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CAN EMOTIONS PROVIDE KNOWLEDGE, JUSTIFICATION, OR UNDERSTANDING?

Julien Deonna and Fabrice Teroni

Introduction

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies knowledge and cognate notions. The multifarious links between emotions and epistemic notions have been the focus of sustained interest and fascinating debates. Some emotions (e.g. interest, doubt, and anxiety) play an important function in initiating and sustaining enquiries aimed at gaining knowledge (Kurth, 2018; Silva, 2006; see also Thoman and Leal, Chapter 40, this volume). Scholars are also interested in the roles played by the feeling of knowing, the feeling of certainty, and the feeling of familiarity, as well as phenomena such as the tip-of-tongue experience (Arango-Muñoz, 2014; Meylan, 2014). While these issues are interesting in their own right, this chapter focuses on more fundamental questions regarding the relations of emotions to the three central epistemic notions of *knowledge*, *justification*, and *understanding*.

A long philosophical tradition has it that the contribution of emotions to knowledge, justification, and understanding is purely negative. As Kant writes, "The principle of apathy – namely, that the wise man must never be in a state of affect … is an entirely correct and sublime moral principle of the Stoic school; for affect makes us more or less blind" (2006: 142). This negative picture of the emotions is supported by various considerations (Goldie, 2008; Pugmire, 1998: chap. 2; Västfjäll et al., 2016). It is claimed that emotions generate biases (when in the grip of fear, we tend to unduly perceive threats everywhere), blind us to evidence (we typically miss information that might be relevant to reassess our fear), are quick and crude responses (fear is often triggered before proper consideration of the evidence) and tend to overwhelm us (fear may be so intense as to paralyze us).

It is easy to see that these considerations are the counterparts of features of the emotions that can make them epistemically useful (e.g. Damasio, 1994; De Sousa, 1987). What is negatively described as a bias may be positively seen as a form of alertness to significant features of the environment (our fear late at night while returning home attunes us to the real threats surrounding us). Blindness can be redescribed as a selective focus on what needs to be urgently dealt with (exclusive attention on the threats means that what is irrelevant to our safety is ignored). The fact that emotions are elicited without careful consideration of the relevant evidence does not entail that they are insensitive to evidence (fear may be modulated by subtle, difficult-to-articulate cues of the presence of threats). Finally, it is only seldom that emotions

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overwhelm or paralyze us – they more often tend to facilitate our interactions with the environment (fear is in many cases an effective mechanism for threat avoidance).

The contemporary consensus aligns with these positive assessments and conceives of the emotions as valuable tools for gaining knowledge, justification, and understanding (e.g. Ballard, 2021; Deonna and Teroni, 2012b; Mitchell, 2021; Mulligan, 1998; Tappolet 2016). It is part of this consensus that emotions are about aspects of the environment that are of *significance* or *value* to us. Fear somehow concerns threats. The issue is whether it allows us to gain *knowledge* about threats, *justify* our judgments about the threats we face, and play a role in our *understanding* of what threats are all about. The same issue arises about the relations between anger and offense, amusement and the funny, sadness and loss, pride and personal achievements, indignation and injustice, admiration and the admirable, etc.

This chapter examines the way philosophers have fleshed out the idea that emotions can help us gain knowledge, justification, and understanding about what is of value to us. It is structured as follows. We begin by introducing some central epistemic notions and explaining how they relate to one another. We then lay out a conception of the emotions that provides the background for the epistemological debates surrounding emotions. We present the main models of the epistemic relation between emotions and elicited value judgments, discussing whether emotions provide justification for these judgments, and when these judgments become instances of knowledge. Our next topic is the epistemic relation between emotions and their cognitive bases, understood as the psychological states that elicit emotions (e.g. fear may be elicited by the perception or memory of a dangerous predator). How do cognitive bases bear on the justification of the emotions? Finally, we tackle the relation between emotions and understanding, asking whether and how emotions contribute to our understanding of value. In summary, we are interested in the epistemological aspects of the transition from cognitive bases to value judgments that emotions mediate (Figure 62.1).

