

How Would I Feel If. . .? Mood as Input to a Role Fulfillment Evaluation Process

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Most theoretical models of the relation between mood and evaluation suggest that people in positive moods tend to render more favorable evaluations than people in negative moods. If moods operate as input to a role fulfillment evaluation process, however, then mood-congruent evaluations are not inevitable, even when people incorporate their moods into their evaluations. Instead, the more people experience the feelings (negative or positive) they could expect to feel if the target had fulfilled its role (e.g., a particularly heart-wrenching sad story or an especially funny comedy), the more favorably people should evaluate the target. Three experiments supported this hypothesis. Only the mood-as-input model seems capable of accounting for the results.

When people in different moods make evaluations, the typical result is that those in positive moods render more favorable evaluations than those in negative moods (Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman, & Evans, 1992; Mayer, McCormick, & Strong, 1995; Sedikides, 1992). To account for this finding, researchers have developed theoretical models that, in their essence, are models of mood congruence. What this means is that although some of the models allow for the possibility of mood-incongruent judgments, these models do so only by recourse to mechanisms outside of their core assumptions. Consider, for example, the memory-based models (Bower, 1981; Bower & Cohen, 1982; Isen, 1984). The general explanatory mechanism that these models evoke is the increase in mood-congruent information in memory. It has been suggested, for instance, that people in negative moods have more negatively toned memories in mind than do people in positive moods. When people use these mood-congruent memories as the basis for their judgments, the result is a mood-congruent judgment.

It has also been suggested, however, that negative moods engender mood repair strategies (Blaney, 1986; Clark & Isen, 1982; Erber, Wegner, & Theriault, 1996). People attempt to reduce or eliminate their negative moods by actively bringing to mind pleasant memories. If these pleasant memories become the basis for a person's judgment, then the result is a mood-incongruent judgment. Thus, the memory-based models treat the priming of mood-congruent memories as the general or default effect but allow for this effect to be overridden by a strategic, motivated search.

This default-override orientation toward explaining mood ef-

fects was summarized succinctly by Mayer et al. (1992). They described mood-congruent judgment as a general effect that "automatically occurs for every judgment for which there is a class of legitimate responses that can be distinguished according to their mood congruence. The effect would fail to occur only when a second process interferes" (p. 119).

In this article, we present a theoretical model designed to account for both mood-congruent and mood-incongruent judgments within a single set of assumptions (i.e., without recourse to a second, interfering process). Because this model begins with the assumption that people use their moods as a source of information, we begin by describing Schwarz and Clore's (1988) "How do I feel about it?" heuristic. Following this, we describe an alternative mechanism along with the results of three experiments that test some implications of this mechanism. Finally, we discuss the implications of our results for a variety of theoretical models.

The "How Do I Feel About It?" Heuristic

Schwarz and Clore's mood-as-information model (Clore, 1992; Schwarz & Bohner, 1996; Schwarz & Clore, 1988) begins with the assumption that in the course of evaluating a target stimulus, people experience affective feedback. This feedback may include valenced thoughts and feelings that are not different in kind from the affective feedback that arises when one experiences a mood. Because of the close overlap between these two sources of feedback, people sometimes mistake the two. That is, people sometimes mistake aspects of their reactions to a nontarget source (e.g., good mood as a result of pleasant weather) as their reaction to the target (e.g., satisfaction with their life as a whole). One consequence of this confusion is a shift in people's target evaluations toward the valence of their moods (i.e., mood-congruent judgments).

The process just described has been termed the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic (Schwarz & Clore, 1988) and is the basic mechanism of the mood-as-information model. With this heuristic, people use their moods as a bottom-line evaluation (Clore, 1992). Rather than computing a complex judgment,

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people simply assess how they feel while evaluating the target and incorporate this assessment into their evaluation. When this assessment is colored by feelings unrelated to the target, the result is assimilation of the target evaluation toward the valence of the nontarget feelings.

Of course, people do not always use their moods in their evaluations. In situations in which there is a clear objective standard, for example, people are likely to use the objective information rather than their moods (Schwarz, Strack, Kommer, & Wagner, 1987). Also, in situations in which people believe that their current mood is attributable to a target-irrelevant source, people may discount their mood and base their evaluations on other information (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). The result in each case is either no effect of mood on judgment or mood-incongruent judgment. Note, though, that these two outcomes are obtainable only if people do not use their moods in their evaluations. As long as people use the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic, their evaluations will reflect mood congruence. As Schwarz and Bohner (1996) note, "reliance on a 'How do I feel about it?' heuristic is bound to result in more positive evaluations of the [target] during elated than during depressed moods" (p. 130).

The Case for Configurality

Imagine a person feeling sad as a result of reading a story. Will the person's sad mood lead the person to render a negative evaluation of the story? If people use their mood as a bottom-line evaluation, then the answer would have to be yes, because used in this way, mood "contributes to impressions by combining with the stimulus information additively" (Clore, 1992, p. 139). Thus, "desirable states should seem all the more desirable when we are in a good mood, but may seem much less desirable when we are in a bad mood. Conversely, undesirable states may seem all the more repulsive when we are in a bad rather than a good mood" (Schwarz & Bohner, 1996, pp. 130-131).

In real life, however, we know that this is not always the case. People may enjoy reading a sad story more than reading a happy story and may do so precisely because of the different feelings induced by the two stories. In other words, there are times when people prefer a tearjerker to a comedy not in spite of the sad feelings the tearjerker induces but precisely because of these feelings. This example is interesting at the theoretical level because it reflects a case in which an evaluator attributes his or her mood to the target, believes that his or her mood is relevant to evaluating the target, does not engage in mood repair, and yet renders an evaluation opposite in valence to his or her mood. How can one explain such mood-incongruent evaluations?

We believe that these evaluations can be explained by keeping in mind that people often process information configurally. That is, people often evaluate stimulus configurations as a whole (R. H. Anderson & Ortony, 1975; Asch, 1946; Higgins & Rholes, 1976; Pusteri & Latane, 1982; Woll, Weeks, Fraps, Pendergrass, & Vanderplas, 1980) rather than by considering each piece of information separately and then adding (Clore, 1992) or averaging (Abele & Petzold, 1994) the pieces. Within a configural system, the implications of any given piece of information (including a mood) can change with the context. For

example, a sad mood experienced at a friend's funeral conveys quite different information than a sad mood experienced at one's own birthday party. In addition, to use our earlier example, experiencing a sad mood after reading a sad story means something different than experiencing a sad mood after reading a funny story.

If a person reads a story that was designed to be a tearjerker, then sadness is the intended reaction. Sadness is what the author of the story hoped to convey and presumably is what the reader sought in choosing to read that story. So, if the person feels sad after reading the story, then the story has accomplished what it was supposed to accomplish: It has left the reader sad. If, on the other hand, the person reads what was intended to be a tearjerker and is left laughing, then the story has not accomplished its job. The person is likely to render an unfavorable evaluation of such a story. By the same logic, if a person reads what was intended to be a happy story, then he or she can expect to feel happy. Thus, the happier the person feels after reading the story, the more favorably he or she will evaluate the story.

