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SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR AS A FUNCTION OF OBSERVER RESPONSIBILITY AND VICTIM FEEDBACK

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ABSTRACT

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR AS A FUNCTION OF OBSERVER RESPONSIBILITY AND VICTIM FEEDBACK

by Harvey A. Tilker

Socially responsible behavior, as manifested by interference with experimental procedures, was studied in the context of a paired-associates verbal learning situation, employing an experimental paradigm similar to that devised by Milgram (1963) in his behavioral studies of destructive obedience.

Two variables, Observer Responsibility and Victim Feedback were manipulated in a 3 x 3 factorial design with five subjects per cell. There were three conditions of observer responsibility for the learner's well-being (None, Ambiguous, Total) and three conditions of feedback from the learner (None, Auditory, and Auditory-Visual). Under the condition of Auditory-Visual Feedback and Total Responsibility, observers interfered with experimental procedures earlier ($p < .01$) and came to the assistance of the learner. Subjects in this condition also made a significantly greater number of verbal attempts to assist the learner ($p < .05$).

Interfering and non-interfering subjects showed little differentiation on 16 PF Test data or descriptive

data. Significant differences were found to exist between Interferers and Non-Interferers on academic grade point average and between Early and Late Interferers on 16 PF Factor Q3. These results were discussed in relation to an individual's feelings of self-esteem, as reflected in conforming and independent behavior.

The need for directing future research at the further analysis of the concepts of responsibility and feedback and their operation under differing situational circumstances was discussed.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR AS A FUNCTION OF OBSERVER RESPONSIBILITY AND VICTIM FEEDBACK

By

Harvey A. Tilker

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TO THERESA

whose love was sustaining

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the men and women who were responsible for the planning and execution of the daily activities of the Nazi German extermination camps, and newspapers still carry an occasional story villifying a newly discovered "cog in the great machine." Most of us seem to have contented outselves by saying that such atrocities, or events similar in nature, could never happen again and, consequently, relatively little effort has been devoted to seeking an understanding of the factors that contributed to the occurrence of such events as those described above.

Only recently have behavioral scientists become concerned with the question of social responsibility (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Gouldner, 1960; Berkowitz and Daniels, 1963; Berkowitz and Daniels, 1964; Berkowitz and Connor, 1966; Darley and Latane, 1966; Goranson and Berkowitz, 1966; Horowitz, 1966; Walster and Berscheid, 1966). Milgram's recent work on the phenomena of destructive conformity and obedience (1963; 1964; 1965a; 1965b; Elms and Milgram, 1966) has been the most notable approach toward understanding the events

that may have contributed to the existence and effectiveness of the extermination camps. Milgram (1963) devised a procedure in which naive Ss were ordered to administer increasingly more severe punishment to a victim. Twenty-six, out of forty Ss, obeyed the experimenter's commands and administered the maximum amount of punishment to the victim. Further research by Milgram (1964, 1965b) has explored the situational determinants of varying levels of destructive obedience in different experimental conditions.

Every so often, though, in scanning the daily newspapers, one is apt to encounter a story which resurrects the questions and doubts pertaining to the trust one has in his fellow man. Such a story appeared in the March 27, 1964, edition of The New York Times. In Kew Gardens, Queens, New York, Catherine Genovese was stalked by a killer and stabbed to death, in three separate attacks, over a period of thirty-five minutes, while thirty-eight persons witnessed the occurrence. Not one person came to her aid during the assaults.

Not all of the witnesses understood they were watching a murder (Milgram and Hollander, 1966). Some thought they were observing a meaningless lovers quarrel; others saw or heard so very little of the ambiguous and confusing episode that they could not have reached any conclusions about the nature of the disturbance. Wainwright (1964) noted that "regardless of what they thought was

transpiring in the street below, the fact remains that no one, even those who were sure that something was terribly wrong, felt moved enough to act" (p. 21).

The two events cited above contain a striking similarity, which is to be found in the general apathy and lack of socially responsible behavior on the part of the residents of Germany in the 1940's and Kew Gardens in the 1960's. The excuses offered by the non-Nazi German population for their apathy and inaction usually center around the assertion that they had no idea that death camps existed. In other words, their failure to respond in a socially responsible manner was based on a lack of information or feedback from the victims. The apathy and inaction in Kew Gardens, certainly not attributable to a paucity of feedback, although the question of ambiguity can be legitimately raised, must be attributed, in light of the witnesses responses to inquiries, to a conscious decision not to get involved.

While it is true that man behaves in socially responsible ways in many areas of his daily life, it is equally apparent that he is most often likely to shirk this responsibility when acts of violence or aggression are involved. The present study, following closely upon the design of Milgram's work, attempted to manipulate the conditions of observer involvement or responsibility, and feedback from the victim. It was hypothesized that

if a person is forced to "get involved" or "feel responsible" for the well-being of another person and is receiving feedback from the victim, then he will be most likely to react in a socially responsible manner and, in some way, attempt to alter the course of events. In other words, socially responsible behavior, as manifested in interference with experimental procedures, would vary as a function of the interaction of observer responsibility and victim feedback, with earliest interference occurring under conditions of Total Responsibility and Auditory-Visual Feedback.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects and Personnel

The subjects were 45 male, freshman, volunteers attending classes at Michigan State University. In terms of experimental design, there were two independent variables, feedback and responsibility. This yielded a 3 x 3 design with five subjects per cell. The only additional requirement for selection as a subject was that prior to their participation in the experiment they had to have completed a Subject Information Sheet (see Appendix A) and taken the I.P.A.T. 16 PF Test (Cattell, 1957). This data was collected in group administrations two weeks prior to the experiment and was not tabulated or scored until after all experimental procedures were completed.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the nine experimental conditions.

The role of the experimenter was played by the author, a 27-year old graduate student in clinical psychology. His manner was matter-of-fact and he was only present at the beginning of the experiment (to pay the participants

and to explain the instructions and the operation of the equipment) and then withdrew to an adjoining room designated as his "Office." The "teacher" and the "learner", both accomplices, were played by 21-year old undergraduate students majoring in psychology. Both accomplices were trained for their respective roles.

Procedure

The experimental paradigm employed in the present study was basically the same as that used by Milgram (1963) in his behavioral studies of obedience. Modifications were instituted to account for the observer's role and the present experimental conditions.

All participants appeared for the experiment at an appointed time and neither accomplice acknowledged the fact that he knew the other or the E. Upon meeting with the E, each participant was paid $3.00 and was told that the money was theirs simply for coming to the laboratory and it could not be taken away.

The three participants were then told of the presumed relationship between punishment and learning:

> Psychologists have developed several theories to explain how people learn various types of material. Some of the better known theories are treated in such books as, "The Teaching and Learning Process" by Cantor, "Theories of Learning" by Hilgard, and "The Learning Process" by Harris and Schwann. One of the things all these books deal with is the theory of how people learn when they

> are punished. A common application of this theory would be when a parent spanks a child whenever he has done something wrong. The expectation being that the spanking, a form of punishment, will teach the child to remember better; that is, will teach him to learn more effectively.
>
> But actually we know very little about the effect of punishment on learning because almost no truly scientific studies have been made of it in human beings.
>
> For instance, we don't know how much difference it makes as to who is giving the punishment, whether or not the learner's performance is being observed, whether an adult learns better from a younger or older person than himself--and many things of that sort.
>
> So, in this study we are bringing together a number of adults and we are asking some of them to be teachers, some to be observers, and some to be learners. We want to find out just what effect different people have on each other as teachers, observers, and learners and, also, what effect punishment will have on this learning situation.
>
> Therefore, I am going to ask one of you to be the teacher, one to be the observer, and one to be the learner. We usually decide this by having you draw slips of paper. O.K.?