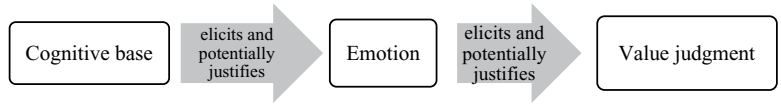

Figure 62.1 From cognitive base to value judgment through emotion.

Readers interested in learning more about the multifarious epistemological issues raised by emotions can consult Brun et al. (2008), a collection of papers targeting most of the relevant issues, with a helpful introduction. Greenspan (1988) contains seminal discussions of the epistemic role of emotions. For detailed discussions stressing the epistemic potential of emotions, see Tappolet (2016), Kurth (2022), and Deonna and Teroni (2012b). For a less optimistic approach, see Brady (2013). Recent developments are to be found in Mitchell (2021) and Müller (2019).

Epistemology and Emotions: Setting the Stage

Epistemology is concerned with the conditions under which a subject who judges that the wall in front of her is red, or that the wheelbarrow is in the shed, or that water is H_2O, or that the remark was unjust, is in a state of *knowledge*, is *justified* in making this judgment, and *understands* it. But what do we mean by knowledge, justification, and understanding?

Let us begin from the conditions for knowledge (Ichikawa and Steup, 2018). When we describe someone as knowing that p, for any proposition p, we first of all mean that p is *true*. If the wheelbarrow is not in the shed, you cannot know that it is in the shed. Second, we mean

that the subject has a certain psychological attitude toward p. The subject takes the proposition about the wheelbarrow to be true and, traditionally, this attitude is described as *judging* (an episodic act) or *believing* (a disposition to judge) that the wheelbarrow is in the shed.[1]

Third, we mean that the judgment is not only true, but true not *by chance*. If you judge that the wheelbarrow is in the shed as a result of having played heads and tails, your judgment does not qualify as knowledge even if, by chance, the wheelbarrow is in the shed. The notion of *justification* is commonly used to refer to this third, "anti-luck" condition on knowledge (Pritchard, 2007). Your judgment about the wheelbarrow is justified if evidence speaks in its favor, for example because you remember that you put it there yesterday or a neighbor just told you he saw it there.[2] The justification at issue is described as defeasible or prima facie: this is to say that the judgment is justified given the currently available evidence – the judgment may turn out not to be justified if additional evidence comes to light. This is the case once you learn that the neighbor is an unreliable witness, for example.[3]

It is important to distinguish two ways of developing the idea that knowledge precludes truth by luck. According to *externalist* approaches to justification, the anti-luck condition is satisfied when a judgment results from a cognitive process that tends to generate a high ratio of true over false judgments (Goldman, 1979). Remembering that you put the wheelbarrow in the shed justifies your judgment that it is there because remembering is by and large a reliable way of forming judgments about the past. In the same way, seeing the wheelbarrow in the shed justifies your judgment that it is there because visual perception is a reliable way of forming judgments about one's immediate surroundings.

According to the *internalist* alternative, justification is much more integrated into the subject's perspective (Feldman and Conee, 1985). A variant of this idea that will prove important in what follows has it that a judgment is justified when the subject is *aware* of what makes it true. So, when internalism considers perception to be the paradigmatic type of justification, this is not because perception is reliable, as the externalist would have it. It is rather because our perceptual judgments are supported by our awareness of what makes them true, e.g. when we judge that the wheelbarrow is in the shed because we see it there. Whether we favor externalist or internalist approaches, justification describes the satisfaction of the anti-luck condition that turns true judgments/beliefs into knowledge.

