CHAPTER 2: Dual Modes in Social Cognition

1. List three reasons as to why so many of people’s social cognitive responses are automatic?
   a) People are often cognitive misers. Thus, developing automatic responses is favorable because
      automaticity is efficient.
   b) Repeating behaviors automatically is beneficial because if those behaviors have worked well in
      the past, they will often reap adequate outcomes in a similar situation in the future.
   c) Automatic, unconscious thought can manage more complex information more rapidly, leading
      to more coherent and clear choices.

2. Explain why the difficulty of thought suppression is relevant to depression? Be sure to explain how
   ruminations are related to thought suppression.
   a) The difficulty of thought suppression is implicated in the inability of depressed people to avoid
      negative thoughts, though not positive thoughts. Depressed people perseverate about failures
      longer than others.
   b) A single intrusive thought can lead a depressed person down associative pathways of thinking
      that are unwanted, counterproductive, and repetitive. Such ruminations are a product of the
      depressed person’s inability to suppress these unwanted, negative thoughts.

3. Define intentional thought and provide an example of how a mother may interpret the intent
   of her 9-year old son when he voluntarily gives his favorite scooter away to his cousin, who is also
   9-years old and travelling back home across the country.
   a) Intentional thought is a thought process that involves making a choice between two or more
      options. Intentional thought is most obviously recognized when someone makes the hard
      choice among their options—a hard choice enacted by paying attention to implementing one’s
      intent.
   b) The mother attempting to understand her son’s intent would first consider the options he had. In
      this case, he could have kept the scooter or he could have given the scooter away—both
      socially acceptable options, though one is harder than the other. The son’s act of giving his
      scooter away suggests intentionality because he picked the harder of his two options. She could
      guess that his intention was to make his cousin happy or to give his cousin something to
      remember him by.

4. Name two automatic tendencies that result from people’s motive to belong. Define each tendency in
   your own words and explain each one’s connection to the belonging motive.
   a) People’s motivation to belong explains 1) ingroup bias and 2) conformity.
   b) Ingroup bias occurs when one favors those who they identify as part of some ingroup over
      outgroup members. Identifying ingroup and outgroup members or concepts has been shown
to be an automatic process designed to ease social interactions. The need to belong can motivate this sort of automatic impression formation—allowing people to feel that they belong to a group.

c) Conformity occurs when one matches the behaviors, beliefs, or norms of others in relatively automatic ways. The motivation to belong to a group spurs behaviors of conformity, given that being like others allows one to comfortably feel like they belong with those same others.

5. Describe two key differences between the dual process model of impression formation proposed by Brewer and the continuum model of impression formation proposed by Taylor and Fiske that are described in the chapter.

a) There is the branching vs. continuum contrast. Brewer proposes that impression formation involves a branching of different cognitive representations depending on the relevance of the target person to the perceiver, the perceiver’s involvement with the target person, etc. Taylor and Fiske, on the other hand, propose that people move along a continuum from automatic to deliberate processes of impression formation, depending on information configurations and motivations.

b) There is also the specific rules vs. constant rules contrast. Brewer’s model outlines specific rules for passing along each impression-processing branch. In contrast, Taylor and Fiske’s model offers constant rules for moving up or down the impression formation continuum.

6. In person perception, are threat-related stimuli more likely to be encoded deliberately or automatically? Provide an example from the literature that illustrates your answer.

a) Threat-related stimuli tend to be encoded automatically. The chapter mentions several studies that illustrate this phenomenon. For example, faces that look relatively angry tend to lead to activation of the amygdala and to spontaneous, quick judgments of the target’s untrustworthiness (Todorov et al., 2008). When perceiving groups, individuals who appear angry stand out more than individuals who appear happy (Hansen & Hansen, 1998).