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## COMMENTARIES

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### A Second-Generation Psychology of Emotion

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The scope and promise of current emotion research is greater than ever before. Still, the burgeoning empirical findings in the field have outpaced efforts to integrate these findings into an efficient and compelling theoretical framework. This situation is not a shortcoming but a sign of the process and progress of emotion research. Although many fundamental issues remain unresolved, including the very definition of emotion and the distinction between various affective phenomena (such as mood, motivation, temperament, and meta-mood cognition), research continues to be highly productive and occasionally hints at resolutions to these basic issues. This endeavor is a process of empirical bootstrapping. It challenges us, as researchers, to proceed ahead of theory without losing sight of theoretical understanding as our ultimate goal.

Many emotion researchers have met the challenge of empirical bootstrapping. Among them, Joseph Forgas is a psychologist whose contributions to the study of emotion range from basic social cognitive research to highly integrative theory building. Forgas has recently introduced, in his target article (this issue) and elsewhere (e.g., Forgas, 1995), the affect infusion model (AIM), an impressive framework that accounts for the influence of mood on social thought and behavior. This model is of special interest to us given our related efforts to develop an integrative model of

emotional intelligence, in which we emphasize the close collaborative relation between emotion and reason (e.g., Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 2000; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In this commentary, we discuss emotional intelligence and the AIM as indicators of the current state of theorizing in the field of emotion. We argue that the strength of these models goes beyond their positive contributions to our understanding of emotion. Equally important is their capacity to identify and focus our attention on specific aspects of affective phenomena that remain obscure.

#### A First Generation

Over the past few decades, the misgivings psychology has had about emotion have given way to a collective sense of excitement. The historic view, espoused by most philosophers and early psychologists, holds that feelings are disruptive, irrational "passions" without any discernable purpose (see Solomon, 2000). Yet empirically minded thinkers, from David Hume and Charles Darwin to a host of contemporary researchers, have come to recognize that emotions play a vital role in human psychology. At a basic level, emotions confer an impressive survival advantage through their ability to energize adaptive behaviors and rapidly to

signal details about a situation (such as danger) to other members of the species through nonverbal cues (Darwin, 1872/1965). More generally, affect plays a pivotal role in arousing, sustaining, and directing human action, so much so that it is tempting to regard emotion and motivation as nearly synonymous (e.g., Hume, 1739/1948; Izard, 1971; Leeper, 1948; Tomkins, 1962). Moreover, cognition itself depends on the direction of emotion. When the neural substrates of emotion are damaged, cognitive processes clearly suffer (e.g., Damasio, 1994). These considerations have inspired a growing number of investigators to study emotion. After a history of neglect, feelings appear to be critically important to human functioning, making the pursuit of a better understanding of emotion an important, exciting endeavor.

How advanced is our current understanding of emotion? The latest surge of research makes this a timely question, but it is somewhat difficult to answer. We certainly know a great deal more about affective phenomena than we did 65 years ago, when Darrow published "Emotion as relative functional deorientation" in *Psychological Review* (1935), but our knowledge consists of a profusion of loosely related findings spanning virtually every subspecialty in psychology, including findings at many different levels of analysis, from synapse to society. It is an embarrassment of these empirical riches, in the absence of a comparable degree of theoretical coherence, that affective phenomena appear more complex now than ever before. A first generation of theoretical work has distilled many core principles from this complexity, and these principles have led to a much better conception of the structure, function, dynamics, and apparent laws of emotion (e.g., Bower, 1981; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Fridja, 1988; Higgins, 1987; Lazarus, 1982; Russell, 1980; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). Nevertheless, now that the scope of emotion research has widened, the field must extend and supplement these principles and clarify the interrelations among them to advance our understanding of affective phenomena. This requires a second generation of theoretical work.

### A Second Generation

Emotional intelligence (EI) and the affect infusion model (AIM) are two examples of second-generation theorizing about emotion. Each model attempts to organize a broad collection of research within one theoretical framework, and each does so by extending or integrating principles emerging from previous theoretical work. Certainly, EI and the AIM represent early second-generation work. Although they make positive contributions to our understanding of emotion, they leave many questions unanswered. However, it reflects the theoretical strength of the models that they

call our attention to important issues that are not well understood and prompt us to ask more perceptive follow-up questions regarding these issues. Consideration of the goals and limitations of these models thus provides an informative view of the current state of theorizing and paths to further understanding in the field of emotion.

### Emotional Intelligence

The EI framework organizes a collection of literatures pertaining to emotional competencies. Although emotion regulation is perhaps the most obvious component of EI, we do not assume that feelings are generally unruly or in need of regulation. The underlying assumption of our work is quite the opposite. We believe, with others (e.g., Schwarz & Clore, 1983), that affect constitutes a unique source of information for individuals about their environment, opportunities, and goals. The fundamental assumption of EI is that people differ in how skilled they are at understanding and managing this emotional information. The EI framework therefore emphasizes meta-emotional competencies and the collaborative relation between emotion and reason. Beyond this, we suggest ways in which the four competencies of EI (i.e., emotional perception, emotional facilitation of cognitive activities, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation) may promote personal well-being and growth (e.g., Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 1999, 2000).