In these examples, the reader is using his or her mood not as an emotional bottom line but as input to assess the extent to which the story has fulfilled its role. In essence, the person is asking (not necessarily explicitly or verbally), "What would I feel if . . . ?" with the question being filled in with the nature of the target and the specific judgment. For example, what would I feel if the sad story I just read was a good sad story? Sadness. What would I feel if my life as a whole were going well? Happiness. What would I feel if I were an assertive individual who had just been wronged? Righteous anger. The evaluation is then rendered subjectively when the person compares his or her current feelings with the expected feelings. Favorable evaluations arise to the extent that the person's feelings (positive or negative) are congruent with what would be expected if the target had fulfilled its role, whereas negative evaluations arise to the extent that the person's feelings are incongruent with what would be expected if the target had fulfilled its role. This mechanism not only allows for mood-congruent evaluations but also suggests that people can use their positive moods to render negative evaluations or their negative moods to render positive evaluations.

This role fulfillment view of mood is a variant of a process proposed by Higgins and Rholes (1976; see also Wyer, 1970) to account for the impressions people form on the basis of trait and role information. According to Higgins and Rholes (1976), when people are exposed to a verbal description composed of a role and a descriptor (e.g., *cruel mother*), people call to mind stored information about the target to which the description as a whole refers. Then they use this information to make two judgments: (a) whether the target's role (i.e., mother) generally has positive or negative social value and (b) whether the descriptor (i.e., cruel) allows the target to fulfill its expected role (i.e., the role of mothers is to be kind rather than cruel).

A person presented with the target *careful surgeon*, for example, may judge *surgeon* to have positive social value and may feel that *careful* is a feature of a good surgeon. Thus, the person would render a positive evaluation of a careful surgeon. A person asked to evaluate a *casual surgeon*, in contrast, may feel that *surgeon* has positive social value but that *casual*, despite being positive in and of itself, is not a feature of a good surgeon. As

a result, this person would render a negative evaluation of a casual surgeon—even though both casual and surgeon are individually positive.

Experiment 1

In Experiment 1, we attempted to find out, using a condition analogous to our tearjerker example, whether people use their moods as input to a role fulfillment mechanism. Participants first viewed either happy or sad video clips. The purpose of this procedure was to induce a happy or a sad mood, respectively. Then participants read either a happy or a sad story and rated the story in terms of how effective it was in inducing its intended mood, how much they liked the story, and what grade (A+ to F) they would assign to the story.

If participants evaluated the story by using their moods as a bottom-line evaluation, then we should have observed a main effect of mood. Participants in positive moods would have rendered more favorable evaluations of the story than participants in negative moods. If participants used their moods as input to a role fulfillment mechanism, however, then we should have observed a crossover interaction. Specifically, the most favorable evaluations should have come from happy participants evaluating the happy story and from sad participants evaluating the sad story, whereas the least favorable evaluations should have come from happy participants evaluating the sad story and from sad participants evaluating the happy story.

Method

Participants. Forty-seven students from the introductory psychology participant pool at the University of Georgia participated in the experiment. They were given partial course credit for their participation. The participants were randomly assigned to watch either the happy or the sad video clips and to read either the happy or the sad story.

Stimulus materials. Participants watched video clips that had been shown in earlier research to be effective in inducing the appropriate mood (Martin, Ward, Achee, & Wyer, 1993; Sanna, Turley, & Mark, 1996). All participants first saw a neutral car chase scene from the movie *Bullit*. This clip was included to distract participants from the mood-inducing nature of the videos. We hoped by doing this to reduce the likelihood that participants would realize that we were attempting to alter their moods by showing them the clips. After viewing the neutral clip, participants in the happy condition saw scenes from *Splash* and *Stripes*, whereas those in the sad condition saw scenes from *Galippoli* and *Sophie's Choice*. Together, the clips in each condition lasted for about 20 min. After each clip, participants were asked several general questions about the clip (e.g., Have you seen the movie? Did the scenes make sense?). Finally, participants were instructed to rate the general feeling of the clip they had just seen. This was done on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*down, depressed*) to 5 (*uplifting, optimistic*).

The happy and sad stories were presented to participants as though they had been written by participants in previous experiments. To enhance the believability of this cover story and to increase impact, the stories were handwritten and included a couple of writing mistakes and colloquialisms. In both the happy and the sad versions of the story, a woman told how her best friend wanted desperately to attend a specific college with her. The friend, however, was not financially well off and had to live at home to save money. In the happy version, the friend's grandmother informs the friend of a trust fund she had set aside to put her through college, and the friend manages to go to her desired college. In the sad version, the grandmother has the money but then gets sick

and must use the money for medical bills. As a result, the friend cannot afford to go to her desired college and must stay home to take care of the grandmother. Each story was close to a page long.

The rating form for these stories asked participants first which kind of emotional tone the author intended to convey. Participants indicated this by circling either *sad*, *neutral*, or *happy*. Then participants were asked how effective the story had been in inducing the intended mood and how much they liked the story. Participants answered these two questions on scales ranging from 1 (*not very effective, not very much*) to 20 (*very effective, very much*). The final question asked participants what grade they would assign to the story if they had read it as a paper in a class. Participants were given 12 options, ranging from A+ to F. Participants indicated their choice by circling the grade.

Procedure. Participants were recruited for an experiment titled "Rating Movies." They participated in groups ranging in size from 2 to 4 participants and were seated in isolated booths. Participants were told that the experiment dealt with rating clips from movies but that they would also be asked to perform several other tasks, which they were told would be explained as they got to them. Participants then watched and rated three video clips. Participants first watched the car chase video. Then participants in the happy mood conditions watched the two comedies, whereas participants in the sad mood conditions watched the two sad videos. Between each clip, participants answered general questions about each video (e.g., Have you seen the film before? Did the scenes make sense?).

After participants answered the questions about the last video, they were asked to draw a map of their college campus (Martin, Ward, et al., 1993). The ostensible purpose for this task was to measure how people represent aspects of their environment in their memories. The actual purpose was to add some time between the mood inductions and the ratings of the target stories in order to minimize the likelihood that participants would discount their moods while rating the stories (Berkowitz & Troccoli, 1990).

After 90 s, participants were instructed to put their maps away and were handed the happy or sad stories. These stories had previously been placed in a counterbalanced order and left face down in a stack. The experimenter distributed them to participants starting with the leftmost booth and proceeding to the rightmost booth. Thus, the experimenter was unaware of which participants had which stories.

