CHAPTER 11: REFLECTIONS ON THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT: GENESIS, TRANSFORMATIONS, CONSEQUENCES

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PROLOGUE

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In a sense, this chapter does not fit well in the frame of this book on Milgram's paradigmatic research on obedience to authority. It is less about extreme forms of inter personal compliance to the demands of unjust authority than it is about emerging conformity pressures in "total situations" in which the processes of deindividuation and dehumanization are institutionalized. However, in another sense, it is the natural complementary bookend to chapters tied to Milgram's obedience paradigm, which between them hold up the lessons of the power of social situations to overwhelm individual dispositions and even to degrade the quality of human nature.

Whereas a central contribution of Milgram's paradigm was to quantify aggression and thus the extent of obedience using a simple but impressive technology, the value of the Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) resides in demonstrating the evil that good people can be readily induced into doing to other good people within the context of socially approved roles, rules, and norms, a legitimizing ideology, and institutional support that transcends individual agency. In addition, although the obedient participants in Milgram's many replications typically experienced distress for their "shocking" behavior, their participation lasted for only about one half hour, after which they learned that no one was really harmed. By contrast, participants in the SPE endured 6 days and nights of intense, often hostile, interactions that escalated daily in the level of interpersonal aggression of guards against prisoners. Take, as but one example of the confrontations that occurred repeatedly during the prison study, this statement found in a guard's diary: "During the inspection ‘the prisoner’ grabbed my throat, and although I was really scared, I lashed out with my stick and hit him in the chin."

The authority that created the prison setting was typically not in sight of the participants, but rather I, in the role of prison superintendent, became an agency or remote agent overseeing the daily and nightly

confrontations between these opposing forces. It became my job to hold in check the growing violence and arbitrary displays of power of the guards rather than to be the Milgramesque authority who, in becoming transformed from just to unjust as the learner's "suffering" intensified, demanded ever more extreme reactions from the participants. Indeed, it was just the opposite.

This chapter is the product of a 1996 APA symposium held in Toronto, Canada, honoring the 25th anniversary of the SPE. Editor Tom Blass thought that its basic themes could somehow mesh with the other contributions honoring and extending the classic work of Stanley Milgram. That symposium began with my overview of the genesis of the study, outlining some of the processes involved and the lessons learned from it. I highlighted the drama of the study with slides and archival footage, now contained in a video titled *Quiet Rage: The Stanford Prison Experiment*. Christina Maslach presented the perspective of an "outsider" who witnessed the unimaginable transformations of character of the participants -- and of herself -- and heroically challenged the authority to end the study. Craig Haney, who had assisted in all phases of the study, along with William Curtis Banks, described how current conditions in real prisons could benefit from application of the lessons of the SPE. We follow that same sequential flow here, giving very personal accounts of our experiences in this loosely connected, tripartite structure.

But before doing so, I want to exercise the prerogative of seniority to interject some reflections on my personal association with Stanley Milgram that links us intimately beyond the facts of our most salient research. So allow me to share a few remembrances of the "good old days" before we turn to our analysis of the Stanford Prison Experiment.

My Personal Connection with Stanley Milgram

Stanley and I were high school classmates at James Monroe High School in the Bronx, he being considered the smartest kid and I voted the most popular. We sometimes talked about the reasons for seemingly strange or irrational behavior by teachers, peers, or people in the real world that violated our expectations. Not coming from well-to-do homes, we gravitated toward situational explanations and away from dispositional ones to make sense of such anomalies. The rich and powerful want to take personal credit for their success and to blame the faults of the poor on their defects. But we knew better; it was usually the situation that mattered, by our account.

After graduation in 1950, we went to separate colleges and graduate schools but were reunited briefly a decade later at Yale University. Stanley had started as a new assistant professor in 1960, whereas I left Yale to start my career at New York University. I returned the next year to teach part time in the School of Education and met with him on a several occasions. Stanley began his landmark obedience studies in 1961, and, when I asked about his research, Stanley chose not to share his ideas or emerging data with me (or anyone else, I gather). He said that he preferred to wait until his work was published, and then he would be pleased to discuss it. But I still regret this lost opportunity to share ideas at their most exciting stage of emergence.

We exchanged correspondence in 1965; I congratulated Stanley on winning the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) prize, and he responded with the hope of increasing our contact in the future. He called me a while later to say he was using my book *The Cognitive Control of Motivation* (Zimbardo, 1969) as a text in his methodology course because it represented the most rigorous and interesting studies testing predictions from dissonance theory. Obviously flattered, I worked at renewing our relationship, planning a jointly authored social psychology textbook along with Bob Abelson (that unfortunately never materialized), calling him more often, and meeting him at conventions.

Several interesting conversations deserve mention here. I realized one day while teaching about the Milgram paradigm that we all focus on the obedient participants and ignore the heroic ones who resisted the situational pressures to obey the authority. I wondered what they did after they refused to continue shocking the "learner." Did they get out of their assigned seat and run to aid the victim in apparent distress or insist that the experimenter do so? When I posed this question to Stanley, he searched his memory and answered, "Not one, not ever!" That means that he really demonstrated a more fundamental level of obedience that was total -- 100% of the participants followed the programmed dictates from elementary school authority to stay in your seat until granted permission to leave. We both discussed but did not act on the need for psychologists to study the dissidents, the rebels, the whistle-blowing heroes. Demonstrating the power of the situation to make good people do evil deeds somehow held more appeal to us than the more difficult reverse process of showing how ordinary people could be induced to do heroic deeds within a Milgram-like paradigm.

At APA in 1971, I modified my planned invited address to include graphic procedural slides and some hot new data I had just obtained from a study that had ended only weeks before, the Stanford Prison Experiment. Stanley was in the audience and was excited, in our conversation afterwards, about the conceptual similarity of our research and really delighted that I would soon be diffusing some of the critical heat off him regarding the ethics of such "dark side of human nature" research.

One of my greatest surprises from Stanley came at the height of his career when he confided in me that he felt his research was underappreciated and not sufficiently respected by his social psychology colleagues. I was at first stunned because his obedience studies are the most cited in every introductory and social psychology text I know. But perhaps what he meant was that, unlike Leon Festinger, his work did not generate countless dissertations nor instigate more than a few dozen studies claiming to prove or disprove his theory (see Blass, 1992). And in that sense, Stanley was right. He was the master at demonstrating phenomena in captivating scenarios. His research revealed vital aspects of human nature and social processes, and his readers, his film observers, were, in a sense, the control condition. It was their accounts of what ought to have happened, how they would have behaved, that served as the base rate against which Stanley's results could be evaluated. Stanley Milgram, for all his genius, was not a theoretician who inspired many others to support or challenge his derivations. He was a keen observer of human nature, a brilliant empiricist, who could translate abstract conceptions and socially intriguing questions into elegant experimentally valid plots for his actors to play out and improvise -- which leads to my final link in the connection between Stanley and me.

Milgram and Zimbardo Admired Allen Funt of Candid Camera Fame

Only after Stanley died did I become aware of our mutual admiration for Allen Funt, creator of *Candid Camera*. I consider Funt to be one of the most creative, intuitive social psychologists on the planet. For 50 years he has been contriving experimental scenarios in which ordinary people face a challenge to their usual perceptions or functioning. He manipulates situations to reveal truths about compliance, conformity, the power of signs and symbols, and various forms of mindless obedience. I persuaded Funt to allow me to work with him in preparing sets of his videos for distribution to teachers of introductory psychology and others for social psychology. In preparing a viewer/instructor's manual to accompany the videos and laser disks (Zimbardo & Funt, 1992), I came across an article (Milgram & Sabini, 1979) that Stanley had written earlier with John Sabini about the vital lessons of *Candid Camera* for psychologists and his respect for its creator (see Zimbardo & Funt, 1992).

I end this prologue with one final surprise. When interviewing Funt for an invited article in *Psychology Today* (Zimbardo, 1985) -- as part of my long-term persuasive effort to get him to share those videos with academicians -- I was intrigued by Funt's assertion that he had absolutely no formal psychological background or training that might have provided a scaffold for his *Candid Camera* paradigms. Just as my probing was reaching a dead end in trying to discover some relevant historical contributions, Funt recalled having worked his senior year at Cornell University as a research assistant for some German professor in the School of Home Economics. His job was to observe, from behind a one-way mirror, different feeding patterns of mothers and nurses as they fed food to their babies or to foundlings. The year was 1934. Funt strained his memory further on questioning and remembered that the professor was "a Kurt, something or other." It was indeed Kurt Lewin, the seminal figure in experimental social psychology, intellectual grandfather to Stanley Milgram, Allen Funt, me, and a whole generation of social psychologists. I think that Stanley would have enjoyed hearing that story.

THE SPE: WHAT IT WAS, WHERE IT CAME FROM, AND WHAT CAME OUT OF IT

Philip G. Zimbardo

The serenity of a summer Sunday morning in Palo Alto, California, was suddenly shattered by the sirens of a police squad car sweeping through town in a surprise mass arrest of college students for a variety of felony code violations. They were handcuffed, searched, warned of their legal rights, and then taken to police headquarters for a formal booking procedure. Let's return to that scene on August 14, 1971, to recall what those arrests were all about.

Synopsis of the Research

The police had agreed to cooperate with our research team in order to increase the "mundane realism" of having one's freedom suddenly taken away by the police rather than surrendering it voluntarily as a research participant who had volunteered for an experiment. The city police chief was in a cooperative and conciliatory mood after tensions had run high on Stanford's campus following violent confrontations between his police and student anti-Vietnam War protesters. I capitalized on these positive emotions to help defuse these tensions between police and college students and thereby to solicit the invaluable assistance of police officers in dramatizing our study from the outset.

