

The Effect of Perceived Role Requirements on Reactions to Favor-Doing¹

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The hypothesis of the present study was that when performing favors is in accord with role requirements attraction will be greater than when it is not, and that when withholding favors is in accord with role requirements, attraction will be greater than when it is not. To test this hypothesis, an experiment examined the effects on attraction to another person of one magnitude of favor (sharing of money), committed or omitted, and in accord, or not, with perceived role requirements (cooperation or competition). Pairs of subjects participated in a word game, under either a cooperative or competitive set. Each subject perceived that his partner won most of the money. Partners then either shared or did not share their winnings with the subject. In general, it was found that appropriate favors and nonfavors resulted in greater attraction than did inappropriate favors and nonfavors. Thus, partners who shared in the cooperation condition and who did not share in the competition condition were liked better than were partners who did not share in the cooperation condition and who did share in the competition condition.

When we do a favor for someone, we ordinarily expect reciprocation, or, at least, gratitude from the recipient. But often we encounter resentment instead, as, for example, the well-known reactions to U. S. foreign aid in some countries. In fact, there may be many situations in which a person will be liked better if he *refrains* from favor-doing, even though the favor is intrinsically pleasant.² Since, for reasons to be

¹This study is part of a dissertation submitted to The Ohio State University in partial fulfillment of the Ph.D. requirements. Further detail is presented in the dissertation. The study was supported in part by a Public Health Service fellowship, 5-FL-MH-15,845-03.

The author gratefully acknowledges the guidance of her adviser, Timothy Brock, in all phases of the research. Thanks are also extended to Charles Kiesler for his invaluable help and encouragement. The administration of the Guilford High School were very helpful in obtaining subjects and providing experimental space.

²In the present study, favor was defined as an act which *objectively* increases the benefits of the recipient, i.e., increases his material welfare or provides assistance. Thus, the favor, objectively defined, may or may not be *perceived* as a favor by the recipient and may or may not incur appreciation or gratitude.

discussed, persons like others who act consistently with their roles and with norms, negative reactions to a favor should occur wherever favor-doing defies convention or is not in accord with role requirements. Hence, whether or not the attractiveness of a potential favor-doer increases (i.e., "gratitude" results) should depend not only on whether or not he does the favor, or on how pleasant the favor is, but also on whether doing a favor or not in that situation is appropriate or inappropriate.

A more general formulation of the above reasoning is that acts elicit liking for the actor to the extent that the acts are in accord with perceived role requirements or norms. But the subclass of acts, favors, are of particular interest because a favor involves another source of elicited liking, namely, the intrinsic value of the favor, itself. What happens when a presumably valuable favor is not in accord with perceived role requirements? We might expect that the more the situation "demands" not doing a favor, or conversely, the greater the magnitude of an inappropriate favor, the less the attraction to the favor-doer. Further, one should find that the more the situation requires not doing a favor, the *greater* the attraction to a person who withholds the favor.

In the present study, the experimental design examined the effects on attraction of one magnitude of favor, committed or omitted, and in accord, or not, with perceived role requirements. It was hypothesized that when performing favors is in accord with role requirements attraction will be greater than when it is not, and that when withholding favors is in accord with role requirements, attraction will be greater than when it is not.

However, the hypothesized positive effect of appropriate favors and nonfavors on attraction (and negative effect of inappropriate favors and nonfavors) cannot be rigorously derived from extant theories. For example, inconsistent with the hypothesis is Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) exchange theory prediction that the greater the "gain" one receives from another, the greater the attraction to him. However, exchange theory also offers consistent arguments. The theory states that incompatible behavior (as when A's laughing interrupts B's performance) reduces gains and hence liking. Norms presumably prevent such "interference." Therefore, one could predict that A's favor-doing behavior which violates norms raises the probability that interference will occur, that gains will be reduced, and that attraction will be lower, even though the favor is intrinsically a source of gain.

Goffman's (1959) notions suggest a different basis for the hypothesis. According to Goffman, norms ("agreements") are created so that persons can agree on the definition of the situation, enabling them to predict and control each other. Counter-normative behavior forces others to

relinquish their definition of the situation and elicits hostility towards the offender. Hence, any favor (or withheld favor) which violated norms should force the recipient to give up his present definition of the situation, and should result in less attraction to the favor-doer.

