WHEN LIARS FOOL THEMSELVES: MOTIVE TO IMPRESS ALTERS MEMORY FOR ONE'S OWN PAST EVALUATIVE ACTIONS

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Previous research has shown that what we tell other people can impair accurate memory for what actually happened, and that tailoring descriptions of an event or person to an audience's known preferences can alter subsequent memory for ambiguous information—an effect that is more pronounced when people are more rather than less motivated to create a shared reality with the audience. The present studies investigated whether motives to impress an opposite-sex other might moderate memory for one's own past evaluative actions. In two studies, participants were more likely to misrepresent and misremember their previous survey responses when they expected to meet an attractive rather than unattractive member of the opposite sex who was known to have responded differently from them, even when they were offered a meaningful reward for memory accuracy. The results have relevance for theories of story retelling, audience tuning, and motivation to establish a shared reality.

Harry gets a call from a political polling organization and is asked for his opinion of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which is commonly known as Obamacare. He gives it the lowest possible rating. A few weeks later, Harry meets an attractive woman named Sally online. During their conversation, Sally mentions that she answered the same question by the same polling organization and expressed high approval of Obamacare. She then asks, "What approval rating did you give Obamacare when they asked you?"

This question poses a dilemma for Harry. Should he tell the truth or should he shade the truth? To the extent that Harry finds Sally very attractive and is motivated to create a positive impression, he might shade the truth about his past behavior by claiming to have expressed at least moderate approval of Obamacare. What, if any, effect would this misrepresentation have on Harry's memory for how he actually answered on the day he was contacted by the polling organization?

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Previous research on retelling stories has shown that people who retell past events often have goals other than strict accuracy (Marsh & Tversky, 2004), that they embellish or distort the facts (Dudukovic, Marsh, & Tversky, 2004), and that doing so can lead them to "remember" their own embellishments and distortions rather than what actually happened (Marsh, 2007). Related research on audience tuning has shown that people routinely "shape" their communications to fit the intended audience (Higgins, 1992), that they are more likely to tune their communications when they desire a "shared reality" with the audience (Echterhoff, Higgins, Kopietz, & Groll, 2008), and that audience tuning can alter subsequent memory (Echterhoff & Hirst, 2009). These lines of research suggest that misrepresenting his past evaluative actions to Sally might cause Harry to confuse what he only claimed to have done with what he actually did (Johnson & Raye, 1981). In fact, if Harry is more likely to misrepresent his past evaluative actions the more he wants to impress Sally, then he might also be more likely to fool himself.

RETELLING STORIES

In everyday conversation, people who retell personal memories have many goals other than strict accuracy. They often retell past events in ways calculated to create a desired impression or simply to entertain (Dudukovic et al., 2004; Marsh & Tversky, 2004). They exaggerate, minimize, embellish, and omit parts of the story strategically, and these retelling strategies can affect their own subsequent memory (French, Garry, & Mori, 2008; Marsh, 2007). If they retell ambiguous information about a target person with the goal of recommending her for a job, for instance, they later remember more positive "facts" (some invented by themselves) about her than if they retell the same ambiguous information with the goal of complaining about her (Tversky & Marsh, 2000). Similarly, if they retell a story in order to entertain someone else, they build more emotion into the events and exaggerate more than if they were merely trying to be accurate—differences in story content that render subsequent memory for the actual events less accurate (Dudukovic et al., 2004).

The influence of retelling goals and strategies on the narrator's own memory has been explained by cognitive rehearsal of events that were inserted or exaggerated and by selective activation of a schema that is used to guide subsequent recall (Marsh, 2007; Marsh, Tversky, & Hutson, 2005), and these mechanisms might well apply to Harry's memory for what he told Sally, but only if Harry were to go beyond simply telling her which point on the survey scale he selected when was asked to evaluate the President's healthcare plan. If he simply tells her "Yes, I also said that I approved," and leaves it at that, then he will not have any story details to exaggerate, embellish, minimize, or insert, or even any chance to heighten the emotions involved. In addition, it is not clear whether retelling one's own evaluative actions (such as responding to a survey) would have the same effects on memory as retelling stories of the type used in these experiments. Even so, research on retelling stories establishes that what we tell other people about past events—our own constructive re-creations—can seem as real in memory as what actually happened (e.g., Coman, Manier, & Hirst, 2009).