The participants were told that participants in a previous experiment had been asked to describe an event in their life that had happened either to themselves or to a friend and that had made them either happy or sad. The participants were then handed a photocopy of a handwritten essay and were told that they would be asked some questions about it after they had read it. After participants read the story, they rated it. Finally, the participants were debriefed and excused.

Results

Preliminary analyses. Prior to debriefing, participants were asked what they thought the experiment was about, whether they perceived any connections between any of the tasks, and whether they thought, more specifically, that having seen the video clips influenced their ratings of the stories in any way. Not one participant guessed that the clips were designed to be mood inducers that might influence their ratings of the story. To the extent that participants guessed at all, they tended to report that the experiment concerned people's reactions to emotional stimuli. The guesses included (a) What kinds of movies do people like? (b) Why do different people like different kinds of movies? and (c) What kinds of events are people most likely to remember? None of these comes close to our hypotheses. Thus, we are confident that our results are not attributable to compliance with experimental demand.

The predictions depend on participants in the happy and sad conditions being in different moods. Because the video clips had been shown to be effective in prior research (Martin, Ward, et al., 1993; Sanna et al., 1996) and because we hoped to minimize the likelihood that participants would discount their moods (Berkowitz & Troccoli, 1990), we did not include an explicit mood measure in this experiment. However, the last question on the video rating scale asked participants to "summarize the general feeling of the clip you just saw." We used these as a proxy for a mood self-report. As expected, participants who had watched the comedies characterized the videos as feeling significantly more positive ($M = 4.26$) than did participants who had watched the sad clips ($M = 1.22$), $t(45) = 22.91$, $p < .0001$.

Rating the stories. The next question concerned the effect of participants' moods on their evaluations. Would we observe the crossover interaction predicted by the role fulfillment hypothesis? To answer this question, we conducted separate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) on the participants' ratings of the effectiveness of the story, their liking for the story, and the grade they assigned to the story. In each case, the ANOVA was a 2×2 design in which the valence of the videos (happy vs. sad) and the valence of the stories (happy vs. sad) were between-subjects variables.¹

Analysis of the rated effectiveness of the story yielded the crossover interaction expected by the mood-as-input model, $F(1, 43) = 4.82$, $p < .03$ (Table 1). When participants evaluated the happy story, the typical mood-congruence effect was obtained. As planned contrasts showed, happy participants ($M = 13.36$) judged the story to be more effective than sad participants did ($M = 10.73$), $p < .05$. When participants evaluated the sad story, however, a reverse pattern was observed. Sad participants ($M = 13.36$) judged the story to be more effective than happy participants did ($M = 10.86$), $p < .05$. Neither the main effect for mood nor that for story was significant (both $F_s < 1$).

The same crossover interaction was observed on the liking measure, $F(1, 43) = 4.06$, $p < .05$ (Table 1). As planned contrasts showed, happy participants ($M = 11.75$) liked the happy story more than sad participants did ($M = 7.82$), $p < .05$, but sad participants ($M = 9.55$) liked the sad story more than happy participants did ($M = 7.85$), $p < .05$. Again, the

main effects for mood and story were not significant (both $F_s < 1$).

Finally, the same crossover interaction was observed on the grades participants assigned to the stories, $F(1, 43) = 6.90$, $p < .01$ (Table 1). Planned contrasts showed that happy participants ($M = 7.08$) assigned a higher grade to the happy story than sad participants did ($M = 5.27$), $p < .05$, but sad participants ($M = 6.91$) assigned a higher grade to the sad story than happy participants did ($M = 5.08$), $p < .05$. The main effects for mood and story were not significant (both $F_s < 1$).

How were the moods used in the evaluations? The ratings tell us that participants in the different groups rated the stories differently. The ratings do not, however, tell us exactly how participants used their moods in making their ratings. Some suggestions regarding the process can be obtained by examining the correlations between participants' moods and their ratings. If participants did in fact use their moods as input to assess the extent to which the story had fulfilled its role, then there should have been a positive correlation between participants' moods and their evaluations only when participants rated what was supposed to be a happy story. When participants rated what was supposed to be a sad story, there should have been a negative correlation because a sad story fulfills its role when it leaves the reader sad.

Because we did not have an explicit mood measure in this experiment, we correlated the participants' evaluations with our mood proxy (i.e., their rating of the overall emotional tone of the video clips). The correlation pattern conformed to predictions from the role fulfillment hypothesis. When participants evaluated the happy story, the more positive their feelings regarding the two mood-inducing videos were, the more favorably they rated the story, $r(23) = .40$, $p < .055$. When participants evaluated the sad story, however, the more negative their feelings regarding the videos were, the more favorably they rated the story, $r(24) = -.44$, $p < .03$. Not only were these correlations in opposite directions, they were also significantly different from one another ($z = 2.86$, $p < .002$).

Discussion

The results of Experiment 1 were consistent with the hypothesis that participants would use their moods as input to assess the extent to which the story had or had not fulfilled its role as a happy or sad story. Evaluations were more favorable when the participants' moods (positive or negative) suggested role fulfillment than when it did not. Specifically, a happy story that left the participants happy was rated favorably, but so was a

Table 1
Ratings of the Story as a Function of Valence of Mood, Valence of Story, and Rating Dimension in Experiment 1

Rating dimension	Sad mood		Happy mood	
	Sad story	Happy story	Sad story	Happy story
Effectiveness	14.1 _a	10.7 _b	11.0 _b	13.8 _a
Liking	10.1 _a	8.1 _b	7.8 _b	11.0 _a
Grade	7.3 _a	5.0 _b	5.0 _b	7.0 _a

Note. Within each row, means with different subscripts differ significantly from one another ($p < .05$, one-tailed). The effectiveness and liking scales had a range of 1 to 20. The grade scale ranged from 0 to 12. In each case, higher numbers reflect more positive evaluations.

¹ An ANOVA treating the three rating scales as a repeated measure revealed a crossover interaction between valence of the story and valence of the movie, $F(1, 58) = 4.98$, $p < .03$, but it did not reveal any significant effects involving the different measures (all $F_s < 1$). In other words, the same pattern was seen regardless of the measure. We chose to report separate analyses of the individual scales, however, because we assumed that readers would be interested in seeing the effects of each, under the assumption that a liking rating and an effectiveness rating might show different effects. As can be seen in their separate patterns, and as revealed in the repeated analysis, the measures showed the same effects.

tearjerker that left the participants sad. A happy or sad story that did not induce its expected mood received a less favorable evaluation.

This pattern of results is not easily reconciled with the hypothesis that participants would use their moods as a bottom-line evaluation. Had this occurred, people in positive moods would have rendered more favorable evaluations than people in negative moods, regardless of the story. We did obtain this additive mood-congruence effect, but only when participants evaluated a story for which a positive mood signaled role fulfillment (i.e., a happy story). When they evaluated a sad story, the sadder participants felt, the more favorably they rated the story.