What about *understanding* (Kvangig, 2003)? The notion of understanding has gained much attention in recent epistemology, and it is conceived in a variety of ways. A first way of conceiving understanding is as *understanding why something is the case* (Hills, 2016). In this sense, someone understands why the wheelbarrow is in the shed when she knows that she put it there yesterday, plus a number of collateral facts, including that material objects tend to remain where they are, that nobody was in a position to move the wheelbarrow, etc. A second way of conceiving understanding is as *understanding what we mean* when we make judgments. In this sense, someone understands the judgment that the wheelbarrow is in the shed when she masters the concepts being deployed, such as the concepts of wheelbarrows, shed, and spatial location.[4]

The epistemology of emotions is the exploration of these issues as they apply to the emotions and the judgments they elicit. As we have observed, emotions are closely related to aspects of the environment that are of significance or value to us. We understand the "cognitive basis" of an emotion to be the mental state through which the relevant aspect of the environment is apprehended – to fear a dog, one must perceive it, remember it, think about it in the abstract, imagine it, etc. Now, whatever cognitive base they may have, emotions always apprehend the objects provided by their cognitive bases in specific evaluative terms. This is manifest in the sorts of judgments we typically make when we undergo emotions. When we are in the grip of

anger, we tend to judge what caused it to be offensive or unjust. When we are amused by a remark, we tend to judge that the remark was funny.

These types of judgments are said to be value judgments. Why? First, because these judgments characterize objects or situations *negatively or positively*. "She found herself in a threatening situation" characterizes the situation negatively, whereas "the remark was amusing" characterizes the remark positively. Second, because these properties are *specific ways of being good or bad*: being threatening and being offensive are two ways of being bad, and being a personal achievement and being amusing are two different ways of being good. A central question is: how should we understand the idea that emotions apprehend objects in evaluative terms and elicit value judgments?

A dominant paradigm in contemporary philosophy of emotion claims that emotions are *experiences of the relevant values* (Scarantino and de Sousa, 2021). On this view, what explains why we judge that the gesture was offensive is that anger at the gesture is an experience of the gesture's offensiveness, and what explains why we judge that the remark was funny is that amusement is an experience of the remark's funniness. In other words, each distinct emotion is an experience of a given value, and the corresponding value judgment states that the value being experienced is instantiated. Talk of emotions as experiences is meant to emphasize the way it feels to undergo emotions, or what philosophers often call the phenomenology of emotions (Goldie, 2000: chap. 3; Johnston, 2001). Emotions, as opposed to the judgments they often elicit, have a salient phenomenology – one which somehow connects us to the relevant values – a fact which plays an important role in some of the epistemological approaches we discuss in this chapter.

Not all theories of emotions privilege experience in their definition of emotions (Scarantino and de Sousa, 2021). Our reflections apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to these theories as well, as long as they accept that emotions qualify as construals or registrations of the relevant values. Each of these non-phenomenological theories will have to offer its own take on how emoters connect to the relevant values in the absence of an experience of such values – we won't assess these alternative proposals in this chapter. Another assumption we take for granted is that the evaluative nature of emotional experience does not presuppose mastery and deployment of the relevant value concepts – Maria can be angry at being treated unjustly without mastering the concept of offense or injustice (Deigh, 1994; Roberts, 1996).

One consequence of assuming that emotions are experiences of value is that emotions can be *appropriate* or *inappropriate* to their objects. Anger at a gesture, being the experience of the gesture's offensiveness, is appropriate just in case the gesture is offensive. Talk of (in) appropriateness in relation to the emotions plays a very similar role as talk of truth and falsity in relation to judgments. For example, we consider the judgment that the wheelbarrow is in the shed to be appropriate when it is true. This being said, emotional appropriateness is a thornier property than truth because of a lack of agreement regarding the nature of values. Suppose that you feel pride at your daughter's graduation from university. In this case, the appropriateness of your pride very much depends on your attachment to your daughter, because feeling pride at her achievement requires that you think of such achievement as relevant to your own identity (Tracy, Weidman, and Mercadante, Chapter 44, this volume).

Such cases foster a form of *subjectivism* about value and, therefore, about emotional appropriateness: what makes your pride appropriate would essentially depend on your subjective attitudes (attachments, cares, concerns, desires). Suppose now that you feel indignant at the report you read in the newspaper of a toddler being viciously beaten up by his father. In that case, it seems that the appropriateness of your indignation does not depend on your attachment to the toddler, or to toddlers more generally. While you have to be concerned with justice to feel indignation, it would be odd to say that concern with justice contributes to

making indignation appropriate – indignation would still be appropriate even if you did not care about justice. Such cases foster a form of *objectivism* about value and emotional appropriateness, because they suggest that what makes your indignation appropriate is the way the world is evaluatively, irrespective of your subjective attitudes.

