When Beauty May Fail

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The Dion, Berscheid, and Walster person perception study was quasi replicated in order to assess the generality of the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype. In Experiment 1, female participants who were either unattractive, average, or physically attractive made a variety of attributions about female target persons of varying attractiveness levels. Attribution favorability was found to be contingent upon the physical attractiveness of the participant as well as the dimensions along which the attributions were made. While many of the attributions were congruent with the postulated stereotype, others were not. Socially undesirable attributions regarding vanity, egotism, likelihood of marital disaster (requesting a divorce/having an extramarital affair), and likelihood of being bourgeois (materialistic/snobbish/unsympathetic to oppressed peoples) were reliably increasing monotonic functions of target persons' attractiveness levels. Plausible explanations for these divergencies were explored in Experiment 2.

The work of Berscheid, Walster, and colleagues (e.g., Berscheid & Walster, 1974) suggests that physically attractive as compared to unattractive individuals generally have a considerable social advantage. To account for why beautiful people might be preferred, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) postulated the existence of a physical attractiveness stereotype—"what is beautiful is good." In the Dion et al. person perception study, participants attempted to estimate accurately, on the basis of black and white photographs, the characteristics of men and women who varied in physical attractiveness. The results were interpreted as being compatible with the stereotype since participants were reported to have rated the physically attractive target persons as having more socially desirable personalities and being more likely to be professionally and maritally successful than target persons of lesser attractiveness.

Dion et al., however, noted that jealousy might attenuate the positivity of attributions for physically attractive target persons and speculated that participants might most likely be jealous of attractive persons of their own sex. This possibility was explored in that both male and female participants and targets were represented in the experiment. The appropriate tests for the jealousy effect—the Sex of Participant × Sex of Target Person interactions—were uniformly nonreliable. Byrne, London, and Reeves (1968) were similarly unsuccessful in testing the identical hypothesis, although they also detected reliable main effects generally favoring attractive over unattractive target persons.

Although Dion et al. (1972) reasoned that jealousy might be operative within their study, in retrospect it is not evident why a majority of participants should have reacted this way to attractive same-sex target persons. Consider the case of women participants. To the extent that women of both high and average physical attractiveness can readily perceive themselves as attractive, they can believe that, as the attractive target persons, they are destined for the best. Consequently, they should have little to be jealous about.

In contrast, physically unattractive women may, for a number of interrelated reasons, most likely carry well-honed hatchets for attractive female targets. Most important, men currently appear to control a preponderance of the rewards in our society and most likely favor attractive over unattractive women in reward distribution. Indeed, Berscheid and Walster (1974) review a number of studies indicating that women's physical attractiveness levels covary positively with their upward social mobility as well as their self-reports of dating popularity. As a consequence, unattractive women may be least capable of distorting their attractiveness far upward and most likely to view themselves as unsuccessful competitors with attractive women for the rewards males control. Unattractive women, therefore, might perceive attractive women neither as "good" (Dion et al., 1972) nor as "expected sources of reinforcement" (Byrne et al., 1968, p. 261) but rather as frustrating.

The purpose of the current study, then, was to delimit the beauty implies goodness stereotype. On the basis of the considerations above, it was hypothesized that the physical attractiveness of female target persons would interact with the attractiveness of participants in determining attributions.

It is important to note that neither Dion et al. nor Byrne et al. included photographs of exceptionally attractive persons in their studies, while such persons were included in the present replication. These researchers have suggested that their theoretical positions might be more strongly corroborated when exceptionally high levels of physical attractiveness are represented. It is precisely women of exceptional attractiveness, however, who are likely to be perceived as the proper object of every man's affection. The present analysis suggests that unattractive women may, as a consequence, not be so favorably disposed.[1] This analysis also suggests that attractive women may be stereotyped as holding socially undesirable bourgeois orientations as a consequence of their ability to attract high-status males.[2] Stated more generally, there are limiting conditions beyond which beauty may fail.

