

# **Lusting while loathing: Parallel counter-driving of wanting and liking**

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## **ABSTRACT**

We show how being “jilted”—that is, being thwarted from obtaining a desired outcome—can concurrently increase desire to obtain the outcome, but reduce its actual attractiveness. Thus, people can come to both *want* something more, yet *like* it less. Two experiments illustrate such disjunctions following jilting experiences. In Experiment 1, participants who failed to win a prize were willing to pay more for it, but were also more likely to trade it away when it was ultimately obtained. In Experiment 2, failure to obtain an expected reward led to increased choice, but also negatively biased evaluation, of an item merely similar to the initial jilted target. Such disjunctions were exhibited particularly by individuals low in intensity of felt affect, supporting an emotional basis for relative wanting-liking harmonization. These results demonstrate how dissociable psychological sub-systems for wanting and liking can be driven in opposing directions.

Situations abound where we experience emotion-laden “jilting” by being denied desired targets or outcomes. Well-recognizable from romantic pursuit scenarios (e.g., the folk-wisdom of “playing hard-to-get”), experiences of frustrating denial and failure occur more broadly in everyday life. Think of waiting hours to buy concert tickets, or to enter a popular nightclub or store on Black Friday, only to face sell-out or denial upon finally reaching the head of the line. How do such experiences shape our desire for, and appraisal of, the jilted outcome? In this research, we show how being jilted in pursuing desired targets can simultaneously *increase* motivation to pursue those targets and yet *decrease* their actual appeal. Thus, perversely, we may come to loathe what we lust after, and want more what we like less.

This proposed disjunction draws primarily upon two streams of research examining different aspects of how individuals deal with failures to obtain desired outcomes. One focuses on the effects of failure on engagement in continued pursuit of failed objectives, and suggests that desire and persistence may be enhanced by constraints, denials and failures in obtaining outcomes (Brehm, 1972; Clee & Wicklund, 1980; Fitzsimons, 2000; Gilovich, 1983; McFarlin, Baumeister, & Blascovich, 1984). The second focuses on how failing to obtain an outcome affects how individuals *feel about* the outcome itself. Crucially, these two aspects of preference, desire/outcome-pursuit and outcome evaluation, can respond conversely to failure experiences (Higgins, 2006). For instance, when two tasks are framed as supportive of achieving the same goal, failure on the first can increase efforts to succeed on the second (Kruglanski et al., 2002). In contrast, negative emotional reactions to disappointing outcomes themselves can lead individuals to switch away from decisions and options associated with those outcomes (Ratner & Herbst, 2005); in essence, failure may emotionally “taint” an outcome. We thus posit that being

jilted can result in a *parallel counter-driving* of wanting and liking, whereby desire and pursuit persistence are enhanced, but actual outcome appraisal is attenuated.

## **PARALLEL COUNTER-DRIVING OF WANTING AND LIKING**

While extant research has not addressed counter-directional shifts in wanting and liking, diverse physiological and pharmacological studies support the notion that they are distinguishable constructs. Intense wanting for addictive substances can co-exist with no corresponding consumption enjoyment (Kelley & Berridge, 2002; Robinson & Berridge, 1993). Specific effects on wanting or liking have been observed with selective brain-area cooling (Berridge & Zajonc, 1991), and with food/sucrose rewards by examining affective taste-reactivity and effortful reward-pursuit rates across varying appetite conditions and neurological interventions (Berridge, 1996). Broadly, this work has identified liking-mediation by opioid systems and primary sensory regions, versus wanting-encoding by midbrain dopamine activity in such efferent regions as nucleus accumbens. This wanting-liking distinction has been proposed as relevant to various psychological domains (Higgins, 2006), including those as complex as political decision-making (Winkielman & Berridge, 2003), and there is evidence that these systems can operate independently outside of conscious awareness (Berridge & Robinson, 1995).