Philosophers tend to go for wholesale subjectivism (Helm, 2001; Hume, 1975) or wholesale objectivism (Enoch, 2011; Moore, 1903), but one may also favor a more piecemeal approach, for example by advocating subjectivism for the values generated by relationships and objectivism for moral values (de Sousa, 2011; Todd, 2014). For our purposes, we need not decide one way or another. Still, it is important to keep this issue in mind, as we shall come back to it when we discuss the relationship between the understanding of values and emotions at the end of the chapter (for more on emotional appropriateness, see D'Arms, Chapter 59, this volume).

We have so far referred to the fact that emotions can *elicit* the relevant value judgments – for example, your anger can elicit the judgment that you were treated unjustly by virtue of being an experience of being treated unjustly. In what follows, we will explore whether your anger can *justify* the judgment that you were treated unjustly, turn it into a case of *knowledge* of being treated unjustly, and possibly into a *conduit for understanding* the injustice you have experienced.

Readers interested in further exploring the nature of emotions as value experiences can consult Deonna and Teroni (2012a), Kurth (2022: chap. 2), D'Arms (Chapter 59, this volume), and Dub (Chapter 26, Volume I). For a good introduction to how epistemic notions play out in the emotional domain, see Echeverri (2019).

From Emotions to Value Judgments: Externalism vs. Dogmatism on Justification and Knowledge

In the previous section, we distinguished externalist and internalist approaches to justification. We shall now apply these approaches to the emotions and briefly assess their respective prospects. The guiding question is: can emotions justify the value judgments that they elicit? (see Figure 62.2).

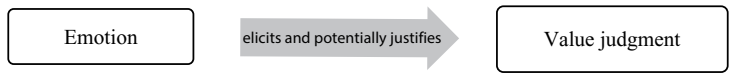

Figure 62.2 From emotion to value judgment.

The externalist's primary concern is the cognitive process that starts with the emotion and ends up with the making of a value judgment. What is the typical shape of this process? Emotions alert the subject to the significant features of her environment and focus her attention on them (Frijda, 2007; Scarantino, 2014). For example, our fear late at night elicits the judgment that we find ourselves in a threatening situation by alerting us to the threat and making us focus on it. The externalist allows that there may be different cognitive routes from a given emotion to the relevant judgment. What is crucial is that the justification (or lack thereof) of the value judgment is a function of the reliability of the cognitive process that leads to it, which is something we can empirically investigate (Goldman, 1986). On this view, the value judgment that the situation late at night is threatening is justified if the sort of alertness and attentional focus that fear provides generates a high ratio of true over false judgments about threats.[5] Amongst the justified judgments elicited by fear, those that are, in addition, true judgments are cases of knowledge (Figure 62.3).

Figure 62.3 From emotion to justified value judgment: the externalist approach.

The central issue for externalism then concerns the reliability of the relevant cognitive processes underlying the formation of judgments. Now, whatever positive epistemic role one may ascribe to emotions, it is unquestionable that emotional processes are subject to frequent cognitive distortions. For example, when in the grip of fear, we may overestimate the presence of threats in the environment. As a consequence, indexing the justification of value judgments to the reliability of the cognitive processes standing between emotions and value judgments is likely to foster the conclusion that a great many of them are unjustified. We shall come back to this issue, but let us present first the alternative, internalist approach to justification.

According to internalism, the justification of the value judgments elicited by emotions is due to the fact that emotions are experiences of values (Döring, 2007; Pelser, 2014; Tappolet, 2016). On this view, the experience of fear makes it seem to you that there is a threat in the environment, which justifies the judgment that the situation is threatening. The justification is defeasible, but it is nevertheless immediate. Suppose that Sam becomes aware of an approaching dog with big teeth and erratic behavior and experiences fear of it. According to internalism, his fear presents the dog as a threat. This explains why Sam is in an ideal epistemic position to judge that the dog is a threat.