Participants then drew slips of paper from a hat to determine who would function in each of the three capacities. The drawing was fixed so that the naive S was always the observer (all slips contained the word "Observer" and each accomplice assumed his predesignated role).

After roles had been decided, the learner was strapped into an "electric chair" apparatus. The E explained that although the straps contained electrodes, they also served to prevent excessive movement while the learner was being shocked. Electrode paste was applied "to provide a good

contact and to avoid blisters and burns." Participants were informed that the electrodes were attached to the shock generator in the adjacent room.

In order to impress upon the S the credibility of the equipment, the learner asked the following question: "I've never had any shock before, how strong are these? Can they hurt me?" The E responded by saying: "Although the shocks can be extremely painful, no permanent damage can be done."

Learning Task. The learning situation consisted of a paired-associate learning task. The teacher read a series of word pairs to the learner, one at a time, and then read the first word along with four terms. The learner was to indicate which of the four terms had originally been paired with the first word. He communicated his answer by pressing one of four switches in front of him, which, in turn, lit up one of four quadrants in an answer box located atop the shock generator.

The teacher, with the observer looking on, is told to administer a shock to the learner each time he gives an incorrect response. He is instructed to start at 15 volts and increase the shock level one step each time the learner gives a wrong answer. He is further instructed to inform the learner whether or not his response was correct, and what the voltage level is before administering the shock. This serves to constantly remind the

observer of the increasing intensity of the shocks being administered to the learner.

The list is repeated and shocks are given until the learner has learned all pairs correctly or, until the 375 volt shock is administered. In all experimental conditions the learner gives a predetermined set of responses to the word pair test, based on a schedule of approximately three wrong answers to one correct answer.

Shock Generator. The instrument panel consisted of a 32 position rotary selector switch, of which only 25 positions were used. Each position was labeled with a numerical voltage designation that ranged from 15 to 375 volts. There was a 15 volt increment from one position to the next going in a clock-wise direction. In addition, the following verbal designations were clearly indicated for groups of four positions: Slight Shock (15 - 60 volts), Moderate Shock (75 - 120 volts), Strong Shock (135 - 180 volts), Very Strong Shock (195 - 240 volts), Intense Shock (255 - 300 volts), Extreme Intensity Shock (315 - 360 volts), and Danger: Severe Shock (375 volts).

When the Main Power Switch was turned on a red pilot light illuminated. Upon pressing the Shock Energizer Switch an orange light was illuminated, an electric buzzing was heard, and a dial on the ampere meter swung to the right.

The lower right hand corner of the generator was labeled Shock Generator, Type ZLT, Dyson Instrument Company, Waltham, Mass. Output 15 volts - 375 volts. The panel was engraved with white letters on a black bakelite background. No subject in the experiment suspected the authenticity of the generator.

Sample Shock. Each naive S (along with the teacher accomplice) was given sample shocks, applied to the inside of the wrist, from an electrode wired into the back of the generator. The shocks were always at the 45 and 120 volt designations and were applied by setting the shock reading at these designations and pressing the Shock Energizer Switch. At the 45 volt level the S received 700 microamperes and at the 120 volt level, 870 microamperes. The generator utilized an open circuit voltage of 420 volts but the actual voltage received by the Ss was dependent upon his skin resistance at the time.

Experimental Conditions

Subjects were run under one of three conditions of Victim Feedback and one of three conditions of Observer Responsibility. Although the responsibility instructions were meant solely for the observer, they were directed at both the observer and the teacher while they were seated in front of the shock generator.

A. Observer Responsibility

All Ss received the following standard instructions:

> "Since you have drawn the observer's role in this experiment, I would like you to pay careful attention to the behavior of both the teacher and the learner and to record (see Appendix B) the learner's responses and the voltage level he receives. Since Mr. _____ has drawn the teacher's role it will be his function to administer the learning task as well as the punishment."

To this was added the specific responsibility instructions depending upon the condition to which the S had been assigned.

1. No Responsibility (NR)

"You two may discuss anything you wish, however, the teacher has complete responsibility for the conduct of the study as well as the well-being of the learner, and his decisions on procedural matters will be final. I will be in my office, next door."

2. Ambiguous Responsibility (AR)

"You two may discuss anything you wish and resolve all procedural matters between yourselves. I will be in my office, next door."

3. Total Responsibility (TR)

"You two may discuss anything you wish, however, since you are in the best position to

judge developments as they might occur, you will be responsible for the conduct of the study as well as the well-being of the learner. Your decisions on procedural matters will be final. I will be in my office, next door."

B. Victim Feedback

1. No Feedback (NF)

Once the learner is strapped into the "electric chair", there is no further visual or auditory contact with him until the experiment is terminated and a reconciliation is effected. The observer's only feedback from the learner comes in the form of his responses as they are flashed on the answer board atop the shock generator.

2. Auditory Feedback (AF)

In this condition the learner's responses are flashed on the answer board atop the shock generator. The learner cannot be seen but vocal protestations to increasing shock levels are heard over a one-way microphone connection. No vocal protest is heard from the learner until shock level 105 is administered. The learner increases the intensity of his protests until the experiment is ended. (A predetermined

set of standardized protestations were used and are listed in Appendix C.)

3. Auditory-Visual Feedback (AVF)

Subjects in this condition received the same feedback as in the Auditory Feedback condition but are also able to view the learner's behavior through a one-way vision mirror. The learner performed certain bodily contortions which are commonly associated with the passage of an electric current through the body (e.g., arching of the back and tensing of muscles) and as shock level increases there are increasingly strenuous attempts to free himself from the situation.

Teacher Response. At various points in the experiment the S may raise the question of whether or not the teacher should continue to shock the learner. In the absence of direct physical interference with experimental procedures, the teacher responded to the observer's inquiries with a predetermined set of responses:

Response #1: I think I should go on, or
I think I should continue.

Response #2: Although the shocks may be painful no damage is being done.

Response #3: The experiment requires that I continue whether the learner likes it or not.

Response #4: The experiment must continue whether the learner likes it or not.

Response #5: You're being unreasonable and don't understand what this is all about. I'm going to continue.

Response #6: I am the teacher in this experiment and I think it is essential that it continue.

Response #7: I don't care what you say or think, I'm going to continue shocking him.

Response #8: I don't care what the experimenter said, I'm working the machine and I want to shock him.

Response #9: Mind your own business and leave me alone.

Response #10: Shut up! This is the way it is.

The responses were always made in sequence; only if the observer continued to argue after Response #1 was offered, could Response #2 be used, and so on up to Response #10. The sequence was started anew after Response #10 was offered and each time the observer raised any questions or objections.

Dependent Measure

The social responsibility score for any S was the maximum level of shock which was allowed to be administered to the learner before the observer caused the experiment to be terminated.