We extend past research by exploring the potential for explicit *decoupling* of wanting and liking, that is, conditions under which they are not simply individually affected, but are actually driven in converse directions. Affect-laden jilting, as we have outlined, presents the possibility of countervailing forces (induced by this single experience) acting oppositely on these sub-systems. Wanting-liking dissociation in such scenarios would have relevance to a broad class of real-life experiences, different and more universal than many previously explored. While we propose that

jilting can induce wanting-liking disjunctions, such decoupling should not be expected to occur unfailingly, across individuals and situations; wanting and liking are dissociable, but not disconnected. For instance, negatively-driven liking feelings may at times simply overwhelm any enhancement of wanting, preventing or ablating any disjunction. Based on our characterization of the fundamentally emotional nature of the evaluative/liking response to jilting, we propose *intensity of felt affect* (Larsen & Diener, 1987) as a factor moderating the extent to which wanting and liking can be counter-driven, with such disjunction more common and pronounced among individuals *lower* in felt emotional intensity. These “cool-headed” individuals would thus actually be those most prone to perversely desiring more what they like less.

We report two experiments demonstrating counter-driving of wanting and liking by jilting experiences, and exploring the role of affect intensity in moderating these effects.

## **EXPERIMENT 1**

### *Method*

*Participants:* 60 participants (30f) from a national online pool participated in the experiment in exchange for the opportunity to win prizes, as detailed below.

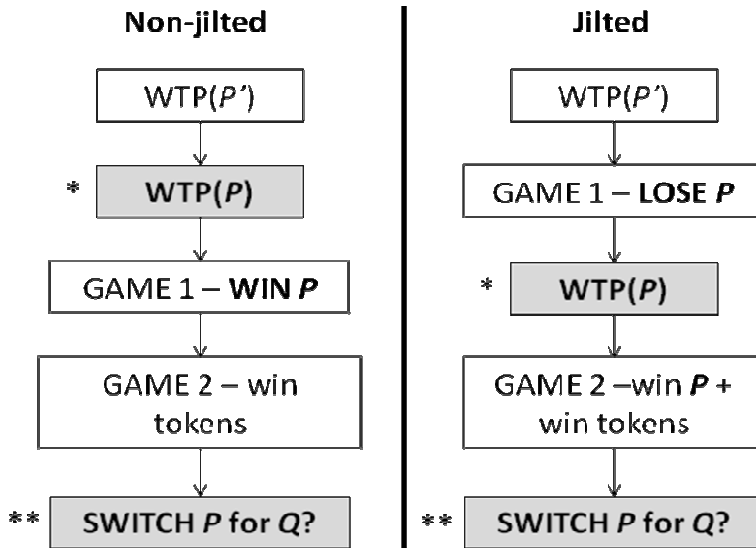
*Procedure:* As a cover story, participants were told that the experimenter was testing prototypes of online games and payment systems using “virtual-tokens”. They were told the games would allow them to win actual prizes and/or tokens that could be used to purchase prizes, but had no value outside the games. All participants were initially provided 25 virtual-tokens, charged 5 as a “virtual-zone entry-fee”, and randomly assigned between two conditions.

*Non-jilted condition:* Before starting the games, participants indicated their willingness-to-pay (WTP, in tokens) for ten potential prizes in an ostensible calibration exercise. Included were \$5 gift cards from Circuit City (*prize P*) and Best Buy (*analogue-prize P'*), pretested to be similar and equally attractive. Next, participants played two games. Game 1 required solving anagram-puzzles, with *P* offered as the prize for a top-quartile performance. Upon completion, all participants were informed they had won *P*, and proceeded to Game 2: a letter-counting word-puzzle offering a 5-token prize. Again, upon completion participants were informed that they had won. Thus, participants succeeded in both games, and finished with prize *P* and 25 tokens. At this point, they were offered the chance to switch *P* for a \$5 Target.Com gift card (*alternative-prize Q*), which was pretested to be equally attractive as *P* and *P'*, though less similar. Finally, participants completed a reduced-version (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2002) of the Affect Intensity Measure (AIM), capturing individual differences in strength of emotional experience and responsiveness (Larsen & Diener, 1987).

*Jilted condition:* These participants also indicated WTP for potential prizes (including *P'*) prior to starting the games. However, unlike in the non-jilted condition, they did not encounter or report WTP for *P* in this initial series. Participants then entered Game 1, identical to the non-jilted condition in setup and potential prize (*P*). However, at completion these participants were told that they had *lost* the game, and would not receive *P*. Participants were subsequently informed that any left-over prizes might later be offered to those willing to pay the most tokens, and were asked how many they would be willing to pay for *P*. Thus, WTP for *P* was measured only after failure to win *P*. Participants next entered Game 2, with the prize offered being 5

tokens (as in the non-jilted condition) *and*  $P$ , the previously denied prize. Upon completing Game 2, all participants were informed they had won. Thus, jilted participants ended with the same holdings (prize  $P$  and 25 tokens) as those in the non-jilted condition. Finally, as in the non-jilted condition, participants were offered the  $P$ -for- $Q$  switching opportunity and completed the AIM.

