

Self and other

Reading Response

You are in love with someone.
But he/she is not in love with you.

Describe how you can use one of the ideas of social psychology (e.g., cognitive dissonance, stereotype threat, fundamental attribution error, spotlight effect, etc.) to help win the person's love.

Self and other

Connectors

- Milgram study
 - 160 people in Omaha, Nebraska to a lawyer in Boston
- 6 degrees of separation
- A small number of connectors
- How connected are you?

Why is it good to go to Yale?

Outline

- Self
- Self and other
- Other
- Groups

Outline

- Self
 - Everyone notices you
 - You are terrific
 - What you do makes sense

You think everyone notices you

Example 1: The Spotlight effect

You think everyone notices you

Example 2: The transparency effect

1. Have you been in London?
Yes, I have been in London /
No, I have not been in London
2. Do you have a younger sibling?
Yes, I have a younger sibling/
No, I do not have a younger sibling
3. Do you like sushi?
Yes, I like sushi/
No, I don't like sushi

You are terrific

- How good are you as a student?
- As a teacher?
- A lover?
- A driver?

Lake Wobegon effect: "all the children are above average"

-- nature of feedback, different criteria for goodness, motivation to feel good about oneself?

You are terrific

The self-serving bias

Students: Think about a class you did well in
Think about a class you did poorly in
Professors: Think about a paper you got accepted
Think about a paper you got rejected

Athletes, CEOs, accident reports

What you do makes sense

Festinger -- Cognitive Dissonance theory

Whenever people experience an internal inconsistency between two thoughts, it causes an unpleasant emotional state (dissonance)

We act so as to reduce dissonance

Avoiding inconsistent information

We attend to information in support of our existing views, rather than information that doesn't support them

- What magazines do you read?

Changing our attitudes to mesh with our decisions

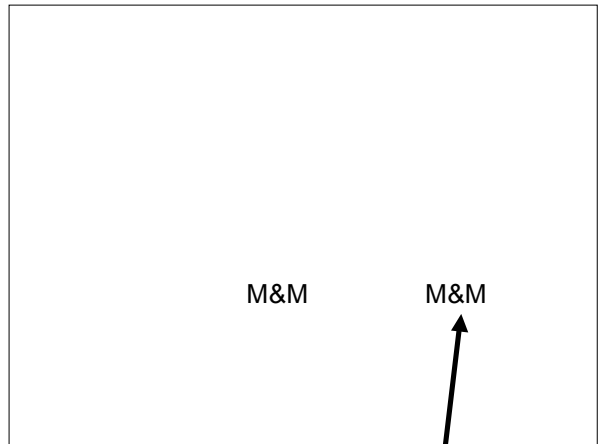
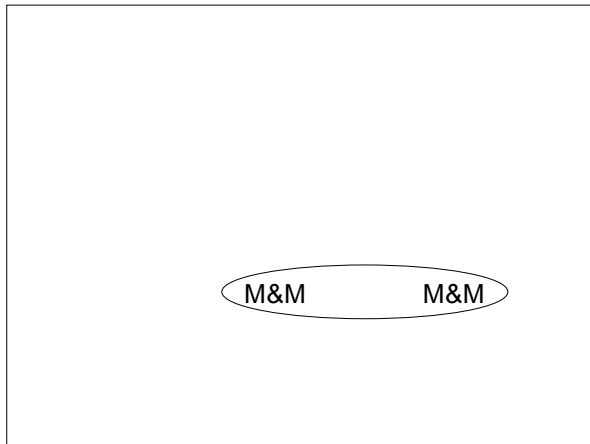
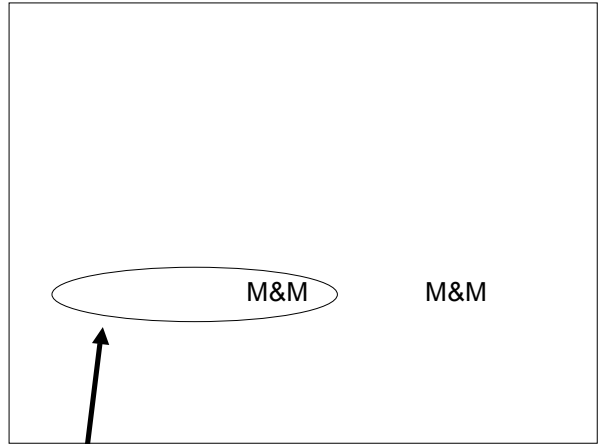
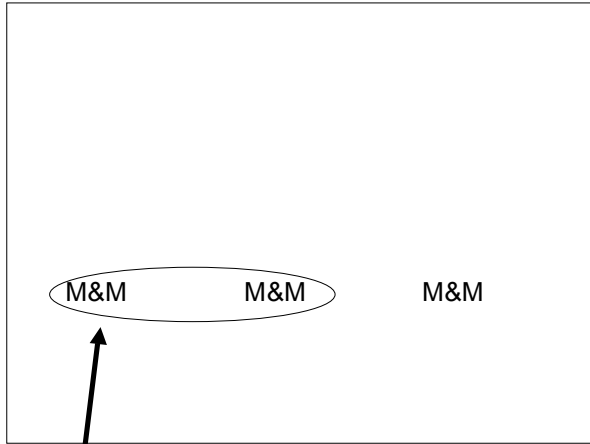
Example 1:
Denigrating unchosen alternatives