EXPERIMENT 1

Method

Participants

Forty female students, who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Iowa, participated in the experiment in exchange for $2. Five weeks earlier they had attended a survey session during which five concealed female observers had independently rated each of 108 participants on a physical attractiveness scale for which the response categories "very unattractive," "unattractive," "just below average in attractiveness," "just above average in attractiveness," "attractive," and "very attractive" were respectively scored with the integers 1–6.[3] The 10 least attractive respondents ($\bar{X} = 2.25$, $s = .05$), 20 average respondents ($\bar{X} = 3.50$, $s = .10$), and 10 most attractive respondents ($\bar{X} = 5.02$, $s = .34$) were selected for inclusion in the experiment.

Procedure

The cover story almost identically followed that of Dion et al., 1972. The participants were informed that their person perception accuracy was being assessed and compared with the accuracy of trained professionals. They were further instructed that standard sets of photographs would be used as the basis for the assesment. The photographed individuals were described as college students enrolled at a variety of universities and junior colleges throughout the midwestern United States who were participating in a longitudinal study of personality and value development scheduled to continue into adulthood. It would therefore be possible to assess the accuracy of each participant's attributions against currently available and forthcoming information on the photographed persons.

Participants recorded their attributions of each target person in different booklets. When a partici-

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[1] Mass media role-casting practices may also contribute to this effect. One might conjecture that the fate of unattractive women in the 1960s and 1970s is not unlike that of Blacks in earlier years, with physically unattractive women cast as servants to the beautiful rich.

[2] Exceptionally attractive women might also be stereotyped as bourgeois as a consequence of their adorning advertisements appearing in the mass media. In a pilot study exploring covariations between the attractiveness of females appearing in magazine advertisements and the luxuriousness of the product they were paired with, only 1 of some 150 females was rated as near average in attractiveness. (This woman appeared in a mop advertisement.)

[3] The average interrater correlation equals .52. The reliability of the five-judge panel as estimated via the Kuder-Richardson formula is .84.

pant completed rating a target, the photograph and booklet were removed before the next set of materials was presented.

Target Materials

One hundred sixteen women, mostly dormitory residents and sorority members at the University of Minnesota, served as photographic subjects in exchange either for $2.50 or a self-portrait. All subjects were asked to wear either white blouses or sweaters, no pins, jewelry, etc., in an attempt to reduce potential socioeconomic cues. No subjects were allowed to wear glasses, and all were posed as if a graduation picture were being taken.

The resulting waist-up, professional quality,[4] color portraits were sorted by 48 coeds at Iowa State University into "extremely unattractive," "unattractive," "attractive," and "extremely attractive" categories. These categories were respectively scored with the integers 1–4.[5] On the basis of these judgments two target sets were assembled. Each set contained three target persons, who reliably were judged to be either of low, medium, or high physical attractiveness. The two high and two low targets were the photographs respectively judged most ($\bar{X} =$ 3.57) and least attractive ($\bar{X} = 1.67$). The two medium targets were the photographs assigned the most intermediate attractiveness values ($\bar{X} = 2.52$).

Half of the participants at each level of participant physical attractiveness were randomly assigned to one of the target sets; the target persons within a set were presented in random order. Thus, a two-between (Target Set × Participant Physical Attractiveness) × one-within (Target Physical Attractiveness) factorial design was generated.

It is important to note that subsequent careful examination of the target sets revealed one of the unattractive target persons to be without a smile, while the attractive target persons wore smiles as well as cosmetics. The question arises as to whether these characteristics should be considered confounded with target attractiveness or aspects of attractiveness. Systematic reasons for deeming one as a confound characteristic and another as an aspect of attractiveness presuppose a theory of beauty. In the absence of such a theory, much less a definition of beauty, researchers investigating physical attractiveness have employed normative judgments of attractiveness. If the absence of a smile or evidence of discrete cosmetic usage are considered confounded with beauty rather than aspects of beauty and part of the attractiveness manipulation, it must at least be recognized that these are frequent naturally occurring confounds.