AUDIENCE TUNING

Research on audience tuning tells a similar story about the effects of what we say on memory, but with more of an emphasis on communication goals that are a function of the specific audience (Higgins & Rholes, 1978). The target information in studies of audience tuning typically involves an ambiguous, experimenter-provided description of a target person (Echterhoff, Higgins, & Groll, 2005; Echterhoff & Hirst, 2009; Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012). Participants are asked to relay that information to someone known to like or dislike the target person. The typical finding is that participants shade their communication about the target person in ways that fit what they assume the audience wants to hear. In addition, they later recall details of the ambiguous description that fit the valence of their own selective communication better than details that do not fit.

Interestingly, audience tuning depends on the participant's motivation to establish a "shared reality" with the audience (Echterhoff, Lang, Krämer, & Higgins, 2009). People do not misremember information about the target when the audience has little in common with them, and they are shading their communication only in the interest of being polite or avoiding conflict should the topic arise in later conversation with the audience (Echterhoff et al., 2008). Their memory is biased only to the extent that the audience is a valued peer, someone whose opinion they value, and someone who elicits a desire to reach agreement for the sake of seeing the world through a common perspective (Echterhoff & Hirst, 2009).

These limits on audience tuning effects suggest that there might be differences among audiences in just how much communicators desire a shared reality. Even among audiences consisting entirely of ingroup peers, for instance, there may be a baseline level of audience tuning effects such that they all elicit some motivation to reach common ground, but there may also be specific audiences for which this motivation for a shared reality is especially high. If Harry is single, for instance, he might want to make a favorable impression on any woman he meets online and thus misrepresent his level of support for Obamacare if she favors it, but if Sally is very attractive, then she might elicit from Harry an especially high level of misrepresenting his actual response to the earlier survey, and an especially high level of misremembering how he had actually responded. Sharing is a widely known technique for signaling romantic interest (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986). Thus, motivation for a shared reality (e.g., Echterhoff et al., 2009) might be especially high when communicating with a very attractive potential partner.

As with research on retelling stories, however, demonstrations of audience tuning effects suggest but do not directly test the present hypothesis. Audience tuning experiments typically involve an ambiguous passage (Higgins & Rholes, 1978) or video (Kopietz, Echterhoff, Niemeier, Hellman, & Memon, 2009) that the participant must communicate to an audience that likes or dislikes the main character. Unless we assume that people spontaneously "see" themselves as the main character in a "mental movie" while they are describing what they did, the procedures in audience tuning studies have not assessed memory consequences of claiming to have evaluated a policy differently from what the person actually did.

THE PRESENT STUDIES

No previous study has directly examined the effect of self-motivated misrepresentation on memory for one's own past evaluative actions. One arena in which such self-motivated misrepresentation occurs frequently is in initial conversation with a potential romantic partner. Both men and women admit to deceptions in an effort to attract mates (Schmitt & Buss, 1996; Tooke & Camire, 1991). A common deception is to tell potential romantic partners what they "want to hear" (Rowatt, Cunningham, & Druen, 1998). In addition, motivation to impress a potential romantic partner is highly correlated with the potential partner's physical attractiveness (Rowatt, Cunningham, & Druen, 1999; Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008). To manipulate self-motivation to misrepresent, it seemed feasible to vary physical attractiveness of a potential partner who had admitted to taking an evaluative action different from the participant's actual previous action. The operational hypothesis of Experiment 1 was that participants would lie more to an attractive than unattractive potential romantic partner, and would later be more likely to misremember their own pre-manipulation actions as consistent with the lie.

EXPERIMENT 1

Experiment 1 tested whether motivation to impress another person affects misrepresentation of and memory for one's own past actions, by using a potential partner's physical attractiveness to manipulate motivation. The participants, who were single, had all indicated disagreement with "comprehensive mandatory exams" on an initial survey. Two weeks later, they were led to believe that they would be meeting either a very attractive or relatively unattractive member of the opposite sex who had agreed, on that same survey, with instituting mandatory comprehensive exams. Before the meeting, they had to tell the potential partner how much they agreed with instituting comprehensive mandatory exams. They were then told that the cover story was fictitious and that they would not be meeting anyone. After that, they were asked to recall, as accurately as possible, how they had answered the initial survey. The dependent measure was their recalled survey response, which was predicted to be more positive when the potential partner was attractive rather than unattractive.