These college students had answered an ad in the local newspaper inviting volunteers for a study of prison life that would run up to 2 weeks for the pay of $15 a day. They were students from all over the United States, most of whom had just completed summer school courses at Stanford or the University of California, Berkeley. Seventy of those who had called our office were invited to take a battery of psychological tests (the California Personality Inventory) and engage in interviews conducted by Craig Haney and Curtis Banks, who were graduate students at that time. We were assisted by David Jaffe, an undergraduate who played the role of prison warden. I played the role of prison superintendent, in addition to being the principal investigator, which would later prove to be a serious error in judgment.

Two dozen of those judged most normal, average, and healthy on all dimensions we assessed were selected to be the participants in our experiment. They were randomly assigned to the two treatments of mock prisoner and mock guard. Thus there were no systematic differences between them initially nor systematic preferences for role assignments. Virtually all had indicated a preference for being a prisoner because they could not imagine going to college and ending up as a prison guard. On the other hand, they could imagine being imprisoned for a driving violation or some act of civil disobedience and thus felt they might learn something of value from this experience should that ever happen.

The guards helped us to complete the final stages in the construction of the mock prison in the basement of the Stanford University psychology department. The setting was a barren hallway, without windows or natural light. Office doors were fitted with iron bars, and closets were converted to dark, solitary confinement areas. The "yard" was the 30-foot-long hallway in front of the three prison cells -- converted from small staff offices. Three offices were set up in an adjacent hallway for the staff: one for the guards to change into and out of their uniforms, one for the warden, and the third for the

superintendent. Provision was made for space in the hallway to accommodate visitors on visitors' nights. There was only a single door for access and exit, the other end of the corridor having been closed off by a wall we erected. A small opening in that wall was provided for a video camera and for inconspicuous observation. The cells were bugged with microphones so that prisoner conversations could be secretly monitored.

The guards were invited also to select their own military-style uniforms at a local army surplus store and met as a group for a general orientation and to formulate rules for proper prisoner behavior on the Saturday before the next day's arrests. We wanted the guards to feel as if it were "their prison" and that soon they would be hosting a group of prisoner-guests.

The would-be prisoners were told to wait at home or at the address they provided us, and we would contact them on Sunday. After the surprise arrest by the police, they were brought to our simulated prison environment, where they underwent a degradation ceremony as part of the initiation into their new role. This is standard operating procedure in many prisons and military institutions, according to our prison consultant, a recently paroled ex-convict, Carlo Prescott. Nine prisoners filled three cells, and three guards staffed each of the 8-hour shifts, supplemented by backups on standby call. Additional participants were also on standby as replacements if need be, one of whom was called on midweek to take the place of a released prisoner. The prisoners wore uniforms that consisted of smocks with numbers sewn on front and back, ankle chains, nylon stocking caps (to simulate the uniform appearance from having one's hair cut off), and rubber thongs on their feet, but no underwear. Among the coercive rules formulated by the guards were those requiring the prisoners to refer to themselves and each other only by their prison number and to the guards as "Mr. Correctional Officer."

Much of the daily chronology of behavioral actions was videotaped for later analysis, along with a variety of other observations, interviews, tests, diaries, daily reports, and follow-up surveys that together constituted the empirical data of the study. Of course, we were studying both guard and prisoner behavior, so neither group was given any instructions on how to behave. The guards were merely told to maintain law and order, to use their billy clubs as only symbolic weapons and not actual ones, and to realize that if the prisoners escaped the study would be terminated.

It is important to realize that both groups had completed informed-consent forms indicating that some of their basic civil rights would have to be violated if they were selected for the prisoner role and that only minimally adequate diet and health care would be provided. The university Human Subjects Review Board approved of the study with only minor limitations that we followed, such as alerting Student Health Services of our research and also providing fire extinguishers because there was minimal access to this space. Ironically, the guards later used these extinguishers as weapons to subdue the prisoners with their forceful blasts.

It took a full day for most of the guards to adapt to their new, unfamiliar roles as dominating, powerful, and coercive. Initial encounters were marked by awkwardness between both groups of participants. However, the situation was radically changed on the second day, when several prisoners led all the others in a rebellion against the coercive rules and restraints of the situation. They tried to individuate

themselves, ripped off their sewn-on prisoner numbers, locked themselves into their cells, and taunted the guards. I told the guards that they had to handle this surprising turn of events on their own. They called in all the standby guards, and the night shift stayed overtime. Together, they crushed the prisoner rebellion and developed a greater sense of guard camaraderie, along with a personal dislike of some of the prisoners who had insulted them to their face. The prisoners were punished in a variety of ways. They were stripped naked, put in solitary confinement for hours on end, deprived of meals and blankets or pillows, and forced to do push-ups, jumping jacks, and meaningless activities. The guards also generated a psychological tactic of dividing and conquering their enemy by creating a "privilege cell" in which the least rebellious prisoners were put to enjoy the privilege of a good meal or a bed to sleep on. This tactic did have the immediate effect of creating suspicion and distrust among the prisoners.

We observed and documented on videotape that the guards steadily increased their coercive and aggressive tactics, humiliation, and dehumanization of the prisoners day by day. The staff had to remind the guards frequently to refrain from such abuses. However, the guards' hostile treatment of the prisoners, together with arbitrary and capricious displays of their dominating power and authority, soon began to have adverse effects on the prisoners. Within 36 hours after being arrested, the first prisoner had to be released because of extreme stress reactions of crying, screaming, cursing, and irrational actions that seemed to be pathological. The guards were most sadistic in waking prisoners from their sleep several times a night for "counts," supposedly designed for prisoners to learn their identification numbers but actually to use the occasion to taunt them, punish them, and play games with them, or rather on them. Deprivation of sleep, particularly REM sleep, also gradually took a toll on the prisoners. Interestingly, the worst abuses by the guards came on the late-night shift, when they thought the staff was asleep and they were not being monitored.

That first prisoner to be released, Prisoner 8612, had been one of the ringleaders of the earlier rebellion, and he jolted his fellow prisoners by announcing that they would not be allowed to quit the experiment even if they requested it. The shock waves from this false assertion reverberated through all of the prisoners and converted the simulated experiment into "a real prison run by psychologists instead of run by the state," according to one of the prisoners. After that, some prisoners decided to become "good prisoners," obeying every rule and following all prison procedures faithfully in zombie-like fashion. Powerful conformity pressures eliminated individual differences among the prisoners. But another generalized reaction was to imitate the behavior of Prisoner 8612 and passively escape by acting "crazy" and forcing the staff to release them prematurely. On each of the next three days a prisoner took that path out of the SPE. A fifth prisoner was released after he broke out in a full body rash following the rejection of his appeal for parole by our mock parole board. The parole board heard prisoner requests for early parole and refutations by the guards. The board consisted of secretaries, graduate students, and others, headed by our prison consultant, who was familiar with such hearings because his own parole requests had been turned down at least 16 times.

Although most of the time during the day and night the only interactions that took place were between prisoners and guards, it should be noted that probably as many as 100 other people came down to our basement prison to play some role in this drama. On Visitors' Night, about two dozen parents and friends came to see their prisoners. A former prison chaplain visited, interviewed all but one of the

inmates, and reported that their reactions were very much like those of first-time offenders he had observed in real prisons. Our two parole boards consisted of another 10 outsiders. Perhaps as many as 20 psychology graduate students and faculty looked in from the observation window or at the video monitor during the experiment or played more direct roles inadvertently. Others helped with interviews and various chores during the study. Finally, a public defender came to interview the remaining inmates on the last day. He came at the request of the mother of one of the prisoners, who had been informed by the Catholic priest (who had visited our prison earlier) that her son wanted legal counsel to help him get out of the detention facility in which he was being held. He too likened their mental and behavioral state to those of real prisoners and jailed citizens awaiting trial.

We had to call off the experiment and close down our prison after only 6 days of what might have been a 2-week long study of the psychological dynamics of prison life. We had to do so because too many normal young men were behaving pathologically as powerless prisoners or as sadistic, all-powerful guards. Recall that we had spent much time and effort in a selection process that chose only the most normal, healthy, well-adjusted college students as our sample of research participants. At the beginning of the study there were no differences between those assigned randomly to guard and prisoner roles. In less than a week, there were no similarities among them; they had become totally different creatures. Guard behavior varied from being fully sadistic to occasionally acting so to being a tough guard who "went by the book" and, for a few, to being "good guards" by default. That is, they did not degrade or harass the prisoners, and even did small favors for them from time to time, but never, not once, did any of the so-called good guards ever contest an order by a sadistic guard, intervene to stop or prevent despicable behavior by another guard, or come to work late or leave early. In a real sense, it was the good guards who most kept the prisoners in line because the prisoners wanted their approval and feared things would get worse if those good guards quit or ever took a dislike to them.

Building on this brief synopsis of an intensely profound and complex experience, I next want to outline why this study was conducted as it was and what we learned from it. Before doing so, I should preview the next section of this chapter by noting that the immediate impetus for terminating the study came from an unexpected source, a young woman, recently graduated with a PhD from our department, who had agreed to assist us with some interviews on Friday. She came in from the cold and saw the raw, full-blown madness of this place that we all had gradually accommodated to day by day. She got emotionally upset, angry, and confused. But in the end, she challenged us to examine the madness she observed -- that we had created. If we allowed it to continue further, she reminded us of our ethical responsibility for the consequences and well-being of the young men entrusted to our care as research participants.

Genesis of the Experiment: Why Did We Do This Study?

There were three reasons for conducting this study, two conceptual and one pedagogical. I had been conducting research for some years earlier on deindividuation, vandalism, and dehumanization that illustrated the ease with which ordinary people could be led to engage in antisocial acts by putting them into situations in which they felt anonymous or in which they could perceive others in ways that made them less than human, as enemies or objects. This research is summarized in Zimbardo (1970). I

wondered, along with my research associates, Craig Haney and Curt Banks, what would happen if we aggregated all of these processes, making some participants feel deindividuated and others dehumanized within an anonymous environment, that constituted a "total environment" (see Lifton, 1969) in a controlled experimental setting. That was the primary reason for conducting this study.

