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FOR
THEORY

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UH 432

Perceiving the Moral and the Immoral



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Perception, both sensory and social, is a process guided by cognitive schemas, which direct our exploration of the environment in order to select certain information for focused attention. The selected information produces alterations in the directing schema or triggers a more deliberate evaluative process through which contradictory information is assimilated in such a way as to preserve important elements of the schema. Young conceptualizes moral perception as a form of social perception, which triggers strong affective feeling states. Based on the nature and strength of aroused feelings, the individual's multidimensional personal moral-value system may be activated. Moral perception, which involves the ability to perceive specific moral elements within situations, as well as the ability to see in moral ways, has significant influences on the individuals' abilities to assess and formulate actions consistent with their personal moral-value systems.