

Schemas, Perception & Stereotyping

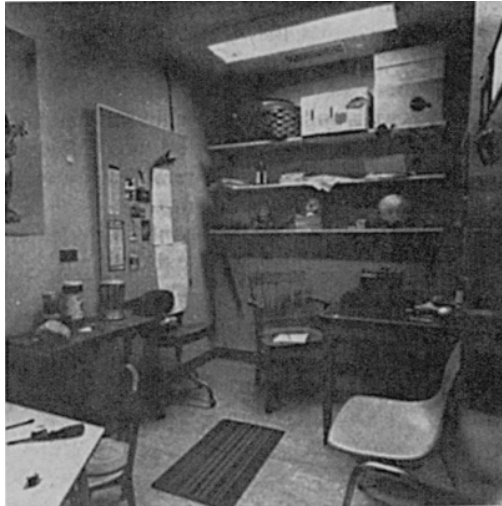


**Falling Woman Study
(Zimbardo & Slavich)**

Look at the picture above for 30 seconds, cover it, then picture what you saw in your mind.

In Zimbardo & Slavich study:

- **Saw no suicidal woman: 1543/1577 (97.8%)**
- **Saw no suicidal person: 1515/1577 (96.1%)**
- **Saw no central stimulus (Animate) 1222/1577 (77.5%)**
- **Saw “Coffee Shop” 579/618 (93.7%)**
- **Saw “Hotel” 758/913 (83.0%)**



**Office Study
(Brewer & Treyns, 1981)**

Look at the picture above for 30 seconds, cover it, then picture what you saw in your mind.

In Brews & Treyns 1981 study:

- **Subjects spent less than a minute in the room**
- **Most recalled a chair and a desk**
- **About 1/3 recalled *books***
- **There were no books in the office**
- **So, what's going on here?**
- **What drives these findings?**
- **Why DON'T people see the falling woman in the hotel scene?**
- **Why DO people see books in the office?**

Schemas!

What are Schemas?

Some Definitions of Schemas:

“people's understanding and remembrance of events is shaped by their expectations or prior knowledge, and that these expectations are represented mentally in some sort of schematic fashion”

Bartlett (1932)

“A cognitive structure of organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience; it guides the processing of new information and retrieval of stored information.”

(Fiske & Linville, 1980)

Schemas are:

- Knowledge structures
- Network of associated thoughts/memories
- Mental representation of a concept; the info stored in long-term memory that allows a person to identify a group of different items of events as members of the same category.

Essentially – schemas are stereotypes about the world including ourselves, other, and environment

How Do Schemas Develop ?

Frequency and Intensity of Practice.

Uniting small bits of associated thoughts, emotions, and behaviors into larger wholes that are activated in an all-or-none manner.

**Become automatic through practice
(Intentionality, Control, and Awareness decrease)**

Bike riding, cooking dinner, reading x-rays,

**Reading emotions, Reacting to situations,
Interpreting new people and events**

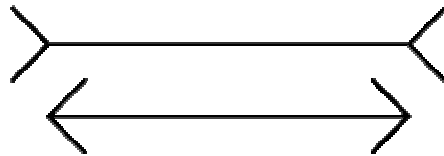
PERCEPTION

DEFINITION

The search for the most appropriate interpretation of sensory data based on existing knowledge of our world.

Perception is an ACTIVE and CONSTRUCTIVE process

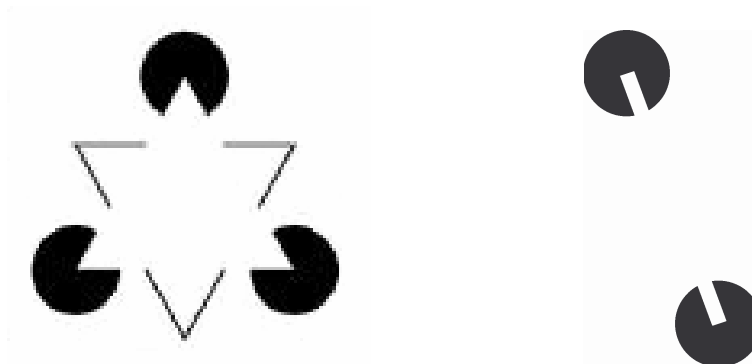
Which horizontal line is the longest?

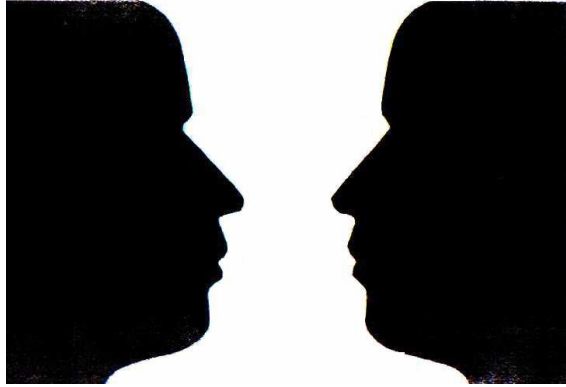


They are exactly the same size.

It is an optical illusion tricking us into assigning a different meaning to what we see.

The brain helps us see and interact with objects by filling in missing information:





Do you see a vase or do you see two faces looking at each other?

The meaning of something will change when you look at it differently. You can look at anything differently and it will have a different meaning.

There is no fixed meaning to anything. You can always change perspectives and change meanings.



Some people see a young lady looking away

Others see an old lady looking down

The picture hasn't really changed.

You just emphasize different parts of it and assign them different meaning.

First Impressions

Are important as they may influence all our PERSONAL interactions with OTHERS.

Burns (1980) argues that we all have “implicit personality theories” which we use to form an impression of someone based on an initial meeting.

Stereotypes

Activity

A father and his son were driving along the road when the father suddenly lost control of the car and crashed into a telegraph pole. The father was killed instantly and the son was badly injured. The boy was rushed to hospital and needed urgent surgery. A consultant surgeon was immediately summoned. When the surgeon arrived and went into the operating theatre to examine the body, a loud gasp was heard: “I can’t operate on this boy”, the surgeon said, “he’s my son!”

Can you solve this riddle?

A stereotype is a cluster of preconceived ideas about a group of people

If we stereotype people we often prejudice how we expect people to behave

Unfortunately prejudice can lead to discrimination that is:

Behaving negatively towards certain groups

Implications of Stereotyping

If we assume that people will behave in a certain way, they often will do so.

If for example we assume a patient cannot care for himself, the patient behaves as expected and adopts a passive role.

This concept of people fulfilling the stereotype is called a

SELF FUFILLING PROPHECY