | 16 | 12 |
| Blame | VB8 | V's blameworthiness | 19 | 15 | EB8 | E's blameworthiness | 20 | 16 |
| Evaluations | | | | | | | | |
| Raw Score | VE9 | V's raw score personality evaluation | 1 | 22 | EE9 | E's raw score personality evaluation | 2 | 23 |
| Difference | VE10 | V's difference score personality evaluation | calculated | | EE10 | E's difference score personality evaluation | calculated | |

suffering. This item was analogous to the ones which produced the contradictory findings in other studies. By looking at correlations between this item and others, it was possible to get an idea what observers are thinking about when they make this undifferentiated type of responsibility attribution. On the other hand, observers' reactions might not be any more differentiated than this item. If that were the case then this item would be commensurably global.

The second item was also fairly global in nature. The "victim's unspecified act" responsibility item (VR2) dealt with performance-based deservingness on the most general level. It asked observers to what extent they thought the victim did something to bring the suffering upon herself. It did not ask what she did or why, if she did nothing, she was responsible for her fate. It is possible that most subjects are not sufficiently introspective or reflective to be able to answer those more specific questions. If that were the case, this item would still have provided a rough test of the performance before personality subhypothesis. If that subhypothesis were correct, observers who say that the victim did perform an act which caused her suffering would also refrain from devaluing her.

Items VR3, VR4, and VR5 on Table I were all concerned with discovering what it was, if anything, that the victim actually did to deserve her fate, Items VR3 and VR5 represented two specific acts which many subjects have mentioned in previous research. If the observer focused on some act other than these two, he was asked to describe it in his own words in item VR4

(victim's alternatives). If, however, the observer thought the victim deserved to suffer because she performed poorly on the learning task, he would indicate this on item VR3. In this experiment the amount of suffering (i.e. number of electric shocks) the victim had to bear was directly related to how long it took her to learn a serial list of nonsense syllables. If it were found that this is the type of performance that most subjects refer to when they claim that the victim is responsible then we would have little problem in designing manipulations of responsibility for independent variables in future research.

Unfortunately, there is already evidence indicating that observers are neither quite so co-operative nor cognitively simple as to confine their deliberations to such a narrow range of the victim's behavior. This is where item VR5 (victim's continued participation in experiment) becomes relevant. Some observers may choose to make their attributions on the basis of larger units of analysis. The act of refusing or tacitly consenting to participate further in the experiment may be the crucial "performance" influencing observer' reactions. This may be the explanation for the extremely negative reactions to martyr victims.

In the Lerner and Simmons experiment, there was a "martyr" condition wherein the confederate-victim was overheard conversing with the experimenter. She expressed a fear of being shocked and "protested that she would not take part in an experiment in which she would be shocked (Lerner and Simmons, 1966, p. 207)." The experimenter then pointed out that (a) the

observers would not receive a lab credit unless she consented to participate (b) her refusal would cause the observers a great deal of trouble and inconvenience and, perhaps most importantly (c) the decision to participate or not was, of course, up to her. Although this scenario was calculated to give the impression that the victim was motivated by purely altruistic considerations it probably also had the unfortunate side effect of drawing the observers' attention to the avenues of possible escape open to the victim. When her alternatives were made salient, the observers might have decided the entire deservingness issue on the victim's choice or "performance" at that critical point. If this is what the observers did, then the resultant devaluation of the martyr contradicts the "performance before personality" subhypothesis. In fact, it would support the common sense notion that observers devalue victims only when the victim's performance makes him deserving of suffering. The inclusion of performance responsibility items aimed at the issue of the victim's continued participation in the experiment made it possible to further explore this alternative interpretation of the 'martyr' results.

Proceeding from similar criticims of Lerner and Simmons' operationalization of an "innocent" victim, Godfrey and Lowe (1973) contrasted intrinsically motivated martyrs with extrinsically motivated martyrs. Martyrs who proceeded with the experiment because of a professed belief in the importance and worth of the research were rated more favorably than martyrs who apparently had to be convinced to continue. Godfrey and

Lowe applied an attributional analysis to these results claiming that although both martyrs suffered innocently, only the extrinsically motivated martyr was devalued because he actually did something indicating a personality weakness (e.g. he was a "sucker"; easily persuaded). Item VR5 allowed observers to indicate to what extent they thought the victim acted autonomously in continuing to participate.

This illustrates a more general point which is the basis for the view that a victim is derogated only when he is held responsible. Many acts performed by the victim can be used as the basis for both responsibility and personality attributions. This could explain the dynamics of the blaming and sympathizing reactions because the acts mentioned in items VR3, VR4 and VR5 would not only inform the observer that the victim brought her suffering upon herself but they would also indicate that she was unintelligent (e.g. slow rate of learning nonsense syllables) and spineless (e.g. failure to discontinue participating in the experiment). Thus, blaming is global unfavorable reaction to the person. It is like a negative halo effect.

The phenomenological reactions of observers may be more global than was initially apparent in the early studies focusing only on personal evaluations of the victim. The extent to which the more global response of "blaming" characterizes observers' reactions to suffering victims is largely unknown because none of the previous research has

attempted to directly assess the observers' attributions of blame *per se*. Item VB8 (victim blame) was designed to do just that.

On the personality side of the performance before personality subhypothesis, items VR6, VE9 and VE10 measured two aspects of the same reaction. If, for example, an observer did not think that any of the performed acts specified in items VR3, VR4 or VR5 made the victim responsible, he could still claim that she brought her fate upon herself by turning to item VR6 (victim's personality responsibility). This item asked to what extent the victim's behavior was a result of her personal characteristics and dispositions. Such ratings are presumably made on the basis of inferences from personality revealing behaviors. For instance, the observer might attribute undifferentiated responsibility to the victim on the basis of some set of expressive gestures which have no linguistic label but which nevertheless betray an attitude which invites victimization. In such a case the observer might express this perception as a form of deservingness arising from personal characteristics of the victim. Therefore, in holding the victim responsible on this item the observer is essentially devaluing the victim. Devaluation is what personality responsibility means within the context of the subhypothesis. Nonetheless, devaluation could occur independently of the ascription of any type of responsibility, whether it be performance or personality based. Therefore separate scales were included to tap personality attributions *per se*. Either

VE9 or VE10 (or both) were used by Lerner and his colleagues as indecies of devaluation in almost every previous study.

The Just World Hypothesis has undergone some modification in the light of empirical findings. These modifications will be called "addenda". Victim devaluation has been unexpectedly absent among some observers. These observers, however, have usually found other targets for their negative reaction. Observers who devalue or condemn either the victimizer or the victimizing situation (or both) do not devalue the victim. On the basis of spontaneous comments from subjects in an experiment (Lerner and Simmons, 1966) using the same paradigm as that used in this study, Lerner suggested, "Apparently if the subjects were willing to condemn the situation they had no need to devalue the victim" (Lerner, 1970, p. 211). Lerner does not specify why anyone who needed to believe that the world is just would be willing to condemn the situation. Presumably he would say that such an observer would believe that the world is actually unjust. If, however, all observers sampled condemned the situation the Just World Hypothesis itself would come into question. In the present study it was possible to examine the exact degree of relationship between Just World Belief and condemnation of the situation. Item VS7 afforded observers the opportunity to condemn the situation.

Likewise, in a previous unpublished study, subjects who devalued the victimizer tended not to devalue the victim. Items ER1 to ER6 represent this alternative. In this paradigm

the victimizer is the videotaped experimenter who administers the shocks to the victim. If observers hold the experimenter responsible for the victim's suffering it is still helpful to know exactly what the basis is for that attribution. The same rationale for item inclusion apply to attributions of responsibility to the experimenter as apply to the victim. Therefore, the experimenter items ER1 to ER6 correspond to the victim items in boxes VR1 to VR6. Personality and blame attributions for the experimenter were also measured.

Hypothesized Inter-Item Relationships: The following is an attempt to relate the predictions of both the performance before personality subhypothesis and the blaming hypothesis to the operationalizations of the variables in this experiment. The predictions consist of clusters of correlations reflecting patterns of attributions. They are presented symbolically as follows:

Let:

c = "co-occurs with"

VRpers = VR6 = victim's dispositional responsibility

VRperf = VR2 to VR5 = victim's performance responsibility

VS = VS7 = control of victim by situation

VE = VE9, VE10 = victim's personality evaluations

ER = ER1 to ER6 = victimizer's (experimenter's) responsibility

Performance Before Personality Predictions:

high VRperf

1. performance:

(not low VE) c (high VRperf) c (low VRpers) c (low VS) c (low ER)

low VRperf

2. personality:*

(low VE) c (low VRperf) c (high VRpers) c (low VS) c (low ER)

3. addenda:

(not low VE) c (low VRperf) c (low VRpers) c [(high VS) and/or (high ER)]

Blaming/Sympathizing Predictions:

high VRperf

4. blaming:*

(low VE) c (high VRperf) c (high VRpers) c (low VS) c (low ER)

low VRperf

5. sympathizing:

(high VE) c (low VRperf) c (low VRpers) c [(high VS) and/or (high ER)]

*victim devaluation

Notice that the performance before personality subhypothesis requires three lines while the blaming hypothesis requires only two. This is because the performance before personality subhypothesis is indeterminate in the case of low victim performance responsibility. Another way of expressing this is by pointing out that under the performance before personality subhypothesis there are two distinct patterns of correlations (performance and addenda) associated with no devaluation.

The performance before personality subhypothesis seeks to predict either devaluation or no devaluation. The blaming

hypothesis predicts either devaluation or positive evaluation (liking). This difference, however, is not actually as important as it might seem. In practice, devaluation is always defined relative to more positive victim evaluations in other experimental conditions. The scales that Lerner and his colleagues have used to measure devaluation (VE9) have a midpoint of 75 and range from 15 (extremely negative) to 135 (extremely positive). In no reported study has a victim ever received a mean evaluation of less than 75, the midpoint. Thus the labelling of a particular mean score as either positive evaluation or non-devaluation is determined as much by the investigator's theoretical orientation as it is by the value of the score in relation to scores in other experimental conditions. The absolute value of the score seems to be relatively unimportant in labelling the score.