Another relevant framework is Carlsmith and Aronson's (1963) recent version of expectancy theory. The theory predicts that when a person expects event X and event Y occurs, dissonance will occur, whereupon the person will judge Y as less pleasant than if he had expected Y. Carlsmith and Aronson present an experiment which indicates that disconfirmed expectations do create dissonance, as predicted, providing the expectations are clear and definite. Thus, when a person clearly expects no favor, and a favor is performed, it should be judged as less pleasant than if the favor were clearly expected. Furthermore, one might predict that if the favor were difficult to devalue (as with a gift of money), the favor-doer would be less liked as an alternative mode of dissonance reduction. Expectancy theory, then, generates a prediction identical to the present hypothesis, assuming that norms or roles create clear expectations of whether or not favors will be performed. However, there are undoubtedly many roles where favors are appropriate but not necessarily expected at any particular time, as when giving a "surprise" birthday party for her child is in accord with a mother's role though the party is not a clearly expected event.

Although the above theories suggest that the present hypothesis has some validity, there are as yet no data to support it directly. In the only other study of favor-doing (Brehm and Cole, 1966) the effect of violations of situational norms was not examined. However, the Brehm and Cole study is of interest here because no changes in attraction in response to a favor were found. The study was designed to show that when a favor reduces a person's freedom, "psychological reactance," or motivation to restore the lost freedom, is aroused. Subjects made first impression ratings of a confederate who did, or did not, do a favor for the subject (bringing the subject a Coke before the experiment). It was found that returning the favor (presumably a way to restore lost freedom) depended on whether it was important to be free from incidental influence when judging the confederate. Not only were the favor-doers not liked more than those who did no favor, but, somewhat surprisingly, favor-doers who "reduced freedom" when it was important were not liked less than those doing a favor when freedom was less important. Although there are no data to support this contention, it is possible that when a complete stranger brings one an unasked-for Coke (and doesn't bring one for himself), the act is so unexpected or inappropriate that

gratitude is inhibited. While these results are provocative, the Brehm and Cole study still leaves the present hypothesis untested.

According to the hypothesis, favors or nonfavors which are in accord with role prescriptions should engender greater attraction. However, a previous study by Thibaut and Riecken (1955) suggests a further elaboration. These authors found that compliance with a subject's request resulted in greater attraction if the subject perceived that it was done out of "internal causality" (i.e., the other really wanted to do it) than if it was done because of external pressure. These data suggest that the predicted positive and negative reactions to favor-doing will occur mainly when the favor is perceived as "internally" caused, since a forced favor is less likely to reflect the "real" feelings of the favor-doer. Hence, in the present experiment, the recipient's perception of the favor-doer's motivation, internal vs. external, was varied: the favor-doer did the favor on his own, or because he was induced to do so by the experimenter. It was expected that the effect of favor-doing on positive or negative changes in attraction would be greater in the former condition.

METHOD

The hypothesis was tested by having pairs of male high school students participate in a "contest" in which they could win money by playing a word game. The experimental instructions were directed at intensifying widely shared norms pertaining to cooperation and competition. Half of the subjects were induced to enact strongly cooperative roles and half were induced to enact strongly competitive roles. Cross-cutting this manipulation was the favor-no favor variation: after a subject failed to win much money in the game, his partner either shared his winnings or indicated that he would not share his winnings. It was assumed that sharing of money in our culture is more in accord with cooperative role enactment than with competitive role enactment, whereas not sharing one's winnings is more in accord with competitive role enactment. It was predicted that attraction to a sharer would be greater when the subjects had been induced to cooperate rather than compete, and to a nonsharer when the subjects had been induced to compete rather than cooperate.

To manipulate the subjects' perception of the partners' motive for sharing, half of the partners ostensibly shared of their own accord and half because the experimenter requested that they do so.² In all, the design included two role enactment conditions (Cooperation and Competition) and three favor conditions (Own Share, Induced Share, and No Share).

Procedure

Previously unacquainted male subjects were brought in pairs to the experimental room and seated in separate cubicles. A short "conversation" was stimulated by the

²The same variation was not replicated within the No Share condition because it would have been implausible.

experimenter to provide a basis for the pre-measure of attraction to the partner, which was administered immediately following. Subjects were then told that a study was being done on cooperation (or, competition), and were instructed not to talk.