The most popular version of this internalist approach is known as "emotional dogmatism" (Brogaard and Chudnoff, 2016; Harrison, 2020). The paradigm here is familiar from the epistemology of perception. According to this influential approach, perceptual experiences justify perceptual judgments because they give us access to the relevant features of the environment (Huemer, 2013; Pryor, 2000). For example, if you have a perceptual experience of a red apple lying on the table in front of you, this alone justifies you in judging that there is a red apple lying on the table in front of you, as long as there are no defeaters like your awareness that you just took hallucinogenic mushrooms.

Emotional dogmatism claims that the same is true of the epistemic relation between emotions and value judgments. For the dogmatist, emotions justify value judgments because they make us aware (or seem to make us aware) of the relevant values. In contrast to externalism, it is the emotion itself, independently of the reliability of the process leading from it to the value judgment, that confers justification. And if the emotion really makes us aware of the relevant value, namely if what emotionally seems to us to be the case is actually the case, the value judgment it justifies is a case of knowledge (Figure 62.4).

Figure 62.4 From emotion to justified value judgment: the dogmatist approach.

These contrasting approaches to the justification of value judgments reflect fundamental disagreements regarding the nature of knowledge and justification in contemporary epistemology. This is, of course, not the place to adjudicate between externalism and internalism (BonJour and Sosa, 2003; Pappas, 2014). Still, we want to outline how elements of externalism and internalism could be integrated in a comprehensive account of the justification of value judgments – this is very much an ongoing project in contemporary epistemology of emotions.

Observe that both externalism and dogmatism hold that the justification provided by emotions is defeasible, i.e. additional evidence may defeat this justification. For the externalist, this additional evidence will be anything that suggests that the emotional process is unreliable or that the emotion at issue is unfitting. The role of this additional evidence should not be downplayed, since, apart from the simplest situations, reliable value judgments presuppose a monitoring of emotional responses through a form of *epistemic vigilance* (Döring, 2007; Jones, 2006). More often than not, it is important to take into consideration evidence to which the triggering of the emotion may not have been sensitive.

Suppose you are offended by a child telling you that you look old – there is clearly no offense here, just the statement of a fact, but you cannot help getting angry. Epistemic vigilance consists of refraining from making the judgment that the child has offended you. More generally, we all have a variety of emotional propensities that are likely to distort the evaluative landscape and that many of us have learned to keep in check. If this is along the right track, the reliability at the center of the externalist approach is typically generated by a form of vigilance that requires the integration of various sources of information into the subject's perspective. In the recent literature, this enriched externalist project has been taken up by virtue-based approaches, whose main idea is that knowledge depends on the cultivation and deployment of the subject's virtuous cognitive abilities, amongst which a form of epistemic vigilance plays a prominent role (Sosa, 2007; Zagzebski, 1996; and, for an application to the emotions, Zagzebski, 2003).

Within dogmatism, defeasible justification also helps integrate issues of unreliability. It is indeed hard to think that internalist justification can float completely free from evidence about unreliability (Brueckner, 2009). For instance, an irascible person who is aware of being irascible, as evidenced by the fact that he voluntarily takes anger management classes every week, is not justified in trusting his experiences of offense and consequently in judging that he has been offended. This expanded version of dogmatism holds that, when evidence of unreliability is accessed by the subject, justification is defeated. Note that for being unjustified, it is not necessary that the cognitive process leading from the emotion to the value judgment is actually unreliable, but merely that it seems so to the subject.

This is a step in the right direction, but it seems that justification can be defeated even if evidence of unreliability is *not* accessed by the subject. The judgments of offense made by our irascible subject may be defeated even if he has not yet noticed how irascible he is, as evidenced by his (angry) refusal to attend anger management classes. It is unclear whether dogmatism can accommodate this additional pressure from externalism without transitioning into full-blown externalism (Brogaard and Chudnoff, 2016; Smithies, 2019).