The performance before personality subhypothesis attempts to order the alternative attribution patterns in terms of the observer's preference. The observer will prefer to see the victim's performance responsibility as high (line 1). His second choice is to ascribe the patterns of either personality responsibility (line 2) or the addenda (line 3). The subhypothesis, however, does not state an order to preference between personality responsibility and the addenda.

The blaming hypothesis, on the other hand, does not assert that the observer has a preference. The observer blames or sympathizes as a function of the information he receives about the incident and the people involved. He is not motivated to

re-interpret or distort the information as is the performance before personality observer. It is the motivational basis of the performance before personality subhypothesis (i.e. need for inequity anxiety reduction) which hypothetically predisposes observers to have preferences among patterns of attributions.

## E. Internal Validity: Control Factors and Manipulation Checks

Two items were included on the post-experimental questionnaire to check the efficacy of the procedures. One dealt with the main manipulation of shock contingency. The item asked observers to rate how fairly they thought the victim had been treated in the experiment. This was a syllogistic operationalization of inequity. If inequity is perceived as unjust and if injustice is perceived as unfair then observers in the non-contingency shock condition should have rated the victim's treatment as more unfair than observers in the more equitable contingent shock condition.

Another item dealt with the observers perception of the amount of suffering the victim experienced. Since she received the same number of shocks in each condition, the severity of her suffering should have been rated the same across conditions. If this were the case, it would justify concluding that the perceived inequity derived from the contingency/non-contingency manipulation and not form some distortion of the severity of the victim's outcome.

Two control factors were included as independent variables in the design. One dealt with pretest sensitization and

the other dealt with order effects on the post-experimental questionnaire. To assess the extent of any pretest sensitization that might have occurred, a Solomon four group design was used (cf. Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 24). The pretesting occurred 3 to 4 weeks before the experimental session and consisted of several personality tests and attitude measures including the two Just World Scales. In both shock contingency conditions there were some subjects who had been pretested and others who had not.

Since the post-experimental questionnaire was rather lengthy, a factor was included to test for possible order effects. The dependent variables fall into two main categories; the personality evaluations and the responsibility attributions. Two orders of presentation were used. On one form of the questionnaire the personality evaluations were presented first (form A) and on the other (form B) the responsibility attributions were presented first. There are two reasons for including this control factor. First of all, none of these variables have ever been examined for their sensitivity across time. It would be interesting to know whether the victim devaluation phenomenon is merely a transitory effect which lasts only a few minutes following the witnessing of an incident of victimization, or whether derogation can be observed on these scales for an indefinite period after the termination of the shocks. If either type of dependent variable produces only transitory effects, then the results of any particular experiment may rest on the timing of the ratings. Secondly,

answering one type of item first might create an attributional set for the second type of item. This attributional set might be different from that which would be created if the order were reversed. Yandell (1973) found just such an effect in an attribution study. Thus, there is reason to believe that the information obtained from this factor may prove valuable for the interpretation of the results.

F. Summary and Formal Hypotheses

Lerner never measured Just World Belief in his subjects and was therefore logically unable, strictly speaking, to either confirm or disconfirm his hypothesis. Rubin and Peplau's ambiguous results might have been caused by sampling error which alotted a high probability of victimization to many observers. The ambiguity might also have been caused by historical-political factors in subjects' perceptions of the victimization or by inaccurate measurement of Just World Belief.

The present research used items from two independent sources to assess subjects' Just World Belief. A measure of Just World Belief was constructed which met a criterion of high internal consistency. Furthermore, the simulated incident of victimization used in this study was more removed from historical-political issues. It also minimized observers' anticipation of a fate similar to the victim's.

The literature on the performance before personality and hypothesis was shown to be inconclusive. Several possible meanings of the term "responsibility" were outlined. The

dependent variables designed to assess these various nuances were described. Two addenda, and one alternative, to the performance before personality subhypothesis were presented. The addenda are included in the second hypothesis below. The alternative was the blame-sympathy hypothesis. Predictions of this hypothesis and the performance before personality hypothesis were compared.

The formal hypotheses of the present study are the Just World Hypothesis and derivations of the performance before personality subhypothesis. In the context of the operationalizations used in this experiment they can be stated as follows:

1) In the high inequity anxiety condition, Just World Believers will devalue the victim more than Unjust World Believers. More specifically, in the non-contingent shock condition, subjects who scored high on COMJWB will rate the victim's personality more negatively than low scorers on COMJWB.

2) Subjects who perceive the victim as responsible on account of some specified act will not devalue her while those who do not attribute to her any responsibility for her own fate by her performed acts will either devalue her or will place the responsibility for her suffering on the situation, the experimenter or both.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

## A. Subjects

One hundred fifty-one volunteers were recruited from the introductory psychology subject pool at the University of British Columbia. As Shown on Table II, there were 30 unpretested subjects in the two control conditions. The other 121 subjects were requested by telephone to participate in two sessions each lasting one hour. The random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions was restricted only by timetable conflicts and the unavailability of subjects at scheduled participation times. Fifty-eight (48%) of the 121 subjects who participated in the pretest did not participate in the experimental treatment. Of those who, at the time of the second telephone contact, said they would participate in the second session at a particular time, 37 (31% of the total number pretested) failed to appear. Sixty-three (52%) of the 121 pretested did participate. The remaining 21 of the 58 pretested dropouts either could not be contacted a second time or refused to participate in the second session for a variety of personal reasons.

A Hotellings $T^2$ performed on the pretest scores of dropouts vs experimental participants failed to reveal any differences between the two groups on any of the personality tests administered ($T^2 = 16.16$; $df = 118$; $p = .28$). The dropouts did not differ significantly from the participants even on two scales which have previously been shown to be predictive

Table II

Account of Subject Participation

| | | Male | Female | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PRETESTED | | | | | | |
| Dropouts: | No Shows | 21 | 16 | 37 | | |
| | Misc. | 13 | 8 | 21 | | |
| | | 34 | 24 | 58 | 58 | |
| Experimental Participants: | CS | 18 | 13 | 31 | | |
| | NCS | 17 | 15 | 32 | | |
| | | 35 | 28 | 63 | 63 | |
| Total Pretested | | 69 | 52 | | 121 | 121 |
| UNPRETESTED | | | | | | |
| Controls: | CS | 12 | 5 | 17 | | |
| | NCS | 5 | 8 | 13 | | |
| Total Pretested | | 17 | 13 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Total Contacted | | 86 | 65 | | | 151 |

of participation in psychological research. These were Rubin and Peplau's (1973) Just World Belief Scale and Adair's (1970) Psychological Research Survey. Zuckerman (1975) found Just World Believers more willing to volunteer for psychological experiments and Adair and Fenton (1971) found the "good subject" syndrome among people with more favorable attitudes towards psychological research.

B. Materials

Pretest Questionnaires: Three to four weeks before the experimental session subjects assembled in groups of 12 to 28. They were requested to complete the items from the Just World factor of the Locus of Control Scale (Collins, 1974) and Rubin and Peplau's Just World Belief Scale. A number of other personality tests were also administered for exploratory purposes (see Appendix A for a list of the tests and a sample questionnaire). Subjects marked their answers to all items on optical sense computer cards.

Videotape: There were two versions of black and white videotape corresponding to the two treatment conditions. Each videotape was to learn a serial list of nonsense syllables. Depending on the condition, she received shocks either at random intervals throughout the learning task or upon wrong responses. Both conditions contained an equal number of shocks. The videotape was presented to subjects as a live, closed-circuit TV broadcast. Therefore, the victim wore the same clothes in both versions of the tape and to all experimental sessions since

she sat among the observer-subjects just prior to the start of the "broadcast".

Post-Experimental Questionnaire: The post-experimental questionnaire (see Appendix B) included Lerner's (1971b) victim evaluation items along with a modified version for evaluations of the victimizer. After Lerner, difference scores were obtained by subtracting ratings of either the average college student or the average psychology experimenter from the raw score ratings of either the victim or the experimenter, respectively. The ratings of the average student and the average experimenter will be called "average target" ratings.

There were two forms of the post-experimental questionnaire. They varied only with respect to the order in which the items appeared. In form A, the first six items consisted of raw score evaluations and average target ratings. These were followed by nine pairs of items related to the attribution of responsibility and blame. The first item of each pair dealt with attributions towards the victim. The second item dealt with attributions towards the victimizer. In the style of earlier studies, the first two items attempted to assess the observer's global attribution of responsibility. This was followed by two items measuring the observer's perception of both targets' responsibility by virtue of unspecified acts. The third pair of items dealt with the question of responsibility through memorization rate in the learning task. The fourth pair probed perceptions of alternatives open to both the victim and the victimizer. This allowed those observers who focused on the issue of the

victim's continued participation in the experiment to identify themselves. Perceptions of victim responsibility through the performed act of participating in the experiment were assessed by the nineth and tenth responsibility items (fifth pair). The next four items tapped the locus of observers' attributions of causality (dispositional vs. situational) for the targets' behavior. Attributions of blame per se followed. There were two manipulation checks and two exploratory pilot items at the end.

In form B of this questionnaire, the attributions of responsibility, the manipulation checks and the exploratory items all appeared first. The evaluations of the victim and the victimizer appeared second.

One half of the subjects in each session received form A and the remaining half received form B. Subjects were assigned to these two conditions at random and, the experimenter did not know what item-order condition the subject was in. Subjects were, however, told that there were two forms. Since they were tested in groups and sat close to each other with 3 to 4 sharing the same table it was assumed that at least some would notice the different forms. In order to satisfy their curiosity, thereby preventing them from perusing their neighbors' questionnaires, they were told that the two forms contained all the same questions but in different orders. They were also simply told that the purpose of this was to control for order effects.