METHOD

Participants. Forty-four single participants (33 women, 11 men) participated for course credit.[1]

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1. Participant sex had no effect on the results reported in Experiment 1 or 2, *F*s < 1.

Materials and Procedure

Initial Survey. As part of an online survey at the beginning of the semester, participants indicated their agreement with several proposed campus changes, including mandatory comprehensive exams for graduating seniors (0 = *not at all agree*; 10 = *very much agree*). Participants selected to participate indicated they did not agree with instituting mandatory exams (responding at most 3 on the 0–10 scale). Participants did not differ on initial responses across conditions, $F(1, 42) = 1.61$, *ns*.

Partner Attractiveness Manipulation. In an ostensibly unrelated study approximately two weeks later, these same students participated in individual sessions. They were told that the researchers were investigating the effectiveness of online dating websites, and that they had been randomly assigned to meet someone during the second part of the study. Prior to meeting in person, they were given a profile of their opposite-sex partner. Part of the profile included an "important issues on campus" section, on which the partner indicated that he or she had answered the online survey question by choosing "9" on the initial survey scale. To avoid making the study be about persuasive messages, participants learned only that the partner very much agreed with instituting mandatory comprehensive exams.

To manipulate motivation to make a favorable impression, participants were also given a photo of their partner, who was an opposite sex person pretested as either physically attractive ($n = 23$) or unattractive ($n = 21$).[2] After that, participants were asked to what extent they found their partner physically attractive, and wanted to get along with, and make a good impression on their partner (from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *a great deal*). These three items were averaged to form a composite of motivation to impress the partner ($\alpha = .87$).

Claimed Responses. After participants read their partner's profile with a "9" on agreement with mandatory exams, they were asked to complete a profile of their own to be sent to their partner prior to their in-person interaction. The profile sheet was identical to that of their partner's profile sheet, except that the "important issues on campus" section asked participants to indicate *their own* agreement with mandatory exams on the same scale. It was made explicit to participants that their responses would be shown to their partner.

Memory Test. Immediately after participants completed their own profile sheets, they were informed that the online dating cover story was fictitious, that the photo was of an unknown person who did not attend their university, whose opinions on any issue were unknown, and whom they would never meet. This "debriefing" was intended to remove any reason for continuing to claim anything but disagreement with mandatory exams. At this point, the experimenter explained that the true topic of the study was memory for one's own past actions.

The experimenter gave participants six of the original survey items, including the one on mandatory exams, and asked them to recall exactly how they had an-

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2. In an earlier pretest, attractiveness ratings of the photos (1 = *very unattractive*; 7 = *very attractive)*, were provided by 42 students from the same university (22 men; 22 women). Women rated the attractive male photo ($M = 5.92$, $SD = 0.67$) as significantly more attractive than the unattractive male photo ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.30$), $F(1, 21) = 18.41$, $p < .001$. Men rated the attractive female photo ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.06$) as significantly more attractive than the unattractive female photo ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.23$), $F(1, 21) = 228.15$, $p < .001$.

swered those six questions in the online session two weeks earlier. The experimenter stressed that we were interested only in "memory accuracy" for what they had said on the start-of-semester survey, and not at all in how participants currently felt about the issues. Participants were explicitly asked to be as accurate as they could on this "memory test" by circling whichever answers they remembered choosing two weeks earlier. After the memory test, participants were asked to guess the hypothesis, debriefed regarding the true purposes of the study, thanked, and dismissed. No participant correctly guessed the hypothesis. All participants reported trying hard to remember what they had done on the original survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Manipulation Check. Partner attractiveness proved a reliable way to manipulate motivation. Using the composite score, participants reported greater motivation to impress their partner when their partner was attractive ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 0.56$) rather than unattractive ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.26$), $F(1, 42) = 13.77$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .247$.