Cooperation-competition manipulation. The role enactment manipulation was then introduced. Instead of delineating all the implications of the roles to which the subjects were assigned, the manipulation merely capitalized on what the students already knew about competing or cooperating by redundant stressing of the key words associated with the two roles and by arrangement of how money could be won. Cooperation condition subjects were told:

In order to get you to do your very best, and to make sure you really *cooperate*, we are going to give you a chance to win some money. You will have a chance to come here twice to try to win the money. [The subjects actually came only once; the instruction was designed to create greater importance of the partner's behavior.] Both times you will be doing exactly the same thing. You two are now *partners* and you must try your best to cooperate as a *team*. Your team will pick up points as you play the game. . . . Each point wins you money. The team that wins the most money during the two sessions here will win an extra prize of \$20 which you can divide. The most money you win in the two sessions here is \$10, \$5 today and \$5 the next time. So you can see that of all the teams, the one that gets closest to \$10 in the two sessions here will win an extra \$20 to keep. . . . Each of you will be able to keep the money that you win for your team. So if one person today wins 40¢ for the team he can keep the 40¢ and it will count towards the big prize of \$20. To win this, you have to cooperate with your buddy here. The more you win the better off the team is towards the prize and the more he wins the better off you are.

Thus, although the subjects were ostensibly competing with other teams they were cooperating with each other. All the subjects understood this. Competition condition subjects were given the same initial instructions, substituting the word "competing" for "cooperating." The experimenter continued as follows:

You two are now *competitors* and you must try your best to beat out each other in the game. Each of you will pick up points as you play the game. . . . Each point wins you money. The guy out of all the players who wins the most money during the two sessions here will win an extra prize of \$10, which he can keep. The most money you can win in the two sessions here is \$10, \$5 today and \$5 the next time. . . . Each of you will be able to keep the money you win for yourself. So if one person today wins 40¢ by himself then he can keep the 40¢ and it will also count towards the big prize. Now remember that in order to win the money in the two sessions and to win the big prize you have to beat out your partner and really compete with him. There is only \$5 that can be won today and \$5 the next time so that every time he gets a point you lose out. The more you win, the better off you are now and the closer you are to the big prize; the more your competitor wins the worse off you are.

Hence, despite different instructional sets, all the subjects played the game under the same financial conditions. Aside from the stressing of role-associated words, the only difference between conditions was that in the Cooperation condition

it would not be as bad for the partner to win money as in the Competition condition, since his gains could help the subject towards the "big prize."

Subjects played the word game individually using Scribbage⁴ cubes (on which letters are printed) to make as many words as possible in each of ten 1-minute trials. The subjects were told that winning depended upon their being able to make long and unusual words with the letters which were spilled out of the cup each trial. This requirement made their losing plausible, since it was difficult to make anything but short, common words. As the game progressed, the experimenter scored the lists of words turned in after each trial, gave back colored chips to represent the subjects' winnings, and announced the total amount won on the previous trial.

Subjects were made aware that they were losing throughout the game. First, when the experimenter announced the total amount won for each trial, the partner had apparently won much more. Also, the subjects received only white (1¢) and blue (5¢) chips, instead of yellow (10¢) and red (25¢) chips. After the fifth trial, the subjects exchanged chips for money, receiving 23¢.

Sharing manipulation. After the fifth trial the experimenter said, "Now before we go on I'm going to pass you some envelopes. You may want to say something to your partner . . . if you have time and want to pass a message, write it down on one of your sheets, put it in an envelope, and pass it to me. Then I will pass it to him." These instructions were designed to prepare subjects for a note from their partner. Subjects were involved immediately in continuation of the game so they would not have a chance to write a note at this point.

After the tenth trial the experimenter told the subjects that they had together won \$3.96, one person winning 51¢ and the other, \$3.45. Then giving an excuse that she "had to get organized" the experimenter loudly shuffled papers while she passed envelopes, ostensibly from the partner, to the subjects in the Own Share and No Share conditions.

Own Share subjects received an envelope containing a large number of red and yellow chips and a note reading, "We're in this together so I think that we should split. I think this is about right—it gives us each \$1.98." The No Share envelopes contained a note reading, "I thought about sharing my winnings but I don't think I should."