Figure 1 summarizes these experimental conditions. WTP for  $P$  was our between-conditions dependent measure of *wanting* (for  $P$ ), with WTP for analogue-prize  $P'$  allowing within-participants examination of  $P$ -versus- $P'$  valuation differences. Using WTP to measure desire for a target ( $P$ ) not in participants' possession fits with typical past treatments of the construct (e.g., Horowitz & McConnell, 2002).  $P$ -to- $Q$  switching propensity conceptualized *liking* for  $P$ , in terms of satisfaction with and commitment to something in possession (rather than desire for an unobtained target).



**FIGURE 1:** Primary stages for Experiment 1 conditions. Starred are the key measures of wanting [\*] and liking [\*\*]. Across both conditions, all participants have 20 tokens and no prizes upon wanting-measurement [\*], and 25 tokens and one prize  $P$  upon liking-measurement [\*\*].

From our earlier outlined theory, we predicted that, first, jilting *increases wanting*: specifically, jilted participants would report *higher WTP* for *P* than non-jilted participants, and higher WTP for *P* than *P'*. Second, jilting *decreases liking*: specifically, jilted participants would be *more likely to switch* from *P* to *Q* than non-jilted participants. Additionally, as described earlier, we hypothesized moderation of this disjunction by affect intensity: whereas all jilted participants were expected to like *P* less, the extent to which wanting (WTP) would escape being overwhelmed by this negativity, and show the hypothesized jilting-enhancement, was predicted to depend on individual affect intensity differences.

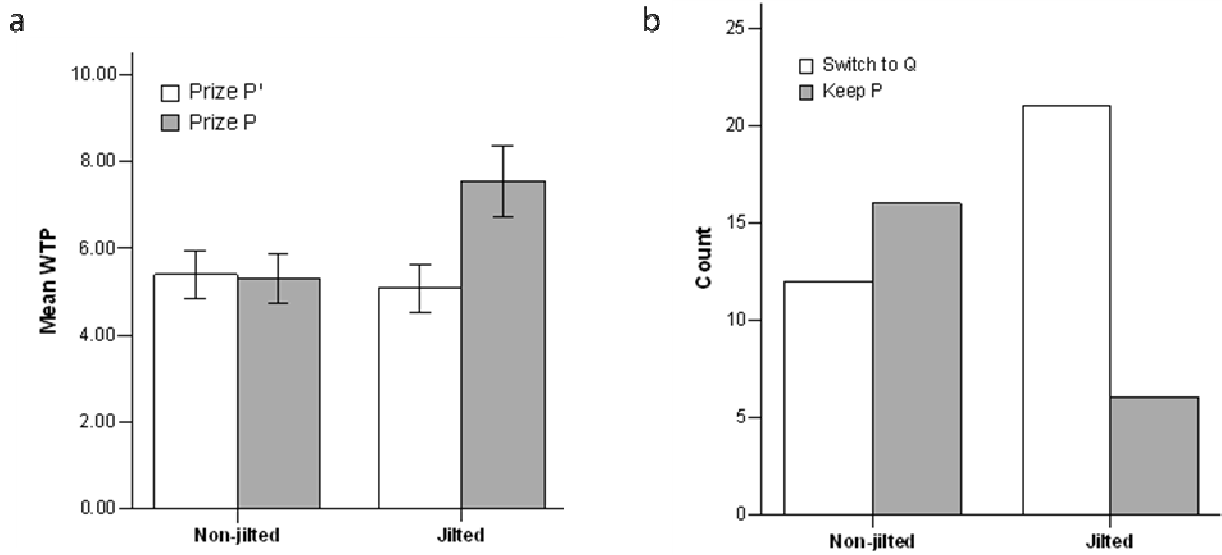
## *Results*

5 participants exited before experiment completion, leaving 55 for analysis (28 non-jilted, 27 jilted).