There were four ways in which the observer could interfere and terminate the experiment. This could be accomplished by:

1. calling upon the E to stop the procedure;
2. some sort of physical action directed against the teacher;
3. disabling the apparatus (e.g., pulling out the plug or turning off the shock generator);
4. removing himself from the experimental situation.

Theoretically, a S's social responsibility score could vary from 0 (for a S who refused to begin the experiment) to 25 (for a S who did not interfere at all and permitted the 375 volt shock to be administered).

Interview and dehoax. Upon termination of the experiment each S was interviewed by the E. The interview was designed to elicit Ss' reactions to the experiment, their reasons for interfering or not interfering, and their impressions of the credibility of the apparatus and procedure. After the interview, each S was introduced to the learner and teacher and a friendly reconciliation was arranged. Great care was taken to deal with and reduce any tensions that might have arisen as a result of the experiment. No adverse effects were observable in the behavior of the subjects.

Subjects were asked not to discuss the study in

their classes nor to tell their fellow students or friends about the actual intent of the study.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

I. Effectiveness of Feedback and Responsibility

The major data of this study are the final levels of shock which observers permitted the learner to receive, before interfering with experimental procedures. There were only 13 out of 45 Ss (29%) who interfered with the study. They were distributed thusly among the nine experimental conditions: one S in the NFTR group; three Ss in the AFNR group; one S in the AFTR group; one S in the AVFNR group; two Ss in the AVFAR group; and, five Ss in the AVFTR group.

Inspection of the appropriate means in Table 1 indicates that the AVF-TR group interfered more quickly and, thereby, did not permit as many shocks to be administered to the learner. This is the expected result and confirms the effectiveness of the experimental manipulations. Analyses of variance (Hays, 1963) conducted on the data in Table 1, yielded significant probabilities for the Feedback main effect ($F = 11.46$, $df = 2,36$, $p < .001$), Responsibility main effect ($F = 3.73$, $df = 2,36$, $p < .05$) and the Feedback x Responsibility interaction

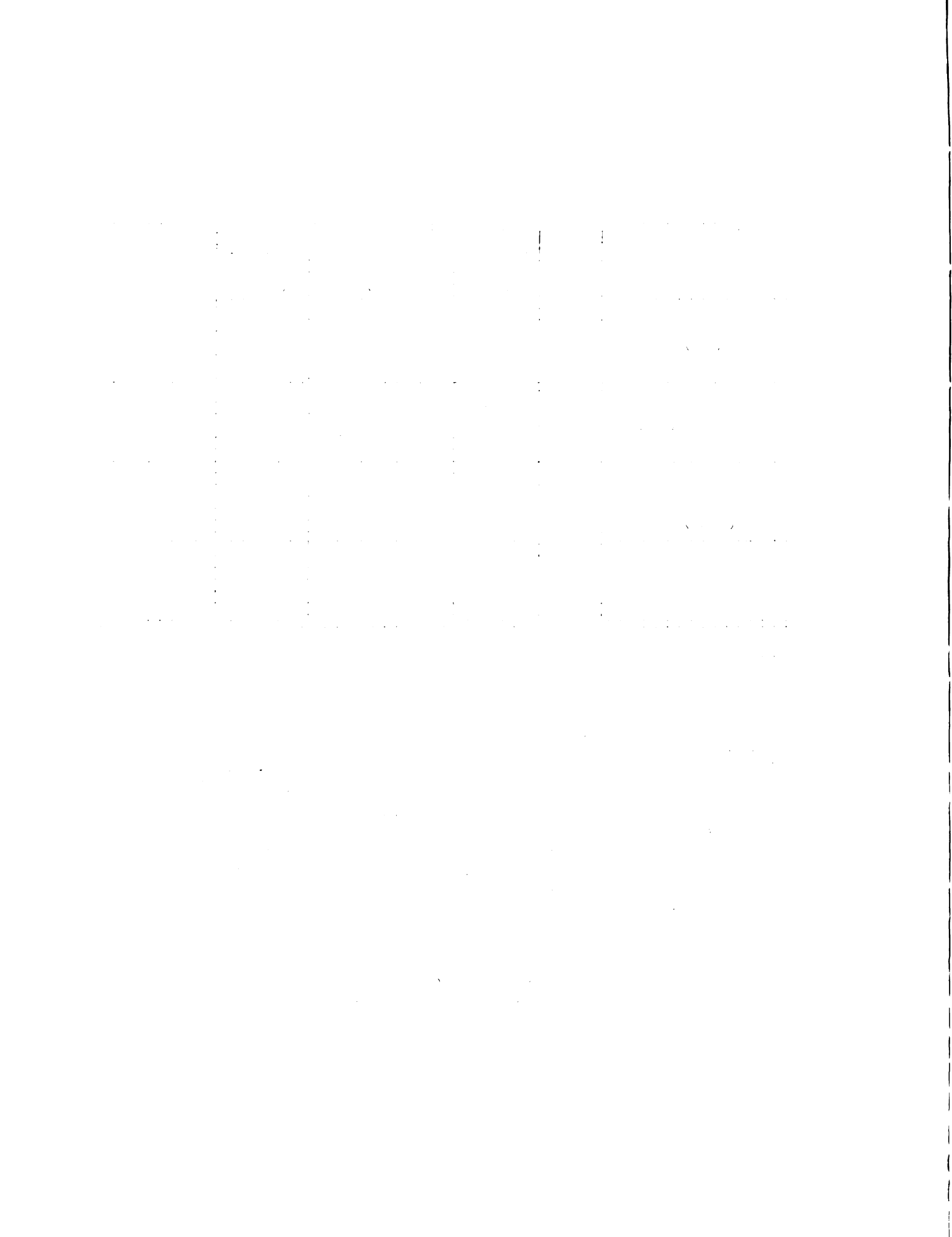
TABLE 1

Means and Variances of all Feedback and Responsibility Conditions for the Shock Level at which the Study was stopped.[1]

Feedback		Responsibility			Row Totals
		None (NR)	Ambiguous (AR)	Total (TR)	
None (NF)	$\bar{X}$	25.0	25.0	24.8	24.9_b
	$\sigma 2$	0.0	0.0	.20	.07
Auditory (AF)	$\bar{X}$	21.4	25.0	24.6	23.7_c
	$\sigma 2$	12.3	0.0	.80	6.5
Auditory-Visual (AVF)	$\bar{X}$	23.2	23.0	16.6	20.9_{bc}
	$\sigma 2$	16.2	15.5	4.3	20.4
Column Totals	$\bar{X}$	23.2	24.3_a	22.0_a	
	$\sigma 2$	10.5	5.4	17.1	

[1] $\bar{X} = 25$ and $\sigma^2 = 0$ indicates that no S in the group interfered with the experimental procedures. The large variance differences between conditions reflects the fact that while most Ss did not interfere, the social responsibility scores of those who did interfere served to substantially affect the variance estimates. For example, the low total variance estimate for the NF condition reflects the fact that only one S interfered with the study, and this was at shock level 24; while the high total variance estimate for the AVF condition reflects the fact that 8 of the 15 Ss interfered with the study and obtained social responsibility scores ranging from 14 to 24.

Note: Column and row totals with common subscripts differ significantly (a = .01) using the method of critical criterion (Peatman, 1963).