Experiment 2

Experiment 2 was designed as a conceptual replication and extension of Experiment 1. One goal of Experiment 2 was to determine whether the results of Experiment 1 were due to something idiosyncratic to the target and measures in that experiment. To determine this, we used a different target and a different judgment task. Also, recall that Experiment 1 did not include an established mood measure as a manipulation check. Instead, we used the participants' ratings of the overall emotional tone of the videos. So, in Experiment 2, we used an established mood measure (Watson, 1988) to help us obtain a cleaner assessment of the participants' moods and to give us further confidence that our results were due to differences in people's interpretations of their moods.

A great deal of previous research has shown that people evaluate themselves more favorably when in positive as compared with negative moods (Sedikides, 1992). If the role fulfillment hypothesis is correct, however, then it should be possible to reverse this consistent finding. One context in which such a reversal might be evident is that of self-ratings of empathy. By definition, one is empathetic if one experiences feelings congruent with another person's situation. More specifically, people consider themselves empathetic if they feel happy for someone who has had a positive experience and feel sad for someone who has had a negative experience.

It follows from the definition of *empathy* that a person who feels sad after observing another person in distress would rate themselves more favorably in terms of empathy than would a person who feels happy after observing another person in distress. Such a finding would be inconsistent with the mood-congruent judgments typically found in the literature but would be compatible with the role fulfillment hypothesis. This is because the sad mood would inform the person that he or she has fulfilled the role of being an empathetic person. This was the hypothesis we tested in Experiment 2. Specifically, we instructed participants to view the happy or sad videos used in Experiment 1 and then read the happy or sad stories used in that experiment. Unlike in Experiment 1, however, participants in Experiment 2 completed an established mood measure after watching the videos and rated themselves in terms of empathy rather than rating the story in terms of liking and effectiveness.

If participants used their moods as a criterion to assess the extent of their empathy, then we should have observed a cross-over interaction analogous to that obtained in Experiment 1. After reading the happy story, participants who had previously

seen the happy videos (i.e., happy participants) should have rated themselves as more empathetic than those who had previously seen the sad videos (i.e., sad participants); however, after reading the sad story, the reverse should have occurred. That is, those who felt sad should have rated themselves more favorably in terms of empathy than those who felt happy.

Method

Participants. Seventy students from the introductory psychology participant pool at the University of Georgia participated in the study. They were given partial course credit for their participation and were randomly assigned to watch either the happy or the sad video and read either the happy or the sad story.

Procedure. Participants watched and rated the three videos in a manner similar to that in Experiment 1. Immediately after rating the last video, however, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which a series of positive and negative adjectives reflected their current mood (Watson, 1988). These ratings were made on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The positive adjectives were *happy*, *satisfied*, *pleased*, *delighted*, *content*, and *glad*. The negative adjectives were *gloomy*, *annoyed*, *depressed*, *miserable*, *sad*, and *frustrated*.

After rating their mood, participants performed the map-drawing distractor task used in Experiment 1 and then read the happy or sad stories also used in that experiment. Finally, participants were given a sheet containing seven questions. The first question asked participants to indicate the kind of outcome the story had. They indicated this by circling either *sad*, *neutral*, or *happy*. The next question asked participants to rate their current feelings. They indicated this on a scale of 1 (*very sad*) to 21 (*very happy*). The last five scales constituted the empathy measure. Participants read five statements and indicated the extent to which each statement was true of them. This was done on scales of 1 (*never*) to 21 (*always*). The statements were "I can put myself in other people's shoes," "I am understanding," "I am compassionate," "I can feel what other people are feeling," and "I am empathetic." Finally, participants were debriefed and excused.

Results

Preliminary analyses. During debriefing, we assessed participants' beliefs about the purpose of the experiment. As in Experiment 1, participants did not perceive a connection among the videos, the story, and their empathy ratings. We are therefore again confident that our results are not due to compliance with experimental demand.

To assess whether our mood manipulation was successful, we reverse-scored participants' ratings of the negative mood adjectives and added these to participants' ratings of the positive mood adjectives. This procedure produced a single measure in which higher scores corresponded to more positive affect. A 2 (happy vs. sad mood) \times 2 (happy vs. sad story) between-subjects ANOVA on this measure revealed only the predicted main effect of mood, $F(1, 66) = 184.45, p < .0001$. Participants who had watched the happy videos reported feeling better ($M = 3.59$) than those who had watched the sad videos ($M = 1.45$). Thus, our manipulation of mood was successful.

Rating one's own empathy. If mood operates as input to a role fulfillment process, then participants who felt happy after reading the happy story or felt sad after reading the sad story should have rated themselves as more empathetic than participants whose moods did not match the evaluative tone of the story. We tested this hypothesis in a 2 (happy vs. sad mood) \times

2 (happy vs. sad story) \times 5 (empathy rating scales) ANOVA with the last factor being repeated measures. The only effect to emerge was an interaction between mood and story valence, $F(1, 66) = 6.43, p < .01$, which was consistent with the role fulfillment hypothesis (Figure 1). When reading the happy story, participants who had previously seen the happy videos rated themselves somewhat more favorably in terms of empathy ($M = 15.74$) than those who had previously seen the sad videos ($M = 14.91$), $p < .34$, as planned contrasts showed. When reading the sad story, however, participants who had previously seen the sad videos rated themselves much more favorably in terms of empathy ($M = 16.63$) than those who had previously seen the positive videos ($M = 15.13$), $p < .05$. Neither the main effect for mood, $F(1, 66) = 1.75$, nor the main effect for story valence ($F < 1$) was significant.

How were the moods used? If participants used their mood to assess their level of empathy, then the more participants experienced the mood (positive or negative) commensurate with the target's situation, the more favorably they should have evaluated themselves in terms of empathy. We tested this hypothesis by examining the correlation between participants' empathy ratings and their ratings of the mood adjectives as well as the correlation between their empathy ratings and the feelings they indicated after reading the story.