*Wanting (WTP values)*: Figure 2a presents the focal WTP results. As predicted, jilted participants indicated higher WTP for *P* ( $M=7.56$  tokens,  $SD=4.25$ ) than non-jilted participants ( $M=5.29$ ,  $SD=3.02$ ;  $t(53)=2.29$ ,  $p_{rep}=.94$ ,  $d=.62$ ). Mean WTP for *P'* did not significantly differ between jilted ( $M=5.07$ ,  $SD=2.92$ ) and non-jilted conditions ( $M=5.39$ ,  $SD=2.97$ ;  $t(53)=.40$ ,  $p_{rep}=.61$ ,  $d=.11$ ). Within-participants comparisons showed significantly higher WTP for *P* than *P'* by those jilted (paired  $t(26)=3.28$ ,  $p_{rep}=.98$ ,  $d=.68$ ), but not non-jilted participants (paired  $t(27)=.43$ ,  $p_{rep}=.62$ ,  $d=-.03$ ). These results support our predictions.

*Liking (prize-switching propensity)*: Figure 2b presents the *P*-versus-*Q* switching results. Consistent with the predictions, jilted participants were more likely than non-jilted participants to

trade  $P$  for  $Q$ . 57% of non-jilted participants chose to keep  $P$  instead of switching to  $Q$  (not significantly different from chance:  $B(28,1/2)$ ,  $p_{rep}=.83$ ), while only 22% of jilted participants kept  $P$  (significantly less than chance:  $B(27,1/2)$ ,  $p_{rep}=.97$ ), a significant between-condition difference (Fisher’s exact test,  $p_{rep}=.96$ ,  $\phi=.36$ ).



**FIGURE 2:** Experiment 1 results for “wanting” and “liking”, as functions of condition. a) Mean reported WTP values ( $\pm 1 SE$ ) for target-prize  $P$  and analogue-prize  $P'$ . b) Breakdown of decisions to keep target-prize  $P$  versus switch to alternative-prize  $Q$ .

*Affect Intensity Measure:* The 20 AIM items ( $\alpha=.86$ ) were averaged to form a single score for each participant ( $M=3.63$ ,  $SD=.45$ , range 2.70-4.70). We used a median-split to distinguish between individuals low versus high in affect intensity (“Low-AIM” vs. “High-AIM”). Based on this split, there was a significant interaction between AIM and jilting in predicting wanting, i.e., WTP for  $P$  ( $\beta=-1.60$ ,  $t(51)=2.07$ ,  $p_{rep}=.92$ ,  $d=.58$ ). For the Low-AIM group, jilted participants reported significantly higher WTP for  $P$  ( $M=8.85$ ,  $SD=3.08$ ) than non-



jilted participants ( $M=4.79$ ,  $SD=3.31$ ;  $t(25)=3.29$ ,  $p_{rep}=.98$ ,  $d=1.29$ ). Additionally, only jilted participants reported significantly higher WTP for  $P$  than  $P'$  ( $M=5.15$ ,  $SD=3.29$ ; paired  $t(12)=3.53$ ,  $p_{rep}=.98$ ,  $d=1.16$ ).

For High-AIM participants, the difference in WTP for  $P$  between non-jilted ( $M=5.79$ ,  $SD=2.72$ ) and jilted participants ( $M=6.36$ ,  $SD=4.92$ ) was not significant ( $t(26)=.38$ ,  $p_{rep}=.60$ ,  $d=.14$ ). Within-participants WTP differences between  $P$  and  $P'$  ( $M=5.00$ ,  $SD=2.66$ ) were also non-significant for those jilted (paired  $t(13)=1.31$ ,  $p_{rep}=.72$ ,  $d=.34$ ). Overall, as predicted, WTP-enhancement by jilting seems centrally driven by those scoring *low* in affect intensity.

Affect intensity did not impact the results previously explicated for the liking (prize-switching) measure.

## *Discussion*

Results supported our hypotheses regarding the dissociability of wanting and liking, and how they may be counter-driven by jilting experiences. Participants jilted by losing out on a prize subsequently reported *higher willingness-to-pay* for that prize, compared to non-jilted participants and to their own WTP for an analogue (but jilt-free) prize. Contrasting this increased wanting, these same jilted participants were also more likely to *switch away* from the jilt-associated prize upon ultimately receiving it.