A related second conceptual reason was to generate another test of the power of social situations over individual dispositions without relying on the kind of face-to-face imposition of authority surveillance that was central in Stanley Milgram's obedience studies (see Milgram, 1992). In many real-life situations, people are seduced to behave in evil ways without the coercive control of an authority figure demanding their compliance or obedience. In the SPE, we focused on the power of roles, rules, symbols, group identity, and situational validation of ordinarily ego-alien behaviors and behavioral styles. We were influenced here by earlier reports of "brainwashing" and "milieu control" coming out of accounts of the Korean War and Chinese Communist indoctrination methods (Schein, 1956).

Pedagogically, the study had its roots in a social psychology course I had taught the previous spring, after the student strikes against the university as part of anti-Vietnam War activities. I invited students to reverse roles and instruct me on 10 topics that interested me but that I had not had the time to investigate. They were primarily topics and issues that were at the interface of sociology and psychology or of institutions and individuals, such as the effects of being put into an old-age home, media distortion of information, and the psychology of imprisonment. The group of students, headed by David Jaffe, who chose the prison topic conducted a mock prison experiential learning session over a weekend just before they were to make their class presentation. The dramatically powerful impact this brief experience had on many of them surprised me and forced us to consider whether such a situation could really generate so much distress and role identification or whether the students who chose to study prisons, among the many other options available to the class, were in some way more "pathological" than the rest of the ordinary students. The only way to resolve that ambiguity was to conduct a controlled experiment that eliminated self-selection factors, and so we did.

Ten Lessons Learned From the SPE

Lesson 1. Some situations can exert powerful influences over individuals, causing them to behave in ways they would not, could not, predict in advance (see Ross & Nisbett, 1991). In trying to understand the causes of complex, puzzling behavior, it is best to start with a situational analysis and yield to the dispositional only when the situational fails to do a causal job.

Lesson 2. Situational power is most salient in novel settings in which the participants cannot call on previous guidelines for their new behavior and have no historical references to rely on and in which their habitual ways of behaving and coping are not reinforced. Under such circumstances, personality variables have little predictive utility because they depend on estimations of future actions based on characteristic past reactions in certain situations -- but rarely in the kind of situation currently being encountered. Personality tests simply do not assess such behaviors but rely on asking about typical reactions to known situations -- namely, a historical account of the self.

Lesson 3. Situational power involves ambiguity of role boundaries, authoritative or institutionalized permission to behave in prescribed ways or to disinhibit traditionally disapproved ways of responding. It requires situational validation of playing new roles, following new rules, and taking actions that ordinarily would be constrained by laws, norms, morals, and ethics. Such validation usually comes cloaked in the mantle of ideology; systems considered to be sacred and based on apparently good, virtuous, valued moral imperatives (for social psychologists, ideology equals their experimental "cover story").

Lesson 4. Role playing -- even when acknowledged to be artificial, temporary, and situationally bound -- can still come to exert a profoundly realistic impact on the actors. Private attitudes, values, and beliefs are likely to be modified to bring them in line with the role enactment, as shown by many experiments in dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957; see Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). This dissonance effect becomes greater as the justification for such role enactment decreases -- for example, when it is carried out for less money, under less threat, or with only minimally sufficient justification or adequate rationale provided. That is one of the motivational mechanisms for the changes we observed in our guards. They had to work long, hard shifts for a small wage of less than $2 an hour and were given minimal direction on how to play the role of guard, but they had to sustain the role consistently over days whenever they were in uniform, on the yard, or in the presence of others, whether prisoners, parents, or other visitors. Such dissonance forces are likely to have been major causes for the internalization of the public role behaviors into private supporting cognitive and affective response styles. We also have to add that the group pressures from other guards had a significant impact on being a "team player," on conforming to or at least not challenging what seemed to be the emergent norm of dehumanizing the prisoners in various ways. Finally, let us take into account that the initial script for guard or prisoner role playing came from the participants' own experiences with power and powerlessness, of seeing parental interactions, of dealing with authority, and of seeing movies and reading accounts of prison life. As in Milgram's research, we did not have to teach the actors how to play their roles. Society had done that for us. We had only to record the extent of their improvisation within these roles -- as our data.

Lesson 5. Good people can be induced, seduced, initiated into behaving in evil (irrational, stupid, self-destructive, antisocial) ways by immersion in "total situations" that can transform human nature in ways that challenge our sense of the stability and consistency of individual personality, character, and morality (Lifton, 1969). It is a lesson seen in the Nazi concentration camp guards; among destructive cults, such as Jim Jones' People's Temple or more recently the Japanese Aum cult; and in the atrocities committed in Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Burundi, among others. Thus any deed that any human being has ever done, however horrible, is possible for any of us to do -- under the right or wrong situational pressures. That knowledge does not excuse evil; rather, it democratizes it, shares its blame among ordinary participants, rather than demonizes it. Recently, a program at the U.S. Air Force Academy (code named SERE) that was designed to train cadets for survival and escape from enemy capture had to be terminated early because it got out of control. As part of a "sexual exploitation scenario," women cadets were beaten repeatedly, degraded, humiliated, put in solitary confinement, deprived of sleep, and made to wear hoods over their heads -- all much like the SPE. But in addition, the women cadets in this course were subjected to simulated rapes by interrogators that were realistic enough to cause posttraumatic stress disorder. These "rapes" were videotaped and also watched by other cadets, none of whom ever intervened. The grandfather of one abused female cadet, himself a World War II hero,

said, "I can't believe that all these men, these elite boys, could stand around and watch a young woman get degraded and not one had enough guts to stop it" (Palmer, 1995, p. 24). After watching our "good guards" be similarly immobilized when witnessing SPE abuses, I can now understand how that could happen.

Lesson 6. Human nature can be transformed within certain powerful social settings in ways as dramatic as the chemical transformation in the captivating fable of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I think it is that *transformation of character* that accounts for the enduring interest in this experiment for more than a quarter of a century. A recent analysis of the SPE by an Australian psychologist (Carr, 1995) reports that undergraduate students in that country who learn about the study are left surprised, disturbed, and mystified by it. He notes:

> Judging by the reactions of our own students, it has even more impact than either Asch's "line-length" study (Asch, 1951) or Milgram's (1963) obedience study. What seems to strike home is that Zimbardo's situation impacted much more deeply on his subjects, reportedly corrupting their own innermost beliefs and feelings -- and all this without involving the direct pressure to change which runs through the classic conformity and obedience studies. (Carr, 1995, p. 31)

Lesson 7. Despite the artificiality of controlled experimental research such as the SPE or any of Milgram's many variations on the obedience paradigm, when such research is conducted in a way that captures essential features of "mundane realism," the results do have considerable generalizability power. In recent years, it has become customary to deride such research as limited by context-specific considerations, as not really credible to the research participants, or as not tapping the vital dimensions of the naturalistic equivalent. If this were so, there would be no reason to ever go through the enormous efforts involved in doing such research well. We believe that much of that criticism is misguided and comes from colleagues who don't know how to do such research or how to make it work or who misunderstand the value of a psychologically *functional* equivalent of a real-world process or phenomenon. Several previous chapters in this volume document eloquently the generalizability of Milgram's experiments.

I would like to call attention to two parallels to the SPE: one recent, the other from an earlier era. On July 22, 1995, news headlines chronicled, "Guards abused inmates in immigration center" (Dunn, 1995, p. A6). The article, reprinted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* from the *New York Times*, reported on an investigation of a New Jersey detention center holding immigrants awaiting deportation. It outlined "a culture of abuse that had quickly developed at the detention center," in which "underpaid and poorly trained guards had beaten detainees, singling out the midnight shift as particularly abusive." Investigators found that "guards routinely participated in acts meant to degrade and harass, such as locking detainees in isolation and repeatedly waking them in the middle of the night." This was all possible in part because "the detention center had become a closed and private world." Such an account mirrors exactly what transpired in the SPE: The worst abuses were by guards on our midnight shift, who thought they were not being monitored by the research team; they degraded, harassed, and woke the prisoners repeatedly every night, and at times hit them and locked them in isolation -- and they were also underpaid and poorly trained to be guards.

Historian Christopher Browning (1992) provides a chilling account of a little-known series of mass murders during the Holocaust. A group of older reserve policemen from Hamburg, Germany, was sent to Poland to round up and execute all the Jews living in rural areas because it was too costly and inconvenient to ship them to the concentration camps for extermination. In his book, appropriately titled *Ordinary Men*, Browning documents how these men were induced to commit the atrocities of shooting Jewish men, women, and children, doing the killing up close and personal, without the technology of the gas chambers to distance the crimes against humanity. The author goes on to note, "Zimbardo's spectrum of guard behavior bears an uncanny resemblance to the groupings that emerged within Reserve Police Battalion 101" (p. 168). He shows how some became sadistically "cruel and tough," enjoying the killings, whereas others were "tough, but fair" in "playing the rules," and a minority qualified as "good guards" who refused to kill and did small favors for the Jews.

So we side with Kurt Lewin, who argued decades ago for the science of experimental social psychology. Lewin asserted that it is possible to take conceptually and practically significant issues from the real world into the experimental laboratory, where it is possible to establish certain causal relationships in a way not possible in field studies and then to use that information to understand or make changes in the real world (Lewin, 1951; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). In fact, in his presidential speech to the American Psychological Association, psycholinguist George Miller (1969) startled his audience by advocating a radical idea for that time, that we should "give psychology away to the public." The exemplars he later used, in a *Psychology Today* (1980) interview, as being ideal for public consumption of psychological research were the Stanford Prison Experiment and Milgram's obedience studies.