After verbal debriefing, each subject received a dittoed sheet explaining the purpose of the experiment.

C. Procedure

Subjects were tested in groups of 12 to 19. Some control subjects were tested in the same session with pretested subjects and vice versa. There were seven testing sessions, three for the contingent shock (CS) condition and four for the non-contingent shock (NCS) condition. The confederate was always blind to the condition being run up until the procedure of the learning task was explained to subjects. The confederate entered the room with the other subjects and sat with them. When all subjects had arrived, the experimenter introduced himself and gave the following rationale (cf. Godfrey and Lowe, 1973) for the procedure:

> This is an experiment involving the perception of persons in stress. The information we hope to obtain could be used to assist those who have to deal with people undergoing stress, such as accident, or disaster or crime victims. It is also important for these people to be able to quickly assess what is happening in stressful emergency situations. Later, it is often also necessary for jurors in a court trial to be able to assess what happened. There will be a questionnaire at the end of the experiment to tap your perceptions. We are also interested in the differences that exist between individuals in their reactions to persons in stress. We hypothesize that some of these differences may be related to the personality dimensions on which I tested you a few weeks ago.
> In a few minutes you will be watching a person in a stressful situation. He will be assigned the task of trying to learn a list of nonsense syllables. Nonsense syllables share many attributions in common with words but are much less likely to hold different connotations or emotional impacts from person to person.

At this point the instructions varied according to what condition was being run.

[Contingent Shock] The learner will receive an electric shock whenever he makes a wrong response.

[Non-Contingent Shock] The learner will receive electric shocks at random intervals throughout the learning session.

[Both Conditions] He will perform the learning task in the room where the shock apparatus is located. While we're watching this experiment we're not going to be right in the room with the learner because the room is rather small and our presence might distract him and impair his performance. Instead, we are going to be watching them over a closed circuit T.V. system.
The person you will see administering the learning task and the shocks is Neil Kyle, the main experimenter. Now I'll draw the student number to see who the learner will be.

The experimenter drew a slip of paper from a bowl and read a student number aloud. When he asked whose it was, the confederate raised her hand. The experimenter told the confederate how to find the testing room and she left the room. Approximately 20 to 30 seconds later the experimenter turned on the videotape while explaining to subjects that he was about to turn on the closed circuit T.V. camera.

The videotape depicted a male experimenter (the victimizer) sitting at a table in front of some impressive looking electronic equipment. After a few seconds the victim (a confederate) entered and introduced herself to the experimenter as the subject who was randomly selected to be the learner. The experimenter explained to the victim that her task was to memorize a list of 12 nonsense syllables in their proper order. The list of syllables was written on a deck of file cards, one syllable to a card. The experimenter said that he would first show her the cards one at a time. She was to read the syllables aloud and try to memorize their order. Then the testing trials

would begin. There were to be as many trials as it took for her to learn the list in the proper order without an error. In both conditions there were several trials and the learner made the same errors in the same order. In other words, her task performance was the same in both conditions.

As he attached electrodes to the victim's wrist, the experimenter explained the shock contingencies depending on the condition being portrayed. He assured her that no permanent tissue damage would result from the shocks. After the learner had had a chance to read the list through once, the seven testing trials began. In the contingent shock condition the learner appeared to receive an electric shock every time she made an error. In the non-contingent shock condition shocks were delivered at random intervals throughout the testing trials. The victimizer was clearly shown depressing a key on a box each time he administered a shock. During the learning task, the victim acted as if she were being shocked each time the victimizer depressed the key. The key simultaneously illuminated a clearly visible lamp and sounded a buzzer. On the seventh trial the learner gave the list of syllables in the correct order and the experimenter then informed her that the task was over. The tape ended immediately after he detached the electrodes from her wrist. When the videotape was finished the experimenter gave the following instructions to the observers who had just watched it:

> Now I'd like you to fill out this questionnaire. Don't spend too much time pondering each item. Just give your first impressions but be careful not to omit any questions. There are two forms

> of the questionnaire. Both forms ask all the same questions but the pages have simply been arranged in different orders. This is so that we can control for any effects that might result from answering the questions in a different order. So don't worry if you see that your neighbor is working on a different question. That question will appear later on in your questionnaire. Please fill out the questionnaire on your own without consulting anyone else. If there are any questions just raise your hand and I'll try to answer them.

Post-experimental questionnaires were distributed and when they had been completed and collected, the verbal debriefing began. An attempt was made to assess the extent of the subjects' suspiciousness about the veridicality of the shocks and the closed circuit T.V. broadcast. After they had been asked not to reveal the nature of the experiment to their peers until it was completed, subjects received a written summary of the purpose of the experiment along with the experimenter's thanks for their participation.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The results of the MANOVA performed to test the Just World Hypothesis are presented before the correlational findings which are pertinent to the performance before personality sub-hypothesis. Neither hypothesis was confirmed but theoretically and statistically significant differences and correlations were found. The last results presented are concerned with the internal validity of the experiment.

## A. Failure to Confirm the Just World Hypothesis

Essentially, the Just World Hypothesis was phrased as an interaction between inequity and Just World Belief. The hypothesis was tested within the framework of a 2 x 2 factorial multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on 33 dependent variables and linear transformations thereof. The COMJWB factor had two levels. Subjects were categorized into two groups on the basis of a median split. There were 32 observers classified as Unjust World Believers and 31 classified as Just World Believers. The interaction between shock contingency and COMJWB was not significant (multivariate $F = 0.536$; $df = 13/47$; ns). Neither was there any main effect for COMJWB (multivariate $F = 1.023$; $df = 13/47$; ns). There was, however, a significant main effect for shock contingency (multivariate $F = 7.55$; $df = 20/40$; $p < .0001$). Before discussing this let us make sure that the Just World Hypothesis was thoroughly and adequately tested. A closer examination of the Just World

Belief measures and their division into factor levels is in order. First of all, the descriptive statistics on COMJWB are reported.

Rubin and Peplau's scale significantly correlates with the Collins scale ($r = .451$; $df = 118$; $p < .001$). The eigenvalue for the first principle component (i.e. COMJWB) was 1.45 and, of course, since there were only two input variables, the values in the eigenvector are identical for each scale (.852). The eigenvector values are identical with the correlation coefficients between COMJWB and the two input measures ($r = .852$; $df = 61$; $p < .001$).

Since the eigenvalue is considerably greater than 1.00 and the correlations are all very significant ($p < .001$) the principle component analysis seems to have succeeded in producing a highly internally consistent measure of Just World Belief.

Nevertheless further analyses were performed as a precautionary measure. The scores from Rubin and Peplau's Just World Belief Scale were used to construct the second MANOVA factor. In terms of significance levels, the results on the two main effects and the interaction were all the same as those obtained using COMJWB.

In order to examine the possibility that only extreme scores on these measures would react according to predictions, the sample was divided into three groups by means of a tertile split. This yielded a three-level Just World factor and a 2 x 3 MANOVA. Table III shows the resultant cell frequencies and marginal sums for the median and tertile splits performed

Table III

Frequencies Produced by Median and Tertile Splits on Two Measures of Just World Belief Factor

| | | CS | NCS | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMJWB | | | | |
| Median:* | Just | 16 | 15 | 31 |
| | Unjust | 15 | 17 | 32 |
| Tertile | Just | 12 | 9 | 21 |
| | Neutral | 9 | 11 | 20 |
| | Unjust | 10 | 12 | 22 |
| Rubin & Pelau's Scale | | | | |
| Median | Just | 17 | 19 | 36 |
| | Unjust | 14 | 13 | 27 |
| Tertile | Just | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| | Neutral | 16 | 15 | 31 |
| | Unjust | 7 | 9 | 16 |

*This was the major analysis in the experiment. It was used to calculate the MANOVA results reported.

on both COMJWB and Rubin and Peplau's scale. They are all intersected with shock contingency conditions. Again, the tertile splits did not change the significance levels of the results found using a median split on COMJWB. The unavoidable conclusion is that Just World Belief had no predictive value whatsoever.

B. Main Effect for Shock Contingency

Having dealt with the non-significant MANOVA results let us now consider what significant results were found. Under the multivariate main effect for shock contingency there were ten dependent variables with significant univariate F rations. Their means, F ratios and significance levels are summarized in Table IV.

Attributions of undifferentiated responsibility for the victim and for the victimizer were inversely related across conditions. The victim was rated as more responsible in the CS condition than in the NCS condition ($p < .001$). The victimizer was seen as more responsible in the NCS condition ($p < .0002$). Moreover, in the CS condition, more responsibility was attributed to the victim than to the victimizer ($p < .0001$). In the NCS condition they are reversed. This is most clearly illustrated by the third variable on Table IV ("V-E Resp"). It was constructed by subtracting the victimizer's undifferentiated responsibility score from the victim's.

The personality evaluations for the victim and the victimizer were also inversely related across conditions. The victim

## Table IV

MANOVA Summary of Shock Main Effect

Multivariate F = 7.5514, p .0001, df = 20/40

| | Item (Code No.)* | Univariate F (df = 1/59) | P | $\bar{X}$ CS | $\bar{X}$ NCS | Means Key |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | V undifferentiated R (VR1) | 48.84 | .0001 | 4.032 | 7.750 | R = lower number |
| 2 | E undifferentiated R (ER1) | 17.17 | .0002 | 6.161 | 3.312 | R = lower number |
| 3 | V-E Resp (#1-#2) | 47.83 | .0001 | -4.270 | 8.780 | VR = negative "-" |
| 4 | Raw score V evaluation (VE9) | 6.65 | .0125 | 92.290 | 129.300 | "+" VE = higher |
| 5 | Difference score E eval. (EE10) | 6.09 | .0165 | 0.650 | -6.469 | derogation = "-" |
| 6 | Victim blame (VB8) | 15.00 | .0003 | 4.548 | 7.000 | blame = lower |
| 7 | Experimenter blame (EB8) | 9.01 | .0004 | 6.194 | 4.062 | blame = lower |
| 8 | V-E Blame (#6-#7) | 15.97 | .0003 | -3.270 | 5.680 | VB = negative |
| 9 | V unspecified act R (VR2) | 105.25 | .0001 | 2.290 | 7.344 | R = lower number |
| 10 | Fairness of experiment | 8.650 | .0047 | 3.258 | 4.844 | fair = lower |

*See Table I for key to item code numbers.