Supporting an emotional basis for these effects, they were moderated by affect intensity differences between individuals. As hypothesized, it was primarily those scoring *low* in affect intensity who exhibited significantly enhanced prize-desire following jilting. In contrast, decreased liking of the jilted prize did *not* depend on affect intensity differences; thus, actual wanting-liking disjunction was more characteristic of Low-AIM individuals.

A possible alternative account might be that jilted participants liked their prize less simply due to shorter ownership duration compared to non-jilted participants (cf. Figure 1). This account seems unlikely, as ownership-time and prize-switching were not significantly correlated within participants (Non-jilted:  $r=.07$ ,  $p_{rep}=.59$ ; Jilted:  $r=.04$ ,  $p_{rep}=.55$ ; All:  $r=.04$ ,  $p_{rep}=.59$ ). In Experiment 2 we eliminate ownership entirely across conditions, to directly rule out any such effects.

## EXPERIMENT 2

This experiment augments the first in several ways. First, it tests the generalization of wanting and liking effects to a *jilt-proxy*, an item overlapping only weakly with a jilted target (e.g., sharing only brand-name). If the affective tainting account of jilting is correct, we propose that wanting/liking counter-driving may occur for items merely sharing features with a jilted target, in line with research on spillover effects and emotional target-diffusiveness (Janakiraman, Meyer, & Morales, 2006; Lewicki, 1986; Stapel, Koomen, & Ruys, 2002). This approach also helps address the possible role of item-salience in Experiment 1. That is, jilting might cause participants to ruminate more about the target item and thus increase its salience, which could conceivably affect subsequent WTP judgments (Higgins, 1996). Examining wanting and liking for only a proxy-item in Experiment 2 minimizes such potential salience effects.

Second, Experiment 2 replicates the main results with alternative operationalizations of wanting and liking, and shifts the cause of jilting from one's own failure to win a game to a prize stock-out. These design changes serve to rule out possible effects due ownership-time differences, as no participants actually obtain the jilted target. They also test an alternative account for Experiment 1's results based purely on *mood-repair*: that is, jilted participants report

greater WTP for subsequently encountered items to improve a negative mood-state induced by the jilting. In Experiment 2, we measure wanting by participants' choice between two equally attractive alternatives, one of which being the jilt-proxy. While our theory predicts skewing towards the proxy-item by jilted participants, a mood-repair account does not predict a choice-share difference between two equally attractive alternatives, which should be similarly rewarding and mood-reparative.

Finally, Experiment 2 shifts to a between-participants design, to avoid confounds and potential cross-effects from within-participants wanting and liking measurement.

### *Method*

*Participants:* 173 participants (115f) from an online pool took part in the study in exchange for \$5 e-gift cards.

*Procedure:* We employed a nested 2 (Jilted vs. Non-jilted) x 2 (Task: Wanting vs. Liking) between-participants design. All participants first completed a task asking about preferred possible names for various products (used to eliminate between-condition mere-exposure differences), followed by an anagram-unscrambling task. At this stage, participants were randomly assigned to the jilted or non-jilted condition. Jilted-condition participants were informed that they could receive a pair of Guess sunglasses as a bonus-prize (*P*) for completing the anagram task, while supplies lasted. Upon completion, these participants were in fact informed that they would not receive *P*, because the prize-supply had been exhausted due to full experimenter allocation of available prizes. In contrast, non-jilted participants completed the same anagram task simply as part of the overall study, without being offered any additional

prize. (To control for mere-exposure effects, non-jilted participants encountered the Guess sunglasses in the product-naming task, which was otherwise unchanged.)

Next, participants in each jilting condition were randomly assigned between tasks measuring either wanting or liking. In the wanting task, participants chose between Guess wristwatches (*jilt-proxy*  $P^*$ ) and Calvin Klein wristwatches (*alternative-prize*  $Q$ ) as their preferred prize in a potential lottery drawing. In contrast, the liking task sought attractiveness *evaluations* of  $P^*$  and  $Q$ , in a scenario detached from any potential for actually obtaining these items. We employed the information-distortion paradigm (Russo, Medvec, & Meloy, 1996; Russo, Meloy, & Medvec, 1998), in which relative favoring/disfavoring of alternatives is measured by the degree to which individuals evolve to judge serially presented equivocal information as increasingly favoring one alternative over another. Specifically, participants were presented with a scenario in which they evaluated alternatives  $P^*$  and  $Q$ . Equivocal, non-diagnostic information across nine attributes was then presented in a paired fashion. For instance, on the attribute “watch-band”, participants encountered:

- The Guess watches have silvered stainless-steel bands that fit smoothly against the skin and promote stylistic elegance.
- The Calvin Klein watches feature interlaced sub-banding with safety case-connectors and a polished sheen.