From another perspective, the SPE does not tell us anything new about prisons that sociologists and narratives of prisoners have not already revealed about the evils of prison life. What is different is that by virtue of the experimental protocol, we put selected good people, randomly assigned to be either guard or prisoner, and observed the ways in which they were changed for the worse by their daily experiences in the evil place.

Lesson 8. Selection procedures for special tasks, such as being prison guards -- especially those that are relatively new to the applicants -- might benefit from engaging the participants in simulated role playing rather than, or in addition to, screening on the basis of personality testing. As far as I know, current training for the very difficult job of prison guard, or correctional officer, involves minimal training in the psychological dimensions of this position.

Lesson 9. It is necessary for psychological researchers who are concerned about the utility of their findings and the practical application of their methods or conclusions to go beyond the role constraints of academic researcher to become advocates for social change. We must acknowledge the value-laden nature of some kinds of research that force investigators out of their stance of objective neutrality into the realm of activism as partisans for spreading the word of their research to the public and to those who might be able to implement its recommendations through policy actions. Craig Haney and I have tried to do so collectively and individually in many ways with our writings, public testimonies, and

development of special media to communicate to a wider audience than the academic readers of psychology journals.

For starters, we published the SPE first to U.S. audiences in articles in the *New York Times Magazine* (Zimbardo, Haney, Banks, & Jaffe, 1973) and in *Society* (Zimbardo, 1972), as well as to international audiences (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973; Zimbardo & Haney, 1978); we extended the implications to education in a *Psychology Today* magazine piece (Haney & Zimbardo, 1975) and in an educational journal (Haney & Zimbardo, 1973); and we related psychology to legal change (Haney, 1993b). I have also specified how the SPE gives rise to considering new role requirements for social advocacy by psychologists (Zimbardo, 1975). Most recently, we have just published an article in *American Psychologist* on the how the lessons learned from the SPE could improve the ill health of America's out-of-control correctional system (Haney & Zimbardo, 1998). Appearances on national television and radio shows, such as *The Phil Donahue Show* and *That's Incredible*, in which we discussed the SPE have also extended the audience for this research. In each case, some of the participants from our prison study were involved. We have carried the message to college and high school students and also to civic groups through colloquia and distribution of a dramatic slide-tape show (Zimbardo & White, 1972; available on the Internet, http://www.prisonexp.org/) and the provocative video *Quiet Rage* (1992), as well as in the PBS video series *Discovering Psychology* (1989; Program #19, "The Power of the Situation"). Finally, I have given invited testimony relating the SPE to various prison conditions before Congressional Subcommittees on the Judiciary (The Power and Pathology, 1970; The Detention and Jailing, 1973).

Lesson 10. Prisons are places that demean humanity, destroy the nobility of human nature, and bring out the worst in social relations among people. They are as bad for the guards as the prisoners in terms of their destructive impact on self-esteem, sense of justice, and human compassion. They are designed to isolate people from all others and even from the self. Nothing is worse for the health of an individual or a society than to have millions of people who are without, social support, social worth, or social connections to their kin. Prisons are failed social-political experiments that continue to be places of evil and even to multiply, like the bad deeds of the sorcerer's apprentice, because the public is indifferent to what takes place in secret there and because politicians use them and fill them up as much as they can to demonstrate only that they are "tougher on crime" than their political opponents. At present, such misguided thinking has led to the "three strikes" laws in California and a few other states. Meant to curtail violent crime, the statute was so broadly written as to include drug offenses as "serious felonies," thus filling prisons with a disproportionate number of nonviolent, young minority drug offenders -- for a minimum of 25 years to a maximum life term. The cost to taxpayers figures to be about one million dollars per inmate for 25 years of warehousing and medical care and to be even greater for older inmates (see Zimbardo, 1994). The costs of extensive prison construction and of hiring many guards to oversee the many prisoners starting to fill these new prisons is already diminishing the limited state and county funds available for health, education, and welfare. A "mean-spirited" value system pervades many correctional operations, reducing programs for job training, rehabilitation, and physical exercise, and even limiting any individuality in appearance. Projections are dire at best for the future of corrections in the United States.

I was able to terminate my failed prison experiment, but every citizen is paying for, and will continue to pay an enormous price in taxes for, the failed experiments taking place in every state of this union -- the failed U.S. prison system. This system has failed by any criteria: of recidivism, of prison violence, of illegal activities practiced in prisons, of second offenders often committing more serious second-time-around crimes than initially, of low morale of corrections staff, and of deadly prison riots. Among the most outrageous examples of the evil that prison settings can generate come from the recent reports of guards "staging fights among inmates and then shooting the combatants," 50 of whom have been shot and 7 killed in the past 8 years (Holding, 1996). Federal investigators have been checking out such reports (*Los Angeles Times*, 1998). Obviously, sometimes it is the guards we must be protected from, as we saw in the SPE.

Ethics of the SPE

Was the SPE study unethical? No and Yes. No, because it followed the guidelines of the Human Subjects Research Review Board that reviewed it and approved it (see Zimbardo, 1973). There was no deception; all participants were told in advance that, if they became prisoners, many of their usual rights would be suspended and they would have only minimally adequate diet and health care during the study. Their rights should have been protected by any of the many citizens who came to that mock prison, saw the deteriorated condition of those young men, and yet did nothing to intervene -- among them, their own parents and friends on visiting nights, a Catholic priest; a public defender; many professional psychologists; and graduate students, secretaries, and staff of the psychology department, all of whom watched live action videos of part of the study unfold or took part in parole board hearings or spoke to participants and looked at them directly. We might also add another no, because we ended the study earlier than planned, ended it against the wishes of the guards, who felt they finally had the situation under their control and that would be no more disturbance or challenge by the prisoners.

Yes, it was unethical because people suffered and others were allowed to inflict pain and humiliation on their fellows over an extended period of time. This was not the distress of Milgram's participants imagining the pain their shocks were having on the remote victim-learner. This was the pain of seeing and hearing the suffering you as a guard were causing in peers, who, like you, had done nothing to deserve such punishment and abuse. And yes, we did not end the study soon enough. We should have terminated it as soon as the first prisoner suffered a severe stress disorder on Day 2. One reason we did not was because of the conflicts created by my dual roles as principal investigator, thus guardian of the research ethics of the experiment, and as prison superintendent, thus eager to maintain the integrity of my prison.

Positive Consequences

1. The study has become a model of the "power of the situation" in textbooks and in the public mind. Along with Milgram's obedience studies, the SPE has challenged people's views that behavior is primarily under the influence of dispositional factors, which is the view promoted by much of psychology, psychiatry, religion, and law.

2. The study's results, as presented in my testimony before a Congressional Judiciary Committee, influenced federal lawmakers to change a law so that juveniles jailed in pretrial detention (as was the case in our study) would not be housed with adult prisoners because of the anticipated violence against them, according to Congressman Birch Bayh.

3. The study has been presented to a great many civic, judicial, military, and law enforcement groups to enlighten them and arouse their concern about prison life and has influenced guard training in some instances (see Newton & Zimbardo, 1975; Pogash, 1976). Its role-playing procedures have been used to demonstrate to mental health staff how their mental patients perceive and respond to situational features of the ward and staff insensitivity toward them (see Orlando, 1973). Its results have been generally replicated in another culture, New South Wales, Australia (Lovibond, Mithiran, & Adams, 1979).

4. Ideas from the SPE have been the source of three research programs that I have carried out in the past 20 or more years, most notably on the psychology of shyness and ways of treating it -- first in the unique Shyness Clinic that I started at Stanford and now in the local community -- to liberate shy people from their self-imposed silent prisons (see Zimbardo, 1977, 1986; Zimbardo, Pilkonis, & Norwood, 1975). The second long-standing research program influenced by my personal experiences in the SPE is the study of time perspective, how people come to develop temporal frames to partition their experiences but then come to be controlled by their overuse of past, present, or future time frames (see Gonzalez & Zimbardo, 1985; Zimbardo & Boyd, in press). Temporal distortion was a fact of life in the SPE, with 80% of the conversations (monitored secretly) among mock prisoners focused around the immediate present and little about the past or future. Also apparent in the SPE was the fact that many healthy, normal young men began behaving pathologically in a short time period. Thus I began to study the social and cognitive bases of "madness" in normal, healthy people in controlled laboratory experiments (see Zimbardo, Andersen, & Kabat, 1981; Zimbardo, LaBerge, & Butler, 1993). We have found that pathological symptoms may develop in up to one third of normal participants in the process of trying to make sense of their unexplained sources of arousal.

5. At the personal level, there are several positive effects of the SPE that are a source of pride for me.

   Carlo Prescott, our prison consultant, has been a good citizen and out of prison for the past 27 years after having served 17 previous years and being released just months before his involvement in the SPE. Because of his role in the SPE, Carlo got a job, had his own radio program for some years, taught college courses on imprisonment, lectured in the community, and gained new status and enhanced self-esteem. We have maintained a close, supportive relationship over many of the intervening years.

   Doug Korpi, Prisoner 8612, a ringleader of the prisoner rebellion, was the first prisoner to suffer an extreme emotional stress reaction that forced us to release him after only 36 hours.

Doug was so disturbed by his loss of control in this situation that he went on to get a PhD in clinical psychology, in part to learn how to gain greater control over his emotions and behavior. He did his dissertation on shame (of the prisoner status) and guilt (of the guard status), completed his internship at San Quentin Prison, and has been a forensic psychologist in the San Francisco and California corrections system. It is his moving testimony that gave us the title for the video *Quiet Rage*, when he talked to us about the sadistic impulse in guards that must be guarded against because it is always there in such situations of differential power, ready to slip out, to explode, as a kind of "quiet rage." Here is a case of the obvious initially negative effect of the power of the SPE being transformed into a positive and enduring consequence for the individual and society.

