to political research. Lastly, the normative consequences of this research regarding the representativeness of democratic systems should appeal to all political scientists.

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## REFERENCE

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**The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil**. By Philip Zimbardo. New York: Random House. 2007. 551 pp.

This remarkable and riveting new book by the creator of the classic Stanford Prison Experiment deserves to be required reading for all those interested in the intersection of psychological processes and political reality. For the first time, nearly 30 years after conducting this famous experiment, Philip Zimbardo writes a detailed account of what transpired in the basement of the Stanford psychology department for six days beginning on August 14, 1971. Writing in the current political context, Zimbardo carefully connects the events, experiences, and lessons of those days with the recent torture and abuse scandals concerning American troops that took place in Abu Ghraib prison in 2003. In analyzing the recent horrors in Iraq in light of insight gained into the power of the situation from the earlier experiments, Zimbardo places responsibility for these events at the foot of the Bush administration for their central role in creating the political and social system which defined and granted legitimacy to these situational forces. In so doing, Zimbardo creates a masterpiece of political psychology, investigating and explaining how basic underlying psychological processes are informed and defined by the political, economic, social, religious, cultural, and historical contexts and situations in which they exist. Throughout this analysis, Zimbardo reflects on the nature of good and evil, the nebulous boundaries between these realities, and the myriad ways in which individuals can be transformed from angels into devils, and, perhaps, how it may be possible for them to revert back into heroism.

This book is essentially divided into two temporal aspects. The first part, constituting the first 11 chapters, provides a detailed description of the Stanford Prison Experiment on a day-by-day basis. This discussion provides unique documentation into the process by which two dozen ordinary boys, all screened beforehand (from 75 volunteers) to assure their normal cognitive and emotional

functioning, soon became transformed—many into brutal guards and neurotic prisoners. At the outset, these boys were randomly assigned to the "guard" and "prisoner" conditions, but within 24 hours, the bored guards were inventing novel ways to abuse their prisoners. While Zimbardo told the guards that they could not physically abuse the prisoners, the guards quickly invented 17 largely arbitrary rules by which the prisoners had to abide, including night drills and public humiliation. Prisoners who did not comply were subjected to a variety of punishments, including solitary confinement. Within a matter of days, individual prisoners tried to organize resistance, went on a hunger strike, and one broke down and had to be released from the experiment. Everyone became deeply involved in the situation; a former prisoner served as a parole hearing officer; a priest came to counsel; parents tried to engage lawyers to set their children free. This section of the book, much of it written in the present tense, immediately draws the reader into an involving and engaging world, allowing observers an eyewitness view on one of the most important and influential experiments in the history of social psychology.

Zimbardo freely admits his own engagement with the role of Warden; and credits Christina Maslach, who had been his graduate student, for being the hero who saw through the situation and forced him to stop the experiment a week before its scheduled conclusion. In fact, an entire chapter is devoted to an ethical examination of the Prison experiment. Prior to this study and the infamous Milgram experiment, human subjects' boards did not exist. In many ways, these institutional review boards grew out of opposition to the perceived excess in these studies. And yet, good things clearly emerged; for instance, one of the subjects went on to become an important advocate of prison reform as a chief psychologist in the California prison system.

This study received particular attention at the time because it came out just prior to the infamous Attica prison riots in upstate New York in September 1971 in which 39 people were killed. Just as the Stanford Prison Experiment proved relevant then, it remained hauntingly relevant upon the release of the photos from Abu Ghraib prison some 30 years later. This book contains many photos from the original experiment, and they will strike any viewer as startlingly familiar in design to the more recent Abu Ghraib pictures. Some of the poses in which guards placed prisoners reemerge as identical in nature and scope.

The second half of the book focuses on these similarities and strives to explain how, like Lucifer, God's favorite angel who transformed into the devil once he defied God's authority, young American soldiers of impeccable character became torturers in the context of the Abu Ghraib prison. In so doing, Zimbardo takes the opportunity to reflect deeply, and in profound ways, on what 50 years of research in social psychology can teach us about the nature of conformity, obedience, and deindividuation, and how these realities can create environments which foster evil action. In particular, he discusses in detail the case of Sergeant Ivan "Chip" Frederick, one of eight men sentenced to military prison for participation in torture in Abu Ghraib. As an expert witness in this trial, Zimbardo draws on his

exceptional access to the relevant materials to show how a neat and clean young American soldier came to engage in acts of torture through the combination of fear, filth, boredom, disorder, isolation, social pressure, lack of leadership and oversight, and uncertainty which characterized his night shift on Tier 1A in Abu Ghraib. In this discussion, Zimbardo brilliantly intertwines the nature of basic psychological needs for order and human contact, within the specific political context of a guerrilla war, to examine and explain how responsibility for evil actions goes beyond the individual to hold equally accountable those who knowingly create and sustain the environments and situations which instigate such behavior. In this regard, those who establish and maintain a system which encourages and allows situations predisposing individuals within them to commit evil acts are themselves responsible for structuring opportunities for sin to flourish.

In a final chapter on heroism, Zimbardo discusses how humility, awareness, and responsibility can encourage heroism. He uses the case of Joe Darby, the young American whistle-blower in Abu Ghraib, to illustrate the social challenges associated with calling attention to bad behavior on the part of peers.

A couple of additional points are worth mentioning. Portions of this book may be well worth assigning in classes in social psychology and political psychology. Specifically, chapter 12, on "Investigating Social Dynamics: Power, Conformity and Obedience," constitutes the single best, most insightful, and concise summary of the history of social psychology I have ever read. The last chapter, on celebrating heroism, also offers some specific lessons on ways to resist unwanted social influence which can be useful for students as well.

This magnificent book stands as a truly impressive testament to Philip Zimbardo's life-long study of human psychology. Drawing on path-breaking experimental work conducted in the 1970s in the Stanford Prison Experiment, Zimbardo brilliantly examines the current Abu Ghraib prison torture scandal. He meticulously details the situational factors which can make good people engage in evil acts in order to meet natural and normal human needs for safety, knowledge, and affection. In so doing, he demonstrates the systematic political and institutional responsibility for such horrible outcomes. This important book must be read by everyone seeking to understand the nature of evil, and the prospects for good, in themselves, each other, and society at large. Be prepared; this book will change how you understand yourself and others. The book's final instructions encouraging personal awareness, accountability, and responsibility should challenge readers to take action to change and improve the world around them by recognizing, and resisting, the subtle ways politicians and others use the environment to manipulate unsuspecting bystanders into doing their dirty work for them. Yet the ultimate message of hope encourages the possibility of redemption for those who have learned the secrets of human behavior detailed in this book.

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