Consistent with the role fulfillment hypothesis, when participants read the positive story, the correlation between their moods and their empathy ratings was positive, $r(35) = .30, p < .08$, as was the correlation between their story-induced feelings and their empathy ratings, $r(35) = .47, p < .005$. The better participants felt after reading the happy story, the more positively they rated themselves in terms of empathy. Also, consistent with the role fulfillment hypothesis, when participants evaluated the sad story, the correlation between the participants' moods and their empathy ratings was negative, $r(35) = -.31, p < .07$, as was the correlation between their story-induced feelings and their empathy ratings, $r(35) = -.47, p < .005$. The sadder partici-

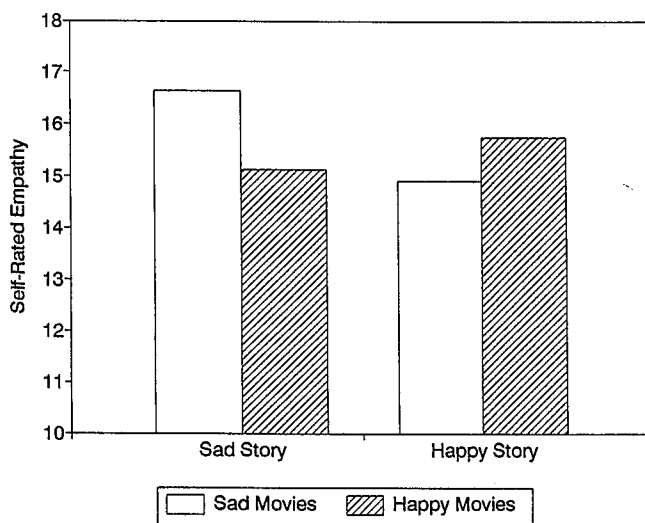


Figure 1. Self-rated empathetic feelings as a function of mood and story valence in Experiment 2.

pants felt after reading the sad story, the more positively they rated themselves in terms of empathy. Not only were the correlations in the happy story and sad story conditions in opposite directions, but they were also significantly different from one another: Mood \times Empathy, $z = 4.06, p < .001$; Feelings After Story \times Empathy, $z = 5.23, p < .001$.

Discussion

The results of Experiment 2 replicate and extend those of Experiment 1. Both experiments demonstrated that participants can use their negative moods as information to make positive evaluations or use their positive moods as information to make negative evaluations. In addition, in both experiments, the cross-over interaction on the ratings was bolstered by the correlations between participants' feelings and their ratings. In extension of Experiment 1, however, Experiment 2 used an established mood measure and used the self rather than a story as the target of the judgment. Despite these differences, the results of Experiment 2 paralleled those of Experiment 1. This increases our confidence that our results were not due to idiosyncracies in the targets or judgmental tasks.

Also, the results of Experiment 2 (like those of Experiment 1) cannot be easily reconciled with the hypothesis that participants used their moods as a bottom-line evaluation. Had participants done this, then those in positive moods would have rendered more favorable evaluations than those in negative moods, regardless of the story. We did find this mood-congruence effect, but only when participants evaluated a target for which role fulfillment was signaled by a positive mood.

Experiment 3

In both Experiments 1 and 2, participants were asked explicitly to rate the intended tone of the story and the mood they experienced after reading the story. Could these explicit ratings have highlighted the connection between the intended tone of the story and the participants' resultant moods to induce artificially a role fulfillment effect? In other words, would participants use their moods as input to a role fulfillment process without a prior rating of the intended tone of the target? This issue was addressed in the third experiment.

Experiment 3 also explored an issue relevant to Schwarz and Clore's (1988) suggestion that people do not always rely upon a "How do I feel about it?" heuristic. According to Schwarz and Clore, people sometimes discount their moods and use other information as the basis for their evaluations. It is under these situations that mood-incongruent evaluations are possible. There is evidence, for example, that when participants do not base their evaluations on their moods, they may use the mood-inducing stimulus as a standard of comparison (Schwarz et al., 1987; Strack, Schwarz, & Gschneidinger, 1985). This comparison produces contrast. Did participants in Experiments 1 and 2 discount their moods when the valence of their moods was incongruent with the valence of the story, and did this lead them to render the mood-incongruent evaluations we observed in those conditions?

Although plausible from the general view that mood operates as information, this mechanism is not a plausible account of the results of Experiments 1 and 2. Consider, for example, what

would have happened had the sad participants in Experiment 1 not used their moods to evaluate the happy story but instead used the valence of the video as a standard of comparison. In comparison with the sad video, the happy story would have seemed even happier (i.e., a contrast effect). Hence, it would have been perceived as even more effective as a mood inducer (i.e., it was a particularly positive happy story). Our results indicated, however, that the sad participants rated the happy story as less, not more, effective. Despite the implausibility of a discounting or contrast mechanism in accounting for our results, it was nevertheless worthwhile to determine whether we could replicate the patterns of Experiments 1 and 2 under conditions in which participants clearly attributed their moods to the target of their evaluation.

In sum, in Experiment 3, we asked whether we could obtain a crossover interaction analogous to those obtained in Experiments 1 and 2 when participants (a) did not make explicit ratings of the intended tone of the story, (b) rated their mood only after rating the target, and (c) rated their mood in such a way that it was clear that their mood was attributable to the target. To find this out, we had participants watch either the happy or the sad video and then answer several questions about it. The questions began with several filler items (e.g., Have you seen the video before? What was the title?) and ended with the three items of main interest. These latter questions were (a) How much do you like the clip you just saw? (b) How much would you like the video from which the clip was taken? and (c) What are your current feelings? Participants answered these questions in the order just listed.

Participants were not given any expectations regarding the intended tone of the clip, nor did they rate the tone of the clip. Also, the mood ratings followed the rating of each video. Thus, the intended tone of the story was not highlighted, and participants' mood was not brought to their attention until after participants had made the target ratings. Finally, it should be noted that the mood assessment asked participants how they felt "as a result of watching the video." This phrasing made it clear to participants that their moods came from the videos and thus were relevant to evaluating the videos. There was no reason, therefore, for participants to discount their mood under these conditions or to perceive their mood as irrelevant to their evaluations.

If moods were operating as input to a role fulfillment mechanism under these conditions, then participants watching the happy videos may have reported feeling better than those watching the sad videos, but they should not necessarily have rendered more favorable evaluations. Even sad videos can be good. In fact, the sadder the sad videos made participants feel (presumably within some limit), the more positively participants should have evaluated them. This is because the sadder the participant felt, the more the video had fulfilled its role as a sad video. Therefore, if participants used their mood to assess the extent to which the videos had fulfilled their roles, then there should have been a positive correlation between participants' mood and their evaluations when they watched a comedy (i.e., the happier I feel, the better the comedy was), but there should have been a negative correlation between their mood and their ratings when they watched a sad video (i.e., the sadder I feel, the better the tearjerker was).

Method

Participants. Twenty-nine students from the introductory psychology participant pool at the University of Georgia participated in the study. They were given partial course credit for their participation. Participants were randomly assigned to watch either the happy or the sad video clips.

Stimulus materials. The videos used were the same as those used in Experiments 1 and 2. After each video, participants answered the following questions: (a) Have you seen the movie from which the clip was taken? If so, how long ago and how many times? (b) Do you remember the title of the movie? If so, write it down; and (c) Do you think these scenes made sense? That is, could you tell from just the scenes you saw what was happening?

Following this were the three questions of main interest. First, participants indicated how much they liked the clip they had just seen. They answered this on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). Next, they indicated how good they thought the movie from which the clip had been taken was. They indicated this on a scale of 1 (*not very good*) to 5 (*very good*). Finally, participants were asked, "How do you feel right this moment as a result of watching the video?" They answered this question on a scale of 1 (*down, depressed*) to 5 (*happy, optimistic*).