For each such pair, individuals rated on a seven-point scale the degree to which the information favored either alternative (1=“Strongly favors Guess”, 7=“Strongly favors Calvin Klein”).

Finally, participants across conditions completed the AIM employed in Experiment 1.

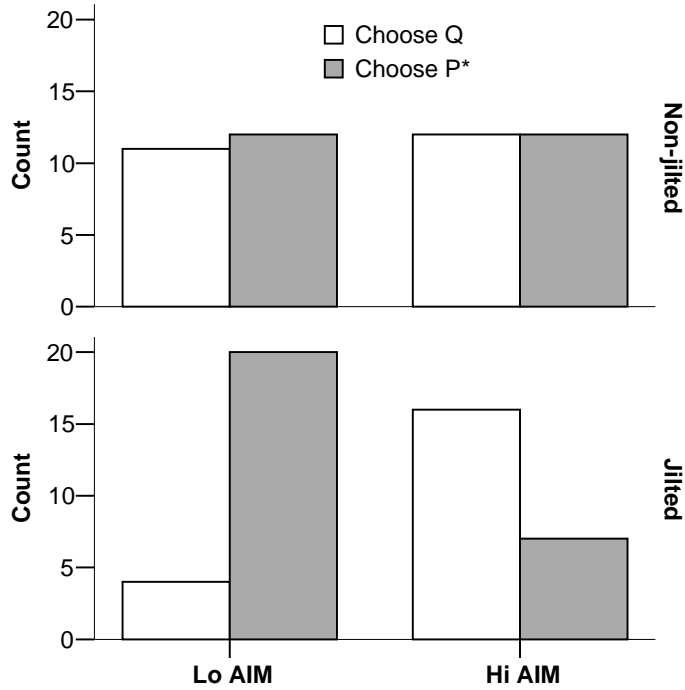
We predicted that, relative to non-jilted participants, those jilted from obtaining  $P$  would show *reduced liking* for jilt-proxy  $P^*$  (regardless of affect intensity) by distorting evaluations against  $P^*$  and thus rating equivocal information as favoring  $Q$ . In contrast, we expected jilted participants to show *increased wanting* (choice-propensity) for  $P^*$ , relative to non-jilted participants. As in Experiment 1, this latter result was expected primarily for individuals *low* in felt affect intensity, for whom it would be less likely that negative affect driving liking-attenuation would overwhelm any potential wanting-enhancement.

## Results

14 participants skipped past the anagram-task, leaving 159 participants for analysis.

*Affect intensity measure:* The 20 AIM items ( $\alpha=.82$ ) were averaged to form a single score for each participant ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=.54$ , range 2.50-5.55). As in Experiment 1, we assigned participants to Low-AIM and High-AIM groups via median-split.