V = victim R = responsibility E = experimenter

was rated more positively in the NCS condition than in the CS condition ($p < .0125$). The victimizer was perceived more positively in the CS condition than in the NCS condition ($p < .0165$). In short, the greater inequity of the NCS condition made the victim seem nicer and the victimizer seem nastier.

The results on the undifferentiated attributions of responsibility and the personality evaluations can be used to determine the occurrence of any blaming response. Since, in the NCS condition, for example, the victimizer was both devalued and held responsible, blaming did occur. As would be expected then, the attributions of blame *per se* also differed significantly across shock contingency conditions. The victim was perceived as more blameworthy in the CS condition than in the NCS condition ($p < .0003$). The reverse was true for the victimizer ($p < .0004$). The eighth variable on Table IV ("V-E Blame") compares the relative blame attributed to victim *vs.* victimizer across conditions. Like the V-E Resp variable, it was constructed by subtracting victimizer blame scores from victim blame scores. In the CS condition the victim was perceived as slightly more blameworthy than the victimizer. In the NCS condition, however, the victimizer was rated as a great deal more blameworthy than the victim ($p < .0003$). Therefore the greater inequity of the NCS condition resulted in blame for the victimizer and sympathy for the victim.

The ratings of the extent to which the victim "did something" to bring about her own suffering, portrayed the victim as more responsible in the CS condition ($p < .0001$). In a

strictly behavioral sense, the victim did exactly the same things in both conditions. She was selected to receive shocks and complied in the same way both times. She made the same responses over the same number of trials in both conditions. Yet the observers' ratings produced a huge univariate F (105.25) indicating that their perceptions of how much she did to bring the suffering on herself were drastically different from one condition to the other. In the CS condition she was seen as performing some unspecified act which caused her suffering. In the NCS condition she was seen as largely helpless, an innocent pawn. Surprisingly, however, the victim's "unspecified act" item was not significantly correlated with her responsibility arising from either her memorization rate or her continued participation in the experiment. What is more, the data from the open ended item on what alternatives she had available do not shed any light on exactly what the observers in the CS condition thought she had done to bring the misfortune upon herself. When asked if the "learner" (i.e. victim) could have done anything other than what she actually did, 36% of the CS observers said "NO" while 64% said "YES". In the NCS condition 53% said "NO" and 47% said "YES". A chi square showed these frequencies to be within the range of chance variation ($\chi^2 = 1.82$; df = 1; NS). Furthermore, point-biserial correlations of these "alternatives" items with all other performed act responsibility items revealed no significant correlations. Thus, it remains unknown exactly what the victim was perceived to have done in the CS condition to bring the suffering upon herself.

As for the last variable on Table III, the treatment of the victim in the CS condition was rated as significantly more fair than the treatment she received in the NCS condition ($p < .0047$). This indicates that the greater inequity of the non-contingent shock was interpreted as less fair treatment of the victim.

Summarizing the results relating to the first hypothesis, no support was found for the Just World Hypothesis but a blaming reaction was observed. Where the victim should have been devalued the most, she received sympathy and the victimizer was blamed.

C. Failure to Confirm the Performance Before Personalty Subhypothesis

The performance before personality subhypothesis was the second hypothesis in this experiment. It received no support whatsoever. The alternative hypothesis was the blaming reaction. The evidence supported a modified version of this alternative.

All the evidence bearing on the performance before personality subhypothesis was correlational. The elements being correlated were personality evaluations and responsibility attributions. The responsibility attributions fell into three rough categories. These were dispositional responsibility, responsibility arising from specific acts and global responsibility attributions.

Dispositional responsibility was assessed by the item VR6. It represents the personality part of the phrase "performance before personality". According to the hypothesis, observers who devalued the victim should have attributed a high degree of responsibility to her on this item. They did not. The correlation with raw score victim evaluations was non-significant ($r = .0534$; $df = 61$; ns).

The performance part of the phrase "performance before personality" covers attributions based on specific acts by which the victim might have brought her suffering upon herself. These attributions were measured by the items VR3, VR4 and VR5. They refere to responsibility arising from memorization rate, continued participation in the experiment and whatever else the subject can specify himself. The performance before personality subhypothesis predicts that attributions of a low degree of responsibility on any or all of these would be accompanied by victim derogation. It was not. All of the correlations with both measures of the victim's personality were non-significant. Attributions of responsibility on the basis of specific acts were unrelated to victim devaluation.

The item assessing responsibility attributed on the basis of an unspecified act (VR2) is also subsumed by the "performance" part of the subhypothesis. It was not correlated with victim devaluation in the predicted direction either. As Table V shows, however, it was significantly correlated ($p < .05$) in the opposite direction with raw score victim evaluations. The more responsibility attributed,

the more victim devaluation. This is the blaming response.

To summarize all the comparisons relevant to the performance before personality subhypothesis, two things must be noted. First, absolutely no support was found for the subhypothesis although some support was found for the alternative hypothesis of blaming. Second, one possible explanation for the failure of victim evaluations were not related to responsibility ratings in the predicted manner is that, since so little victim devaluation occurred, the results are based on different psychological processes from those covered by the subhypothesis. In other words, since it was the victimizer who was held responsible there were no data relating to observers' preferences for types of responsibility attribution when it is the victim who they hold responsible.

D. Victimizer Blame and Victim Sympathy

There are two apparent loopholes in the performance before personality hypothesis. They state that when the victim has been neither held responsible nor devalued, observers attribute the injustice to either the situation or the victimizer. As mentioned in Chapter II, the Just World Hypothesis is incapable of either predicting or explaining such reactions.

Nonetheless, since the victim was neither held responsible nor devalued, the two addenda items must be examined. The correlations between victim evaluations and attributions of responsibility to situational factors (VS7) were non-significant. The second addendum, however, produced significant correlations.

Attributions of greater unspecified responsibility to the victimizer (ER1) were correlated with more positive raw score victim evaluations ($r = .2566$; $df = 61$; $p < .05$). The same was true for greater attributions of blame to the victimizer ($r = -.3037$; $df = 61$; $p < .02$).

The set of variables which are relevant to the blaming reaction are slightly different insofar as the blaming hypothesis does not make any distinction among types of responsibility. Table V shows all the variables included in the blaming cluster. This alternative hypothesis does, however, maintain the distinction between responsibility variables and personality evaluations. As indicated in Table V, the responsibility variables form a tight cluster while the personality evaluations tend to be more peripheral.

Because no necessary distinction is made between performance- and personality-based responsibility, the undifferentiated responsibility attributions and the attributions of blame form a central part of this cluster. Just as central are attributions of victim responsibility based on an unspecified act. These responsibility attributions are of a global nature insofar as observers did not agree on what it was that made the targets responsible.

The only personality evaluation measure which correlates significantly with variables in the responsibility cluster is raw score victim evaluations. The raw score victim evaluations were more positive when the victim was seen as less responsible owing to an unspecified act ($p < .05$). Conversely,

Table V

Correlation Matrix for Blame Cluster of Variables

| | Item (Code No.)* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VR1 | V undifferentiated R | | | | | | | | |
| ER1 | E undifferentiated R | -.433[d] | | | | | | | |
| VB8 | Victim blame | .671[d] | -.257[a] | | | | | | |
| EB8 | Experimenter blame | -.379[c] | .579[d] | -.493[d] | | | | | |
| VR2 | V unspecified act R | .783[d] | -.349[c] | .516[d] | -.317[b] | | | | |
| VE9 | Raw score VE | .236 | -.257[a] | .145 | -.304[b] | .292[a] | | | |
| EE9 | Raw score EE | -1.56 | .133 | -.170 | .201 | .004 | -.035 | | |
| VE10 | Difference score VE | -.073 | .239 | -.023 | -.020 | .046 | .-34 | -.002 | |
| EE10 | Difference score EE | -.237 | .220 | -.053 | .039 | -.210 | -.141 | .494 | .157 |

*See Table I for key to item code numbers.

E = experimenter
R = responsibility
V = victim

df = 61

a) p .05
b) p .02
c) p .01
d) p .001

the greater the victimizer's undifferentiated responsibility and the greater his blameworthiness, the more positive the victim is rated ($p < .05$ and $p < .02$, respectively). This leads to a minor modification of the blaming hypothesis. It is not actually the most responsible target who is likely to be devalued. Rather, if target A is held more responsible, target B is rated more positively. At least this was the case for two out of the three variables which correlated significantly with a measure of personality evaluation.

## E. Internal Validity: Marginal Order Effect

The following are two analyses which are germaine to the internal validity of the experiment. Since they are based on control factors, they do not test the predictions of any hypotheses.

Taking advantage of the Solomon four group design (cf. Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 24) an analysis was performed to determine the extent of any pretest sensitization in the experiment. A 2 x 2 x 2 factorial MANOVA was performed on all dependent variables using shock contingency and pretesting vs. no pretesting as independent variables. The third independent variable was order, form A vs. form B of the post-experimental questionnaire. The overall F ratio for the main effect of pretesting ($F < 1.0$; df = 13/73) was not significant. Likewise, the interaction of shock contingency with pretesting ($F < 1.0$; df = 13/73) was not statistically significant. Thus,

the null hypothesis that there was no pretest sensitization, was not rejected.