The explicit contribution of the EI framework to our understanding of emotion is its recognition and description of a hierarchy of specific emotional competencies. If this had been the only accomplishment of EI, it would have been of minor significance, and it certainly would not have been the subject of such widespread (and often overly exuberant) interest. Yet the notion of emotional intelligence does more than specify a hierarchy of skills. Specifically, it focuses our attention on a collection of lingering questions and attractive possibilities, such as:

- What distinguishes between the more basic components of EI, which involve the perception, integration, and understanding of emotional information, and the ability to regulate emotional phenomena? What enables a person to bridge the apparent gap between processing emotional information and managing emotion itself?
- How should EI be measured? Does a general ability, similar to the *g* of analytic intelligence, contribute to EI?
- Does a person have to be smart (analytically) to be smart about emotion? What distinguishes meta-emotional competencies from other cognitive abilities?

- How does EI relate to other constructs such as optimism, self-esteem, social competence, and life satisfaction? Can a person be emotionally intelligent yet still be a psychological wreck? Is EI uniformly beneficial, or can there be too much of a good thing?
- How does individual emotional competence shape the collective emotional functioning of a group or organization?
- Can we cultivate EI in ourselves and others? Can we design effective emotional learning curricula for children with effects that extend beyond the classroom? If so, how? Should emotional lessons be taught as concepts, or do they need to be experienced?
- Are there any situation, task, or person characteristics that enhance or constrain the efficacy of EI? Through what mechanisms or processes do the competencies of EI influence a person's thinking and behavior?

This is only a partial list of questions emerging from the EI framework. The ultimate value of EI will depend on the ability of the framework to help us ask more discerning questions, leading us to a deeper understanding of meta-emotional phenomena. We believe the integrative nature of EI has already advanced a new, more unifying agenda of research, and we hope the resulting insights of this research are at least somewhat commensurate with the extent of interest in this topic.

### Affect Infusion

The AIM stems from Forgas's investigation of affective priming and his prolific interest in mood effects. With Bower, Forgas has demonstrated that moods often influence thought by priming similarly valenced memories and concepts; the increased salience of this one-sided emotional information can produce affect-congruent distortions in recall, judgment, and behavior (for an updated review, see Bower & Forgas, 2000). Despite the explanatory power of this framework, affective priming sometimes fails to occur and occasionally results in mood-contrasting effects. Furthermore, Schwarz and Clore's (1983, 1988) affect-as-information approach appears to be a competing explanation of mood-congruent processing in which emotion is construed as experiential feedback that guides judgment. To reconcile the influence and limits of affective priming with the affect-as-information approach, Forgas has developed the AIM.

Forgas's model provides for two dimensions of information processing (i.e., degree of openness and effort) that jointly define four information-processing strategies (i.e., substantive, heuristic, motivated, direct). Affect infusion (i.e., mood congruence) occurs only during open, constructive information processing, including substantive processing (i.e., high effort) and heuristic processing (i.e., low effort); affect infusion

does not occur or may result in mood-contrasting effects during closed processing (i.e., motivated and direct processing). Importantly, the AIM asserts that affect infusion is attributable to priming in the case of substantive processing and attributable to the use of affect as informational feedback in the case of heuristic processing. The most tangible contribution of the AIM to our understanding of emotion is this clear specification of the conditions under which the affective priming and affect-as-information views apply.

Again, Forgas's contribution extends beyond the basic substance of the AIM. The clarity of this integrative model brings into high relief many compelling questions, such as:

- How does motivated processing forestall affect infusion? Although the AIM specifies the mechanisms through which affect infusion influences substantive and heuristic processing, the mechanism through which motivated processing avoids the influence of mood is not fully elucidated. Is this mechanism corrective, or does it altogether circumvent the influence of mood?
- Similarly, how do task, person, and situation features determine choice of processing strategy? With others (e.g., Sedikides & Green, 2000), we suspect that the AIM needs to be extended or augmented to elucidate fully mechanisms through which these features moderate the influence of mood on thinking and behavior.
- In the homeostatic mood-management system described by Forgas as an implication of the AIM, what activates motivated affect control? In what sense is the shift away from substantive processing motivated, if it is subtle and automatic? Likewise, when and how is affect control disengaged?

These are just the most apparent issues to catch our attention. The richness of the AIM, from its method of parsing social cognitive judgments into different processing strategies to its relevance to other theories of affect and social cognition, promises to motivate many more questions. In addition to suggesting these questions, the AIM will undoubtedly contribute to our interpretation and understanding of the answers, which reflects yet another strength of integrative theorizing.

### Approaches, Frameworks, Models, and Theories

Our understanding of affective phenomena is still at an early stage. Indeed, few emotion researchers are willing to label their ideas as Theories (with a capital T). The affect-as-information view is described more as a theoretical approach (Clore, Gasper, & Garvin,

2000), emotional intelligence as a theoretical framework, and the AIM as a theoretical model. Current theoretical work is bootstrapping its way from description to explanation. Of course, it is extremely difficult to draw the line between perceptive descriptions and causal explanations. The one begets the other, at least that is the hope.

Although it would have been impossible in this brief commentary to scrutinize our understanding of emotion from the perspective of the philosophy of science—perhaps someone will take up this worthy task—it does seem clear that descriptions and explanations of affective phenomena are growing more complex. This integrative, second-generation of theorizing in the field of emotion will continue to facilitate inquiries that may not have been pursued, and would have been less meaningful, before now. We would like to see more integrative work of this nature. This work is ambitious, but we believe it often succeeds and does so even where it falls short.

#### Note

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