Procedure. Participants were recruited for an experiment titled "Rating Movies." They were run in groups ranging in size from 2 to 4 participants. Once in the lab, they were isolated from one another in separate booths. They were told that the experimenters were interested in why different people like different kinds of movies and that their task was simply to watch three video clips and answer some questions about them.

All participants first watched the neutral car chase scene and then completed the questionnaire for this clip. Participants in the happy condition then watched the two comedies, whereas participants in the sad condition watched the two sad video clips. After participants watched each clip, they completed the questionnaire for that clip. Finally, participants were debriefed and excused.

Results

Preliminary analysis. After viewing the neutral car chase, participants watched the two mood-inducing clips. We were able to tell whether these clips induced participants' corresponding moods by examining their self-reported reactions. As expected, participants who had watched the happy clips reported significantly more positive affect than did participants who had watched the sad clips. This was true of their reactions to the first mood clip (for happy clip, $M = 3.40$; for sad clip, $M = 1.71$), $t(27) = 6.80$, $p < .001$, as well as the second mood clip (for happy clip, $M = 4.00$; for sad clip, $M = 1.36$), $t(27) = 12.29$, $p < .0001$.

Rating the clips. If mood is used as input to a role fulfillment mechanism, then happy participants should not necessarily have rendered more favorable evaluations than sad participants. The ratings depend on the extent to which participants' mood suggested that the target had fulfilled its role. To test this hypothesis, we performed a median split, within the positive and negative conditions, on the average of participants' affective reactions to the two clips. Then we used these splits as a variable in a 2 (relatively positive reactions vs. relatively negative reactions) \times 2 (positive vs. negative movie) ANOVA. This ANOVA yielded a significant main effect of movie, $F(1, 27) = 5.00$, $p < .009$. Participants generally liked the comedies more ($M = 3.65$) than the sad movies ($M = 3.34$). The analysis, however, also yielded

a significant Movie \times Positivity of Reaction interaction, $F(1, 27) = 14.09, p < .0009$ (Figure 2). Specifically, among participants who had viewed the comedy, those whose affective reactions were above the group median in positivity liked the movies better ($M = 4.20$) than those whose reactions were below the median ($M = 3.38$), $p < .05$, as planned contrasts showed. Among participants who had viewed the sad clips, however, those whose affective reactions were above the median liked the movies less ($M = 2.50$) than those whose reactions were below the median ($M = 3.80$), $p < .05$.

This crossover interaction is consistent with the role fulfillment hypothesis. Participants in positive moods made more favorable evaluations than participants in negative moods only when they evaluated a stimulus for which a positive mood indicated goal attainment. When participants evaluated a stimulus for which a sad mood indicated goal attainment, sad participants rendered the more favorable evaluations.

How were the moods used? The interactive pattern observed with the ANOVA was affirmed by the within-cell correlations. According to the role fulfillment hypothesis, there should have been a positive correlation between participants' moods and their evaluations of the movies when participants evaluated the happy movies but a negative correlation when they evaluated the sad movies. The results supported these predictions. When participants watched the happy clips, a positive correlation was obtained between their emotional reactions and their ratings of the first mood clip, $r(15) = .55, p < .03$, the movie from which that clip came, $r(15) = .49, p < .06$, the second mood clip, $r(15) = .88, p < .0001$, and the movie from which that clip came, $r(15) = .76, p < .001$. When the ratings of the two clips and two movies were averaged into a single score and correlated with the averaged emotional responses, a significant positive correlation emerged, $r(15) = .76, p < .001$. The better participants felt, the more positively they evaluated the happy films.

In contrast, when participants watched the sad clips, there were moderate negative correlations between their emotional reactions and their ratings of the first mood clip, $r(14) = -.28,$

$p < .33$, the movie from which that clip came, $r(14) = -.19, p < .51$, the second mood clip, $r(14) = -.49, p < .06$, and the movie from which that clip came, $r(14) = -.31, p < .27$. When the ratings of the two clips and the two movies were averaged into a single score and correlated with the averaged emotional responses, a significant negative correlation emerged, $r(14) = -.56, p < .04$. The sadder participants felt, the more positively they evaluated the sad films. Not only were the mood-evaluation correlations in opposite directions for the happy and sad movies, but they were also significantly different from one another (clip 1: $z = 2.17, p < .02$; movie 1: $z = 1.74, p < .04$; clip 2: $z = 4.59, p < .001$; movie 2: $z = 3.16, p < .001$; all comparisons one-tailed).

Discussion

The results of Experiment 3 replicate and extend those of Experiments 1 and 2. They revealed the same pattern of data while (a) removing the explicit mention of the intended tone of the movies, (b) having participants rate their mood after they rated each movie, and (c) assuring that participants considered their moods to be relevant to the target. The results suggest that even under these conditions, participants used their moods as input to determine the extent to which the movies fulfilled their role as happy or sad mood inducers. The more participants experienced the mood consistent with the movie's role, the more favorably they evaluated the movie. This was true even when the mood participants experienced was a sad one.

General Discussion

We began by noting that most theoretical models explain mood-incongruent judgments by recourse to some process that overrides or interferes with the presumably more basic mood-congruence process. We wondered whether it is possible to account for both mood-congruent and mood-incongruent judgments with a single theoretical mechanism. The results of our three experiments suggest that it is. In each experiment, positive moods led to more favorable evaluations than negative moods when participants evaluated a target for which a positive mood signaled role fulfillment, whereas a negative mood led to more favorable evaluations when participants evaluated a target for which a negative mood signaled role fulfillment. When people's moods serve as evidence of role fulfillment, what is important is not the valence of the mood per se but rather the match between the mood the person is experiencing and the mood the person could expect to experience if the target had fulfilled its role. Comedies that make people laugh are good; comedies that make people cry are bad. Tearjerkers that make people laugh are bad, whereas tearjerkers that make people cry are good.

In some sense, these results are the kind that appear obvious once they have been obtained. We all know that in the real world, people can sometimes like dramas as much as, if not more than, comedies. Despite this ostensible obviousness, we could not find a model, other than the role fulfillment hypothesis, that could account for our results. Below we discuss the implications of our results for a variety of mood models.

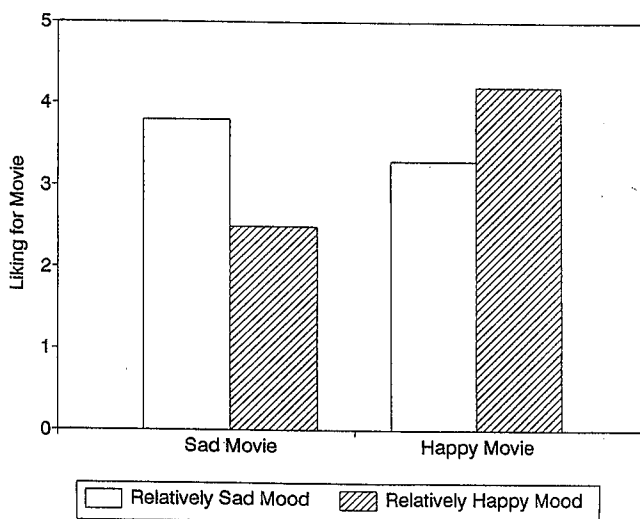


Figure 2. Liking of movie as a function of movie valence and positivity of affective reaction in Experiment 3.

