

For example, if a variable (e.g., source attractiveness) increases elaboration, persuasion will be enhanced when strong arguments are presented but decreased when weak arguments are presented. With the multiple roles postulate, the ELM explains how the same variable can bring about attitude change in different ways (e.g., serving as a cue, biasing processing) with different consequences.

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See also Attention; Attitude Change; Attitude Strength; Dual Process Theories; Motivated Cognition; Need for Cognition; Persuasion; Resisting Persuasion

Further Readings

- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 19, pp. 123–205). New York: Academic Press.
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., Strathman, A., & Priester, J. R. (2005). To think or not to think? Exploring two routes to persuasion. In T. C. Brock & M. C. Green (Eds.), *Persuasion: Psychological insights and perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 81–116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

ELEVATION

Definition

Novels, films, religious texts, and popular books often provoke a feeling in the viewer of being moved by the moral excellence of another person. Drawing upon Thomas Jefferson's own analysis of this emotion, Jonathan Haidt has called this *emotion elevation*. According to Jefferson, *elevation* is the desire to perform acts of charity or gratitude when presented with same and, on the contrary, the sense of abhorrence when presented with an appalling deed.

Usage and Analysis

Elevation is elicited by acts of charity, gratitude, fidelity, generosity, or any other strong display of virtue that runs counter to current expectations. In this way, elevation differs from a closely related emotion, awe, which occurs when the individual encounters

something that is vast and beyond current expectations. People experience awe in response to transcendent and vast objects in art, in nature, and for some, in religious experience. People experience elevation, in contrast, in response to the morally virtuous actions of others.

Jefferson's analysis points to other hypotheses that are beginning to be investigated. What is the physiological sensation of elevation? People report feelings of the opening and swelling in the chest. These sensations may trace back to the activity of the vagus nerve, which is a bundle of nerves originating in the top of the spinal cord. Research finds that when the vagus nerve is activated, shifts in breathing and heart rate occur, and people tend to feel prosocial sentiments, such as compassion, as well as engage in prosocial behavior aimed at attending to the needs of others.

Perhaps more intriguing is the question of whether the experience of elevation inspires morally virtuous action? For Jefferson, elevation was a source of charity and gratitude. Does witnessing another's selfless action inspire altruism and benevolence in the viewer? As yet there is no evidence to support this, but the answers to this question will have important implications for the study of how people learn to be moral actors and how cooperative communities form.

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See also Awe; Emotion; Helping Behavior

Further Readings

- Haidt, J. (2000). The positive emotion of elevation [Electronic version]. *Prevention and Treatment*, 3.
- Jefferson, T. (1775). Letter to Robert Skipwith. In M. D. Peterson (Ed.), *The portable Thomas Jefferson* (pp. 349–351). New York: Penguin.

EMBARRASSMENT

Definition

Embarrassment is the emotion that results when social predicaments increase the threat of unwanted evaluations from real or imagined audiences. It occurs when people realize that they are making undesired impressions on others, and it usually strikes without warning