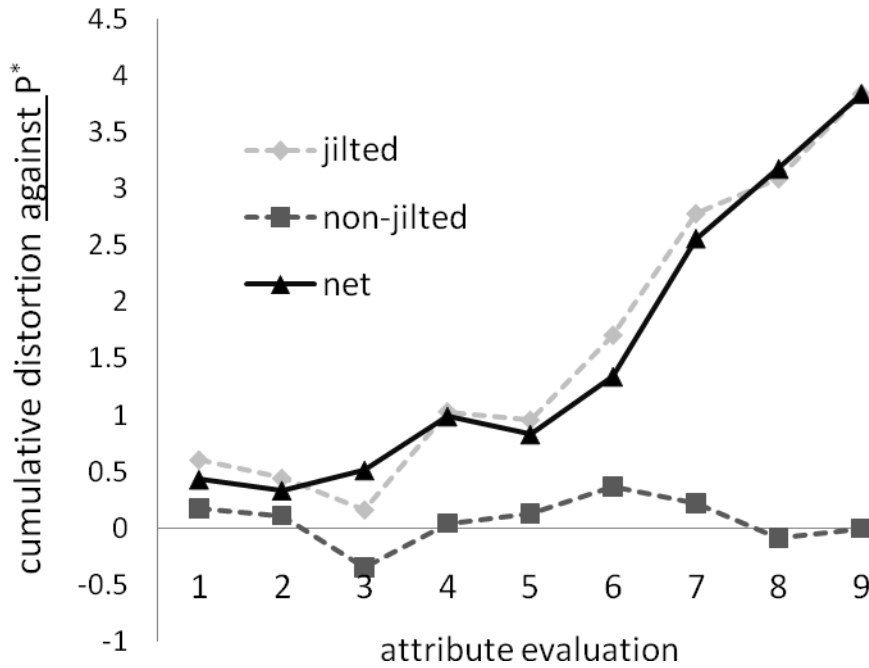
*Wanting (choice):* Figure 3 presents the jilting-by-choice interaction paneled by AIM median-split. Non-jilted participants split evenly between  $P^*$  and  $Q$ , regardless of AIM-level. In contrast, for jilted participants, we observed the predicted AIM-by-choice interaction (Fisher's exact test,  $p_{rep}>.99$ ,  $\phi=.54$ ). 83% of Low-AIM jilted participants selected  $P^*$  over  $Q$ , significantly greater than non-jilted chance-responding ( $B(24,1/2)$ ,  $p_{rep}>.99$ ). In contrast, only 30% of High-AIM jilted participants selected  $P^*$  over  $Q$ , a marginal trend against  $P^*$  ( $B(23,1/2)$ ,  $p_{rep}=.88$ ).



**FIGURE 3:** Lottery prize choice breakdowns by jilt condition and level of affect intensity.

*Liking (evaluation):* As predicted, participants jilted from receiving  $P$  distorted evaluations of equivocal information *against* jilt-proxy  $P^*$  and in favor of  $Q$ . We computed between-conditions distortional difference by subtracting from jilted participants' mean attribute evaluation-ratings the equivalent evaluation-ratings by non-jilted participants (Russo et al., 1998; Russo, Carlson, & Meloy, 2006). Figure 4 presents cumulative mean distortion as a function of the number of attributes evaluated, with greater positive values indicating increasing distortion *against*  $P^*$ . The final net-effect<sup>1</sup> of jilting, after all nine attributes, was 3.83 units of relative distortion against proxy prize  $P^*$ . This compares well with past research (e.g., Russo et al., 2006) that has typically observed cumulative effects ranging from 1 to 3 units.

<sup>1</sup>This between-conditions net difference is our central focus. Absolute-magnitudes for each individual group are not generally bias-free (Russo et al., 1998). We present them (Figure 4, dashed lines) to show the constituents of our net-effect of interest, rather than individual interpretation.



**FIGURE 4:** The net effect of the jilting manipulation on the distortion of item evaluations.

Dashed lines track, for each condition, the raw (non-debiased) mean *cumulative* distortions of attribute information as nine such attributes are sequentially presented for consideration. The solid line (computed by subtracting the non-jilted line from the jilted line) represents the cumulative difference between the groups, i.e., the relative cumulative distortion due to jilting.

In addition to this cumulative net-effect, the mean across-attributes difference between conditions also supported our predictions. Calculated within and combined across all nine attributes, jilted relative to non-jilted participants distorted +0.40 units against  $P^*$ , significantly greater than zero ( $t(286)=3.81$ ,  $p_{rep}= .98$ ,  $d=.45$ )<sup>2</sup>. Also as predicted, paneling by AIM did not yield significant differences. Mean distortional differences for Low-AIM and High-AIM participants were +0.28 and +0.52, respectively, each significantly greater than zero but not

<sup>2</sup>This and subsequent results were calculated using evaluations as individual observation units. Recalculation using by-subject means (see Russo et al., 1998, notes 8-9) does not change our conclusions.

significantly different from each other ( $t(286)=1.16$ ,  $p_{rep}=.79$ ,  $d=.13$ ). Thus, relative liking-attenuation for  $P^*$  by jilted participants occurred across AIM groups, and was not significantly more pronounced for either.