Implications for Other Theoretical Models

The "How do I feel about it?" heuristic. As Schwarz and Bohner (1996) note, "reliance on a 'How do I feel about it?' heuristic is bound to result in more positive evaluations of the [target] during elated than during depressed moods" (p. 130). Because we obtained this mood-congruence effect only under conditions in which positive mood signaled role fulfillment (i.e., a happy story, positive empathy, a comedy film), a straightforward application of this heuristic cannot account for our results. Moreover, as we noted earlier, the assumption that participants had discounted their moods and contrasted the target with the mood inducer also cannot account for our results. This interpretation was made particularly implausible by Experiment 3, in which the target and the mood inducer were one and the same. How could participants contrast the movie with itself?

Of course, our results should not be taken as evidence that people never use a "How do I feel about it?" heuristic. Mood effects, like most effects, are likely to be overdetermined, and it is reasonable to believe that people may use the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic under some conditions and the role fulfillment process under other conditions. We return to this point later.

We should also note that our results do not question the more general view that people use their moods as information. In fact, our role fulfillment hypothesis is based on that assumption. The main implication of our results for the mood-as-information model is that under some conditions, people can use their moods as information in a mechanism other than the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic and that when they do so, the result need not be mood-congruent judgments. With the role fulfillment mechanism, people can use their negative moods as information to arrive at positive judgments or use their positive moods as information to arrive at negative judgments.

Information integration models. We have suggested that moods can be used as information in a mechanism other than the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic, but we are not the first researchers to make this suggestion. Abele and Petzold (1994) as well as Kaplan (1991) have suggested that moods sometimes function as pieces of information that are combined with other pieces of information in an information integration system (see N. H. Anderson, 1981). This is an interesting suggestion, and it may account for some mood effects. However, this suggestion has difficulty accounting for our results. First, the current applications of information integration are based on the assumption that moods give rise to mood-congruent judgments (Abele & Petzold, 1994). Thus, the models are not designed to explain the kind of mood-incongruent effects we obtained. Second, because these models address only mood-congruent judgments, they have assumed that the rule that best describes how people integrate their moods into their overall judgments is an averaging rule (Abele & Petzold, 1994). Such a rule cannot explain our crossover interactions. Specifically, there is no way in which a positive mood averaged with the target information could yield a less favorable evaluation than a negative mood averaged with the same target information.

Memory-based models. According to memory-based models (Bower, 1981, 1983; see also Isen, 1984), moods influence evaluations by increasing the accessibility of mood-congruent

information. Thus, "persons who are likely to be feeling good have a more positive outlook [,] . . . seem to 'see the brighter side of things,' and evaluations made from memory reflect this positive bias" (Isen, Shalke, Clark, & Karp, 1978, p. 5).

Applied to Experiment 1, these assumptions would lead us to expect that positive beliefs would be most accessible when happy participants rated the happy story, whereas negative beliefs would be most accessible when sad participants rated the sad story. This is because it is in these two conditions that the valence of the mood and the valence of the story are additive in their cueing effect (Bower, 1981). Thus, we would expect the most favorable evaluations to occur in the happy mood-happy story condition and the least favorable evaluations to occur in the sad mood-sad story condition. What we found, however, was that the evaluations in these two conditions were equal to one another and that both were more favorable than evaluations in the sad mood-happy story and the happy mood-sad story conditions. Thus, our results do not fit easily with a memory-based explanation of mood effects.

Affect infusion. Forgas's (1995) affect infusion model was developed specifically to integrate various types of mood effects into a single framework (see also Sedikides, 1995; Sinclair & Mark, 1992). Forgas defined affect infusion as the process whereby affectively loaded information becomes incorporated into the judgmental process, eventually coloring the outcome. According to the model, affect infusion is most likely when people engage in substantial transformation or elaboration of the stimulus details. Infusion does not occur, for example, when people directly access a prior judgment or search for specific information (e.g., mood repair). The likelihood that a person will engage in the kind of elaborative processing that leads to affect infusion is assumed to be a function of features such as the familiarity of the target, the personal relevance of the judgment task, and the pragmatics of the situation.

Despite its potential to address a wide variety of findings, the affect infusion model does not account for our results. First, the affect infusion model equates affect infusion with mood congruence. According to the model, mood-incongruent judgments occur only when people do not use their moods in their judgments (i.e., only when no affect infusion occurs). In our sad story conditions, however, sad participants used their moods as information in making their judgments (as indicated by the correlations) but rendered judgments opposite in valence to their moods. Second, the affect infusion model proposes that affect infusion occurs either through a "How do I feel about it?" heuristic or through priming. We have already discussed the difficulty that these two mechanisms have in accounting for our data.

Mood repair. We noted in our introduction that negative moods can engender attempts at mood repair (e.g., Clark & Isen, 1982; Erber et al., 1996; Sedikides, 1994). Did participants in our sad mood conditions attempt to eliminate their negative moods by thinking positive thoughts, and did these thoughts contribute to the positivity of their evaluations? There are several reasons to think that this did not occur. First, a mood repair hypothesis predicts an asymmetry. Repair would have occurred among sad participants, but not among happy ones. As a consequence of their repair attempts, sad participants should have rendered positive evaluations—but then so should have happy

participants. As a result, this version of the mood repair hypothesis leads us to expect no effect of mood. The obtained significant crossover interactions were not consistent with this application of the mood repair hypothesis.

Another possibility is that the motivation toward mood repair was greater among sad participants who read the sad story than among sad participants who read the happy story. According to this theory, sad mood-sad story participants would have been more likely than sad mood-happy story participants to attempt to retrieve positive thoughts to repair their moods. Unfortunately, it can be very difficult to access information that is inconsistent with one's mood (Nasby & Yando, 1982; Teasdale, Taylor, & Fogarty, 1980). So, although sad mood-sad story participants would have experienced a greater motivation to repair their moods, they are also likely to have been less successful at it. As a result, sad mood-sad story participants would have rendered less favorable evaluations than sad mood-happy story participants. Our results were inconsistent with this version of the mood repair hypothesis.

A third difficulty with a mood repair interpretation of our results is particularly noticeable in Experiment 3. Here, we placed participants in sad moods by showing them a sad movie. Yet they rendered a positive evaluation of that movie. Why would participants motivated to avoid a sad mood render a positive evaluation of the very stimulus that placed them in a sad mood?