($F = 6.36$, $df = 4,36$, $p < .001$). Subjects given some responsibility for the well-being of the learner and receiving some feedback from him are more likely to act in a socially responsible manner and come to his assistance, than Ss with no responsibility and receiving no feedback.

Individual comparisons of the means of the Responsibility main effect, as presented in Table 1, reveal a significant difference between the AR and TR groups (C.C. = 2.3, a = .01, df = 28). Neither of the other comparisons were statistically significant. Similar comparisons of the means of the Feedback main effect show significant differences between the NF and AVF conditions and the AF and AVF conditions (C.C. = 2.3, a = .01, df = 28).

Scheffe's test (Hays, 1963) for post-hoc comparisons was performed on the means for each experimental group and the results of this analysis are presented in Table 2. These comparisons indicate that only when Ss have total responsibility and auditory-visual feedback, are they likely to interfere.

Another way of viewing the data is to examine the number of verbal attempts made by subjects to assist the learner. Inspection of the means in Table 3 reveals that Ss in the AVF-TR group made more verbal attempts (attempts to help short of actual interference with

TABLE 2

Individual Comparisons of Group Means for Shock Levels Administered to Learner (n = 5 per cell).

		GROUP							
		NFAR	NFTR	AFNR	AFAR	AFTR	AVFNR	AVFAR	AVFTR
GROUP	$\bar{X}$	25.0	24.8	21.4	25.0	24.6	23.2	23.6	16.6
NFNR	25.0	0	.2	3.6	0	.4	1.8	1.4	8.4*
NFAR	25.0		.2	3.6	0	.4	1.8	1.4	8.4*
NFTR	24.8			3.4	-.2	.2	1.6	1.2	8.2*
AFNR	21.4				-3.6	-3.2	-1.8	-2.2	4.8
AFAR	25.0					.4	1.8	1.4	8.4*
AFTR	24.6						1.4	1.0	8.0*
AVFNR	23.2							-.4	6.6*
AVFAR	23.0								6.4*

*Significant at a = .05 level by Scheffe's method.

Note: NFNR = No Feedback-No Responsibility; NFAR = No Feedback-Ambiguous Responsibility; NFTR = No Feedback-Total Responsibility; AFNR = Auditory Feedback-No Responsibility; AFAR = Auditory Feedback-Ambiguous Responsibility; AFTR = Auditory Feedback-Total Responsibility; AVFNR = Auditory-Visual Feedback-No Responsibility; AVFAR = Auditory-Visual Feedback-Ambiguous Responsibility; AVFTR = Auditory-Visual Feedback-Total Responsibility.

TABLE 3

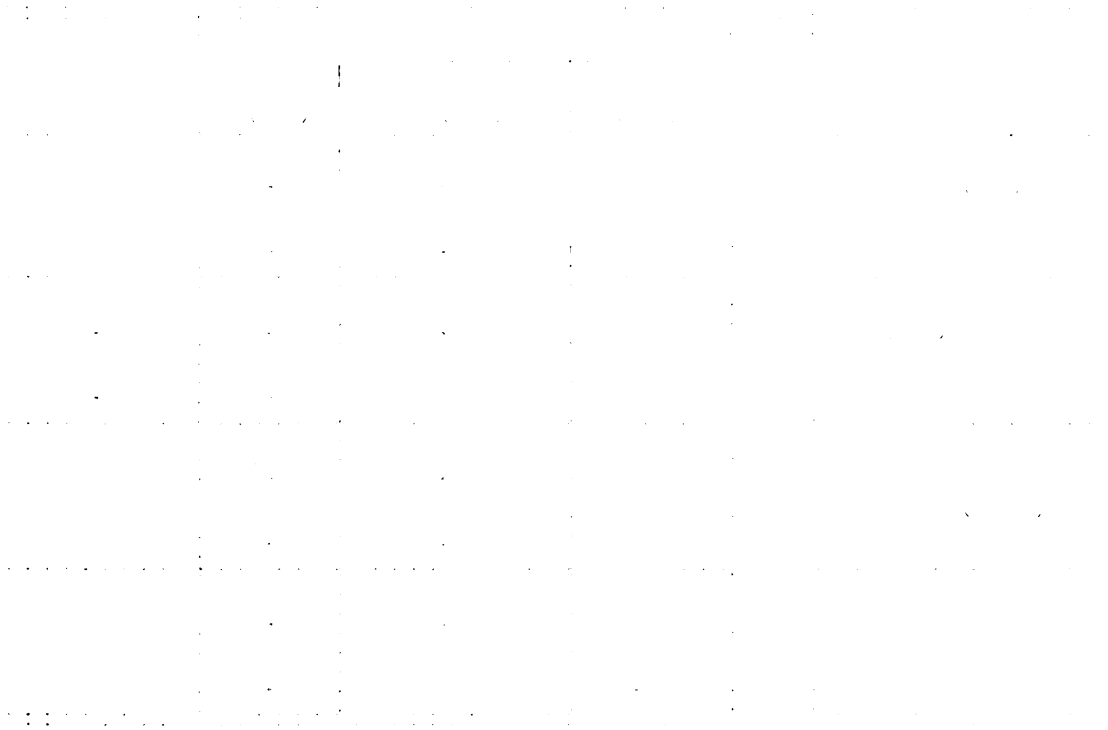
Means and Variances of All Feedback and Responsibility Conditions for the Number of Verbal Attempts to Assist the Learner

Feedback		Responsibility			Row Totals
		None (NR)	Ambiguous (AR)	Total (TR)	
None (NF)	$\bar{X}$	.6	1.0	2.4	1.3_a
	σ^2	.9	5.0	28.8	10.5
Auditory (AF)	$\bar{X}$	7.6	4.8	6.0	6.1
	σ^2	64.3	3.7	18.0	25.9
Auditory-Visual (AVF)	$\bar{X}$	6.4	6.0	15.2	9.2_a
	σ^2	15.3	116.5	47.2	63.3
Column Totals	$\bar{X}$	4.9	3.3	7.9	
	σ^2	25.4	33.5	66.3	

Note: Row total means with common subscript differ significantly (a = .05) using the method of critical criterion (Peatman, 1963).

experimental procedures, e.g., trying to talk the teacher out of raising the shock level; verbally threatening the teacher with physical harm; or, trying to contact the learner in order to determine the nature of his condition) to help the learner.

The significant probability of the Feedback main effect ($F = 7.99$, $df = 2,36$, $p < .01$) indicates that if subjects receive maximum feedback which accurately reflects



the learner's condition, they are more likely to come to his assistance by verbally protesting to the teacher. Individual comparisons of the means of the Feedback main effect, as presented in Table 3, yield a significant difference between the NF and AVF conditions (C.C. = 7.3, a = .01, df = 28).

Comparisons on the means for each experimental group were performed and the results are presented in Table 4. Once again, comparisons conclusively show that it is the AVF-TR group which is exerting the major influence.

II. Interferers vs. NonInterferers

If we now view the data in terms of a distinction between Ss who interfered with the experimental procedures (Interferers) and those who did not (NonInterferers) perhaps another dimension will be added to our understanding of the results. It should be noted that of the 13 subjects who interfered with the study, seven did so by calling upon the E to stop the procedure, five Ss disabled the apparatus (i.e., shut off the machine), and one S threatened the teacher with physical harm.