There was a marginal main effect ($F = 1.619$; $df = 13/73$; $p < .10$) for the order of items on the post-experimental questionnaire. This was a result of the significant univariate $F$'s on four dependent variables. They all had 1 and 85 degrees of freedom. They were; the amount of blame for the victimization attributed to the victim ($F = 4.63$; $p < .05$) and the victimizer ($F = 9.92$; $p < .01$), the victimizers degree of responsibility for the difficulty of the learning task ($F = 9.69$; p .01), and V-E Blame ($F = 11.85$; $p < .001$).

On form A the responsibility items followed the personality evaluations of the target persons. In form B the order was reversed. On all the responsibility items lower scores indicate greater attributed responsibility and the scales were the Likert type ranging from 1 to 9. More blame was attributed to the victim on form B ($\bar{x} = 5.35$) than on form A ($\bar{x} = 6.42$) while the reverse was true for the victimizer (form A, $\bar{x} = 3.69$; form B, $\bar{x} = 5.60$). The comparative blame variable highlights this effect. On form A the victimizer was seen as more blameworthy than the victim ($\bar{x} = 2.77$). On form B, however, they were both equally blameworthy ($\bar{x} = -0.221$), or unblameworthy. The form B means for both victim and victimizer blame fall between the 5th and 6th scale points. The midpoint of the scale is five. Verbally this would translate into a statement to the effect that the target person was equally blameworthy and blameless, or, that he was neither completely

to blame nor completely blameless. The ratings of the victimizer's responsibility for the difficulty of the learning task also fell near the midpoint on form B ($\bar{x}$ = 5.43). From the observer's point of view, the number of shocks delivered may be seen as a function of the number of trials needed to learn the list. This in turn may be related, in some observer's minds, to the level of task difficulty pre-established by the victimizer. Thus, observers who hold the victimizer reponsible for the suffering can use this item as a means of expressing their perception of the victimizer's indirect responsibility for the number of shocks delivered. This is exactly what form A observers did as a whole ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83).

The marginal order effect can be summarized as a tendency for observers to see the victimizer as more blameworthy when they had already made ratings of his and the victim's personalities. Observers who made the attributions of blame and responsibility first (form B) tended to rate both targets as neither completely blameworthy nor completely blameless. It should also be noted that order had no significant effect on the evaluations of the targets' personalities.

F. Summary

The Just World Hypothesis was not supported. Neither the COMJWB measure nor Rubin and Peplau's scale produced the predicted interaction. There was a significant main effect for shock contingency but no victim devaluation occurred. The performance before personality subhypothesis received no support

but the alternative blaming hypothesis was strongly supported. In the NCS condition the victimizer was blamed and the victim received sympathy. There was no pretest sensitization but a marginally significant order effect was found.

# CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

## A. Inequity Anxiety as an Intensity Parameter and the Inefficacy of Just World Belief

The aspect of the Just World Hypothesis dealing with the influence of individual differences in Just World Belief received no support whatsoever. Not even under high inequity anxiety (NCS condition) did Just World Belief predict evaluations of the victim, or the victimizer. Nor did it predict any type of responsibility attribution. Rubin and Peplau's (1973) study was the only other one published which tested the efficacy of Just World Belief. On four dependent variables they found victim derogation as a function of Just World Belief but on three others they found a "compassionate" tendency. Although Just World Belief may predict behavior in some situations, it seems as though those situations are highly specific and their defining parameters are mysterious.

Lerner attributed to observers a need to believe that the world is just. This attribution was apparently made on the basis of the observers' tendency to say that the victim deserved his fate. There may be many reasons why observers sometimes claim that the victim deserved to suffer. The need to protect a belief in a just world does not appear to be prepotent among these reasons. As far as inequity anxiety is concerned, the more inequitable condition in the present study (NCS) led to less victim derogation.

This result need not lead to a complete rejection of Lerner's hypothesis. Although inequity anxiety might not be directly predictive of the direction or target of derogation, it is, as Lerner implied, a factor affecting the intensity of the observer's response. As was pointed out in Chapter 1, one response to inequity anxiety might be to admit that the world is unjust and then to decide what to do about that state of affairs. This, of course, is based on the assumption that inequity produces inequity anxiety.

Strictly speaking, the evidence for the efficacy of inequity anxiety is just as tenuous as that for Just World Belief. Therefore, the more parsimonious conclusion would be that the degree of inequity in a situation affects the intensity of observers' responses. This, however, begs the question of motivation. We would still want to know how inequity itself produces various effects. The most obvious candidate for replacing inequity 'anxiety' would be some form of balance model. But then we would want to know why people seek cognitive consistency. This question has led some (Kagan, 1972) right back to postulating motives which appear quite similar to Lerner's inequity anxiety. In short, the elimination of inequity anxiety from the explanation does not advance our understanding of the phenomenon any more or any less than the invocation of the concept did.

B. Responsibility Attributions and Personality Evaluations

Failure of the Performance Before Personality Predictions: No support was found for the performance before personality subhypothesis. The relevant performed acts were the victim's continued participation in the experiment and her memorization rate in the learning task. Although these could conceivably be the basis for either performance or personality attributions of responsibility, the results still disconfirm the subhypothesis. If observers had seen these acts as leading directly to the suffering, there should have been a negative correlation between attributed responsibility and victim devaluation. There was no such correlation. If, on the other hand, observers used these acts to make dispositional attributions about the victim there should have been a positive correlation between attributed responsibility and victim devaluation. This correlation did not materialize either. One cannot even invoke the argument that the nomothetic averaging of subjects' responses obscured these divergent tendencies in the data. If that were the case, one would expect the undifferentiated responsibility attributions and the attributions for an unspecified act to be uncorrelated with victim devaluation. Although the reasoning underlying observers' ratings on these two items remains unknown, they are both still attributions of responsibility. If some observers were attributing responsibility on the basis of performance and others were attributing it on the basis of inferred personality, everyone would agree that the victim was

responsible on these two items. But according to the sub-hypothesis the former observers would rate the victim's personality positively while the latter observers would devalue her. When these two opposing trends were averaged, they would neutralize each other. Therefore, the two global responsibility items would not correlate significantly with evaluations of the victim. But, in fact, they do correlate.

They correlate positively. The less the victim is held responsible for her fate, the less she is devalued. This relationship only holds for global attributions of responsibility. The data did little to clarify what observers mean when they simply rate a victim as not responsible for her suffering. One thing they do mean is that she did not "do something" to bring the suffering upon herself. All we know about the "something" is that the victimizer is the one who did it.

Unpredicted Blame and Sympathy: In the more inequitable condition the victim received sympathy and the victimizer was blamed. Several explanations can be suggested for this finding. The Just World approach would be to say that since the victimizer was blamed, there was no need to blame the victim. If observers can identify some act performed by the victimizer as the cause of the injustice then they at least have an orderly world if not a just world. This explanation abandons all hope of saving the Just World Hypothesis and opts for a watered down, yet to be articulated, Orderly World hypothesis. Unfortunately, there is already evidence against it. Observers could not, in fact, identify any act performed by the victimizer

as the cause of the injustice. They held the victimizer responsible only on the global, non-specific responsibility items.

C. Explanations for the Absence of Victim Devaluation

The results reported here would seem quite straight forward were it not for the existence of all the Just World literature. It is the discrepancy between these results and the results reported in the literature which necessitates some comment. It seems that the Just World Hypothesis cannot account for the findings of the present study. It was not designed to account for them. It only purports to explain victim devaluation, not victimizer devaluation or victim sympathy. Nonetheless, it also purports to specify the conditions under which victim devaluation occurs. These conditions appear to have been met in the present experiment. What follows is an attempt to explain the unexpected absence of any victim devaluation.

Adequacy of the Deception: One possible explanation can be ruled out immediately. It might be argued that a failure to achieve adequate deception impaired the internal validity of the experiment. Subjects who know that the victim is only acting do not devalue her (Lerner, 1971b). However, it is also unlikely that they would devalue the victimizer. Moreover, if observers did not think that the victim was really suffering why did they rate the severity of her pain as worse than average? Also, why did they rate the NCS condition as more

unfair? Was there something less convincing about the deception in the CS condition? If so, what was it? Since these questions remain unanswered it must be assumed that the observers were adequately deceived.

Interaction Between Victimizer Evaluations and Perceived Unfairness: There are several things which differentiate the procedure of this study from those of other studies which did find victim devaluation, and which this experiment has in common with the two others which did find victimizer blaming (Lincoln and Levinger, 1972; Chaikin and Darley, 1973). The latter all took measures of the victimizer's responsibility and personality. These items may serve to focus blame on the victimizer through demand characteristics. The very act of asking for evaluations of the victimizer might encourage observers to look beyond the videotaped experimenter's role to the human being performing that role. Also, when observers are asked to rate the extent of the victimizer's responsibility for the suffering there may be an implicit message being simultaneously transmitted. Observers might perceive this as an indication that the victimizer was in some way responsible. They might think, "If the experimenter was really beyond reprehension why would we be asked how blameworthy he was?" If this were the case, the observer might be encouraged to set aside his usual deference towards the role of "experimenter". Once the authority and validity of the victimizer-experimenter's role has been questioned, he becomes a possible target for blame. In the present study, however, the request

for victimizer responsibility and personality evaluations was not enough in itself to evoke victimizer blame and victim sympathy. Likewise, it was not enough by itself in the other two studies which found victimizer blame and victim sympathy. In those two studies, as in the one reported here, the victimizer was only blamed in the condition where the victim's fate was perceived as more unfair. This fairly reliable observation may have theoretical ramifications.