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[4] The photographic skills of Michael R. Cunningham and Mark Rice were essential to the success of this phase of the study.

[5] The average interrater correlation equals .46.

Attribution Instructions and Dependent Variables

As in Dion et al., the first page of each booklet stressed that person perception accuracy was being studied, and that it was of the utmost importance that participants rate the stimulus persons frankly.

The first set of 27 items (see Dion et al.) tapped personality attributions and were presented in a semantic differential 6-point rating scale format. The items within this set were randomly ordered across participants and target persons. The 14 items which constitute the Dion et al. Social Desirability Index and which were balanced for directionality of response follow: poised/awkward, modest/vain, strong/weak, interesting/boring, self-assertive/submissive, sociable/unsociable, independent/dependent, warm/cold, genuine/artificial, kind/cruel, exciting/dull, sexually warm/sexually cold, sincere/insincere, and sensitive/insensitive. Dion et al. report that in a preliminary study two-thirds of their sample of male and female respondents agreed on the item poles which characterized a socially desirable person (of either sex).

The next set of items required the participant to estimate the likelihood that the target person (a) sympathized with oppressed peoples (the poor, the disadvantaged, etc.), (b) was a materialist (i.e., believed that money and wealth are primary ingredients for a happy life), (c) was a (social) status-seeking snob, (d) would lead an exciting life, (e) would experience self-fulfillment, and (f) would be successful in her chosen occupation. The first three items of this set tapped perceptions of bourgeois orientation, while the latter three items tapped expectations of social and professional happiness. The response categories for these likelihood estimations were the following: "extremely unlikely," "very unlikely," "somewhat unlikely," "somewhat likely," "very likely," and "extremely likely," which were respectively scored with the integers 1–6.

For the remaining items, the participant was asked to assume that the target person would get married someday. Likelihood estimations were made for the target person's (a) subsequently requesting a divorce, (b) being an understanding spouse, (c) being a responsive sexual partner, (d) having an extramarital affair, (e) being a good parent, and (f) raising her children well. The final items in the booklet required the participant to prognosticate the occupation the target person's husband would likely hold at age 40 and the occupation the target person would hold at age 40, if employed. The 60 occupations were selected from Hollingshead's Occupational-Status Scale (see Bonjean, Hill, & McLemore, 1967, p. 442) and represented seven levels of status.

After the participants had completed rating all of the target persons, the experimenter explained that it was necessary to measure factors which may have influenced their ratings so that these factors could be controlled in the data analyses. He indicated that participants' perception of the physical attractiveness

of the target persons may have affected their attributions and asked them to rate the target persons. The target persons were judged in the original order in which they were presented, on the aforementioned 6-point attractiveness scale. The session was concluded with the rationale behind the experiment explained. A few participants were suspicious of the cover story, though there was absolutely no indication that participants were aware of the hypotheses being tested.

Results

Manipulation Check and Target Set Effects

Participants' judgments of the physical attractiveness of the target persons were analyzed as a function of the between-groups factors: target set and participant physical attractiveness (low, medium, high); as well as the within-groups factor: target physical attractiveness (low, medium, high).[6] All three- and two-way interactions were not statistically reliable.[7] There were, however, reliable main effects for target physical attractiveness, $F_m(2,33) = 145.32$, $p < .000001$, and set, $F(1,34) = 4.30$, $p = .05$; $\bar{X}$ set$_1$ < $\bar{X}$ set$_2$. As anticipated the two unattractive targets ($\bar{X} = 2.4$) were judged reliably less attractive than the two intermediate targets ($\bar{X} = 3.7$), who were in turn judged reliably less attractive than the two attractive targets ($\bar{X} = 5.5$). It should be noted that a special effort was made to include exceptionally attractive targets in the original photograph pool, and that the attractive targets were accordingly judged to be *very* attractive.