## *Discussion*

This study provides further support for the notion that jilting can concurrently increase wanting and decrease liking. Extension beyond the specific jilted target to a weakly-similar proxy-item illustrates how these effects can bleed-over in a manner consistent with an emotional-tainting account, and helps address several rival explanations for Experiment 1's results. As predicted, participants low in affect intensity demonstrated the canonical wanting-liking disjunction: jilted pursuit of a prize  $P$  caused these individuals to choose overwhelmingly *in favor of* jilt-proxy  $P^*$ , but also distort attractiveness evaluations *against*  $P^*$ . While jilted participants high in affect intensity also distorted evaluations against  $P^*$ , they exhibited choice propensities that (at least directionally) disfavored  $P^*$ .

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

These studies illustrate how wanting and liking may be driven in opposite directions when people experience failure in pursuing desired outcomes. For example, participants who lost an attractive prize were willing to pay more for it, but were also more likely to trade it away when it was ultimately obtained (Experiment 1). Perversely, these individuals became willing to pay *more* for something they would like *less*. Furthermore, we show such effects can extend to influencing wanting and liking of targets merely similar to a jilted outcome. After being denied



Guess sunglasses, participants were more likely to choose Guess wristwatches over Calvin Klein wristwatches, but also distorted evaluations as disfavoring Guess wristwatches (Experiment 2).

We propose that such disjunctions arise because wanting can be enhanced after denials and failures in obtaining a target (e.g., McFarlin et al., 1984), whereas liking of the target may suffer as pursuit-failures emotionally taint it. Thus, jilted desires can result in a *parallel counter-driving* of wanting and liking, whereby desire and pursuit-engagement are enhanced, but actual outcome appraisal diminishes. In support of this affect-based account, we show that wanting-liking counter-driving is moderated by individuals' felt affect intensity. Across studies, we find that while individual differences in affect intensity have little bearing on liking measures, they significantly influence whether jilting leads to increased wanting as well.

There are at least two plausible accounts for why affect intensity differently influences wanting and liking. One is that more intense jilting experiences can induce sufficient negative affect towards a target to overwhelm any increased wanting. Thus, if individuals high in affect intensity experience jilting more strongly, this could explain their more congruent wanting-liking responses. Contrastingly, if low affect intensity individuals experience jilting less intensely, wanting-liking disjunction could arise because of decreased liking not overwhelming increased wanting.

Another possibility is that high affect intensity entails more *tightly coupled* wanting and liking sub-systems. Wanting and liking are dissociable, not detached, and indeed should often influence each other (Vohs & Baumeister, 2007). Nonetheless, it is plausible that there are considerable individual differences in the general degree, rate and progression of such co-influence. Wanting-liking disjunctions would be harder to induce and would more readily dissipate in people for whom these systems are more tightly coupled. If such hyper-coupling is

characteristic of individuals high in affect intensity, this would also lead to our observed effects. Future research should investigate the relative merits of these and other possibilities.

### *Further Research*

A useful direction for additional inquiry would be to examine the willingness-to-accept (WTA) measure commonly studied in tandem with WTP. Given the typical antecedence of ownership (and thus ability to evaluate) to querying WTA, it seems natural to conceptualize WTP and WTA as respective measures of wanting and liking. From the effects observed in the current studies, it seems plausible that jilting could simultaneously drive WTP up and WTA down, thus reducing or even reversing the endowment effect (Coursey, Hovis, & Schulze, 1987; Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990).

Additionally, jilting need not be manipulated by foiling individuals in their effortful pursuits of material goods. Varying the intrinsic attractiveness of targets, whether individuals are jilted once or by a series of failures, the social context of the jilting experience, and other moderators of goal-pursuit are all important issues in defining an overarching framework for how affect-laden jilting may differentially influence wanting and liking. Moreover, while mood-repair could not fully explain the results presented here, many jilting experiences (particularly in high-stakes or social situations) seem likely to have important mood-related effects. Deeper exploration of mood as a contributing mechanism for differential wanting and liking shifts is warranted.

A final point of interest is that, despite some seemingly irrational responses by jilted individuals high in affect intensity (e.g., spurning Guess wristwatches after a Guess sunglasses stock-out), such actions might have been “hedonically normative”. That is, they were more

consistent with true evaluative feelings about the available alternatives. In contrast, individuals low in felt affect intensity leaned strongly towards *increased* choice of and WTP for the very same jilt-associated targets for which their liking had *decreased*. Thus, following affect-laden failures to achieve desired outcomes, it may be, ceteris paribus, that “hot-headed” individuals high in felt affect intensity are better at acting in ways that will ultimately leave them happier.

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