Memory Test. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant effect of partner attractiveness on how much participants remembered having agreed with mandatory exams two weeks earlier, $F(1, 42) = 6.83$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2 = .140$. Participants with relatively attractive potential partners remembered giving more positive initial survey responses ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 3.06$) than did participants with relatively unattractive potential partners ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 2.06$), $d = .81$.[3]

Mediation Analysis. The prediction was that the memory effects would occur because participants would be more likely to misrepresent their initial survey responses when communicating with an attractive rather than unattractive potential partner. In other words, the memory effects of manipulated motivation to impress would be mediated by misrepresentation. We used the Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping procedure and corresponding SPSS macro to test for a significant indirect effect of partner attractiveness on remembered survey responses via claimed responses (bootstrap resamples = 1000). Results revealed evidence of a significant indirect effect of partner attractiveness on recalled responses to the initial survey via claimed responses to the issue, $\beta = .199$ ($B = 1.10$, $SE = 0.49$, confidence interval does not include 0; 95% CI [0.39, 2.42]; see Figure 1). As predicted, partner attractiveness significantly predicted participants' claimed responses (*a* path), $\beta = .422$ ($B = 2.19$, $SE = 0.72$), $t(44) = 3.02$, $p = .004$, whereby participants claimed a more positive response when communicating with an attractive rather than unattractive potential partner.[4] Further, as participants claimed more positive responses, they recalled having made more positive responses to mandatory comprehensive exams on the initial survey (*b* path), $\beta = .472$ ($B = 0.50$, $SE = 0.15$), $t(39) = 3.33$, $p = .002$. Although the indirect effect of partner attractiveness on participants' recalled responses to the initial survey question about mandatory exams via claimed re-

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3. Although not strictly applicable because variance of actual survey responses was much smaller than that of recalled survey responses, a 2 (Partner Attractiveness) × 2 (Actual vs. Recalled responses) mixed model ANOVA yielded a significant two-way interaction, $F(1, 42) = 5.05$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 p = .107$. Participants in both conditions recalled having responded more positively than they actually had, but those with very attractive partners were more likely to do so.

4. Mean claimed responses for the attractive and unattractive potential partner were 7.00 ($SD = 2.13$) and 4.81 ($SD = 2.68$), respectively.

Indirect Effect of Partner Attractiveness on Recalled Response on Initial Survey, $\beta = .199$, $SE = 0.49$, 95% CI [0.39, 2.42]
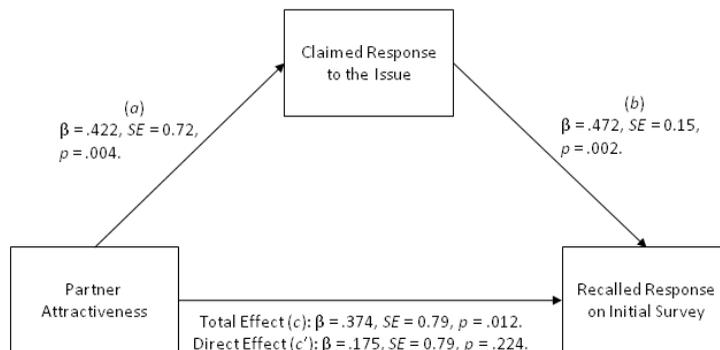

FIGURE 1. Mediation model for Experiment 1. All path coefficients represent standardized regression weights. The direct effect coefficient represents the effect of partner attractiveness on recalled response after controlling for the mediating influence of claimed response (95% CI [0.39, 2.42]).

sponses to the issue was significant (*c* path), $\beta = .374$ ($B = 2.07$, $SE = 0.79$), $t(44) = 2.61$, $p = .012$, the direct effect of partner attractiveness on recalled responses after controlling for claimed responses was not significant (*c′* path), $\beta = .175$ ($B = 0.97$, $SE = 0.79$), $t(44) = 1.23$, $p = .224$. In short, claimed responses mediated the effect of partner attractiveness on recalled responses.

An alternative explanation for these results might be that misrepresentation was not important. Participants in one condition were led to believe an attractive person had favored mandatory exams, whereas participants in the other condition were led to believe an unattractive person had done so. Once they knew that, even though the information was later revealed to be fictitious, they might have adopted different ideas about the type of person who would mark the positive end of the scale, but the effect would have been the same even if they had no opportunity to misrepresent what they had done on the earlier survey. Although the significant mediation results in Experiment 1 argue against this alternative explanation, meditational analyses are correlational rather than experimental. Experiment 2 took an experimental approach.