D. Artifactual Information Variables as Direction Parameters

The interaction of unfairness with items appraising the victimizer could be construed as an interaction between a motivational and an informational variable. The unfairness creates the prerequisite level of inequity anxiety necessary for any blaming or devaluation to occur. The request for ascriptions of responsibility and characteristics for the victimizer determines the direction of the response. The motivation comes from inequity anxiety and the information comes from experimental demand characteristics. In the studies which found victim devaluation, there are a number of artifactual information sources which direct the blame towards the victim. The most obvious is absence of any other target to be rated. Also, Godfrey and Lowe (1973) showed that information about who was most responsible for the suffering is subtly provided to observers in the typical paradigm. The ostensibly spontaneous verbal exchange between the experimenter and the victim-confederate immediately upon the selection of the latter

for receiving shocks provides observers with personality revealing behavioral information.

Generally, this explanation portrays the observer as taking the information available about the situation along with previous information about similar situations and trying to apply it to the problem with which he is presented. In most experiments, that problem has been one of making inferences about the person who is suffering. In the author's experience, at least one subject-observer in every experiment spontaneously objects that the task is bound to produce meaningless results since he feels he does not have enough information about the target to make personal evaluations. Nonetheless, observers oblige the experimenter and try to make their inferences as best they can despite their qualms about having to guess in order to respond. They decide whether or not the suffering was deserved by taking into account such things as what the experimenter says the suffering is going to prove and how the victim was selected. Particularly close attention is paid to any role discrepant behavior on the part of targets, since this information can provide glimpses of the personality behind the role. Finally, of course, since the real experimenter (not the videotaped E) is the only one in the room who really knows what the experiment is about, it is important to pay attention to what he does, says and asks about the suffering, the people, and the experiment in order to get clues about how justified the suffering might be.

## E. Attributional Set: An Informational Prerequisite for Blame and Sympathy?

If the information-oriented sketch of the observer's mental processes were accurate one would expect such information processing variables as attributional set to influence reactions to the incident of victimization. Observers using different attributional sets would essentially be asking themselves different questions about what is transpiring. Since this would lead them to attend to different information, they would make different attributions. There is evidence which suggests that this does happen.

The marginal order effect reported here may be interpreted as a result of an attributional set induced by the format of the post-experimental questionnaire. Observers who received form B made responsibility attributions first. They likely assumed that their task was to judge impartially the guilt and innocence of the target persons. The reference to jurors in the cover story may have primed observers to interpret the responsibility items in this way. This will therefore be called the "juror" attribution set. In order to perform this task they would have had to recall details of the "crime" and the rights and obligations of the participants in their respective roles as subject and experimenter. Thus, they would have asked themselves such questions as, "Was the procedure for selecting the learner fair?", "Did the experimenter inform her of her rights?", and "Did the purpose of the experiment

justify the suffering?" Having focused on these questions, it is not surprising that the form B observers attributed equal responsibility to both victim and victimizer.

When, however, they came to the personality evaluations their attributional set had to change because the nature of the task changed. Instead of being involved in litigation they were involved in the psychological assessment of personality. The switch to personality assessment may have led form B observers to abandon their juror set and assume what will be referred to as the "psychologist" attribution set.

When operating under this set they would be likely to try to recall more of the features of the target's behavior which indicated something about his abilities, his interpersonal style, his traits, and so forth. Therefore, the observer would now have to ask himself questions like, "Did the learner appear upset when her number was drawn?", "Did she hesitate to go on with the experiment?", "Did the experimenter deliver the shocks with an apologetic demeanor or did he conduct the session with a tone of cold, impartial objectivity?", and, "Was lack of either ability or motivation a factor in the learner's memorization rate or did she perform at a normal level?" Being set to extrapolate from the information provided by these personality revealing behaviors it is understandable how observers could make trait ascriptions to the target.

The observers who received form A started out with the psychologist attributional set. Naturally, their target

evaluations were no different from those given by form B observers. Unlike form B observers, however, the form A group continued to use the psychologist set while making the responsibility attributions. That is, they may have interpreted the responsibility items as dealing less with performance than personality. For example, the question about the victim's memorization rate could be interpreted as a question about her ability or her motivation.

Yandell (1973) has found evidence indicating that subjects will continue to use the same attributional set across a series of items unless the perceived intent of the item changes in such a way as to require a new set. Form B observers might have perceived such a change in the intent of the items while form A observers might have seen no need to adopt a new attributional set. Hence, both groups of observers made similar ratings on the personality evaluations because they were both using the psychologist set. On the responsibility items, however, the form B group was less likely to assign serious guilt to one target and virtual innocence to the other because they were using the more impartial juror set. This suggests the hypothesis that the psychologist attribution set is a prerequisite for both blaming and sympathizing. The foregoing is, of course, all highly speculative.

## F. Suggestions for Future Research Using an Information Orientation

Problems to be Considered: It seems, then, that the best way to conceptualize the phenomenon of victim derogation is as an interaction of motivational and informational factors. In attempting to explain the victimizer blame and victim sympathy found in the high inequity condition several arguments have been presented emphasizing the importance of the observer's active attempts to seek and process information. In their search for inforamtion, the observers in the typical paradigm seem to be very sensitive to incidental items of information coming from numerous and diverse sources (e.g. minor variations in cover stories, non-verbal reactions of victims to being selected, reactivity to dependent measures). This creates tremendous problems in controlling the information to be obtained and used by observers in making their attributions. The Just World hypothesis is not particularly useful in providing guidelines for this enterprise. What is needed is a set of hypotheses that relate items of information available to observers to the directions of their reactions. We also need hypotheses which deal with an expanded range of phenomena. The reactions of blaming and attributing responsibility must be made predictable along with personality evaluations. Reactions to victimizers as well as victims must also be explained. Finally, an account must be given of what factors produce positive, sympathetic reactions as well as neutral and negative reactions.

A move toward integrating this expanded range of phenomena into an informational approach has already been made above. The concepts of personality revealing behavior and attributional set, however, must be more clearly defined before they are likely to lead to any unequivocal operationalizations. Other possible lines of approach may be provided through a consideration of individual differences in information processing, especially of threatening information, (e.g. Repression-Sensitization) and attributional styles. These may be closely related to perceptual styles such as field dependence/independence (Witkin et al., 1962). An observer who can abstract the victim's behavior (i.e. figure) from the context of the situation in which it occurs (i.e. ground) might be less likely to equate the victim's experience of being "punished" with the contextually produced state of deserving punishment.

Advantages of Greater Mundane Realism: Probably the most promising direction for future research would be in the direction of more mundane realism (cf. Aronson and Carlsmith, 1968, p. 22). The majority of victimization does not involve physical pain. In the verbal learning task paradigm the victim seems more like a laboratory Kitty Genovese. Although the study of observers' reactions to victims in emergency situations or criminal acts where pysical pain is involved is interesting in its own right, it seems like a misplaced emphasis if one is interested in generalizing to reactions to the more common, everyday, non-crisis victim.

The observer of a non-crisis victim typically learns about the victimization through the news media. For example, the person watching the evening news on T.V. hears a report on the increasing municipal welfare rolls and spontaneously characterizes welfare recipients as lazy parasites. If the focus of research interests were shifted to this aspect of the victim blaming phenomenon, many methodological problems could be overcome. Simulated T.V. or newspaper reports allow a much greater control over crucial items of information available to the observer. The simulated physical assault devised by Lerner and Simmons does not provide for this control. As the focus of research shifts from motivational to informational approaches, an appropriate new paradigm may be called for. Although Godfrey and Lowe (1973) have managed to manipulate some important pieces of inforamtion using the 'verbal learning task' paradigm, there may be other paradigms which make the control of input information easier, broader and more certain.

The information-oriented approach of presenting observers with simulated media reports about everyday non-emergency victims would require the investigator to make research decisions on the basis of personal beliefs and values. To label anyone as an innocent victim the investigator must implicitly assert that the person has experienced an injustice. Injustice and justice, however, are concepts which could mean different things to people of different ideological persuasions. Lerner (1974) has alluded to the connection between various

ideologies or belief systems (e.g. Marxism, Protestant Ethic) and different principles of justice (e.g. distribution according to need, equity). William Ryan (1971) has described how political and ideological beliefs can influence reactions to everyday non-crisis victims.

Ryan sees victim blaming as a negative by-product of taking a "particularistic", instead of a "universalistic" approach to social problems. According to Ryan, popular liberal thinking assumes that the U.S. social and economic system is, in general, just. This position is particularistic insofar as it looks to deficiencies in the victims of that system for explanations of the obvious inequities. Thus, remedial social programs are directed at changing the personal characteristics of the poor, for example, in such a way that they will be able to obtain greater equity within that system. The universalistic approach would be to blame and change the system. Ryan's particularistic vs. universalistic distinction seems to describe the dimension of comparison underlying the psychologist vs. juror attributional sets. This suggests the interesting hypothesis that the particularistic approach which Ryan scorns may be a prerequisite for sympathizing with the victim as well as for blaming him. In any case, it is clear that Ryan encountered political and ideological variations in the definition of an "innocent" victim. These issues, however, also arise in the discussion of simulated victims.

Although the novelty and artificiality of laboratory incidents of victimization may initially obscure the

investigator's biases and personal beliefs, these biases and beliefs continue to play a necessary part in the operationalization of such concepts as "innocence" and "injustice". Even in the verbal learning task paradigm certain value judgements about the ethics of shocking human research subjects underlie the definition of the learner as a victim. For example, one could hold that shocking a subject is ethically permissable when the subject has given informed consent. Starting from this assumption, the learner could not be called a victim. Moreover, the learner could be called "foolish" or "intelligent" if she consented to participate when she really did not want to. Thus, by taking a different position on the ethics of research with human subjects one could seriously assert that Lerner and Simmons failed to adequately operationalize the concept of an "innocent" victim. In any case, no real increase in scientific objectivity or precision has been obtained by avoiding making political and ideological value judgements about the forces acting upon real people (not confederates) in society.

G. Summary

Just World Belief scores did not predict the sympathetic reaction to the victim or the blaming of the victimizer. Just World Belief may be related to victim devaluation but the Just World Hypothesis is neither detailed nor explicit enough to predict with much certainty when victim devaluation will occur.