While these findings corroborate the manipulation, they must be cautiously interpreted because the variance/covariance dispersion assumptions for the within-group tests were severely violated as revealed by Box's (1950) test, $F(1,1307) = 1.87$, $p = .003$. Fortunately, the test did not reveal assumption violations for the remaining analyses.

Set interaction effects were occasionally detected in the remaining analyses; they were, however, invariably "monotonic" (see Campbell & Stanley, 1966, p. 29; Glass & Stanley, 1970, p. 429). In view of the nature of these interactions and the implied generality of effects across such interactions, the analyses were revised with the set factor disregarded.

Personality Attributions

The items which constitute the Dion et al. Social Desirability Index were first intercorrelated across experimental cells. While Dion et al. never claimed their index to be unidimensional, there were substantial negative correlations between the modest/vain item and other scale items.[8] In view of this finding, the item was eliminated from the index and analyzed separately. Analyses of the revised scale revealed a target physical attractiveness main effect as indicated in Table 1, row 1, as well as a suggestion of a Target × Participant Attractiveness interaction as revealed in rows 2 through 4.

The means associated with the main effect corroborate previous findings (e.g., Dion et al.; Miller, 1970) revealing the favorability of personality attributions to increase monotonically with the physical attractiveness of targets. It should be noted, however, that attributions for attractive targets were not reliably more favorable than those for targets of intermediate attractiveness, $F(1,37) = 2.83$, $p = .10$, while attributions for unattractive targets were reliably less favorable as compared with those for the intermediate targets, $F(1,37) = 20.04$, $p = .00007$. This finding suggests that for female participants, unattractive female targets are disadvantaged—"what is ugly is bad"; rather than attractive female targets being advantaged—"what is beautiful is good" (cf. Dion et al., Table 1).

The means associated with the interaction, in Table 1, suggest that unattractive women do not make personality attributions in strict accord with the beauty implies goodness the-

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[6] All analyses reported in Experiment 1 are based on weighted means; all p values are two-tailed.

[7] Researchers who suspect that the physical attractiveness of the target persons and participants would have an interactive effect may be interested in the associated statistics: $F_m(4,66) = .94$, $p = .44$. F_m denotes the likelihood ratio criterion for testing departures from a multivariate hypothesis (e.g., see Bock & Haggard, 1968, p. 110).

[8] This does not appear to be a random event since an independent researcher has found a similar effect using the Dion et al. stimulus materials and scales.

TABLE 1
ATTRIBUTIONS YIELDING RELIABLE TARGET ATTRACTIVENESS MAIN AND/OR
INTERACTION EFFECTS IN EXPERIMENT 1

Measure	Target's attractiveness			F_m	$p =$
	Low	Medium	High		
Social desirability of target's personality	48.9	56.5	59.2	23.58[a]	.0000003
Attractiveness					
Low	50.4	57.8	55.1		
Medium	47.8	57.4	61.2	1.96[b]	.11
High	49.6	53.3	59.2		
Target's vanity	2.4	3.1	3.8	14.15[a]	.00003
Target's egotism	3.1	3.1	3.9	6.34[a]	.004
Target's being an understanding spouse and responsive sexual partner	8.1	9.1	9.4	6.22[a]	.005
Target's requesting a divorce and having an extramarital affair	5.2	5.4	6.4	4.30[a]	.02
Target's parental competence					
Attractiveness					
Low	8.7	9.2	7.2		
Medium	8.9	9.2	9.4	2.62[b]	.04
High	8.4	9.4	9.2		
Spouse's occupational status	5.2	5.8	6.6	14.46[a]	.00002
Target's social and professional happiness	11.8	12.7	13.4	8.24[a]	.001
Target's bourgeois orientation	8.2	9.4	9.9	6.07[a]	.005