Subjects in the Induced Share condition received no envelopes; instead, the experimenter said, "You know it's really unusual for one person to win so much more. Sometimes one person is just lucky and gets good letters. Now I know that giving your money away isn't pleasant, but I think you should share the winnings, so this time that's what we are going to do. If the winner is really against it he can send me a note . . . O.K., you'll split."

Dependent Variable

Before chips were finally exchanged for money, the subjects completed the post-questionnaire. On both pre- and post-questionnaires subjects were asked six questions measuring their attraction to the partner (Thibaut and Riecken, 1955; Jones and DeCharms, 1957): (1) Is he good natured or irritable? (2) Is he likeable or obnoxious? (3) Is he considerate of others or inconsiderate? (4) Is he modest

⁴The game of Scribbage is manufactured by the E. S. Lowe Company, Inc., New York 10, N. Y.

or a braggart? (5) Is he dependable or undependable? (6) Is he easy to get along with or hard to get along with? The subjects answered by marking an appropriately labeled 32-point scale. For example, the first scale was labeled "very irritable," "fairly irritable," "fairly good-natured," and "very good-natured." Subjects were also asked to rate their best friend on the same scales, the only purpose for this being to provide an anchor. The dependent variable was the pre-post change in attraction to the partner.

Several other questions were included in the post-questionnaire to check on the effectiveness of the manipulations and to generate further information about the experiment. Filler items served to reduce suspiciousness and the subject's memory of how they had filled out the pre-questionnaire.

After completing the post-questionnaire, all subjects were paid \$2, the experiment was explained thoroughly, and the subjects were sworn to secrecy. There was no evidence that secrecy was not maintained.

Subjects

Subjects were 170 male students from the Guilford High School in Connecticut, randomly chosen from the 9th through 12th grades. The high school counselor attempted to pair the subjects from adjacent grades who were not friends, but the experimenter routinely checked for friendship and as a result, 19 subjects were discarded from the experiment. In addition, 2 subjects were discarded for failing to complete the questionnaire, 2 for not reading the share note, 2 for being apparently incapable of understanding the experimental instructions, and 8 for suspiciousness (suspicious subjects were approximately equally divided among the four Share and No Share conditions). Seventeen subjects refused to accept the favor. The data of those who refused, presented later, were not included in the main analyses because they failed to meet the requirements of the Share conditions (however, their data do not change the principal results). This left 120 subjects, 20 in each condition.

RESULTS

Effectiveness of the Manipulations

An analysis of variance was performed on scores from an item on which the subjects checked one of the following statements: we competed a lot (scored 1), we competed a little, we cooperated a little, we cooperated a lot (scored 4). The analysis indicated that the cooperation-competition manipulation was successful. Subjects in Cooperation conditions perceived that they worked with greater cooperation than did subjects in the Competition conditions ($F = 10.13$, $df = 1, 109$, $p < .001$).

Changes in Attraction

Before-after change scores from the six items measuring attraction to the partner were combined. An analysis of variance on the pretest scores showed no significant effects; also, an $F_{\max}$ test on the change scores proved the assumption of homogeneity of variance to be warranted. The change score data are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
MEAN CHANGES IN ATTRACTION TO THE PARTNER AS A FUNCTION OF ROLE
REQUIREMENT AND SHARING BEHAVIOR OF THE PARTNER

Role requirement	Partner's behavior		
	Own share	Induced share	No share
Cooperation	17.70 s = 18.77	17.05 s = 18.71	1.65 s = 16.02
Competition	14.80 s = 20.44	9.40 s = 18.53	17.75 s = 21.38

Note.— $N = 20$ in each condition. The higher the mean, the greater the increase in attraction to the partner.

The hypothesis—that there would be a greater increase in attraction to a partner doing a favor under cooperation than under competition and a greater increase in attraction to a partner not doing a favor under competition than under cooperation—was evaluated by examining the interaction between the Cooperation-Competition variable and the Share (both Own and Induced)-No Share variable. When Own Share was compared with No Share the obtained interaction yielded a $p < .05$ ($F = 4.87$, $df = 1, 76$). Comparing Induced Share with No Share yielded an interaction significant beyond the .01 level ($F = 8.01$, $df = 1, 76$). These outcomes supported the hypothesis.

More detailed analysis of the interaction yielded the following results: As predicted, there was a greater increase in attraction in the No Share condition when subjects were competing rather than cooperating ($t = 2.68$, $df = 38$, $p < .02$, two-tailed).

