**Debriefing Information**

**Forming impressions of other people**

Stereotypes are popular beliefs about specific social groups (e.g., Chris is a salesman so he must be pushy and talkative). The main aim of the present study was to explore whether memory for individual traits is affected by group membership. Specifically, this study examined whether participants recalling newly learned information (i.e., personality traits) about novel social targets (i.e., "alien" individuals), inadvertently exploit any existing categorical structure.

In the memory task both aliens that had been viewed in the learning phase and new aliens that shared some of the same characteristics (e.g., colour, shape or movement) as the “seen aliens” were presented. It is predicted that without awareness you would assign some of the same personality traits to aliens that share similar features (i.e., the inference that individuals that look the same or behave in the same way share some additional characteristics).

The main dependent variable is *shared trait attributions –* the relative overlap in traits in the seen and unseen sets. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to statistically test whether there is a difference in the number of traits shared between unseen and seen aliens when they also share more physical characteristics (e.g., same shape and colour but different movement) than when they share fewer or no physical characteristics (e.g., different shape, colour and movement). *It is expected that targets that share multiple physical characteristics (whether they were seen or unseen) will be attributed as sharing more traits than those that do not share any characteristic.*

**Additional Reading**

Hamilton, D. & Gifford, R. (1976). "Illusory correlation in interpersonal perception: A cognitive basis of stereotypic judgments". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* *12,* 392–407.