Craig Haney went on to graduate from Stanford with a law degree, as well as a PhD from the psychology department. He is now on the faculty of University of California, Santa Cruz, teaching courses in psychology and law, as well as in the psychology of institutions. Craig is one of the nation's leading consultants on prison conditions and one of only a handful of psychological experts working with attorneys who still represent prisoner class-action suits in the United States. Craig outlines his views on the relationship between lessons of the SPE and corrections in the final section of this chapter.

Christina Maslach, now a psychology professor at University of California Berkeley, who contributed the next section of this chapter, utilized her experience in the SPE to become the pioneering researcher on "job burnout," the loss of human caring among health care professionals. Her work helps to identify those at risk for burnout, and she also adopts a situationist perspective in recommending how to change institutions that promote burnout as opposed to than the traditional therapeutic focus on changing "defective workers." She has also studied the flip side of deindividuation processes, focusing instead on the positive aspects of individuation; that is, the things that make people feel uniquely special.

Finally, I end with the ultimate tribute to the crossover impact of the SPE into popular culture. "Stanford Prison Experiment" is also the name of a rock band from Los Angeles whose very loud music represents "a fusion of punk and noise," according to their leader, who learned about the SPE as a student at UCLA. Having heard their music and "hung out" with the quartet at a recent concert at San Francisco's famous Fillmore auditorium, I can attest to their high energy and tympanic destructive tendencies.

It is reasonable to conclude that there is something about this little experiment that has enduring value not only among social psychologists but also among the general public. I now believe that special something is the dramatic transformation of human nature, not by Jekyll-Hyde chemicals but rather by the power of the situation. Thus I end the first part of this trilogy being pleased that my colleagues and I have been able "to give psychology a way into the public consciousness" in an informative, interesting, and entertaining format that enables all of us to understand something so basic, although disturbing, about our conception of human nature. I think that Stanley Milgram would be pleased that our well-worn, circuitous paths have crossed again in this tribute to him.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF THE UNDERSIDE OF THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT

Christina Maslach

My Role in the Stanford Prison Experiment

In August of 1971, I had just completed my doctorate at Stanford University, where I was the office mate of Craig Haney, and was preparing to start my new job as an assistant professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. Relevant background also should include mention that I had recently gotten involved romantically with Phil Zimbardo, and we were even considering the possibility of marriage. Although I had heard from Phil and other colleagues about the plans for their prison simulation study, I had not participated in either the preparatory work or the initial days of the actual simulation. Ordinarily I would have been more interested and maybe become involved in some way, but I was in the process of moving, and my focus was on preparing for my first teaching job. However, I agreed when Phil asked me, as a favor, to help conduct some interviews with the study participants. The interviews were to be done on Friday, nearly a week after the start of the study, to assess some of the subjective impact of participation on the guards, as well as the prisoners. I came down to Palo Alto on Thursday night to visit the "prison" and get some sense of what was going on.

When I went downstairs to the basement location of the prison, I viewed the yard from the observation point at the end of the hall (where the video camera was set up). Not much was happening at that point, and there was not much to see. I then went to the other end of the hall, where the guards entered the yard; there was a room outside the yard entrance, which the guards used to rest and relax when not on duty or to change into or out of their uniforms at the start or end of their shifts. I talked to one of the guards there who was waiting to begin his shift. He was very pleasant, polite and friendly, surely a person anyone would consider a really nice guy.

Later on, one of the research staff mentioned to me that I should take a look at the yard again, because the new late-night guard shift had come on, and this was the notorious "John Wayne's" shift. John Wayne was the nickname for the guard who was the meanest and toughest of them all; his reputation had preceded him in various accounts I had heard. Of course, I was eager to see who he was and what he was doing that attracted so much attention. When I looked through the observation point, I was absolutely stunned to see that their John Wayne was the "really nice guy" with whom I had chatted earlier. Only now he was transformed into someone else. He not only moved differently, but he talked differently -- with a Southern accent. (I discovered later that he was modeling his role on a prison movie character.) He was yelling and cursing at the prisoners as he made them go through "the count," going out of his way to be rude and belligerent. It was an amazing transformation from the person I had just spoken to -- a transformation that had taken place in minutes just by stepping over the line from the outside world into that prison yard. With his military-style uniform, billy club in hand, and dark, silver-reflecting sunglasses to hide his eyes (adopted by Phil from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*), this guy was an all-business, no-nonsense, really mean prison guard.

At around 11 p.m., the prisoners were being taken to the toilet prior to going to bed. The toilet was outside the confines of the prison yard, and this had posed a problem for the researchers, who wanted the prisoners to be "in prison" 24 hours a day (just as in a real prison). They did not want the prisoners to see people and places in the outside world, which would have broken the total environment they were trying to create. So the routine for the bathroom runs was to put paper bags over the prisoners' heads so they couldn't see anything, chain them together in a line, and lead them down the hall into, around, and out of a boiler room and then to the bathroom and back. It also gave the prisoners an illusion of a great distance between the yard and the toilet, which was in fact only in a hallway around the corner.

When the bathroom run took place that Thursday evening, Phil excitedly told me to look up from some report I had been reading: "Quick, quick -- look at what's happening now!" I looked at the line of hooded, shuffling, chained prisoners, with guards shouting orders at them -- and then quickly averted my gaze. I was overwhelmed by a chilling, sickening feeling. "Do you see that? Come on, look -- it's amazing stuff!" I couldn't bear to look again, so I snapped back with, "I already saw it!" That led to a bit of a tirade by Phil (and other staff there) about what was the matter with me. Here was fascinating human behavior unfolding, and I, a psychologist, couldn't even look at it? They couldn't believe my reaction, which they may have taken to be a lack of interest. Their comments and teasing made me feel weak and stupid -- the out-of-place woman in this male world -- in addition to already feeling sick to my stomach by the sight of these sad boys so totally dehumanized.

A short while later, after we had left the prison setting, Phil asked me what I thought about the entire study. I'm sure he expected some sort of great intellectual discussion about the research and the events we had just witnessed. Instead, what he got was an incredibly emotional outburst from me (I am usually a rather contained person). I was angry and frightened and in tears. I said something like, "What you are doing to those boys is a terrible thing!" What followed was a heated argument between us. That was especially scary for me, because Phil seemed to be so different from the man I thought I knew, someone who loves students and cares for them in ways that were already legendary at the university. He was not the same man that I had come to love, someone who is gentle and sensitive to the needs of others and surely to mine. We had never had an argument before of this intensity. Instead of being close and in tune with each other, we seemed to be on opposite sides of some great chasm. Somehow the transformation in Phil (and in me as well) and the threat to our relationship was unexpected and shocking. I don't remember how long the fight went on, but I felt it was too long and too traumatic.

What I do know is that eventually Phil acknowledged what I was saying, apologized for his treatment of me, and realized what had been gradually happening to him and everyone else in the study: that they had all internalized a set of destructive prison values that distanced them from their own humanitarian values. And at that point, he owned up to his responsibility as creator of this prison and made the decision to call the experiment to a halt. By then it was well past midnight, so he decided to end it the next morning, after contacting all the previously released prisoners, and calling in all the guard shifts for a full round of debriefings of guards, prisoners, and then everyone together. A great weight was lifted from him, from me, and from our personal relationship (which celebrated its 25th wedding anniversary on August 10, 1997).

Lessons To Be Learned: Dissent, Disobedience, and Challenging the System

So what is the important story to emerge from my role as "the Terminator" of the Stanford Prison Experiment? I think there are several themes I would like to highlight.

First, however, let me say what the story is not. Contrary to the standard (and trite) American myth, the Stanford Prison Experiment is not a story about the lone individual who defies the majority. Rather, it is a story about the majority -- about how everyone who had some contact with the prison study (participants, researchers, observers, consultants, family, and friends) got so completely sucked into it. The power of the situation to overwhelm personality and the best of intentions is the key story line here.

So why was my reaction so different? The answer, I think, lies in two facts: I was a late entrant into the situation, and I was an "outsider." Unlike everyone else, I had not been a consenting participant in the study when it began and had not experienced its powerful defining events. Unlike everyone else, I had no socially defined role within that prison context. Unlike everyone else, I was not there every day, being carried along as the situation changed and escalated bit by bit. Thus the situation I entered at the end of the week was not truly the "same" as it was for everyone else -- I lacked their prior consensual history, place, and perspective. For them, the situation was construed as being still within the range of normalcy; for me, it was not -- it was a madhouse.

My overall reaction -- that the situation was crazy and harmful -- was similar to that of Prisoner 416, who was also a late entrant (he joined the study on Wednesday as a replacement for another prisoner, 8612, who had been released early). He, too, found the situation to be a madhouse. He said later: "It was a prison to me. I don't regard it as an experiment or simulation. It was a prison run by psychologists instead of run by the state." Prisoner 416 chose to resist the powerful pressures he was facing from guards and inmates by going on a hunger strike, refusing to eat his food in protest. He believed that his rebellion might serve as a catalyst for renewed prisoner solidarity and opposition against the guards or that, if it was not, he would get physically ill and would have to be released. He was wrong; even after only 4 days it was too late to stir the other prisoners out of their zombie-like conformity to the rules. So instead of becoming the defiant hero who mobilized collective resistance to the brutality of the guards and the sadism of the John Waynes there, he was just a lonely troublemaker, despised by prisoners and tormented by the guards for not eating his awful food. In any case, Prisoner 416 soon became an "insider" in the situation because he tried to work within a set of definitions of that situation, establishing a uniquely defined role as rebel and disobedient prisoner, whereas I was an outsider without a clear role on that momentous night.