Now, whatever we think of the debate between externalism and dogmatism, both approaches must consider an aspect of the emotions we have yet to discuss. This is the fact that the emotions themselves can be assessed in light of the evidence in their favor, just as value judgments are (Brady, 2013; Deonna and Teroni, 2012a). We have explored so far whether or not the occurrence of an emotion (anger at a remark, say) can justify a value judgment (the judgment that the remark was offensive). But we are also prone to inquire into the justification the subject has for having the relevant emotion in the first place.

If we ask someone why he judged a remark as offensive and he replies that it is because it made him angry, we are unlikely to consider the matter settled. Rather, we are going to further inquire into the reasons why the remark angered him. In which context was the remark made? What was its exact content? With what intention was it conveyed? Could it have been interpreted in a different way? In light of these "why-questions" about the emotions, it should come as no surprise that the justification of the relevant value judgments presupposes the

justification of the emotions that elicit them (Deonna and Teroni, 2012a; Harrison, 2020). So we should ask: under what conditions are emotions themselves justified?

The epistemic impact on the perceptual analogy of the fact that emotions can themselves be justified or unjustified is discussed in Milona and Naar (2020). The monitoring of emotional responses is at the center of the literature on emotion regulation (Gross, 2014), although the emphasis is seldom on epistemic issues (but see D'Arms, Chapter 59, this volume).

How Do Cognitive Bases Justify Emotions?

The previous section ended with the idea that only justified emotions may justify value judgments. Justified anger may justify the judgment that the remark was offensive, unjustified anger cannot. Now, the question of whether the emotions themselves are justified should be answered by looking at the psychological states to which the emotions react. As we have seen, these psychological states are called the "cognitive bases" of the emotions (Deonna and Teroni, 2012b; Mulligan, 1998). One undisputed function of cognitive bases is to provide emotions with their objects: one is afraid of the dog one *sees*, sad about a loss one *remembers*, offended at having *heard* some gossip about oneself, or hopeful that an *anticipated* promotion will materialize. A more disputed issue concerns the conditions that cognitive bases have to satisfy in order to justify the emotions that presuppose them (Figure 62.5).

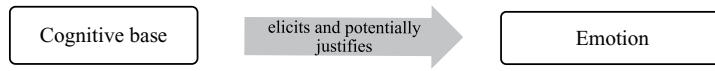

Figure 62.5 From cognitive base to emotion: another transition of epistemological interest.

When an emotion is justified, its cognitive base must provide evidence in its favor. For instance, justified anger at a remark must have a cognitive base that provides evidence in favor of experiencing the remark as offensive. A key issue concerns how exactly we flesh out the relation between the cognitive base and the emotion, an issue that becomes especially salient within internalist approaches to epistemology.

Indeed, as far as externalism is concerned, the situation is pretty straightforward. The fact that emotions can be justified is accommodated within externalism by making the reliability of the cognitive process that goes from the emotion to the value judgment conditional upon the reliability of the cognitive process leading from the cognitive base to the emotion. Suppose, for instance, that your anger is elicited by registering a colleague's sneer. According to externalism, your anger is justified if registered sneers are reliable signs of the presence of offenses. Actually, the registering of any reliable sign of the presence of an offense would justify anger on this approach – there is no further constraint on the cognitive base (Figure 62.6).

Figure 62.6 From cognitive base to emotion: the externalist approach.

This "anything goes" approach to the justification of emotions has not been popular in contemporary epistemology of emotion because of its profligacy – it makes the justification of emotions seem too easy. Pressed to say more about what makes cognitive bases apt to justify

emotions, a great many epistemologists have required a pre-emotional value apprehension of some kind.[6] The idea is that the subject must have some sort of access to the offensiveness of a colleague's sneer in order to be justified in experiencing anger about such sneer. What form can this apprehension of value take?

A first option, the *prior value judgment view*, requires the making of the relevant value judgment before the emotion occurs. Someone sneers at you, you judge that this is offensive, as a result of which you justifiably get angry. But many epistemologists balk at the idea that emotions cannot be justified unless they are prefaced by such cognitively demanding psychological states. More importantly, if having a justified emotion presupposes making a value judgment, then the prospects for emotions to justify value judgments in the way they do according to emotional dogmatism evaporate. Indeed, to have a justified judgment out of an emotion would require having already passed the same justified judgment prior to the emotion. This appears to be a nonstarter for anyone who thinks that emotions are capable of lending independent justification to value judgments (Figure 62.7).