Analyses of the Share data yielded no differential effect of Own Share vs. Induced Share. Further, although the means were in the predicted direction, the difference between cooperation and competition under either, or both, share conditions was not significant ($F = 1.52$ for main effect). These data support the prediction that under Induced Share the difference between cooperation and competition would be minimal (following from Thibaut and Riecken's (1955) causality hypothesis). However, the finding that under Own Share there was not a significantly greater increase in attraction under cooperation than under competition was unexpected and needs explanation.

The problem of the Own Share condition might be alternatively phrased as follows: what caused the relatively great increase in attraction to the partner in the Competition-Own Share condition? The

Competition-Own Share condition differed from the two other "inappropriate" conditions in one major respect, that is, Competition-Own Share subjects could have easily *forced* the partner to act appropriately—by refusing the favor. Subjects in the Competition-Induced Share condition, to refuse the shared money, would have had to oppose the experimenter; Cooperation-No Share subjects had no easy way to force the partner to share his winnings. But subjects in the Competition-Own Share condition only had to return the envelope with the shared winnings to the partner. Hence, Competition-Own Share subjects, by accepting an inappropriate, but attractive favor which could have been refused, were themselves acting inappropriately. Such inconsistent behavior on their own part might have induced these subjects to be more lenient in their attitudes toward the partner, and more uncertain that the partner was wrong.

To check on the above possibility, several further analyses were performed. First, it was assumed that, of those subjects who could refuse the favor (all Own Share subjects), only those in the Competition condition would feel strong pressure to do so. Supporting this expectation was the finding that of 17 subjects who returned the money, twice as many were in the Competition-Own Share as in the Cooperation-Own Share condition. Secondly, it was proposed that those who accepted the favor would tend to feel that the partner had not been very wrong in doing the favor, and would find him more attractive. Supporting this suggestion, it was found that the mean change in attraction to the partner for those refusing the favor (10.82) tended to be less than the change for those accepting the favor (16.25), but the difference was not significant.

It is possible that some Competition-Own Share subjects felt pressure to justify keeping the inappropriate, but refusable, money. Such pressure might have resulted in re-evaluations of the whole situation. If a subject could convince himself that the relationship between him and his partner was really cooperative, then accepting the favor would be justified (and the partner would seem more attractive). To investigate this possibility, all Own Share subjects were regrouped, according to their answers on the cooperation-competition manipulation check, into those who perceived the situation as cooperative and those who perceived it as competitive. In regrouping it was found that whereas only 3 Cooperation subjects perceived themselves as competing, 8 Competition subjects perceived themselves as cooperating. Analysis of the means from groups divided on the manipulation check indicated a stronger difference between Cooperation and Competition than was found in the original

analysis. The difference between Cooperation and Competition reached the .05 level, one-tailed, supporting the above interpretation.

Written Communications between Subjects

Written communications from subjects in response to the sharing note further support the argument that Competition-Own Share subjects (who accepted the favor) were less sure that the partner was in the wrong.

The sixty written notes were subjected to ratings by two independent judges ($r = .76$) on two scales: (1) a 5-point appropriateness scale on which judges were instructed to rate "how much the note reflects a feeling on the part of the subject that his partner acted out of step with his role" and (2) an ambivalence scale on which the note was rated either 0 or 1 according to whether it reflected confusion or ambivalence. Within the Competition-Own Share condition, notes from subjects accepting the favor reflected significantly more appropriateness than did notes from those refusing the favor. There were no other significant differences in the ratings. Hence, data from the notes, while incidental to the main hypothesis, indicated that within the Competition-Own Share condition, those who refused the favor felt it was more inappropriate than did those who accepted the favor.

Other Measures and Alternative Explanations

One of the questions on the post-questionnaire asked how predictable the partner was. It was felt that predictability might have mediated the effect of favors on the attraction, since a person who acts appropriately might seem more predictable than one who acts inappropriately, and might be liked better because he is more predictable (Gergen and Jones, 1963; Kiesler, 1965). However, an analysis indicated no significant differences on the question, indicating that predictability did not mediate the effect of favor-doing.