Would I have been so vocally opposed were I one of the research team? Would I have been able to stand up to the authority that Phil represented if I were still a graduate student dependent on his good will for a recommendation and not feeling the independence of my new position as a professor? Would I have cared enough to challenge him and his research enterprise had I not had a prior personal relationship that enabled me to see how much he had been adversely transformed by his own role in this

drama? I just don't know. I would hope that I would have still acted out of the same ethical principles, but in retrospect, I can't be certain.

My reactions are interesting to consider in light of Milgram's obedience research. I have always been struck by the difference between dissent and disobedience in those studies; although many participants dissented, saying that they didn't want to give electric shocks to the learner, some even crying at the prospect of what they thought they were doing to that poor victim, only a minority of the participants actually disobeyed and stopped pressing the shock keys (in the baseline conditions). Verbal statements did not translate often into behavioral acts. In the SPE, there was a great deal of dissent of many different kinds, as prisoners and guards argued about what was happening within the prison. But disobedience was rare. It first emerged in the prisoner rebellion, but that was quickly crushed by the guards, not to resurface until Prisoner 416's solitary hunger strike. In the case of Prisoner 416, disobedience meant refusing to go along with the rules of the situation. But that disobedience did not ultimately change the situation -- indeed, it backfired, making the prison setting even more toxic. The guards pitted the other prisoners against Prisoner 416, forcing them to choose between keeping their warm blankets and pillows while Prisoner 416 remained all night in the "solitary confinement" of a dark, small closet and giving up their bedding in return for the release of Prisoner 416 from solitary. It is sad to report that the majority of prisoners -- his buddies -- opted to leave him in solitary confinement.

As an outsider, I did not have the option of specific social rules that I could disobey, so my dissent took a different form -- of challenging the situation itself. This challenge has been seen by some as a heroic action, but at the time it did not feel especially heroic. To the contrary, it was a very scary and lonely experience being the deviant, doubting my judgment of both situations and people, and maybe even my worth as a research social psychologist. I had to consider also in the back of my mind what I might do if Phil continued with the SPE despite my determined challenge to him. Would I have gone to the higher authorities, the department chair, dean, or Human Subjects Committee, to blow the whistle on it? I can't say for sure, and I am glad it never came to that. But in retrospect, that action would have been essential in translating my values into meaningful action. When one complains about some injustice and the complaint only results in cosmetic modifications while the situation flows on unchanged, then that dissent and disobedience are not worth much. What did it matter to the classic original Milgram study that one third of the participants disobeyed and refused to go all the way? Suppose it was not an experiment; suppose Milgram's "cover story" were true, that researchers were studying the role of punishment in learning and memory and would be testing about one thousand participants in a host of experiments to answer their practical questions about the educational value of judiciously administered punishment. If you disobeyed, refused to continue, got paid, and left silently, your heroic action would not prevent the next 999 participants from experiencing the same distress. It would be an isolated event without social impact unless it included going to the next step of challenging the entire structure and assumptions of the research. Disobedience by the individual must get translated into systemic disobedience that forces change in the situation or agency itself and not just in some operating conditions. It is too easy for evil situations to co-opt the intentions of good dissidents or even heroic rebels by giving them medals for their deeds and a gift certificate for keeping their opinions to themselves.

For me, the important legacy of the prison experiment is what I learned from my personal experience and how that helped to shape my own subsequent professional contributions to psychology. What I learned about most directly was the psychology of dehumanization -- how basically good people can come to perceive and treat others in such bad ways; how easy it is for people to treat others who rely on their help or good will as less than human, as animals, inferior, unworthy of respect or equality. That experience in the SPE led me to do the pioneering research on burnout -- the psychological hazards of emotionally demanding human service work that can lead initially dedicated and caring individuals to dehumanize and mistreat the very people they are supposed to serve. My research has tried to elucidate the causes and consequences of burnout in a variety of occupational settings; it has also tried to apply these findings to practical solutions (e.g., Maslach, 1976, 1982; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli, Maslach, & Marek, 1993). I also encourage analysis and change of the situational determinants of burnout rather than focusing on individual personalities of the human caregivers. So my own story in the Stanford Prison Experiment is not simply whatever role I played in ending the study earlier than planned but my role in beginning a new research program that was inspired by my personal experience with that unique study.

THE SPE AND THE ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONS

Craig Haney

The SPE, Milgram, and the Spirit of the Times

For me, the Stanford Prison Experiment was a formative, career-altering experience. I had just finished my second year as a psychology graduate student at Stanford when Phil Zimbardo, Curtis Banks, and I began to plan this research. My interests in applying social psychology to questions of crime and punishment had just begun to crystallize, with Phil Zimbardo's blessing and support. But the study also represented the intersection of several preexisting interests and experiences. Like many undergraduates, I'm sure, I was drawn to social psychology in part because of the dramatic lessons that Stanley Milgram's (1963; 1965) research taught us about human nature and his brilliance in adapting the methods of psychological research to demonstrate enduring truths about the power of the social world to shape and transform us.

In fact, I was in the audience at the University of Pennsylvania when Milgram debated the formidable Martin Orne (Orne, 1973) about the role of "demand characteristics" in the Milgram studies. Even then it seemed apparent to me that in most of the real-world social contexts in which analogues to the Milgram paradigm might be found -- primarily in institutional settings -- the demand characteristics, although different in nature, would be at least as powerful as those that attached to the laboratory. Indeed, as a college senior I had taken a graduate anthropology seminar with Erving Goffman and was much influenced by his perspective on "asylums," the social psychological characteristics of total institutional environments, and the tremendous power of socially defined roles to shape not only attitudes and behavior but also individual identities (Goffman, 1961). I had come to Stanford because Phil Zimbardo's (1970) extraordinary paper on deindividuation had excited me about the possibility of doing social psychological research that combined the rigor of Milgram's obedience paradigm and the richness of Goffman's ethnography.

I was at Stanford for 2 years before we conducted the SPE. During that time I took several classes with Walter Mischel and was fascinated by what were then still revolutionary ideas -- that personality variables often explained only a small portion of the variance in social behavior and that more careful attention to often ignored dimensions of situations might provide much greater insight into the nature of social interactions (Mischel, 1968). And I had the good fortune of working with David Rosenhan on his extremely clever demonstration of the ways in which the prevailing assumptions, procedures, and atmosphere in both private and state mental hospitals so profoundly shaped and influenced the perceptions of the staff that they not only could not discern sanity from madness but also often processed the normal behavior of pseudopatients as further signs of their psychopathology (Rosenhan, 1973).

These were exciting times in which to be a graduate student. The paradigms in psychology were changing, and a new emphasis on structures, contexts, and situations was emerging. Stanley Milgram's research both grew out of and contributed enormously to this changing zeitgeist. Although his specific

focus was obedience to authority, implicit in Milgram's research was a general recognition of the power of real-world social contexts to dramatically alter human behavior. His demonstration of the lengths to which participants would go to obey "authorized" commands provided an empirical backdrop against which others studied less extreme but more prevalent situations and circumstances. And his use of normal individuals to explore the boundaries between normal and abnormal behavior indirectly reinforced the notion that extreme situations and not deviant personalities or aberrant dispositions were often at the root of collective evil, social pathology, and societal dysfunction. Mischel's broad and systematic analysis of the limits of personality assessment built on and amplified this portion of Milgram's message about the relative power of situations over dispositions. Zimbardo had earlier examined different sets of dehumanizing and deindividuating social conditions that radically transformed individual dispositions by producing aggressive behavior from within its normal, societally regulated constraints. Goffman and Rosenhan, each in different ways, explored the intersection of social roles, procedures, perceptions, and identities in similar real-world settings in which the authorization derived not from an individual authority figure but from the structure of an institutional setting and the social psychological context it created. In the SPE, Zimbardo, Banks, and I extended a number of these notions to the institution of the prison -- in many ways our society's concrete and steel embodiment of the dispositional hypothesis itself. But we were all indebted to Milgram for the way in which his demonstrations dramatically reframed the issues that we subsequently studied. Whether or not any of us drew consciously and directly from the Milgram paradigm in formulating our own research agendas, his work was an especially salient part of the prevailing intellectual atmosphere in which our ideas were generated.

Viewed with the benefit of hindsight, I suppose, this kind of intellectual history makes my involvement in the SPE seem natural, logical, and almost inevitable -- all the more because Phil Zimbardo and I shared a deep belief that social psychology could and should be used to improve the human condition. I was Phil's teaching assistant in a course offered in the spring quarter before we conducted the SPE. In the spirit of those times the course had been titled Social Psychology in Action, and we were surrounded with activist students who worked with us on devising ways to make the discipline of social psychology more germane to the important issues of the day. During one of these classes -- in which students regularly took a significant role in helping to set the classroom agenda -- he and I were both moved by the eloquence and insight of an ex-convict, Carlo Prescott, whom one of the students knew and recommended that we invite to speak to the class. I think we realized simultaneously that the institution of prison represented a crucible in which many of the psychological forces we were both interested in studying combined and interacted (although I am sure that neither one of us anticipated the many ways in which this single project we were about to launch would have such a significant impact on our subsequent professional lives). In the ensuing weeks, as the plan for the prison study began to take shape, we relied heavily on the expertise of our ex-convict consultant to educate us about the realities of prison life.

This academic activism and desire to connect to the real world were part of the spirit of the times, and Milgram had something to do with them as well. His were some of the first -- and certainly the most dramatic -- social psychological studies conducted in the early 1960s to highlight the potential application of this discipline to pressing social problems. Although he was not generally known as a

social-political activist, Milgram's work inspired generations of activist social scientists who applied theory and data to questions of social policy and the pursuit of social change. It is impossible to calculate the number of students who were inspired by the sheer dramatic force of these studies to pursue careers exploring unexamined dimensions of human nature, but I count myself among them. His work pushed against the limits of not only the ethical bounds of experimental research but also the political limits of incisive social psychological commentary. Phil has noted that Milgram believed the SPE took some of the critical heat off his research, and I'm certain that it did. But it is also true that his work provided a preexisting context for ours, helping to expand our sense of what it was possible to accomplish in an experimental setting and even to embolden us in the critical uses to which we were willing and able to put our laboratory-based empirical knowledge.