EXPERIMENT 2

To gain greater confidence that misrepresentation plays an important role, participants in Experiment 2 were all given the same information as in Experiment 1 about how the partner had completed the initial questionnaire, but some of them got this information *before* they told the partner what they had done (as in Experiment 1), whereas others got the information *after* they told the partner what they had done. If the alternative explanation about being more affected by an attractive person's than an unattractive person's actions were correct, this additional "foreknowledge" factor would not matter. There would be only a main effect of partner attractiveness. If the original hypothesis were correct, in contrast, there would be a significant Foreknowledge × Partner Attractiveness interaction, specifically one

in which partner attractiveness affected memory only for participants who knew the partner's past actions in advance of telling the partner about their own past actions. Furthermore, the effect of the predicted Foreknowledge × Partner Attractiveness interaction on memory would be mediated by differences in misrepresentation.

Experiment 2 was also designed to increase generality of the results by changing three aspects of the procedure. To test whether motive to impress an attractive member of the opposite sex affects misrepresentation and memory in a wider range of settings than "online dating," the opposite-sex student in Experiment 2 was described simply as a "work partner." To test whether the manipulation would affect memory for types of actions other than indicating agreement versus disagreement with a policy change, the initial questionnaire and memory test in Experiment 2 also included a question about how likely the participant would be to sign a campus petition to the university administration asking for mandatory exams. Finally, to test whether participants might overcome memory deficits with greater motivation to succeed on the memory test, participants in Experiment 2 were offered double credit for memory accuracy. Other than these changes, Experiment 2's procedure was similar to that of Experiment 1.

METHOD

Participants. A total of 117 single undergraduate students (100 women, 17 men) participated in individual sessions for course credit (see Footnote 1).

Materials and Procedure

Initial Survey. In a different semester from Experiment 1, participants were selected to participate if they indicated they were strongly against instituting mandatory comprehensive exams (responding at most 2) on a 0 (*strongly opposed*) to 10 (*strongly in favor*) scale. On the same survey, participants were also asked how likely they would be to sign a petition advocating mandatory comprehensive exams to the administration (0 = *very unlikely*; 10 = *very likely*). Participants' initial responses did not differ across conditions, either on favoring the exams, $F(1, 113) = 1.72$, *ns*, or on willingness to sign the petition, $F < 1$.

Foreknowledge and Partner Attractiveness Manipulations. In an ostensibly unrelated study approximately three weeks later, participants were told that they would be working with a partner on various tasks during the second part of the study. Participants were then randomly assigned to be with or without foreknowledge of their partner's initial survey response. Participants with foreknowledge were given the partner's profile before completing their own profile; participants without foreknowledge were given the partner's profile after completing their own profile. Using different photos from Experiment 1, participants saw one randomly select-

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5. In a pretest, attractiveness ratings of photos (1 = *very unattractive*; 7 = *very attractive)*, were provided by 57 students from the same university (17 men; 40 women). Women rated the three attractive male photos ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 0.84$) as significantly more attractive than the three unattractive male photos ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 0.89$), $F(1,39) = 340.39$, $p < .001$. Men rated the three attractive female photos ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 0.74$) as significantly more attractive than the three unattractive female photos ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 0.85$), $F(1, 16) = 117.14$, $p < .001$.

ed photo of three possible photos of an opposite-sex person pretested as being attractive or unattractive.[5] In all conditions, participants learned that the partner had chosen "9" on the initial survey question about agreement with mandatory exams. To summarize, at the time they completed their own profile, participants either had foreknowledge of an attractive (n = 30) or unattractive partner's positive survey response (n = 27), or had no foreknowledge of an attractive (n = 29) or unattractive partner's positive survey response (n = 31).

Claimed Responses. Participants were then explicitly asked to tell their partner what scale point they had marked on the initial survey for instituting mandatory comprehensive exams, by marking the scale on the profile sheet exactly where they had marked it on the initial survey they took at the beginning of the semester.

Manipulation Check. The same three items used in Experiment 1 measured a composite motivation to impress the partner (α = .89).

Filler Task. After participants completed the partner manipulation check questions, all participants were asked to complete a 7-minute Sudoku puzzle as a filler task. This filler task was used to allow enough time to elapse between claimed responses and memory test that memory confusion might occur (Johnson, 2006).