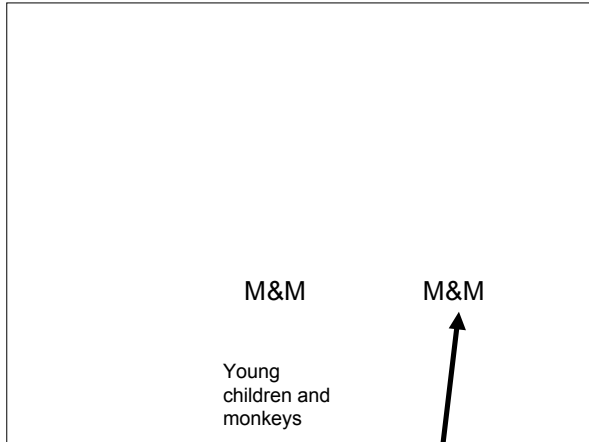
M&M study

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Changing our attitudes to mesh with our decisions

Example 2: Insufficient-justification effect

Insufficient-justification effect

- Festinger & Carlsmith:
 - Gave subjects a boring task, then asked subjects to lie to the next subject and say the experiment was exciting
 - paid ½ the subjects \$1, other ½ \$20
 - then asked subjects to rate boringness of task
 - \$1 group rated the task as far more fun than the \$20 group
 - each group needed a justification for lying
 - \$20 group had an external justification of money
 - since \$1 isn't very much money, \$1 group said task was fun

Cognitive dissonance really matters

- It is the end of the world and you know it (“When prophecy fails”)
- Hazing
- Jobs and therapy
- The dangers of rewarding children

What is going on in cognitive dissonance?

- Not simply inconsistency
- E.g., Insufficient justification effect

Insufficient-justification effect

- Festinger & Carlsmith:
 - ...
 - \$1 group rated the task as far more fun than the \$20 group
 - each group needed a justification for lying

Insufficient-justification effect

- Festinger & Carlsmith:
 - ...
 - \$1 group rated the task as far more fun than the \$20 group
 - each group needed a justification for lying
 - But they each had one!

What is going on in cognitive dissonance?

- Not simply inconsistency
- E.g., Insufficient justification effect
- Rather, we adjust our beliefs to make ourselves look more moral and rational than we really are.

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Attributions from behavior

- Attribution
 - a claim about the cause of someone's behavior
 - seeking a reason for the occurrence of events/behaviors
- Heider
 - early researcher
 - we intuitively attribute others' actions to personality characteristics

Person bias in attributions

- People give too much weight to personality and not enough to situational variables
- Known as person bias
 - a.k.a. fundamental attribution error

Cross-cultural differences

- Western culture
 - people are in charge of own destinies
 - more attributions to personality
- Some Eastern cultures
 - fate in charge of destiny
 - more attributions to situation

Summary so far

- Enhancement of self
- Over-simplification of other

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Why do we like others?

- Proximity
 - “mere exposure effect”
- Similarity
- Attractiveness

Attractiveness Bias

- physically attractive people are rated higher on intelligence, competence, sociability, morality
- studies
 - teachers rate attractive children as smarter, and higher achieving
 - adults attribute cause of unattractive child's misbehavior to personality, attractive child's to situation
 - judges give longer prison sentences to unattractive people