Note. The larger the mean, the more socially desirable the personality, the greater the vanity, etc.
[a] Main effect $df = 2, 36$.
[b] Interaction $df = 4, 72$.

sis. In terms of a linear trend, unattractive women did not reliably rate the attractive targets as having more socially desirable personalities than the unattractive targets, $F(1, 37) = 2.46$, $p = .12$, while the average, $F(1, 37) = 39.94$, $p = .0000002$, and attractive participants, $F(1, 37) = 10.37$, $p = .003$, did. Unattractive participants instead favored the intermediate targets over the unattractive targets, $F(1, 37) = 4.80$, $p = .03$, though the intermediate targets were not reliably favored over the attractive targets, $F(1, 37) = .71$, $p = .40$.

Analyses of the modest/vain and altruistic/egotistic [9] items yielded results in conflict with the beauty-implies-goodness thesis. As is evident in Table 1, attributions of vanity and egotism were highly reliable, monotonically increasing functions of targets' attractiveness levels. Female participants apparently felt that along these dimensions, all that glitters may not be good.

Marital and Parental Attributions

Correlational analyses of the items analogous to the Dion et al. marital happiness scale revealed the items to form two clusters. The likelihood estimates that the target would be an understanding spouse and responsive sexual partner were therefore summed and analyzed separately from estimates regarding the target's requesting a divorce [10] and having an extramarital affair. As presented in Table 1, the spouse/sex cluster yielded results consistent with the beauty implies goodness thesis. The latter (marital disaster) cluster, however, yielded results in conflict with the thesis, for attractive women—when married—apparently are most expected to share their heterosexual charms across households.[11]

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[9] This item constituted 1 of the 27 personality attributions. The remaining personality items, not discussed in the body of this article, are consistent with participants assuming extroversion (e.g., boldness, outgoingness) covaries positively with attractiveness.

[10] This item does not correspond well with the Dion et al. item. A more appropriate item would have been: How likely is this woman to be divorced?

[11] A participant attractiveness main effect was detected on this variable, $F(2, 37) = 3.30$, $p = .05$, such that attribution of marital disaster was a monotonically decreasing function of participants' attractiveness level.

Summation of the items analogous to the Dion et al. parental competence scale (likelihood of being a good parent and raising children well) revealed a Target × Participant Attractiveness interaction as presented in Table 1. The unattractive participants so downrated the parental competence of attractive targets, that the intermediate, $F(1, 37) = 9.55$, $p = .004$, and unattractive targets, $F(1,37) = 4.93$, $p = .03$, were, in comparison, expected to be better parents. There were, however, no reliable target attractiveness simple effects for the remaining participants. Parental competency attributions made by unattractive women do not appear to be described adequately by the beauty implies goodness thesis.

Occupational Status of Target Person and Spouse; Social and Professional Happiness of Target Person

Participants estimated the occupations the target and her spouse would likely hold at age 40. No reliable effects were detected for target's occupation, however, spouse's occupational status was a reliable monotonically increasing function of the target's level of attractiveness.

The items which constitute the social and professional happiness scale (likelihood of an exciting life, self-fulfillment, and occupational success)—which are analogous to the Dion et al. items—were found to intercorrelate well and were therefore summed. Analyses revealed only a target attractiveness main effect. As indicated in Table 1, hapiness attributions increased monotonically with target's level of attractiveness. These findings are consistent, of course, with the beauty implies goodness stereotype.

Bourgeois Orientation

Finally, the items which constitute this scale—likelihood of sympathizing with oppressed peoples (reversed for inclusion in the scale), belief in money and wealth as primary ingredients for a happy life, and likelihood of being a status-seeking snob—were found to intercorrelate well and were summed. As indicated in Table 1, these attributions were not in accord with the stereotype, for attributions monotonically increased with participant's level of attractiveness.