An analysis of the number of verbal attempts to assist the learner shows that those Ss who did interfere also made significantly more verbal attempts to help the learner (Interferers $\overline{X}$ = 12.85, NonInterferers $\overline{X}$ = 2.59, t = 6.83, df = 43, $p < .001$). Once the Interferers started to verbally assist the S, they waited an average

TABLE 4

Individual Comparisons of Group Means for the Number of Verbal Attempts to Assist the Learner (n = 5 per cell).

		GROUP							
		NFAR	NFTR	AFNR	AFAR	AFTR	AVFNR	AVFAR	AVFTR
GROUP	$\bar{X}$	1.0	2.4	7.6	4.8	6.0	6.4	6.0	15.2
NFNR	.6	-.4	-1.8	-7.0	-4.2	-5.4	-5.8	-5.4	-14.6*
NFAR	1.0		-1.4	-6.6	-3.8	-5.0	-5.4	-5.0	-14.2*
NFTR	2.4			-5.2	-2.4	-3.6	-4.0	-3.6	-12.8*
AFNR	7.6				2.8	1.6	1.2	1.6	7.6*
AFAR	4.8					-1.2	-1.6	-1.2	-10.4*
AFTR	6.0						-.4	0.0	-9.2*
AVFNR	6.4							.4	-8.8*
AVFAR	6.0								-9.2*

*Significant at a = .05 level by Scheffe's method.

Note: NFNR = No Feedback-No Responsibility; NFAR = No Feedback-Ambiguous Responsibility; NFTR = No Feedback-Total Responsibility; AFNR = Auditory Feedback-No Responsibility; AFAR = Auditory Feedback-Ambiguous Responsibility; AFTR = Auditory Feedback-Total Responsibility; AVFNR = Auditory-Visual Feedback-No Responsibility; AVFAR - Auditory-Visual Feedback-Ambiguous Responsibility; AVFTR = Auditory-Visual Feedback-Total Responsibility.

of 3.3 more shock levels before they actually interfered and stopped the study. Most verbal attempts to assist occurred after the 225 volt shock had been administered; this is the level at which the learner first asks to be freed from the situation. Other data suggest the existence of a relationship between the level of shock the learner was permitted to receive and the observer's verbal attempts to help ($r = -.51$, $n = 43$, $p < .001$). In other words, the greater the number of verbal attempts to assist that one made, the more likely was he to interfere earlier.

A. Descriptive Data. The descriptive data, obtained by having Ss complete the Subject Information Sheet, were analyzed by "t" tests of mean differences between Interferers and NonInterferers. Data collected included academic grade point average, number of siblings, subject's position in the family birth order, frequency of church attendance, number of social organizations to which subject belongs, and size of home town population (see Appendix D).

Interferers and NonInterferers differed significantly only on academic grade point average ($t = 2.16$, $df = 43$, $p < .05$), with Interferers having a lower grade point average.

B. 16 PF Test Data. No significant differences were obtained on any of the 16 PF factors (see Appendix E).

Nonsignificant elevations were found more frequently (12 of 16 factors) for the NonInterferers, but the mean scores for both groups were generally situated within the average range of sten scores.

III. Early vs. Late Interferers

Another way of viewing the data presents itself if we divide the group of Interferers into Early and Late Interferers. By using the shock level at which each interferer terminated the experiment, Pearson product moment correlations (Peatman, 1963) were computed for this variable with all the descriptive and 16 PF data (see Appendix F).

A. Descriptive Data. No significant correlations were found between the shock level at which the study was terminated and any of the descriptive variables.

B. 16 PF Test Data. Only one Factor, Q3 (Low Integration vs. High Self-Concept Control) was found to be significantly related to the shock level at which the study was terminated ($r = .81$, $n = 11$, $p < .001$). Although the direction of this finding is positive in the statistical sense, its practical meaning, in terms of the present study, is negative. That is to say, Ss who permitted higher levels of shock to be administered to the learner also tended to have higher scores on Factor Q3. Cattell (1957) describes a person with a high score on Factor Q3

as one who "shows socially approved character responses, self-control, persistence, foresight, considerateness of others, and conscientiousness" (p. 18).

Any attempt to interpret the two significant findings (Int. vs. NonInt. on grade point average and Early vs. Late Interferers on 16 PF Factor Q3) must take note of the fact that there were only two such differences which resulted from forty-two tests of significance. This could have resulted from chance alone.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

I. Effects of Feedback and Responsibility.

The major finding of this study indicates that total responsibility for another person's well-being and maximum feedback from that person, regarding his condition, are major determinants of socially responsible behavior. This finding lends support to the conclusions of Milgram (1965) regarding the proximity of a victim to the person who is causing him harm; the findings of Buss (1966) which note that feedback from a victim reduces the intensity of aggression directed toward the victim; and, the results of Darley and Latane (1966) pertaining to speed of assistance as a function of the diffusion of responsibility.

Feedback in the present study entailed the communication of information from one person to another that the first person was in need of assistance. The fact that 63% of the subjects who received some feedback and 53% of those who received maximum feedback did not respond to the learner's pleas, raises some questions regarding the effect of such feedback. Two major questions seem

to present themselves: "What effect does feedback from a victim produce in an observer?" and "Does feedback have the same effect in situations of differing circumstances?"

The present laboratory situation placed the observer in a position where he was witness to an event in which one person was causing physical harm to another. Upon hearing the first vague protests from the learner, subjects were uncertain about what was happening, as witnessed by the frequent comments of "What's that?" or "Is something happening in there?" However, as the learner's pleas for help increased in intensity there were reactions of heightened anxiety, tension, or fear in most subjects. This is attested to by the fact that, in the post-experimental interview, 23 out of the 30 subjects who received some form of feedback were either "nervous", "tense", "scared", "frightened", or "worried", and that this feeling resulted in an initial state of immobilization. One subject (#24) said "I thought something was wrong in there but I didn't know what to do. I wanted to help but I was sorta scared."

It would appear that as it became clearer that the learner was definitely being hurt, the observer was faced with a conflict situation. On the one hand there was a desire to help the learner, while on the other hand there was a fear of harm to the self which might have resulted if he interfered. As one subject aptly commented (#19),

"I thought that if they're crazy enough to hurt that guy in there, who knew what I'd run up against."

It was at this point that subjects usually made the first attempts to verbally assist the learner. It would seem that verbal attempts to assist, although genuine in nature, also served self-protective and delaying functions. Subjects did not know what they would have incurred upon themselves by directly interfering and coming to the learner's assistance. In other words, the delay seems to have provided the S with a chance to evaluate the situation and the personal risks associated with interfering. This would probably account for the delay between the time Interferers started to verbally assist the learner and the time at which they actually interfered with the study (only two Interferers did so at the same shock level at which they began to verbally assist).

