

# Theoretical Perspectives on Evil



**METTE MORELL NØRRE GYM 2012**

# Central Experiments and Selected Theories



- Milgram - Obedience
- Zimbardo – Role and Behavior
- Asch – Conformity
- Sherif – Robber's Cave
- Jane Elliott – A Class Divided
- Bandura – Cognitive Restructuring
- Schema Theory and Stereotyping
- Harris and Fiske – Dehumanisation Theory

# Background and methodology: Milgram



- Proposes a discussion of whether you can in fact ‘quantify evil’
- Ethical concerns
- Responsibility
- Agentic State
- Authorities
- Experimental psychology – variables – ecological validity
- Quantitative versus Qualitative data
- Deceit and Debriefing of subjects – how are they today?

# Background and methodology: Zimbardo



- The importance of the role on behavior
- Depersonalization, dehumanization, deindividualization
- Who/what is responsible? The bad apples? The bad barrels? The barrelmakers?
- Evil as threefold: Dispositional, Situational, Systemic
- [http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/philip\\_zimbardo\\_on\\_the\\_psychology\\_of\\_evil.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil.html)

# Background and methodology: Asch and Elliot



- Using children as participants – ethical concerns
- Conformity – when do you conform to social norms?
- Peer Pressure?
- Conformity types?
  - Normative?
  - Informative?

# Discussing Schema Theory and Stereotyping



- Possible focus on Nazism and Holocaust
- Eugenics
- Use examples of Der Ewige Jude
- Propaganda/Indoctrination
- Discussion of the process of stereotyping
  - Categorization
  - Stereotyping
  - Illusory Correlations
  - Discrimination

# Evil in Society Today?

- Perspectives

- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Psychopathy
- Crime
- Violence
- Minorities

- Other Areas of Psychology

- Developmental Psychology
- Biological Psychology
- Abnormal Psychology
- Case Studies
- Forensic Psychology