Memory Test. As in Experiment 1, participants were told the cover story was fictitious, and that they would not be meeting anyone, prior to taking a memory test. The memory test consisted of 24 items from the initial survey, two of which were the items concerning mandatory comprehensive exams. To increase motivation to remember correctly, the experimenter offered participants double credit if they answered all 24 questions correctly. Participants were explicitly told that getting an item correct meant providing "the exact same response on the memory test as you provided on the online survey at the start of the semester."

After completing the memory test, participants were asked how accurate and confident they thought they were in their memory test answers, on 7-point scales (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very*). Perceived accuracy and confidence did not differ across the four conditions (Fs < 1). After participants completed the memory measures, they were asked to guess the hypothesis, told the true nature of the study, thanked, and dismissed. No participant correctly guessed the hypothesis. All participants reported trying very hard to earn the double credit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Manipulation Check. Students with attractive partners reported greater motivation to impress their partner (M = 4.72, SD = 0.87) than did students with unattractive partners (M = 3.70, SD = 1.01), $F(1, 115)$ = 33.97, $p < .001$, η^2 = .228.

Memory Tests. A 2 (Foreknowledge of Partner's Response: foreknowledge vs. no foreknowledge) × 2 (Partner Attractiveness: attractive vs. unattractive) between-subjects ANOVA of recalled response on the initial survey yielded only a significant interaction, $F(1, 113)$ = 5.51, p = .021, η^2_p = .047 (see Figure 2). When students had foreknowledge of their partner's response, those with attractive partners reported more positive recalled responses regarding mandatory comprehensive exams (M = 3.13, SD = 2.84) than did students with unattractive partners (M = 1.70, SD = 1.94), simple effects $F(1, 113)$ = 6.45, p = .012, η^2_p = .054. When students had
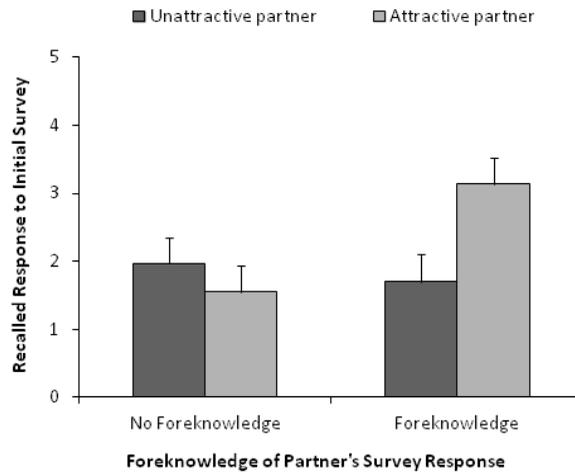
FIGURE 2. Mean recalled response to the initial survey regarding mandatory comprehensive exams as a function of whether participant knew partner's survey response before communicating their own. Standard errors are represented as error bars attached to each column (Experiment 2).

no foreknowledge of their partner's response, there were no differences between students with attractive ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 1.48$) vs. unattractive partners ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.97$), simple effects $F < 1$.

A similar ANOVA of recalled intentions to sign the petition yielded only a significant interaction, $F(1, 113) = 4.32$, $p = .040$, $\eta^2 p = .037$. When students had foreknowledge of their partner, those with attractive partners reported having more positive intentions ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 3.16$) than did students with unattractive partners ($M = 1.11$, $SD = 1.89$), simple effects $F(1, 113) = 7.48$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 p = .062$. When students had no foreknowledge of their partner, there were no differences between those with attractive ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 2.17$) vs. unattractive partners ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 2.74$), simple effects $F < 1$. For both recalled responses and behavioral intentions, the one mean that was greater than the others was in the attractive-foreknowledge condition, suggesting that communicating to attractive partners increased memory errors rather than that communicating to unattractive partners decreased memory errors.[6]

Mediation Analysis for Recalled Responses. Similar to Experiment 1, we examined whether claimed responses mediated the effect of the interaction between partner attractiveness and foreknowledge on recalled responses to the initial survey question about mandatory comprehensive exams. The Preacher and Hayes (2008) bootstrapping procedure (bootstrap resamples = 1000) revealed evidence for me-