The present laboratory situation, as well as the two events which prompted the present study, contained what might be called elements of violence and aggression. The non-Nazi residents of Germany generally claimed that they were not receiving any feedback from the death camps, while it is claimed that the residents of Kew Gardens were receiving incomplete or ambiguous feedback from Miss Genovese. Neither of these groups acted in a socially responsible manner. Although the ecological validity (Brunswik, 1947) of the present laboratory findings is subject to question, results revealing that it was the

NF and AF conditions which differed from the AVF condition may shed some light on the inaction of these groups. It appears that in situations where violence and aggression are involved, thereby implying a certain degree of personal risk to a potential helper, total and unambiguous feedback from a victim is generally necessary before an individual will take action and come to the assistance of another. In other words, he must have enough information so as to be able to evaluate the personal risks involved and then decide in favor of assisting.

On the basis of present findings it would appear that in situations involving aggression and violence a person is less likely to receive help, even if an observer is receiving total and unambiguous feedback. This leads one to consider the second question posed earlier; namely, "Does feedback have the same effect in situations of differing circumstances?" Although the present study was not designed to answer this question, the results do generate some ideas for future research. For example, must a person have total and unambiguous feedback from someone who is drowning or who has been struck down by an automobile? Another fruitful area of research might focus on the observation and measurement of physiological reactions under varying conditions in which demands are made on an observer for assistance. One would expect differing reactions in a situation where violence or aggression is involved (a fear-arousing situation), as

opposed to one in which no harm to the observer is apparent. Also, more introspective information needs to be gathered on observer reactions to situations in which a person is being physically harmed by another as well as in situations where no other person is involved but where someone is in danger of being physically harmed (e.g., a person who is drowning).

The effects of the responsibility variable can also be viewed from two different points of view. First, one can try to evaluate the effect of the situational determinants on the feeling of responsibility toward another person. Secondly, responsibility can be examined in terms of the psychological motivations resulting from certain personality characteristics.

In examining the effects of situational determinants on the responsibility condition, it was noted that the AR condition differed significantly from the TR condition. In both the NR and TR conditions the subject's responsibility, or lack thereof, is clearly defined for him. The subject is told what is expected of him and, therefore, it would seem that the demand characteristics of the study (Orne, 1962) are more explicit and would tend to operate more strongly. Most Ss in the NR condition who failed to interfere generally responded to the E's questioning by saying that "the teacher was responsible for his condition and I thought he'd do something about it"; whereas Ss in the TR condition who did interfere

said "well you told me I was responsible for his well-being." However, in the AR condition, the demands on the individual are not as clearly defined so that the decision for action or inaction is more likely to be predicated on the way each individual interprets the behavior of the teacher, the pleas from the learner, and the perceived demands of the study. Although one S in the AR condition responded to the learner's cries for help by telling the teacher: "I don't give a shit what you or the experiment says, either you stop shocking him or I'll slam you one!", most subjects responded in a manner similar to: "What are you gonna do, he's screamin' pretty loud in there?"

II. Descriptive and 16 PF Test Data.

An explanation of the personological concomitants of responsibility must, of necessity, be more speculative since only fragmentary personality data were collected. One line of explanation could focus on feelings of self-esteem or self-worth as reflected in independent or conforming behavior. It would be reasonable to expect that people with feelings of high self-esteem are likely to be more independent and would base their decision for action or inaction on self imposed expectations or standards, whereas people with low self-esteem would be more likely to conform to externally imposed expectations or standards and react to situations in terms of what they

perceive the demands and expectations of others to be. This hypothesis receives some support from the personality and descriptive data.

Academic grade point average is considered by some to reflect a student's ability to conform to certain rules and expectations as defined by school administrators and teachers. To get good grades one is expected to abide by the general university rules and fulfill specific course requirements. To the student, the latter usually entails doing only what is required and nothing more. One often hears students boasting that "I read only what was required and 'aced' the course."

If we accept the notion that academic grade point average reflects, to some degree, a student's conforming behavior, then another facet of understanding is added to the findings of the present study. As noted earlier, NonInterferers had a significantly higher grade point average than Interferers and, therefore, one would expect them to exhibit more conforming behaviors. It is logical to assume that the NonInterferers were more strongly influenced to conform to the demands of the study and not interfere. That is, Ss were paid $3.00 to participate in a psychological experiment; their responsibility, therefore, was to complete a requirement and, to interfere and stop the study would have meant going against the implied demands of the study, something which they were unable to do. Although non-significant,

the trends found on such other variables as frequency of church attendance, number of social organizations to which S belonged, and 16 PF Factor N (with NonInterferers attending church more frequently, belonging to more social organizations, and having a higher score on Factor N), lends additional support to the possibility that Non-Interferers were more conforming and dependent upon external demands and expectations.

This line of inquiry presents an interesting direction for future research. If the tentative conclusions noted above are correct then one might be able to predict interfering and noninterfering behaviors from subjects differentiated according to a test of field dependence and field independence. One should expect that those who are more field dependent would be less likely to interfere while field independent persons would be more likely to perform as Interferers.

The significant correlation between the shock level at which Interferers stopped the study and 16 PF Factor Q3 seems best explained in terms of the fact that whereas the 16 PF taps what a person says he will do, his actual behavior is reflected in the experiment proper. This conclusion is in line with findings reported above. Namely, the more likely a person is to exhibit conforming behavior, the more likely it appears that he will respond to personality test items in a manner which he thinks will reflect behaviors expected by others. This is a

problem which has long plagued any psychological research which utilizes attitude and personality questionnaires.

There was no reason to expect that any clear-cut differences would exist between those who did or did not interfere. In point of fact, there is evidence (Darley and Latane, 1966; Elms and Milgram, 1966) to suggest an overall lack of differences on personality and descriptive variables. Furthermore, Milgram (1965), in discussing destructive obedience, notes: "Situations producing the greatest obedience could do so by triggering the most powerful, yet perhaps the most idiosyncratic, of motives in each subject confronted by the setting. Or they may simply recruit a greater number and variety of motives in their service" (p. 75). This comment applies as well to the phenomenon of socially responsible behavior. Equally pertinent, however, is his further comment that, "Whatever the motives involved - and it is far from certain that they can ever be known - action may be studied as a direct function of the situation in which it occurs" (p. 75).

Although the general effectiveness of the feedback and responsibility interaction has been demonstrated in the present study, the total lack of socially responsible behavior exhibited by the majority of Ss indicates that it would be unreasonable to assume that these two variables explain all, or even most, instances of socially responsible behavior. As noted earlier, people do behave in

socially responsible ways in many other situations; often with a less clear understanding of events and an almost total lack of any feeling of responsibility toward another person. Similarly, in situations where one would expect to find strong feelings of responsibility, one often encounters an almost total disregard for the well-being of another. One need only spend a short while in a probate court, mental health clinic, or the ghetto of an inner-city slum to see the effects of such disregard. Future research should be directed at the further analysis and understanding of the concepts of responsibility and feedback and their operation under differing situational circumstances.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET

NOTE: All information will be kept strictly confidential and will be destroyed upon completion of this study.

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

(1) NAME:_____ (2) AGE:____
Last First Initial

(3) ADDRESS AT M.S.U.:_____

(4) HOME TOWN AND STATE:_____

(5) CLASS STANDING:_____
(Fr., So., Jr., Sr., Grad.)

(6) G.P.A. TO DATE:_____

(7) HOW MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS DO YOU HAVE?:_____
(Just total please)

(8) IN TERMS OF BIRTH ORDER, WHAT NUMBER CHILD ARE YOU?:
_____
(1st, 2nd, etc.)