Items asking how much the subject would like to change partners, how important winning the game was, how skilled the partner was, how much luck was needed to win the game, and whether the partner was a good winner showed no significant differences, indicating that changes in attraction were not due to differences in perceptions of the game or of the partner's skill. An item asking whether the subject, himself, was a "good loser" showed a significant main effect of sharing ($p < .001$), almost entirely due to the Induced Share conditions. This is reasonably explained by the fact that the experimenter had in effect told these

subjects that losing was not their fault and that sharing was the proper thing to do.

DISCUSSION

The data supported the hypothesis that favor-doing behavior which is in accord with role prescriptions results in greater attraction than favor-doing behavior which is not. While the hypothesis was given stronger support when the inappropriate act involved not doing a favor, several related reasons have been advanced to explain why attraction was not as severely affected when the inappropriate act involved doing a favor. The findings from the Share conditions prevent one from drawing any conclusions concerning the Thibaut and Riecken causality hypothesis. However, if one could for the moment disregard the Own Share data (since other variables were presumably affecting the behavior of the subjects), it appears that in the Induced Share condition, where the partner was externally motivated, there was only a minimal effect on attraction of appropriate behavior (sharing under cooperation) vs. inappropriate behavior (sharing under competition). But in the No Share condition, where the partner was internally motivated, there was a very strong effect on attraction of appropriate behavior (not sharing under competition) vs. inappropriate behavior (not sharing under cooperation). Taken alone, these data support the Thibaut and Riecken hypothesis that another's behavior will have a greater effect on attraction if it is perceived as internally rather than externally motivated.

The present specification of conditions under which favor-doing behavior will incur increased or decreased attraction adds clarity to the literature, since the only other available study (Brehm and Cole, 1966) was ambiguous. The present data show that the same favor will be perceived differently depending on the situation, and that in some situations attraction will increase more when money, usually considered pleasurable, is not given than when it is. Thus, "gains" (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959) must be considered in relation to normative requirements of specific situations in order to derive precise predictions concerning changes in interpersonal attractiveness.⁵

The data also suggest an extension of expectancy theory (Carlsmith and Aronson, 1963), in that disconfirmation of *general* expectations about what is appropriate may have effects analogous to disconfirmed clear, definite expectations. An event Y, then, should be judged as less pleasant, not only when event X was expected, but also when Ys usually do not

⁵Consideration of normative requirements would also be useful when applying Homans' (1961) or Adams' (1963) theories of interpersonal exchange to interpersonal attraction.

occur (since the role requires non-Ys). If evaluations of the act are difficult to distort (e.g., when a gift of money is given) the person performing the act should be perceived as less pleasant (less attractive) as another mode of dissonance reduction.

The data also indicate, contrary to previous findings (Deutsch, 1960), that members of cooperative groups will not generally be more accepting and attracted to each other than members of competitive groups, but that acceptance and attraction depend somewhat on adherence to normative requirements.

The present hypothesis suggests that the greater the inappropriateness (deviation from role requirements) of favor-doing behavior, the less the attraction. Thus, if the amount of money shared by a partner in the Competition-Own Share condition were varied, one would predict that the more the money given away, the less would be the attraction to the partner. However, such a prediction ignores the conditions under which perceptions of the favor-doer's intentions may vary, as well as other modes of reacting to inappropriate behavior. For example, a high status favor-doer who acts inappropriately might be perceived as having the best of intentions while making a "mistake," since high status persons are often expected to help those of lower status. A low status person who does an inappropriate favor, however, might be perceived as "insulting." Thus, we would expect quite different reactions to the inappropriate favor depending on perception of the favor-doer's intentions. Furthermore, experiments by Kiesler (e.g., Kiesler and Corbin, 1965) suggest that whether or not the subject is committed to continue interacting with the favor-doer should be important in determining both perceptions of the favor-doer's intentions and reactions to the favor. For example, if the subject never has to encounter the offender again, he might attempt to temporarily alleviate discomfort by saving the favor-doer's "face" (Goffman, 1955); he could, for example, treat the favor as a joke. If, on the other hand, the subject must continue to interact with the favor-doer, "saving his face" will not be very useful, since the favor-doer might continue to act inappropriately. Hence, the subject should take more extreme measures, such as refusing the favor and telling the other to act appropriately. In the present experiment, where the subjects were committed to continue interacting with the partner, the latter method of dealing with the inappropriate favor-doer seemed to be preferred by some subjects.

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(Received November 10, 1965)