impressions of the stimulus person plus a few filler questions. As a check on the manipulation of ability, S was also asked to rate the stimulus person's intelligence. S answered each question orally and also indicated the intensity of his feeling on a scale ranging from -7 to +7.

Results and Discussion

The results indicate that the manipulation of ability was successful; Ss in the Superior Ability conditions rated the stimulus person more intelligent ($M=5.73$) than in the Average Ability conditions ($M=0.83$; $t=6.89$, $p<.005$).

A composite attractiveness score was computed for each S by summing the numerical responses given to the eight interview questions assessing the S's attraction to the stimulus person. Table 1 lists the mean attraction scores by experimental condition. Inspection of Table 1 shows that the most attractive stimulus person was the superior person who committed a blunder ($M=30.2$) while the least attractive stimulus person was the average person who committed a blunder ($M=-2.5$). The data were analyzed by analysis of variance. There was a significant effect due to ability—Ss indicated a greater liking for the Superior Ability person than the Average Ability person ($F=14.90$, $df=1/40$, $p<.001$). This main effect must be qualified by a significant interaction between ability and pratfall ($F=10.33$, $df=1/40$, $p<.01$). The pratfall had the effect of increasing the liking the S had for the person of superior ability while the same pratfall decreased his liking for the person of average ability. These results confirmed our hypothesis. The effect of the pratfall, by itself, was insignificant. There were no significant interviewer effects.

Thus, within the range of ability varied in this experiment, higher ability leads to greater attractiveness;

Table 1. Mean Attraction Scores

	Pratfall	No Pratfall
Superior Ability	30.2	20.8
Average Ability	-2.5	17.8

Comment on Murray and Kohfeld by Robert Adamson

Murray & Kohfeld (1965) interpret stimulus intensity dynamism in terms of the relation between pre-test AL and test signal intensities. An alternative assumption is made about the AL for one of their groups, and a reinterpretation of their findings is offered which incorporates a tension level intermediary between the aforementioned relationship and performance.

Results reported by Murray & Kohfeld (1965) in a study pertaining to stimulus intensity dynamism are consonant with those reported in earlier studies on reinforcement effects (Bevan & Adamson, 1960; Black, Adamson, & Bevan, 1961) which also utilized an adapta-

however, the pratfall does not have this uniform effect. Whether a pratfall increases or decreases the attractiveness of a person depends upon the level of his ability. A contrast comparing the difference between the Pratfall and the No Pratfall conditions within the Superior Ability ($M_D=+9.4$) condition and within the Average Ability ($M_D=-20.3$) condition is highly significant in the predicted direction ($t=3.18$, $p<.005$). Furthermore, separate contrasts for the Superior and Average Ability conditions lend additional support to the hypothesis. In the Average Ability-No Pratfall condition the stimulus is rated as significantly more attractive than in the Average Ability-Pratfall condition ($t=3.15$, $p<.01$). However, the comparison between the Superior Ability-Pratfall and Superior Ability-No Pratfall conditions, while in the expected direction, does not reach statistical significance ($t=1.45$, $p<.18$).

Taken as a whole, these data support the contention that a blunder on the part of a superior person removes the onus of being "too good"; it increases his approachability and makes him seem less austere, more human—while a blunder on the part of a mediocre person makes him seem that much more mediocre.

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Note

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tion level model. An alternative interpretation of the results is suggested, however, if a different assumption is made about one of the groups in the study.

Murray and Kohfeld pre-adapted three groups, respectively, to 40 db tones, 100 db tones, and silence (presumably, about 10 db). They tested reaction time (RT) for the groups to randomized presentation of auditory signals having a geometric mean of 70 db. "It was anticipated that the effective AL during RT trials would be near 40 or 100 db for Ss initially adapted at those levels and near the geometric mean of the test intensities (70 db) for Ss adapted to silence. Thus it was expected that mean RTs at all levels of signal intensity would be

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effect on R-S recognition when S-R acquisition was taken to mastery of the list. Leicht & Kausler (1965) had previously failed to find an effect for SM on R-S recognition. The present results corroborate this finding and, in addition, suggest that RM may also be unrelated to R-S recognition.

These results are contrary to the interpretation of R-S learning in terms of intratrial rehearsal that was recently offered by Wollen & Gallup (1965) and thus provide some indirect support for an associative symmetry interpretation of R-S learning. If R-S recall is the product of S-R-S-R-S-R intratrial rehearsal, as proposed by Wollen and Gallup, the effect of RM on R-S recall would be expected to be as pronounced as the effect of SM. Because of the greater ease of pronunciation and greater degree of prior integration, R components of HM should generate considerably more S-R-S-R-S-R rehearsal during the study trials than R components of low M, thereby leading to greater R-S recall scores. This was not found in the present study.

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fastest for the 40 db group (as test signals were at or above AL), slowest for the 100 db group (test signals were at or below AL), and intermediate for the silence group."

The above statement makes the critical assumption that Ss do not adapt to silence. If the contrary assumption is made, the AL for the silence-adapted group should be lower than those of the other two groups during the RT trials and the relative signal intensity greatest. The groups would be ordered on a relative signal intensity dimension (geometric mean intensity of the RT signals, at 70 db, minus pre-RT AL) as follows:

Pre-test AL	Test Signal	Difference
Silence	70 db	circa 60 db
40 db	70 db	30 db
100 db	70 db	-30 db

If this is the case, an alternative explanation of Murray and Kohfeld's findings is necessary. The one suggested here is afforded by the Bevan-Adamson (1962) model for reinforcement. This model assumes a tensional intermediary between the difference, intensive input minus AL, and resulting performance. Accordingly, there would be a direct relationship between relative signal intensity and presumed tension level for the groups in Murray and Kohfeld's study.

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Notes

1. Based on a Master's thesis by J. S. under the direction of D. H. K.
2. An additional two level variable in the study was type of instructions. However, the effect of this variable, and its interactions with other variables, was extremely slight on all criterial measures and was omitted from the present study.

A further assumption of the Bevan-Adamson model is that tension-level is curvilinearly related to performance in the form of an inverted U, an assumption well supported experimentally (e.g. Courts, 1939, Shaw, 1956, Yerkes, & Dodson, 1908). On the basis of it, it would be expected that the group pre-adapted to 40 db would represent an intermediate—and possibly optimal—tension level and should show the fastest RT, whereas the other two groups, representing high and low tension levels, should show less efficient performance. This expectation is in accord with the findings of Murray and Kohfeld.

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