Sex sells... or does it?
Old Spice body spray = power
If you wear it
you will become powerful
The first sexual revolution

Pleasure principles

How morality became personal in 18th-century England

Feb 11th 2012
There was a revolution regarding sexual mores during the mid-18th century in England and much of Europe.
Do pretty women inspire men to discount the future?

Margo Wilson and Martin Daly

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Organisms ‘discount the future’ when they value imminent goods over future goods. Optimal discounting varies: selection should favour allocations of effort that effectively discount the future relatively steeply in response to cues promising relatively good returns on present efforts. However, research on human discounting has hitherto focused on stable individual differences rather than situational effects.

In two experiments, discounting was assessed on the basis of choices between a smaller sum of money tomorrow and a larger sum at a later date, both before and after subjects rated the ‘appeal’ of 12 photographs. In experiment 1, men and women saw either attractive or unattractive opposite-sex faces; in experiment 2, participants saw more or less appealing cars. As predicted, discounting increased significantly in men who viewed attractive women, but not in men who viewed unattractive women or women who viewed men; viewing cars produced a different pattern of results.

Keywords: future discounting; sex differences; sexual selection; attractiveness

Is it really true?

Do people actually buy a product because of arousal?
MAGAZINE COVERS ← FOR MEN

- SEXY WOMEN
- VS
- INTERESTING MALE STAR
these magazine covers outperform!
And the implication is...
The experiment used images from the www.hotornot.com website.

Wilson and Daly (2003)
(a) Measuring individual discount parameters

In a modification of the method of Kirby & Marakovich (1996), successive screens provided participants with choices between two monetary options: a specified sum ‘tomorrow’ (range over the 18 choices of $15 to $35) or a larger sum (range of $50 to $75) after a specified delay (range of 7 to 236 days).

Indifference between a smaller, earlier reward (tomorrow) and a larger, later reward (future) indicates the following hyperbolic discount parameter \( k \) (Kirby & Santiesteban 2003):

\[
k = \frac{\text{future} - \text{tomorrow}}{(\text{delay (in days)} \times \text{tomorrow}) - \text{future}}.
\]
Discounting ↑↑ in men viewing attractive women.

Wilson and Daly (2003)
The Methods used in Behavioral Economics

- Field experiments
- Computer simulation
- Neuroscience - fMRI
Why experiment?

Distinguish between:

**Behavioral Economics:**
Psychology + Standard Economics

**Standard Economic Theory:**
Assumes that people are rational, act based on full information and have stable preferences while always maximizing utility.
Fully aware of all the options they have

People are rational: will maximize utility

Always and consistently: rank their options according to their preferences

Always choose the option they like best

Homo Economicus
Arousal and Economic Decision Making

Salar Jahedi\textsuperscript{1,*}, Cary Deck\textsuperscript{2,3,4}, and Dan Ariely\textsuperscript{5}

Previous experiments have found that subjecting participants to cognitive load leads to poorer decision making, \textcolor{yellow}{consistent with dual-system models of behavior}. Rather than taxing the cognitive system, this paper reports the results of an experiment that takes a complementary approach: \textcolor{yellow}{arousing the emotional system}. The results indicate that exposure to arousing visual stimuli as compared to neutral images has a negligible impact on performance in arithmetic tasks, impatience, risk taking in the domain of losses, and snack choice although we find that arousal modestly increases risk-taking in the gains domain and increases susceptibility to anchoring effects. \textcolor{yellow}{We find the effect of arousal on decision making to be smaller and less consistent then the effect of increased cognitive load for the same tasks}. 
Q: Does activating one of the dual systems cause a shift in behavior?
“automatic nonconscious processes pervade all aspects of mental and social life”

John Bargh, Yale University

Two-track mind:

**Thinking Fast**

**Thinking Slow**
Thinking Fast

- fast
- automatic
- effortless
- implicit
- emotional
Thinking Slow

- slow
- deliberate
- sequential
- rational
- effortful
- explicit
Thinking Fast

1. Heuristics
   - Fast
   - Automatic
   - Effortless
   - Implicit
   - Emotional

2. Learned Associations

   - Feelings
   - Guide our judgements
Continuously scans the environment

Fast, but error prone

Works automatically & effortlessly

THINKING FAST - IMPLICIT
How robust & reliably can the emotional system shift decisions?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lizard Brain</th>
<th>Mammal Brain</th>
<th>Human Brain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brain stem &amp; cerebelum</td>
<td>Limbic System</td>
<td>Neocortex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight or flight</td>
<td>Emotions, memories, habits</td>
<td>Language, abstract thought, imagination, consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autopilot</td>
<td>Decisions</td>
<td>Reasons, rationalizes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q. Does emotional taxing change decision-making behavior in a similar manner as does taxing cognitive loads?