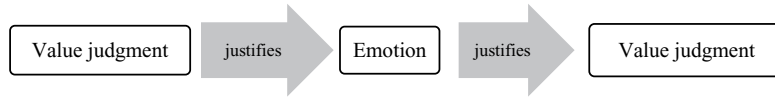

Figure 62.7 The prior value judgment view of justification.

A more attractive model for integrating the relevant considerations into the subject's perspective is the *prior value impression view*. According to it, justified emotions are reactions to value impressions (or perceptions of value, Massin, 2021; or feelings of value, Mulligan, 2010; or construals of value, Müller, 2019). All cases of justified anger, for instance, would have in common that anger reacts to an impression of offense. One option is to think of such impressions as being sensory in nature: there would be a sort of "common evaluative look" under which offensive objects or states of affairs are apprehended. Of course, this presupposes that the idea of an evaluative look is not limited to basic sensory properties such as, say, colors, shapes, sounds, and textures. Many philosophers have claimed that perception can make us aware of high-level properties such as natural kind properties like being a pine tree and, indeed, values like moral wrongness (e.g. McGrath, 2018; Siegel, 2010).

Alternatively, we might try to defend the *prior value impression view* while steering away from the sensory modalities. On this view, there is a non-sensory phenomenological profile common to all pre-emotional apprehensions of a given value, which would explain why the emotion is elicited (Bengson, 2015; Massin, 2021; Mulligan, 2010). This is reminiscent of a kind of intuitionism which had bad press for a long time, but that has met recently with a strong renewal of interest (e.g. Huemer, 2005) (Figure 62.8).

Figure 62.8 The prior value impression view of justification.

It is important to realize that the prior value impression view is incompatible with emotional dogmatism.[7] Emotional dogmatism, as we have seen, is a form of internalism claiming that emotions justify value judgments because they are experiences of the relevant values. According to this view, it is the nature of anger as an experience of the offensive that justifies the judgment that a remark or a gesture is offensive. Now, the prior value impression view has

it that such experiences of value precede and justify the emotions, rather than being an aspect of the emotions themselves. This means that, by its very principles, emotional dogmatism must acknowledge that value impressions justify the relevant value judgments, and do so independently of the emotions themselves. The prior value impression view thus deprives the emotions of any role in justifying value judgments – all the justifying is done by value impressions. As some have concluded, it now looks as if emotions are epistemically redundant (Deonna and Teroni, 2012a: chap. 10; Goldie, 2004).[8]

Note that redundancy is problematic only if one is attracted to emotional dogmatism. If one thinks instead that the possibility of asking why-questions about the emotions (e.g. why did the remark anger you?) shows that emotions cannot by themselves justify value judgments, then redundancy is what should be expected. According to this line of thought, emotions at best transmit the evidence in favor of value judgments that value impressions provide – emotions do not provide additional evidence of their own in favor of value judgments (Brady, 2013; Müller, 2019). Emotions would function in the same way as a messenger transmitting a piece of news: the messenger herself transmits the message as well as whatever evidence the senders may have in favor of what the message contains, but she does not add any new evidence it its favor (Figure 62.9).

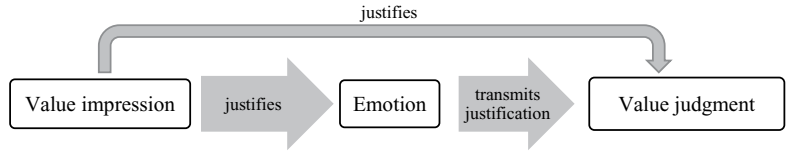

Figure 62.9 Epistemic redundancy of emotions: from value impressions to value judgment.