Inequity anxiety nonetheless does seem to control the intensity of the reactions to both victims and victimizers.

The unexpected absence of victim devaluation may be a result of an interaction between information provided by post-experimental questionnaire items and the perceived unfairness of the shock contingency conditions. The fact that an experimenter was asking subjects to comment on his own research ethics may have created demand characteristics especially in the condition where the victim suffered greater inequity.

In any case, whatever caused the unexpected victim sympathy and victimizer blame, its effect was slightly attenuated by the order in which post-experimental questionnaire items were presented. This effect along with all the results taken together seem most easily assimilated by an attributional interpretation of reactions to victims. In order to study the attributional process, however, a greater control of input information would be necessary. There are many alternate pathways or directions which the inequity anxiety might take to manifest itself. A move towards more mundane realism in this line of research might eliminate some of the pathways which arise primarily from artifactual sources of information imbedded in the context of the psychology experiment itself.

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## APPENDIX A: Pretest Questionnaire

Name_____ TEST BOOKLET INSTRUCTIONS

I.D. Number_____ Section No. (Prof.)_____

Telephone #_____

Your responses to this series of tests will remain completely anonymous. They will be compared with the responses of your group in a later experimental session. In order to make it possible to contact you for voluntary participation in that later sessions, however, it is necessary that you write your name and student I.D. number at the top of this question booklet. At no point will your name be matched directly with your test scores. When this research project is completed there will be no way of tracing your questionnaire responses back to either your name or your I.D. number.

This series of tests is composed of four scales. The first two scales are of the True/False format. The last two provide 5 answer alternatives: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. Four computer cards are provided for the answers. There is approximately one computer card for each scale. There are 50 columns on each computer card but all of the scales have slightly more or less than 50 questions to them. Nonetheless, beside each question you will find two numbers. The "card number tells you on which of the four cards you should place your answer for that question. The "column number" tells you which column of that card is reserved

the answer to that question. So, for example, the answer to question 2-30 goes in the 30th column of the 2nd card.

The Computer Answer Cards

1. The marks must be made only with pencil. Make your marks heavy and black but stay within the brackets.

2. Marks should be erased completely in the event of an error. Crossing marks out will only lead to the question being scored improperly. Doodling on the answer cards should be avoided. Stray marks may be picked up by the IBM card reader and could possibly lead to incorrect scores.

4. Take the four computer cards and write the 10 figures of your student I.D. number in the 10 columns headed "Identification Number". Be sure to indicate your I.D. number twice, first in the boxes at the top and then in the proper combination of brackets of each column.

5. In the single column headed "Answer Card Number" number the cards from 1 to 4. These are the "card numbers" that form the first part of the numbers for the questions in the tests.

Below you will find detailed instructions for answering the True/False questions. Later on in the test booklet you will encounter the detailed instructions for answering the Agree/Disagree-type questions.

True/False Questions

Read each statement and decide whether it is true as applied to you or false as applied to you. Find the appropriate card column for that question. If a statement is TRUE or MOSTLY TRUE, in your opinion, blacken between the first set of brackets in the column. If a statement is FALSE or NOT USUALLY TRUE, in your opinion, blacken the second space in the column.

1 = TRUE 2 = FALSE

Remember to get the right questions matched with the same cards and columns. Do not skip any questions and do not spend too much time pondering any one question. Work quickly giving your first impressions.

| Card Column | SCALE 1 (Card #1) | 1 = TRUE | 2 = FALSE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-1. | Basically, the world is a just place. | | |
| 1-2. | The political candidate who sticks up for his principles rarely gets elected. | | |
| 1-3. | I've found that a person rarely deserves the reputation he has. | | |
| 1-4. | People who find money in the street have often done a good deed earlier that day. | | |
| 1-5. | It is a common occurrence for a guilty person to get off free in Canadian courts. | | |
| 1-6. | Movies in which good triumphs over evil are unrealistic. | | |
| 1-7. | Students almost always deserve the grades they receive in school. | | |
| 1-8. | Crime doesn't pay. | | |
| 1-9. | When parents punish their children, it is almost always for good reasons. | | |

Card Column

1 = TRUE 2 = FALSE

1-10. Although there may be some exceptions, good people often lead lives of suffering.

1-11. It is often impossible for a person to receive a fair trial in Canada.

1-12. In almost any business or profession, people who do their job well rise to the top.

1-13. Although evil men may hold political power for a while, in the general course of history good wins out.

1-14. By and large, people deserve what they get.

1-15. Canadian parents tend to overlook the things most to be admired in their children.

1-16. It is rare for an innocent man to be wrongly sent to jail.

1-17. It makes me said to see a lonely stranger in a group.

1-18. People make too much of the feelings and sensitivity of animals.

1-19. I often find public displays of affection annoying.

1-20. I am annoyed by unhappy people who are just sorry for themselves.

1-21. I become nervous if others around me seem to become nervous.

1-22. I find it silly for people to cry out of happiness.

1-23. I tend to get emotionally involved with a friend's problems.

1-24. Sometimes the words of a love song can move me deeply.

1-25. I tend to lose control when I am bringing bad news to people.

1-26. The people around me have a great influence on my moods.

1-27. Most foreigners I have met seemed cool and unemotional.

1-28. I would rather be a social worker than work in a job training centre.

1-29. I don't get upset just because a friend is acting upset.

1-30. I like to watch people open presents.

1-31. Lonely people are probably unfriendly.

Card Column

1 = TRUE 2 = FALSE

1-32. Seeing people cry upsets me.
1-33. Some songs make me happy.
1-34. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
1-35. I get very angry when I see someone being ill-treated.
1-36. I am able to remain calm even though those around me worry.
1-37. When a friend starts to talk about his problems I try to steer the conversation to something else.
1-38. Another's laughter is not catching for me.
1-39. Sometimes at the movies I am amused by the amount of crying and sniffing around me.
1-40. I am able to make decisions without being influenced by people's feelings.
1-41. I cannot continue to feel OK if people around me are depressed.
1-42. It is hard for me to see how some things upset people so much.
1-43. I am very upset when I see an animal in pain.
1-44. Becoming involved in books or movies is a little silly.
1-45. It upsets me to see helpless old people.
1-46. I become more irritated than sympathetic when I see someone's tears.
1-47. I become very involved when I watch a movie.
1-48. I often find that I can remain cool in spite of the excitement around me.
1-49. Little children sometimes cry for no apparent reason.

SCALE 2 (Card #2) 1 = TRUE 2 = FALSE

2-1. I am certainly lacking in self-confidence.
2-2. Even when I am with people I feel lonely much of the time.
2-3. There is very little love and companionship in my family as compared to other homes.

Card Column

1 = TRUE 2 = FALSE

2-4. At times I think I am no good at all.

2-5. I am inclined to take things hard.

2-6. I have been disappointed in love.

2-7. One or more members of my family is very nervous.

2-8. I am afraid of finding myself in a closet or small closed place.

2-9. Sometimes some unimportant thought will run through my mind and bother me for days.

2-10. When I am feeling very happy and active, someone who is blue or low will spoil it all.

2-11. I sometimes feel that I am about to go to pieces.

2-12. I am apt to take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind.

2-13. I have nightmares every few nights.

2-14. I am easily embarrassed.

2-15. I feel unable to tell anyone all about myself.

2-16. I believe I am being plotted against.

2-17. At times I have been so entertained by the cleverness of a crook that I have hoped he would get by with it.

2-18. It bothers me to have someone watch me at work even though I know I can do it well.

2-19. I usually have to stop and think before I act even in trifling matters.

2-20. Once in a while I think of things too bad to talk about.

2-21. I am afraid when I look down from a high place.

2-22. I do not have a great fear of snakes.

2-23. Life is a strain for me much of the time.

2-24. I am sure I get a raw deal from life.

2-25. Much of the time I feel as if I have done something wrong or evil.

2-26. Once in a while I feel hate toward members of my family whom I usually love.

2-27. I have not lived the right kind of life.

Card Column

1 = TRUE 2 = FALSE

2-28. I have often felt guilty because I have pretended to feel more sorry about something than I really was.

2-29. I do many things which I regret afterwards (I regret things more or more often than others seem to).

2-30. I have often felt that strangers were looking at me critically.

2-31. No one seems to understand me.

2-32. People often disappoint me.

2-33. I do not mind meeting strangers.

2-34. I feel like giving up quickly when things go wrong.

2-35. It makes me nervous to have to wait.

2-36. If given the chance I could do some things that would be of great benefit to the world.

2-37. I sometimes keep on at a thing until others lose their patience with me.

2-38. Even when I am with people I feel lonely much of the time.

2-39. Once a week or oftener I become very excited.

2-40. Bad words, often terrible words, come into my mind and I cannot get rid of them.

2-41. Someone has it in for me.

2-42. People say insulting and vulgar things about me.

2-43. It makes me feel like a failure when I hear of the success of someone I know well.

2-44. At times I have worn myself out by undertaking too much.

2-45. Any person can always rise above the pressures of the moment and the forces of habit to make a free choice about what he will do.

2-46. Human behavior can always be explained in terms of the present circumstances and previous environments that individuals experience.

2-47. People's decisions are always completely determined by biological and environmental factors.

2-48. A person is always free to choose an alternate course of action at any point in his life.

Leave the last two columns of Card #2 blank (i.e. 2-49 and 2-50) and go on to Card #3 after reading the following instructions.

For the next two scales (3 & 4) select the response which best describes your feelings on each statement in accordance with the following scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

If, for example, you strongly agree with the statement, blacken in the number 5 space in the column corresponding to that question. If you strongly disagree with it, blacken in the number 1 space in the column corresponding to that question. Disregard the T and F format of the previous scales. Make your judgements in accordance with your degree of acceptance or rejection of the statement. However, you should try to avoid the "undecided" response as much as possible, as it is your feelings (either positive or negative) towards each of the statements that is being sought.