The SPE and the Power of Institutions

When Phil Zimbardo, Curt Banks, and I began to discuss some way of both assessing the effects of prison environments and demonstrating their powerful, transforming effects, I was strongly committed to the idea that we should select normal healthy participants and randomly assign them to their prison roles. But, frankly, we were all somewhat skeptical about how effectively we could create the equivalent of a functional prison environment that would have the capacity to sustain itself over a 2-week period. I wondered whether the roles we had created would hold together (we had provided some but not many institutional supports for them) and whether the guards and prisoners would take their tasks seriously or, to make things easier on themselves, capitalize on what could have been perceived as a gamelike atmosphere (we had decided that we would not intervene in a heavy-handed way to direct events in one direction and not another). And all of us shared concerns over whether significant, measurable changes in attitudes and behavior would occur over the relatively short period of time the study was designed to last.

We really had only Stanley Milgram's research to draw on directly as a still relatively recent and not yet widely replicated example of the power of a laboratory situation to bend identities and transform behavior. However, as Phil has already noted, the two paradigms were very different in several critical ways. Milgram, after all, had focused on obedience, measuring the effects of an ever-present authority. In fact, when the authority figure was not present, Milgram had showed that the force of his instructions dissipated rather rapidly (Milgram, 1974). Our study was designed to see whether placing participants in a more conventionally designed, and in some ways familiar, role would give the situation a lastingness that it did not appear to have in Milgram's research. Also, of course, there was no real script for our participants to follow -- they literally made it up as they went along (as do real guards and prisoners, who must generate behavior in conformity to what they perceive to be the demands of the prison situation).

Although I did not realize it at the time, I could not have wished for a better social laboratory in which to observe the extraordinary power of institutions and the relative malleability of personality in the face of such situational influence. I was the person primarily responsible for interviewing the volunteers from which we selected our participants. Banks and I reviewed the personality profiles and interview notes that had been collected on them, selected our "extremely normal" group of participants, and then

randomly assigned them to their prison roles. Like everyone else close to the study, I too became immersed in its logic and was transformed by its power. But my close contact with the subjects beforehand also gave me perhaps the best vantage point from which to observe the dramatic transformations that were occurring in them over an unbelievably short period of time. Not long after I finished my work on the SPE I began to study actual prisons and eventually focused also on the social histories that helped to shape the lives of the people who were confined inside them. But I never lost sight of the perspective on institutions that I gleaned from observing and evaluating the results of 6 short days inside our simulated prison.

In this regard, I want to share a few personal anecdotes from the SPE that illustrate both the subtle power of the situation that we had created and the remarkable tenacity of the culturally shared belief in personality as the causal locus of behavior (especially behavior that is unexpected or extreme). The role we had constructed for Banks and me -- "psychological counselors" at the prison -- was designed to keep us in close proximity to the inner workings of the prison so that we could collect data and make as many observations as possible as events unfolded. The job of counselors gave us an excuse to interact periodically with the prisoners (whom we could not see when they were in their cells). From time to time during the study we brought them out of their cells for interviews and also to fill out various questionnaires that we had decided beforehand would be needed to document the subtle changes that we thought might take place in them over the course of the study.

Almost immediately after the experiment began I sensed that major changes were taking place in the participants' perceptions of and relationship to me. The prisoners -- all of whom I had interviewed before the study began and with whom I felt some bond or connection -- now looked at me with skepticism and distrust, refusing any real openness or genuine communication. In their eyes, although my function at the prison was ostensibly to inquire after their well-being and monitor their psychological health, I was no longer the person with whom they had earlier easily and comfortably interacted. I was one of "them" -- a member of the prison administration whose interests now diverged significantly from theirs and whose expressions of honest concern were of no real import given my unwillingness and inability to measurably improve their lot by changing prison conditions (something that, for obvious reasons, I could not do).

In a different way, one that was less noticeable at first but that became more profound over time, the guards, too, withdrew. Just as with the prisoners, I also had interviewed all of them before the experiment began and felt I had gotten to know them as individuals, albeit only briefly. Perhaps because of this, I really felt no hostility toward them as the study proceeded and their behavior became increasingly extreme and abusive. But it was obvious to me that because I insisted on talking privately with the prisoners -- ostensibly "counseling" them -- and occasionally instructed the guards to refrain from their especially harsh and gratuitous mistreatment, they now saw me as something of a traitor. Thus, describing an interaction with me, one of the guards wrote in his diary: "The psychologist rebukes me for handcuffing and blindfolding a prisoner before leaving the (counseling) office, and I resentfully reply that it is both necessary (for) security and my business anyway." Indeed, he had told me off. In a bizarre turn of events, I was put in my place for failing to uphold the emerging norms of a simulated environment I had helped to create by someone whom I had randomly assigned to his role.

As the prison atmosphere evolved and became thick and real, I sensed the growing hostility and distrust on all sides. On one of the nights that it was my turn to sleep overnight at the prison, I had a terribly realistic dream in which I was suddenly imprisoned by guards in an actual prison that Zimbardo, Banks, and I supposedly had created. Some of the prisoners in our study, the ones who in retrospect had impressed me as most in distress, were now decked out in elaborately militaristic guard uniforms. They were my most angry and abusive captors, and I had the unmistakable sense that there was to be no escape or release from this awful place. I awoke drenched in sweat and shaken from the experience. The dream required no psychoanalytic acumen to interpret and should have given me some pause about what we were doing. But it didn't. I pressed on without reflection. After all, we had a prison to run and too many day-to-day crises and decisions to allow myself the luxury of pondering the ultimate wisdom of this noble endeavor that had already started to go wrong.

In the ensuing years, much of my time has been spent studying real prisons and engaging in constitutional litigation over conditions of confinement. Because the psychological well-being of the prisoners is largely at issue in these cases and I am pressed to formulate strategies for making institutional environments more humane, I have often thought back on my brief but intense experience in the SPE and the dynamic it revealed. The speed with which the psychological counselor's role in our simulated prison became impossibly ambivalent and irresolvably contradictory gave me some insight into the untenable position that "helpers" face when placed within settings devoted to oppressive control.

Indeed, psychologists often are consigned to a kind of interpersonal "no-man's land" inside real prisons. The ambiguity of their role is a curse rather than a blessing, because they must exist in environments in which the institutional definition of who you are is all that others have to rely on in gauging their interactions with you. When it is not clear who you are -- because the role you occupy does not allow for clarity of purpose -- the only rational stance for guards and prisoners alike is to be wary of you. Because psychologists increasingly lack power in prisons in which punishment, not rehabilitation, has become the raison d'être of corrections, they become more marginalized and irrelevant. This, I think, is one of the real costs of the shift to punishment models of imprisonment over the last several decades -- the way in which the rehabilitative purpose of imprisonment that empowered psychologists to act as a restraining edge against the worst abuses of imprisonment exists no more. That buffering presence has been stripped away, leaving only the good intentions of the staff and the occasional intervention of the courts to tame the raw force of the institutional imperatives created inside our current prisons.

The second anecdote speaks to the unexpected depth and tenacity of the concept of psychological individualism -- precisely what the SPE was designed to challenge. Less than 2 days into the study, on another of the nights that I had overnight duty at the prison, I returned from a late dinner to find that one of the prisoners, Prisoner 8612, had suffered an "emotional breakdown" and was demanding to be released. Caught completely by surprise -- only 36 hours had passed in our planned 2-week simulation -- I talked at length with the young man, took him to a quiet room outside the basement corridor that served as our prison "yard," and gave him an opportunity to relax and perhaps regain his composure. He told me that he could not stand the constant hassling of the guards following his role as one of the ringleaders of the Day 2 prisoner rebellion. When he had told that to Zimbardo and Prescott earlier

during dinner time, Prescott ridiculed him as a soft white boy who would not last a day in San Quentin. Zimbardo offered him a Faustian deal: He would arrange for the guards not to bother Prisoner 8612 at all in return for the prisoner's providing him with a "little information" about prisoner activities from time to time, adding that he need not decide now but could think it over and give his decision later. Instead of rejecting that offer to become a "snitch," he began considering it, thinking he could become a "double agent." But he was now really confused; and when he left the superintendent's office, Prisoner 8612 announced to his fellow inmates, lined up for a count, that they could not get out, that the staff would not release them. He then went into his cell, lay down on his cot, and became increasingly agitated.

After allowing Prisoner 8612 to rest for a while, I returned, hoping that he would reconsider. But he was adamant and upset even more than before. By now it was the middle of the night, and I knew I could not easily contact Zimbardo, my mentor and "boss." It was clear that the decision over what to do with this unstable prisoner was going to be mine alone. Although in retrospect it seems an easy call, at the time it was a daunting one. I was a 2nd-year graduate student, we had invested a great deal of time, effort, and money into this project, and I knew that the early release of a participant would compromise the experimental design we had carefully drawn up and implemented. As experimenters, none of us had predicted an event like this, and, of course, we had devised no contingency plan to cover it. On the other hand, it was obvious that this young man was more disturbed by his brief experience in the Stanford Prison than any of us had expected any of the participants to be even by the end of the 2 weeks. So I decided to release Prisoner 8612, going with the ethical/humanitarian decision over the experimental one.

