Social Psychology & Its Applications To Modern Slavery

Target Audience
AS Psychology students who wish to further develop their knowledge of the basic concerns and ideas of social psychology and who wish to consider its applications to real-world issues.

Key Concepts
Definition and history of social psychology; major perspectives in social psychology (sociocultural, evolutionary, social learning, social-cognitive); applications of social psychology to modern slavery.

The Activity
Consider the nature and perspectives of social psychology.
Read an article entitled The Social Psychology of Modern Slavery and answer seven set questions relating to the article.

Background Knowledge
A basic understanding of the contribution and remit of social psychology to the discipline of psychology.

Resources
Your first task of this activity is to briefly explore What is Social Psychology?¹, making notes as you work through the page. Second, make notes on the Major Perspectives in Social Psychology². Third, read the article http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-social-psychology-of by Kevin Bales (first published in the magazine Scientific American, April 2002). Finally, answer the following questions relating to the article: 1) How might we define slavery? 2) Which social processes of interest to social psychologists are referred to in the article? 3) What do different forms of slavery share in common? 4) What is the relationship between slave and slaveholder? 5) How do slaves live through and survive their ordeal? 6) What are the considerations when liberating bonded workers? 7) Which social psychological perspectives might be used to study and explain different aspects of slave and slaveholder behaviour?

Outcomes
There are several possible outcomes for this activity. You may decide to write an essay, introducing social psychology and its perspectives, before outlining the paper and integrating your answers to the above questions into your text. Alternatively, you may prefer to produce a 15-minute lecture to present to your psychology class and teacher, incorporating your answers to the above questions.

Helpful hints
Some suggestions when approaching this activity:
• The social psychology of slavery is complex. It may help you to make notes as you read through this article. You will probably need to refer to it and your notes several times as you answer the set questions.
• If you choose to write an essay, you should limit your outcome to 1700 words.

Going further
Visit the Social Psychology Network⁴ which provides links to 135 web-based experiments, surveys and social psychology studies. Explore and make notes on recent developments in social psychology and the latest work in areas such as interpersonal relationships, altruism and self-image⁵.

¹ http://psychology.about.com/od/socialpsychology/f/socialpsych.htm
² http://psychology.about.com/od/socialpsychology/f/socpersp.htm
³ http://www.mit.edu/people/etekle/Index/
⁴ http://www.socialpsychology.org/expts.htm
⁵ http://www.sciencedaily.com/articles/mind_brain/social_psychology/