Discussion

Although the jealousy effect was not as robust as initially anticipated, it nevertheless appears to have some validity. Unattractive participants did not judge the beautiful targets as having reliably more desirable personalities than unattractive targets, while the remaining participants did make such attributions. In this instance, the beauty implies goodness stereotype appears to be attenuated for unattractive participants. The parental competency attributions, however, reflect not just an attenuation but a reversal of the stereotype. Unattractive participants reliably expected the most beautiful targets to be the least competent parents, while the remaining participants' expectations were not reliably affected by the target persons' physical attractiveness levels. Thus the beauty implies goodness stereotype may best describe attributions made by women of average and high physical attractiveness.

Many of the general effects associated with the attractiveness of the target, however, are consistent with previous findings. Thus, attractive targets were reliably expected to (a) have more socially desirable personalities, (b) be better spouses and sexual partners, (c) marry men of higher occupational status, and (d) experience greater social and professional happiness in comparison to the unattractive targets. Attractive targets, nevertheless, were also expected to be more vain, egotistical, likely to request a divorce and have an extramarital affair, as well as be unsympathetic with oppressed peoples, materialistic, and snobbish in comparison to unattractive targets. Beauty does not appear then to imply goodness, in terms of traditional Judeo-Christian mores. It instead appears as if women believe in accord with Don Marquis's (1930) poem "Unjust" that "beauty gets the best of it . . . [at least] . . . in this world." Unfortunately, the current study does not provide information on whether men also associate certain liabilities with feminine pulchritude.

There are, of course, a number of differences between the current constructive replication and the original Dion et al. experiment. The differential findings may, therefore, be attributed to the fact that only female participants were employed in the current study or that the distribution of participant attractiveness levels did not correspond well with the distribution in the original study. Furthermore, a variety of variables were assessed across the two studies.

The most intriguing possibility, however, is that attribution favorability may be a curvilinear funciton of target attractiveness such that favorability increases as attractiveness increases from low to moderately high levels, and then decreases at exceptionally high physical attractiveness levels. Thus, in contrast to the tentative hypotheses of Berscheid and Walster (1972) as well as Byrne et al., exceptionally attractive women may evoke images more congruent with Pandora than with goodness.

EXPERIMENT 2

In order to investigate the curvilinear hypothesis as well as whether males, in addition to females, associate liabilities with feminine pulchritude, the first experiment was quasi-replicated. Consequently, a fourth "medium +" level of target attractiveness was included in the replication as well as the participation of both males and females. The robustness of the beauty stereotype was additionally investigated by requiring half of the participants to indicate their confidence (Jones & Davis, 1965, p. 224) about each attribution, as they proceeded through the questionnaire. It was assumed that if the stereotype was weak, attribution effects would be attenuated when these additional ratings were required.

Method

Participants

Of 354 randomly sampled students at the student union and library of the University of Wisconsin— Milwaukee, 155 males and 164 females agreed to participate.

Procedure

The questionnaire was presented as a survey of person perception accuracy. The instructions were detailed on the first page and were essentially those used in the first experiment.

Target Materials

The low, medium, and high attractiveness photographs were those used earlier. On the basis of the normative ratings collected at Iowa State University, a fourth pair of photographs were selected which were between ($\overline{X} = 3.04$) the medium and high photographs in attractiveness.

Dependent Variables and Confidence Ratings

Only a subset of the variables in the first study were assessed in the present survey: the Dion et al. Social Desirability Index, the spouse/sex scale, the marital disaster scale, the parental competence scale, the social and professional happiness scale, the bourgeois scale, and the physical attractiveness manipulation check. Participants also estimated the occupations and annual salaries of the target and her spouse at age 40. Occupations were scaled on the basis of the 1960 U. S. Census Socioeconomic Scale (see Bonjean et al., 1967, p. 178). Measures were arranged as in the earlier questionnaire, with half of the participants making a confidence rating after each attribution.