(9) HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE? (Please state figure in number of times per year):
_____

(10) PLEASE LIST ALL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH YOU ARE AN ACTIVE MEMBER (Please include religious, professional, social, etc.):_____

_____

APPENDIX B

LEARNER DATA SHEET

Name of Observer_____ Date_____

	WORD PAIRS				TRIAL #1			TRIAL #2		
	1	2	3	4	Right	Wrong	Voltage	Right	Wrong	Voltage
1.	BLUE	boy	GIRL	grass	hat					
2.	HARD	stone	HEAD	bread	work					
3.	SAD	FACE	music	clown	girl					
4.	SOFT	rug	pillow	HAIR	grass					
5.	FAT	NECK	head	cow	chance					
6.	COOL	day	shade	water	CAVE					
7.	GOLD	dollar	necklace	moon	PAINT					
8.	WET	night	grass	DUCK	cloth					
9.	BRAVE	WOMAN	soldier	dog	horse					
10.	WHITE	cloud	HORSE	rock	house					
11.	SHORT	sentence	movie	TIME	skirt					
12.	SHARP	AXE	needle	stick	blade					

. . . continued

APPENDIX B (continued)

	WORD PAIRS				TRIAL #1			TRIAL #2		
	1	2	3	4	Right	Wrong	Voltage	Right	Wrong	Voltage
13.	SLOW	walk	DANCE	truck	music					
14.	RED	brick	rose	sunset	WAGON					
15.	FAST	BIRD	car	train	plane					
16.	BLUNT	knife	stick	work	ARROW					
17.	RICH	cake	man	BOY	girl					
18.	HEAVY	stick	lead	stone	HEART					
19.	BRIGHT	METAL	light	sun	man					
20.	LOUD	noise	cloud	BRIDGE	voice					
21.	NEW	house	pet	book	NAME					
22.	TAME	wolf	BEAR	dog	cat					
23.	QUIET	STORM	party	child	evening					
24.	EYE	cool	DAY	shade	cave					
25.	GREEN	grass	apple	INK	hat					

APPENDIX C

STANDARDIZED LEARNER PROTESTATIONS TO INCREASING VOLTAGE

Voltage	Shock Level	Protest
0, 15, 30, 45, 60, 75, 90	0-6	No Response
105, 120, 135	7-9	Grunt!
150	10	Oh!
165	11	Hey!
180	12	Ouch!
195	13	These things are starting to hurt!
210	14	These are really hurting now! Watch it!
225	15	These hurt too much! Let me out! (At this point learner attempted to free himself from chair.)
240	16	I've had enough of this crap! Let me out! Let me out!
255	17	I can't stand the pain! Let me out! Let me out of here!
270	18	Hey teacher! That's all! Let me out of here! Let me out of here! Let me out!
285	19	You're hurting me! Let me out of here! You have no right to keep me here! Let me out!
300	20	Damn it! Let me out of here! Let me out!
315	21	I won't be in this experiment any more! Let me out! I refuse to go on! Let me out!

APPENDIX C (continued)

Voltage	Shock Level	Protest
330	22	Please somebody help me! I'm being hurt! Can't you hear me? Let me out! (Pleadingly)
345	23	Let me out! Please! Let me out! Let me out! (Pleadingly)
360	24	Help! Damn it! Leave me alone! Leave me alone! (Pleadingly)
375	25	No verbal response. Learner slumped forward in chair with head bent forward.

APPENDIX D

Means, Standard Errors of the Means, and "t" Ratios for Interferers (n=13) and Non-Interferers (n=32) on Grade Point Average, Number of Siblings, Subject's Position in the Family Birth Order, Frequency of Church Attendance, Number of Social Organizations To Which Subject Belongs, and Size of Home Town Population.

Variable		$\bar{X}$	$S.E._{diff.}$	$t^{a,b}$
Grade Point Average	I	2.37	.178	2.16 *
	NI	2.76		
Number of Siblings	I	2.15	1.424	.110
	NI	2.31		
Position in Birth Order	I	1.54	.126	1.57
	NI	1.78		
Frequency of Church Attendance	I	18.69	7.316	1.99
	NI	32.22		
Number of Social Organizations	I	1.00	.376	.415
	NI	1.16		
Size of Home Town Population	I	2.85	1.44	.715
	NI	3.88		

a two-tailed

b d.f. = 43

* $p < .05$

APPENDIX E

Mean Sten Scores, Standard Errors of the Means, and "t" Ratios for Interferers and NonInterferers on 16 PF Test.

16 PF Factor	Group	$\bar{X}$	$S.E._{diff.}$	$t^{a,b}$
A	I	6.08	.645	.310
	NI	6.28		
B	I	6.08	.552	.867
	NI	6.56		
C	I	4.31	.680	.324
	NI	4.53		
E	I	5.46	.637	.031
	NI	5.44		
F	I	6.31	.718	.348
	NI	6.56		
G	I	5.62	.730	.945
	NI	6.31		
H	I	5.54	.612	.082
	NI	5.59		
I	I	4.23	.829	.892
	NI	4.97		
L	I	6.69	.480	-----
	NI	6.69		
M	I	6.46	.685	.467
	NI	6.78		
N	I	7.54	.439	1.502
	NI	6.88		
O	I	5.62	.618	.113
	NI	5.69		

. . . continued

APPENDIX E (continued)

16 PF Factor	Group	$\bar{X}$	S.E.$_{diff.}$	t[a,b]
Q1	I	6.31	.555	.775
	NI	5.88		
Q2	I	6.08	.765	.719
	NI	6.63		
Q3	I	4.54	.656	.610
	NI	4.94		
Q4	I	5.85	.808	.495
	NI	6.25		

a two-tailed

b d.f. = 43

APPENDIX F

Pearson Product Moment Correlations Between Shock Level At Which Experiment Was Terminated and Grade Point Average, Number of Siblings, Subject's Position in the Family Birth Order, Frequency of Church Attendance, Number of Social Organizations to Which Subject Belongs, Size of Home Town Population, and 16 PF Test Data for Early and Late Interferers (n = 13).

Variables	r
Shock Level with Grade Point Average	.169
" " " Number of Siblings	-.149
" " " Position in Birth Order	-.194
" " " Frequency of Church Att.	-.266
" " " Number of Social Orgs.	.365
" " " Home Town Population Size	.238
Shock Level with Factor A	.238
" " " " B	.155
" " " " C	.416
" " " " E	.153
" " " " F	-.114
" " " " G	.059
" " " " H	-.258
" " " " I	-.272
" " " " L	-.108
" " " " M	-.487
" " " " N	.239
" " " " O	-.491
" " " " Q1	.263
" " " " Q2	-.015
" " " " Q3	.806*
" " " " Q4	-.037

* $p < .001$

APPENDIX G

Coding System for Ss Home Town Population Size[1]

Population Size	Code
100 - 9,999	1
10,000 - 29,999	2
30,000 - 49,999	3
50,000 - 69,999	4
70,000 - 89,999	5
90,000 - 149,999	6
150,000+	7

[1]Population figures were derived from U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1963).