Scale 3 has 52 questions in it. Answer the last two questions in the first two columns of card #4 (i.e. questions 51 and 52 go in columns 4-1 and 4-2, respectively).

| Card Column | SCALE 3 (Cards #3 and #4) | 1 = strongly disagree<br>5 = strongly agree |
|---|---|---|
| 3-1. | Most psychology experiments are worthless since even the most carefully controlled experiments lead to inconclusive results. | |
| 3-2. | Through experimentation psychologists have made a real contribution to the understanding of man. | |

Card Column

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

3-3. Psychologists would be better advised to forget the laboratory, and go into the field where the "real people and problems" are.

3-4. Many of the questions asked in testing are personal and are none of the experimenter's business.

3-5. Given a free choice, most students would be willing to volunteer for experiments.

3-6. Many experimenters are smug and take a pretty high-handed attitude with subjects.

3-7. Most experiments in psychology are concerned with trivial observations of artificial behavior.

3-8. Tests and other experimental manipulations are generally not reliable measures of personality and behavior.

3-9. Most experiments deal with such a small segment of behavior that they are meaningless in the broad picture.

3-10. People generally express their real feelings on psychological tests.

3-11. Psychology experiments are fun but do not prove anything.

3-12. Human behavior is too complex to cut up and study piece by piece in the laboratory.

3-13. Most people would say that their experience as a subject in psychological experiments was favourable.

3-14. When an individual signs up for an experiment, it involves a commitment to do what is asked to the best of his ability.

3-15. Most students participate willingly in experiments.

3-16. People rarely express their "real" selves in psychology experiments.

3-17. Experiments in psychology have no value because of the inherent diversity of man and his environment.

3-18. Many experimenters ask too much from their subjects.

3-19. Experiments are nothing but "busy work" for psychologists.

Card Column

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

3-20. Psychology experiments are too time consuming.

3-21. Some experimenters just seem to be waiting for the subjects to make fools of themselves.

3-22. As a matter of personal pride, most individuals would try to do their best when acting as a subject.

3-23. Experimentation is of no practical value in the understanding of the fundamental causes of behavior.

3-24. The psychological journals are mostly filled with unimportant trivia.

3-25. It doesn't matter too much what subjects do; the experimenter usually manipulates the data to prove his hypothesis anyway.

3-26. Psychological tests are generally reliable measures of personality.

3-27. Laboratory studies in psychology are too artificial to produce valid data.

3-28. Most students are "good" subjects, that is, they perform well in their role as experimental subjects.

3-29. Many subjects in psychological experiments go through the motions without really trying.

3-30. The experimental method can be used effectively in the study of human beahvior.

3-31. Subjects in most psychology experiments are treated with respect.

3-32. The experimental approach to psychology has been both fruitful and helpful in understanding human nature.

3-33. Most experimenters are considerate and polite in their treatment of subjects.

3-34. Participation in psychology experiments is not a great imposition on students.

3-35. Psychologists sometimes forget that subjects are still human beings.

3-36. Through psychological tests and experiments psychologists have acquired the knowledge to predict behavior in many real life situations.

Card Column

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

3-37. Most students follow the experimenter's instructions carefully so that they will be able to perform as a good subject.

3-38. Laboratory studies in psychology have contributed significantly to the knowledge of mankind.

3-39. The complexity of individuals make it necessary to study human behavior under controlled conditions.

3-40. From experiments, psychologists can validly generalize to the population at large.

3-41. Subjects in most psychology experiments are treated as guinea pigs.

3-42. Many students do not cooperate and therefore make poor subjects.

3-43. Psychology has proven its worth as an experimental science.

3-44. Any minor discomfort that subjects may go through such as electric shock, embarrassment, etc., is worth it in the long run.

3-45. Psychological data is useless because its interpretation is based on the manipulation of statistics.

3-46. Many students feel a responsibility to cooperate in any way possible in the pursuit of knowledge.

3-47. Subjects frequently feel manipulated by the experimenter.

3-48. Participation in psychological experiments is a waste of the student's time.

3-49. Students should not be asked to give up their time to serve as subjects.

3-50. College students tend to share with experimenters the hope that the study in which they are participating will in some material way contribute to science.

(Card #4)

4-51. Subjects in psychology experiments are "contributors to science."

Card Column

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided,
4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

4-52. Experiments in psychology almost always involve deception or "tricking" the subject in some way.

SCALE 4 The questions in scale 4 go in columns 3 to 49 of card #4.

4-3. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.

4-4. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

4-5. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4-6. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.

4-7. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.

4-8. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

4-9. The average citizen can have an influence in government decision.

4-10. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.

4-11. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

4-12. What happens to me is my own doing.

4-13. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.

4-14. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politicis.

4-15. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.

4-16. No matter how hard you try to some people just don't like you.

4-17. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

Card Column

1 = strong disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided,
4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

4-18. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
4-19. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
4-20. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
4-21. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
4-22. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
4-23. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
4-24. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
4-25. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
4-26. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
4-27. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
4-28. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
4-29. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
4-30. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
4-31. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
4-32. Getting people to do the right things depends upon ability; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
4-33. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.
4-34. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.
4-35. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

Card Column

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided,

4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

4-36. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.

4-37. Many times we might as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

4-38. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.

4-39. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.

4-40. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.

4-41. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.

4-42. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

4-43. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

4-44. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

4-45. There really is no such thing as "luck".

4-46. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.

4-47. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.

4-48. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.

Leave the last columns of card #4 blank (i.e. 4-49 and 4-50) and turn in (a) your booklet (b) your answer cards and (c) your pencil. Before leaving pick up the handout giving details of the next experimental session.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

APPENDIX B: Posttest Questionnaire (form A)

Sex: M F

Student Number: _____

Section: _____

Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following questionnaire you will be asked to make several ratings on nine point scales. The following is an example of the scale:

"How pleasant do you think the weather is today?"

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| extremely pleasant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | extremely unpleasant |

If you thought that today's weather was extremely unpleasant you would circle the 9 and if you thought that it was extremely pleasant you would circle the 1. If you thought that today's weather was average you would circle 5. If you thought that it was somewhere between extreme and average, you would circle the appropriate number in between (2,3,4, or 6,7,8).

Please answer the questions carefully and do not skip any questions.

1) Rate the learner on the following scales.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| intelligent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unintelligent |
| likable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unlikable |
| uncooperative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cooperative |
| bossy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | easygoing |
| immature | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | mature |
| imaginative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unimaginative |
| irresponsible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | responsible |
| nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | calm |
| patient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | impatient |
| reasonable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unreasonable |
| rigid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | flexible |
| courteous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | rude |
| selfish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unselfish |
| warm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cold |
| sincere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | insincere |

2) Rate the televised experimenter (the 'teacher') on the following scales.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| intelligent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unintelligent |
| likable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unlikable |
| uncooperative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cooperative |
| bossy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | easygoing |
| immature | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | mature |
| imaginative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unimaginative |
| irresponsible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | responsible |
| nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | calm |
| patient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | impatient |
| reasonable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unreasonable |
| rigid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | flexible |
| courteous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | rude |
| selfish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unselfish |
| warm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cold |
| sincere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | insincere |

3) On the following scales, make ratings reflecting your impressions on the 'average university student'.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| intelligent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unintelligent |
| likable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unlikable |
| uncooperative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cooperative |
| bossy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | easygoing |
| immature | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | mature |
| imaginative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unimaginative |
| irresponsible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | responsible |
| nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | calm |
| patient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | impatient |
| reasonable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unreasonable |
| rigid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | flexible |
| courteous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | rude |
| selfish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unselfish |
| warm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cold |
| sincere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | insincere |

4) On the following scales make ratings reflecting your impressions of the 'average psychology experimenter'.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| intelligent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unintelligent |
| likable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unlikable |
| uncooperative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cooperative |
| bossy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | easygoing |
| immature | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | mature |
| imaginative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unimaginative |
| irresponsible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | responsible |
| nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | calm |
| patient | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | impatient |
| reasonable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unreasonable |
| rigid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | flexible |
| courteous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | rude |
| selfish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | unselfish |
| warm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | cold |
| sincere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | insincere |

5) To what extent was the learner responsible for his being shocked?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

6) To what extent was the experimenter responsible for the learner being shocked?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

7) To what extent were the shocks a result of something the learner did?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

8) To what extent were the shocks a result of something the experimenter did?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

9) To what extent was the learner responsible for his rate of learning being as it was?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

10) To what extent was the experimenter responsible for the list being of the same degree of difficulty to the learner as it was?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

11) Could the learner have done anything other than what he actually did?

No____ Yes_____ If "Yes", what could he have done (Briefly)?

12) Could the experimenter have done anything other than what he actually did?

No____ Yes____ If "Yes", what could he have done (Briefly)?

13) To what extent was the learner responsible for his own continued participation in the experiment?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

14) To what extent was the experimenter responsible for the learner's continued participation in the experiment?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

15) To what extent was the learner's behavior a result of the situation he found himself in?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

16) To what extent was the experimenter's behavior a result of the situation he found himself in?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

17) To what extent was the learner's behavior a result of his personality characteristics and dispositions at the time?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

18) To what extent was the experimenter's behavior a result of his personality characteristics and dispositions at the time?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

19) To what extent is the learner to blame for his being shocked?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

20) To what extent is the experimenter to blame for the learner's being shocked?

completely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 not at all

21) How fairly was the learner treated in the present experiment?

extremely fairly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 extremely unfairly

22) How fairly are subjects treated in the average psychology experiment?

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| extremely fairly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | extremely unfairly |

23) How severe was the pain suffered by the learner?

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| extremely severe | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | extremely mild |

24) How many psychology experiments have you participated in since September (including this one)?

25) Are you the oldest child in your family?