Thus, a $4 \times 2 \times 2$ (Target Attractiveness × Participant Sex × Confidence) factorial experiment was generated. The manipulable factors were presented within a between-subjects design, in view of the restrictive variance/covariance dispersion assumptions of within-subjects designs. Participants were randomly assigned, of course, to treatments.

Results

Confidence Factor and Physical Attractiveness Manipulation Check

Unweighted means analyses of variance revealed virtually no confidence effects. The factor, consequently, was eliminated from the analyses.

The manipulation check yielded a highly reliable target attractiveness effect, $F(3, 311) = 73.55$, $p < .0000001$. As expected, the attractiveness ratings (3.4, 3.8, 4.8, 5.3) were an increasing monotonic function of the normative ratings. No other effects were detected on this measure.

Attributions

As is evident in Table 2, the sample means were generally a monotonic function of targets' attractiveness. Departures from monotonicity, as is evident in attributions about the social desirability of the target's personality, were not reliable. Internal analyses

TABLE 2

ATTRIBUTIONS YIELDING RELIABLE TARGET ATTRACTIVENESS MAIN EFFECTS IN EXPERIMENT 2

Measure	Target's attractiveness				F [a]
	Low ($n = 79$)	Medium ($n = 78$)	Medium + ($n = 82$)	High ($n = 80$)	
Social desirability of target's personality[b]	49.6	53.5	55.9	55.6	10.85
Target's vanity	2.4	3.0	3.5	3.4	14.20
Target's requesting a divorce and having an extramarital affair	4.9	5.5	5.8	6.0	7.07
Spouse's occupational status[c]	81.0	83.2	90.1	91.6	8.54
Spouse's annual salary (in thousands of dollars)	16.8	17.8	21.3	23.1	7.00
Target's social and professional happiness	11.7	12.4	12.6	13.0	4.61
Target's bourgeois orientation	8.1	9.6	10.3	9.9	15.59

Note. The larger the mean, the more socially desirable the personality, the greater the vanity, etc.
[a] All F ratios are significant at least at the .004 level ($df = 3, 311$).
[b] Revised index.
[c] Based on U.S. Census Scale.

based upon participants' ratings of the attractiveness of the targets also failed to reveal departures from monotonicity.

Although there were reliable participant sex main effects such that females evaluated the targets more favorably than male participants (in terms of spouse's salary, target's socioeconomic status, the spouse/sex scale, the marital disaster scale, and the bourgeois scale), no Participant Sex × Target Attractiveness effects were detected.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The postulated curvilinear relationship between feminine target attractiveness and attribution favorability was not corroborated, for only monotonic relationships were detected. Furthermore, males do not appear to be bewitched by feminine beauty, for they as well as female participants reliably associated certain liabilities with increasing levels of attractiveness. Finally, attributions—whether favorable or unfavorable—appeared sufficiently robust so as to withstand over two dozen queries regarding attributional confidence.

Considered together, the current experiments corroborate previous research indicating that attractive women are expected to be more sociable, heterosexually alluring, professionally successful, and personally happy in comparison to unattractive women. The current findings, however, also differ from previous reports in that attractive women are expected to be more conceited, likely to engage in adultery, and be bourgeois as compared to unattractive women. The divergence between these and previous findings can most readily be attributed to the fact that the variables assessed in the current experiments have been more diverse than those assessed in earlier studies.

This divergence suggests that attractive as compared to less attractive women may not always have a social advantage. Advantage may be contingent upon which dimensions are stressed within a particular social setting. A woman stereotyped as sociable, heterosexually alluring, and likely to be professionally competent may have, for example, the best chance of getting a job in sales or public relations. If she, however, is additionally stereotyped as conceited, adulterous, and bourgeois, she may have the greatest difficulty in acquitting herself of a prostitution charge or prosecuting a rapist. A physical attractiveness stereotype exists; its content, however, does not appear to be perfectly compatible with the "what is beautiful is good" thesis.

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