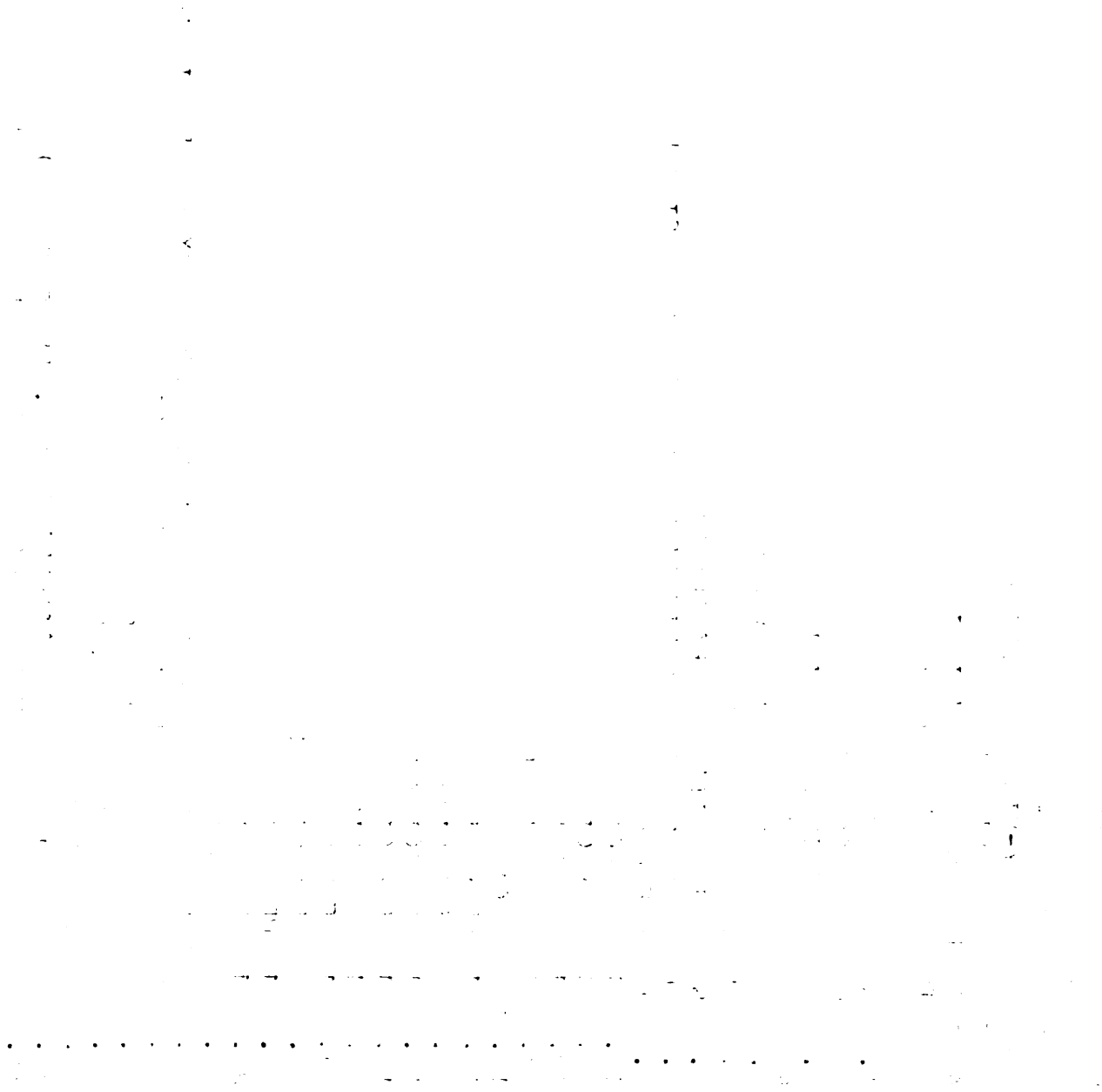
APPENDIX H

PICTURE OF SHOCK GENERATOR

RAW DATA

FEEDBACK AND RESPONSIBILITY CODES
NF = NO FEEDBACK
AF = AUDITORY FEEDBACK
AVF = AUDITORY-VISUAL FEEDBACK
NR = NO RESPONSIBILITY
AR = AMBIGUOUS RESPONSIBILITY
TR = TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. SUBJECT NUMBER
2. FEEDBACK CONDITION
3. RESPONSIBILITY CONDITION
4. AGE OF SUBJECT
5. ACADEMIC GRADE POINT AVERAGE
6. NUMBER OF SIBLINGS
7. SUBJECT POSITION IN FAMILY BIRTH ORDER
8. NUMBER OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH SUBJECT BELONGS
9. 16 PF FACTOR A
10. 16 PF FACTOR B
11. 16 PF FACTOR C
12. 16 PF FACTOR E
13. 16 PF FACTOR F
14. 16PF FACTOR G
15. 16 PF FACTOR H
16. 16 PF FACTOR I
17. 16 PF FACTOR L
18. 16 PF FACTOR M
19. 16 PF FACTOR N
20. 16 PF FACTOR O
21. 16 PF FACTOR Q1
22. 16 PF FACTOR Q2
23. 16 PF FACTOR Q3
24. 16 PF FACTOR Q4
25. DEPENDENT MEASURE-SHOCK LEVEL AT WHICH STUDY WAS TERMINATED
26. NUMBER OF VERBAL ATTEMPTS TO ASSIST
27. HOME TOWN POPULATION SIZE
29. SUBJECT CLASS STANDING
29. RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE
30. FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE (NO. TIMES PER YR)
31. SHOCK LEVEL AT WHICH FIRST ATTEMPT TO HELP WAS MADE



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05 NFNR 19 280 1 1 1 0504080507070304070706050706070 4 25 00 01 FR 2 52 25
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02 NFNR 19 240 1 1 2 0606060807090803070409050604100 1 25 02 07 FR 4 52 01
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31 NFAR 19 310 2 2 1 0606040803080502050806080509040 9 25 00 01 FR 1 36 25
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16 NFAR 18 290 2 1 3 0707050708070608080506050503030 9 25 00 06 FR 2 75 25
11 NFAR 19 380 2 1 0 0506010409020207071005070709030 7 25 00 03 FR 5 03 25
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28 AVNR 19 287 0 1 1 0505060509080705060808050605050 6 25 02 01 FR 1 03 12
15 AVNR 18 334 1 2 1 0807050407100602070505040404100 3 25 05 07 FR 2 52 15
38 AVAR 19 203 5 6 3 0508050610050404070507070207021 0 25 02 01 FR 2 36 17
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27 AVAR 18 254 3 4 1 1006030406090807081008060607030 7 25 00 03 FR 1 52 25
25 AVAR 18 197 4 1 0 0606040405040601071008070607060 5 25 02 06 FR 2 52 03
40 AVTR 18 160 1 1 0 0807040608070704050608090504040 6 17 07 07 FR 1 36 10
39 AVTR 18 275 4 1 0 0706050708070608070908070702040 5 19 18 01 FR 1 15 11
19 AVTR 18 218 2 2 1 0804010508050605080605060604040 7 14 09 01 FR 1 15 01
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14 AVTR 19 260 3 4 2 10040906080407080609080307020402 18 19 01 FR 1 52 12
13 AVTR 18 169 2 1 1 05050404040606070509080807090305 15 23 03 FR 3 12 12
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