More generally, a simple hedonism view (always approach positive; always avoid negative) makes little sense from a configural perspective. From this perspective, there are likely to be contexts in which people will be motivated to avoid positive moods or to attain what might otherwise be considered negative moods. (For data and theory related to this issue, see Erber, 1996.) Our results suggest that people are motivated to obtain positive outcomes, but not necessarily positive moods. In some contexts, attainment of a positive outcome involves being in a negative mood (e.g., seeing a sad movie, experiencing empathy with a distressed loved one, or successfully arguing one's point at a complaint desk). From a configural perspective, whether people attempt to change their moods depends not on the valence of the mood *per se* but on the meaning of the mood in a given situation.

General Implications

Limited applicability? We noted earlier that mood effects might be overdetermined. Each of the processes hypothesized in the different models (e.g., mood repair and priming) may very well occur, but under different conditions. In fact, some theorists have been explicit about this possibility (Forgas, 1995; Sinclair & Mark, 1992). One specific possibility, suggested by a reviewer, was that our role fulfillment hypothesis might be limited to conditions in which participants make evaluations of stimuli designed to induce affective states (e.g., happy or sad stories).

This is a reasonable suggestion except for one observation: Most (if not all) evaluations contain some suggestion of what is to be expected if the target fulfills its role. In several studies, for example, participants have been asked to rate their satisfaction with their life as a whole. Presumably, most people want a

happy rather than an unhappy life. If so, then how would a person feel if his or her life were fulfilling its role? The person would feel happy. It is not surprising, therefore, that people in positive moods tend to report greater life satisfaction than people in negative moods (Schwarz & Clore, 1983).

A similar point can be made with regard to the effects of mood on evaluations of goal progress (Cervone, Kopp, Schumann, & Scott, 1994), decisions (Isen, Nygren, & Ashby, 1988), products (Isen, Shalke, Clark, & Karp, 1978), various activities (Carson & Adams, 1980), and liking for a target person (Sinclair, 1988). In each case, a positive mood signals role fulfillment. People typically seek positively valenced goals, make decisions that they hope will lead to favorable outcomes, buy products that they hope will work satisfactorily, pursue activities they hope to enjoy, and like pleasant as opposed to unpleasant people. In short, in each of these studies there has been a tacit association between positive mood and role fulfillment. Because of this, we cannot say with certainty that participants in these studies were not using a role fulfillment process. The bottom line is that additional studies are needed to establish the parameters of each process.

Would anyone naturally use a role fulfillment mechanism? We have suggested that in making evaluations, people not only consider aspects of the target stimulus and the context but also compare their current feelings with the feelings they might expect if the target had fulfilled its role. This seems like a particularly complex, effortful, and time-consuming process. Would people ever really use such a process with any regularity in the real world? We think so. The reason we think so is that configural processing is not complex, effortful, and time-consuming. In fact, in most cases, configural processing is more efficient than linear, piecemeal processing (Hughes & MacRae, 1994; Pomerantz, Sager, & Stoeber, 1977; Sents & Burnstein, 1979).

This point is perhaps made most cogently in research on word recognition. If word recognition is dependent on prior recognition of the individual letters, then the more difficulty a person has in recognizing the individual letters, the longer it should take the person to recognize the word. This relation is rarely found, however. Rather, manipulation of letter difficulty typically influences the time it takes people to recognize the individual letters but does not influence the time it takes them to recognize the words (Allen, Wallace, & Weber, 1996; Cosky, 1976).

A particularly interesting example comes from research by Jacewicz (1979). He asked participants to determine whether a letter had been present in a tachistoscopically exposed word. He found that participants identified the target letter faster when it was clearly sounded in the word (e.g., *g* in the word *tiger*) than when it was not (e.g., *g* in the word *right*). This result suggests that participants first recognized the word as a whole, then transformed the word from a visual to an acoustic code, and only then analyzed its component letters.

We are suggesting that moods are processed in an analogous holistic way. People do not consider each piece of target, context, and personal (e.g., mood) information separately and then combine them into an overall judgment. Rather, people respond holistically. In essence, they ask the question "What is the meaning of my current feelings given the judgment I am making?"

This is a basic process that, we believe, people can perform quickly, spontaneously, and relatively effortlessly.

Information versus implications. Does our conclusion that moods have different implications in different contexts imply that moods convey no context-invariant information whatsoever? No, it does not. Positive moods may very well imply that the person's environment is safe, whereas negative moods may very well imply that the environment is unsafe (Schwarz, 1990). What we do suggest, however, is that there are no specific evaluative or motivational implications that follow from this information (Martin, Achee, Ward, & Harlow, 1993; Martin & Stoner, 1996; Martin, Ward, et al., 1993).

If we take seriously the postulate that people's moods are a source of information, then it follows that moods, like any other piece of information, should have implications that are context dependent (R. C. Anderson & Ortony, 1975; Asch, 1946; Higgins & Rholes, 1976; Pusateri & Latane, 1982; Woll et al., 1980). Consider, for example, the particular image of a container that comes to mind in each of the following contexts (from R. C. Anderson & Ortony, 1975):

The container held the cola.
The container held the fruit.

In both contexts, a container is a vessel that holds something inside of it. In the first context, though, people are likely to think of the container as a bottle, cup, or glass. In the second context, they are likely to think of the container as a basket, box, or bowl. So, although the term *container* has some context-invariant meaning (i.e., a vessel for holding other things), the specific instantiation of this object is different in different contexts.

We are suggesting that the same holds true with regard to mood. A positive mood might feel better than a negative mood in any context and might even tell a person that the environment is safe (Schwarz, 1990). There is no reason, however, for such feelings to lead necessarily to specific kinds of evaluations or motivations. Change the context and you change the instantiation (i.e., implications) of the mood.

Is a configural view unfalsifiable? We have suggested that the effects of any given mood depend on the context. Does this mean that we can never predict the effects of any given mood? Have we developed a model that makes no clear predictions yet explains everything after the fact? We do not think so. We believe that the configural view can be used in guiding the construction of controlled conditions. For example, a researcher could manipulate people's moods, manipulate their expectancies, manipulate their specific rating task, and so on. Once these conditions have been established, the researcher can make predictions according to the extent to which the participants' moods in these conditions reflect the moods that would be expected if the target had fulfilled its role. Stated differently, when the parameters of the model are clearly instantiated within a given experimental setting, clear predictions are possible and the configural view is clearly falsifiable.

Perhaps the more general point concerns the kinds of theoretical models that are preferable when it comes to explaining the interplay between affective and cognitive processes. Should researchers pursue main effect models that must incorporate over-

riding conditions for every context in which the hypothesized default effect (e.g., mood congruence) is not observed? Or should researchers attempt to build models that take these different contexts naturally into consideration? We opt for the latter position, because we believe that it reflects more closely the complexity of the human social information processor.

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