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6. Although not strictly applicable because variance of actual survey responses was much smaller than that of recalled survey responses, two 2 (Partner Attractiveness) × 2 (Foreknowledge) × 2 (Actual vs. Recalled responses) mixed model ANOVAs yielded three-way interactions for the agreement, $F(1, 113) = 4.10$, $p = .045$, $\eta^2 p = .035$ and petition signing questions, $F(1, 113) = 3.66$, $p = .058$, $\eta^2 p = .031$.

diation (see Figure 3). The indirect effect of Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge on remembered survey responses via claimed responses was significant, β = .308 (*B* = 1.53, *SE* = 0.33, confidence interval does not include 0; 95% CI [0.82, 2.48]). As predicted, the Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge interaction significantly predicted participants' claimed responses (*a* path), β = .447 (*B* = 2.73, *SE* = 0.51), *t*(117) = 5.35, *p* < .001.[7] Further, as participants claimed more positive responses, they recalled more positive responses on the initial survey (*b* path), β = .689 (*B* = 0.56, *SE* = 0.06), *t*(117) = 8.92, *p* < .001. The indirect effect of Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge interaction on recalled responses to initial survey via claimed responses was significant (*c* path), β = .278 (*B* = 1.38, *SE* = 0.45), *t*(117) = 3.10, *p* = .002. The direct effect of Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge interaction on recalled responses after controlling for claimed responses, however, was not significant (*c′* path), β = -.030 (*B* = -0.15, *SE* = 0.38), *t*(117) = -0.38, *p* = .702. These results provide evidence that spontaneously lying about past evaluative actions to make a favorable impression on an attractive opposite-sex person can alter the memory of that past action. Further, claimed responses to partner mediated the effect of foreknowledge of an attractive partner's response on recalled responses for instituting mandatory comprehensive exams.

Mediation Analysis for Behavioral Intentions. A similar mediation analysis tested whether claimed responses told to the partner mediated the effect of the Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge interaction on recalled intentions to sign the petition. The indirect effect of Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge on recalled responses via claimed response was significant, β = .166 (*B* = 0.99, *SE* = 0.31, confidence interval does not include 0; 95% CI [0.40, 1.96]). The interaction term significantly predicted the claimed responses (*a* path), β = .447 (*B* = 2.73, *SE* = 0.51), *t*(117) = 5.35, *p* < .001. Claimed responses also predicted recalled intentions to sign the petition (*b* path), β = .371 (*B* = 0.36, *SE* = 0.09), *t*(117) = 3.82, *p* < .001. The indirect effect of Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge interaction on recalled intentions via claimed responses was marginally significant (*c* path), β = .170 (*B* = 1.01, *SE* = 0.55), *t*(117) = 1.85, *p* = .067. The direct effect of the interaction on recalled intentions after controlling for claimed responses, however, was not significant (*c′* path), β = .004 (*B* = 0.03, *SE* = 0.58), *t*(117) = 0.04, *p* = .96. These results provide evidence that lying about past evaluative actions to impress another person can alter memory for past behavioral intentions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of the present studies proved consistent with past research on retelling stories (Marsh, 2007; Marsh & Tversky, 2004), as well as with past research on audience tuning (Echterhoff et al., 2008; Higgins, 1992). In both of the present experiments, knowing the other person's positive evaluation in advance led participants to misrepresent their own previous evaluations, and this misrepresentation

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7. For participants in the foreknowledge condition, means for claimed responses told to an attractive and unattractive partner were 5.20 (*SD* = 2.68) and 3.48 (*SD* = 2.79), respectively. For those in the no foreknowledge condition, mean claimed responses told to an attractive and unattractive partner were 1.83 (*SD* = 1.89) and 2.19 (*SD* = 1.94), respectively.

Indirect Effect of Partner Attractiveness × Foreknowledge on Recalled Response on Initial Survey,
β = .308, *SE* = 0.33, 95% CI [0.82, 2.48]

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                          ┌─────────────────┐
                          │ Claimed Response│
                          │   to the Issue  │
                          └─────────────────┘
          (a)                                      (b)
     β = .447, SE = 0.51,                    β = .689, SE = 0.06,
     p < .001.                               p < .001.