When Zimbardo and Banks came to the prison the next morning, I had a lot of explaining to do. Understandably, because neither one of them had actually seen how upset the prisoner had become -- shouting, crying, emotionally enraged, thinking irrationally -- they were skeptical of my decision to let him go. I could tell they doubted my judgment. After a fair amount of discussion I was relieved that they finally agreed that I really had made the appropriate choice. But then a different task faced us: how to account for this extreme and, from our point of view, entirely premature and unexpected emotional reaction. We quickly seized on an explanation that felt as natural as it was reassuring -- he must have broken down because he was weak or had some kind of defect in his personality that accounted for his oversensitivity and overreaction to the simulated prison conditions! In fact, we worried that there had been a flaw in our screening process that had allowed a "damaged" person somehow to slip through undetected. It was only later that we appreciated this obvious irony, that we had "dispositionally explained" the first truly unexpected and extraordinary demonstration of situational power in our study by resorting to precisely the kind of thinking we had designed the study to challenge and critique.

I don't think this ironic, self-contradictory behavior can be dismissed simply by attributing it to our naiveté. In a culture steeped in the assumptions of psychological individualism, few of us are immune to its pull. Dispositional thinking and the fundamental attribution error to which it leads loom large even for those of us strongly committed to alternative ways of viewing the social world. We are not only socialized and schooled in its logic but find comfort in what it lulls us into thinking about ourselves and our relationship to the various social problems that we observe in the world around us. Christina Maslach's poignant commentary on what she experienced in her brief contact with the SPE underscores

how much we -- the experimenters -- were motivated to avoid looking directly at the consequences of the environment that we had created. Attributing prisoner breakdowns to defective dispositions and regarding the cruelty of the guards as some fascinating social psychological dynamic that required study rather than intervention allowed us to ignore the painful, obvious truth. Like the experimenters in the SPE, many people find solace in the fundamental attribution error and the way it reassures us that we are not responsible for the harsh social or institutional conditions to which others succumb. If we can attribute deviance, failure, and breakdowns to the individual flaws of others, then we are absolved. In subsequent writing about psychology and law, I have often tried to critically address the extraordinary hold that psychological individualism continues to have over legal thinking (e.g., Haney, 1982, 1983) and the law's resistance to contextualizing (especially) criminal behavior (e.g., Haney, 1995; 1996). However, this personal lesson taken directly from the pages of the SPE has humbled me about the difficulty of the task.

Institutional Change in the Years Since Milgram and the SPE

As I noted earlier, in the years that have passed since the SPE was conducted I have spent a large part of my professional life studying actual prisons, touring and inspecting penal systems across the country, as well as in different parts of the world, conducting in-depth interviews with hundreds of prisoners and correctional staff members, and becoming involved in litigation that challenged the cruel and unusual nature of conditions of confinement in a number of penal institutions. I have no doubt that much of my basic orientation to these issues was influenced in large part by the early lessons I had learned both from Stanley Milgram's obedience paradigm and, certainly, from the SPE's demonstration of the power of institutional environments.

The history of this kind of litigation carries some final lessons, I think, for the meaning and significance of both the Milgram experiments and the SPE and their potential role in producing social and institutional change. Given the significant head start we had on these issues in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the paradigm changes I talked about earlier were in full swing, we should have made great progress by now -- not only in understanding but in actually limiting the potential for institutional excess and abuse that had been highlighted both in Milgram's research and the SPE. Of course, we have not. The prison system in the United States continues in an unprecedented and worsening "crisis" that threatens to become permanent (e.g., Haney, 1997a; Haney & Zimbardo, 1998). Many penal institutions are plagued by unheard-of levels of overcrowding and the abandonment of rehabilitative programs and goals. Court cases continue to uncover shocking levels of brutality and mistreatment of prisoners, as Milgramesque scenarios are played out in SPE-like settings across the country. In addition, there has been a destructive politicization of the process by which we inflict legal punishment, one in which politicians shamelessly compete for the title of "toughest on crime," with no concern for the social and economic costs of frequently ineffective and irrelevant law-and-order programs.

Indeed, incarceration levels have soared for the last 2 decades, whereas crime rates have remained largely stable or actually decreased in most places and the amount of recidivism actually increased in many. Factor in the extraordinary disproportions in the rates of imprisonment of our minority citizens -- what might be called the racialization of prison pain -- and the renewed use of long-term, solitary-like

confinement and punitive isolation in a new penal form known as the "supermax" prison that keeps prisoners in a potentially damaging, asocial, behavioral "deep freeze" for years on end (e.g., Haney & Lynch, 1997), and you begin to fathom the dimensions of this crisis.

Many of us involved in the systematic study of prison conditions also have assisted in the effort to bring unconstitutional penal institutions under legal scrutiny in the United States. Along with the constitutional and civil-rights attorneys who pursue these issues, we have established a very mixed and, I think, instructive record in this regard. Most such efforts have been extremely successful in the initial stage of documenting unconstitutional conditions and obtaining preliminary court-ordered relief, especially with trial court judges who could be brought close to the realities of the prison environments in question and whom we could persuade to see and feel at least some of the impact of the conditions of confinement whose effects on prisoners were at issue. For me, among other things, this has included: participating in a trial in which the totality of conditions in a maximum security prison in Washington State were found unconstitutional (*Hoptowit v. Ray*, 1982); a successful constitutional challenge to conditions inside the "lockup" or disciplinary segregation units in several California prisons, including Folsom, San Quentin, and Soledad (e.g., *Toussaint v. McCarthy*, 1984); an examination of the deficiencies in mental health and medical services provided to prisoners in the entire California prison system that resulted in a substantial federal court-ordered overhaul and improvements (*Coleman v. Wilson*, 1995); and, most recently, an evaluation of the harmful effects of isolated confinement inside a futuristic, so-called supermax prison, Pelican Bay, where, in addition to unremitting monotony and the deprivation of all forms of normal social contact, prisoners were exposed to mistreatment and brutality at the hands of the correctional staff (Haney, 1993a; *Madrid v. Gomez*, 1995).

Yet these initial successes are often followed by a series of legal and practical setbacks that blunt the significance of the litigation in effecting meaningful institutional change. In the legal arena itself it is generally the case that the higher the level to which these cases are taken on appeal, the less sympathetic a hearing prisoner-petitioners receive from the court. Although there may be some historical and ideological idiosyncrasies that help to account for this pattern, I think a social psychological dynamic may be at work as well. Like at least some of Milgram's participants, only judges who most directly face the consequences of the (correctional) authorization they are asked to provide may be able to place the most effective and meaningful limits on what is acceptable. Elsewhere I have argued that our law sometimes demonstrates a perverse genius for distancing decision makers from the morally ambiguous effects of their decisions; for example, that it employs an elaborate panoply of procedural mechanisms to morally disengage executioners, as well as capital jurors, from the harsh reality of the tasks they are asked to perform in death penalty cases (Haney, 1997b). In prisoners' rights cases, appellate judges in far-off venues who know little of the realities of prison life and have only the cold written record of a hearing to review may find it difficult to fully grasp the psychological consequences of the treatment in question. The common placement of penal institutions in remote locales where few people can observe what goes on inside the prison walls only compounds the problem because it helps to neutralize public sentiment on these issues.

The practical setbacks derive primarily from the inability of at least some courts to effectively manage the process of implementing institutional change. Here, too, I think there may be a social psychological

dynamic at work (cf. Haney & Pettigrew, 1986). The law is still dominated by a largely dispositional view of human behavior that also pervades its vision of legally mandated institutional change. The implementation of court orders in prison litigation often takes the form of little more than a series of judicial directives, followed by some process of official monitoring to make sure that those directives are followed. Yet many of the lessons of both the Milgram paradigm and the SPE are ignored here. That is, we know that the social and institutional context that gives rise to unconstitutional conditions and mistreatment in an actual prison must be radically transformed if the behavior of those who have created and maintained this environment is to be altered. Although in one sense both Milgram and the SPE demonstrated the extraordinary power of authority and the potency of socially defined roles and both offered the possibility that such power and potency could be harnessed to accomplish good as well as evil, both studies also underscored the importance of specific situational conditions to control and change behavior.

Good people and even good intentions are not enough. This is especially true in a complex institutional context in which there are likely to be contending views and preferences about who is actually in charge (i.e., the court or the preexisting power structure). Indeed, Milgram (1974) showed very effectively that ambivalent or contradictory authority figures lost their power to effectively compel compliance. My earlier anecdote about the ambiguity of the helping role in an oppressive place of confinement is consistent with this perspective. Thus legally mandated institutional change, in prisons and elsewhere, would do well to mind the social psychological lessons of Milgram and the SPE: Behavior changes when critical dimensions in the powerful situations that support it are changed as well.

Conclusion

In the years since the SPE and the Milgram studies were completed, continuing intellectual and academic progress has been made in documenting the situational origins of behavioral influence and control. Outside of the academy, however, there was an ensuing ideological backlash that undid much of the progress toward developing both popular understanding and political recognition of the importance of social context, structure, and situation. For much of this period, social maladies were typically attributed to individual-level pathology and shortcomings. Indeed, in some quarters, crime, poverty, mental illness, and racial differences in achievement, general well-being, and economic attainment were not only dispositionalized and essentialized but also biologized and geneticized.

Against this despairing and victim-blaming perspective, the lessons of the Milgram studies and the SPE have withstood the test of time. As my colleagues in the SPE and I have acknowledged, these events left an indelible impression on each of us. I believe that the rest of my professional life has been influenced by the clarity of the observations that we made in the SPE, and its basic lessons have guided much of the research I have done and no doubt influenced the questions on which I have worked. Like Stanley Milgram before us, my colleagues Zimbardo, Banks, Maslach, and I have seen a controlled and absolutely unambiguous demonstration that few people ever do -- the way in which good, normal people can be turned into something else -- rapidly, measurably, profoundly. Indeed, Zimbardo, Banks, and I took something else with us from this experience -- the sometimes painful-to-watch chronicle of

how this could happen to ourselves. Like most hard lessons, I suppose, the value of this one can only be gauged by the uses to which it is put. And there is still much constructive work to be done.

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