┌──────────────┐                              ┌──────────────────┐
│   Partner    │                              │ Recalled Response│
│Attractiveness×│   Total Effect (c): β = .278, SE = 0.45, p = .002. │ on Initial Survey│
│ Foreknowledge │   Direct Effect (c'): β = -.030, SE = 0.38, p = .702. └──────────────────┘
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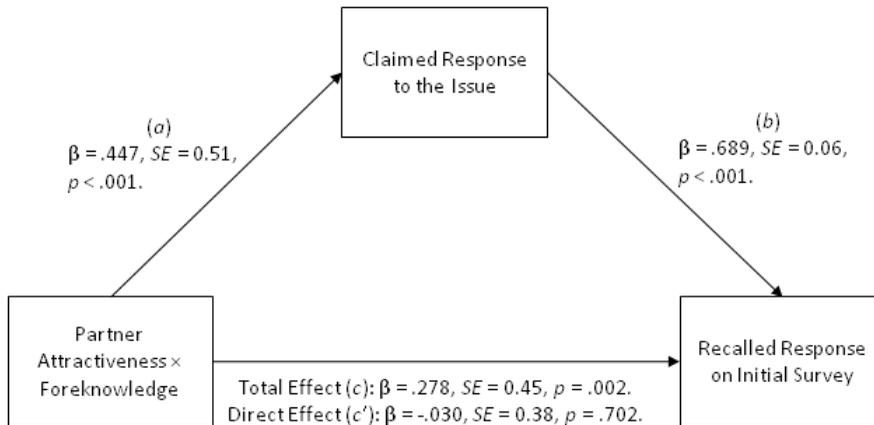
FIGURE 3. Mediation model for Experiment 2. All path coefficients represent standardized regression weights. The direct effect coefficient represents the effect of the interaction on recalled response after controlling for the mediating influence of claimed response (95% CI [0.82, 2.48]).

in turn altered memories for the participants' own actual past evaluative actions. These effects occurred whether participants were merely instructed to emphasize memory accuracy or offered double credit for doing so. In addition, motivation to impress the other person moderated the effects. The more participants wanted to make a positive impression (because the other person was physically attractive), the more they lied about what they had done, and the more they recalled having done what they had only claimed. The results of these two studies thus added to understanding the circumstances under which liars fool themselves.

The present Experiment 1's results could have been explained without referring to the key mediating role of misrepresentation, because participants could have changed their own views of mandatory exams merely because an attractive person favored them, *prior to* telling the other person what they had done. Experiment 2's results, in contrast, could not be explained merely by adopting the partner's views as an "anchor" or as one's own, because partner attractiveness did not produce memory distortions in the absence of misrepresentation. Experiment 2's results also could not be explained by cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) over claiming to have expressed an opinion different from one's own, because both dissonance theory and self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) would predict exactly opposite results, in which participants would come to believe their own lies if they were less, not more, motivated to make a positive impression (e.g., Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy, 1965; see Higgins, 1992 for more details on why audience tuning effects are opposite to those found in studies of cognitive dissonance).

Future research will need to address the cognitive processes involved in the effects of motivation to impress on misrepresentation and memory. One possibility is that, although they were asked only to choose a number on a scale that would be seen by the other person, they "told a story" (e.g., Marsh, 2007) to themselves about the reasons why they might have responded that way, and that they were more likely to tell themselves a story if they were more motivated for their claims to be believed. Another possibility is that the more motivated they were to make

a positive impression, the more willing they were to invest the cognitive effort necessary to "see" themselves marking something near the middle of the initial survey's scale, and later confused what they had actually done with what they had only imagined themselves doing (Johnson, 2006; see also Anderson, 1983; Frye, Lord, & Brady, 2012). Finally, greater motivation to succeed in misrepresenting one's own past evaluative actions may be highly correlated with greater desire to "share reality" with one's audience (Echterhoff, Higgins, & Levine, 2009; French et al., 2008), which might bias perceptions of response similarity. These and other possible underlying cognitive processes are only speculative at this point, because they were neither measured nor manipulated in the present studies, but they do suggest directions for future research.

At a minimum, the present studies suggest that when people disguise themselves to others, motivation plays an important role. People sometimes misrepresent their own past evaluative actions to another person, especially if they know that the other person acted in an exactly opposite way. They are more likely to misrepresent if they are highly motivated to make a favorable impression on the other person. In addition, the more they misrepresent, the more likely they are to misremember what they actually did. In the process of shading the truth about their own past evaluative actions, liars sometimes inadvertently fool themselves.

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