A third option, the *simple view*, occupies a middle ground between the sort of "anything goes" externalism that puts no constraint on the content of the cognitive bases of justified emotions (any reliable sign of the relevant value fits the bill) and the pre-emotional value apprehension required by both the prior judgment view and prior value impression view. Its point of departure is the thought that objects and states of affairs instantiate values by virtue of their natural properties (e.g. Foot, 2001; Thomson, 1997). A dog is threatening in virtue of its sharp teeth and erratic behavior, a painting is beautiful in virtue of the distribution of colors on the canvas, the voluntary stepping on your toes is offensive in virtue of being an invasion of your personal space, etc. The simple view has it that, for an emotion to be justified, it is enough that the subject be aware of the constellation of natural properties that, in the circumstances, constitutes an instance of the relevant value (Deonna and Teroni, 2012b, 2021; Echeverri, 2019; see also Setiya, 2012).

For instance, being aware of a dog's sharp teeth and erratic behavior or of someone invading your personal space would in specific circumstances justify, respectively, fear and anger, without any need for a prior value judgment or value impression of threat or offense. Since these natural properties are partly constitutive of a threat or an offense, being aware of them is, according to the simple view, sufficient to integrate the required evidence into the subject's perspective. Someone sympathetic to the simple view need not claim that there is no other, more demanding, form of pre-emotional value apprehension. He can simply insist that the simple view applies to many basic cases, and that such basic cases are not derivative from the more demanding ones (Deigh, 1994).

The relevant constellations of natural properties will vary quite substantially from one case to the next: stepping on one's foot, reading one's private emails, being kept to wait for an hour at a doctor's office, being ignored by a colleague can all be instances of *offense*, yet they share little at the level of natural properties (Figure 62.10).

Figure 62.10 The simple view on justification.

The simple view can advocate a moderate form of internalism about the justification of emotions: the subject must be aware of something that constitutes the relevant value, but this requires neither prior value judgments nor prior value impressions. The challenge for the advocate of the simple view is to establish that being aware of the relevant constellation of natural properties is sufficient to justify the emotion. How can we be sure that the subject reacts to an offense, given that he reacts to a constellation of natural properties? While this is guaranteed in the other views, the challenge for the simple view is substantial, because it posits that emotions are reactions to values which are neither conceptually nor experientially apprehended.

A possible answer to this challenge involves appealing to the subject's emotional sensitivity, that is, to how he would emotionally react to various counterfactual situations. Consider Jane, who gets angry at someone stepping on her foot. Suppose that she would still have gotten angry had someone stepped on her other foot, or pushed her around, or pried into her personal emails. Suppose further that she would *not* have gotten angry had she realized that the invasion of her personal space was not intentional, or if the person apologized immediately. The idea is that such a well-calibrated counterfactual sensitivity may well be enough to conclude that the emotion is a reaction to offense. Emotions may sometimes – often, perhaps – manifest this form of sensitivity without a prior value judgment or value impression.[9] If this rejoinder is on the right track, then the challenge for the simple view can be met: awareness of the relevant constellations of natural properties is enough to justify the emotions.

The last task facing us concerns the way the simple view fares with emotional dogmatism. As opposed to the prior judgment and prior value impression views, the simple view is consistent with emotional dogmatism (Mitchell, 2017). It is possible to maintain both that emotions are justified when caused by the awareness of the relevant constellations of natural properties (the simple view) *and* that value judgments are justified by these justified emotions (dogmatism). If so, emotions are not epistemically redundant – they have justificatory power of their own in addition to the justificatory power of their cognitive bases. The idea here is that, while awareness of natural properties would be enough to justify the emotion, it would *not* be enough to justify the corresponding value judgment. For example, awareness of a dog's sharp teeth and erratic behavior would be enough to justify fear of the dog, but it would not be enough to justify the value judgment that the dog is a threat – to get to the latter, the experience of the threat associated with fear would be necessary.

Why would that be? When a subject makes a value judgment, she deploys an evaluative concept. And, the argument goes, concept deployment requires that she be capable of applying it to a variety of objects. Concepts go hand in hand with categorizations, and categorization means treating different things as instances of the same category. What is more, it is natural to think that a subject can meet this constraint on concept deployment only if she is somehow guided in her categorizations to tell category members from category nonmembers. Now, the subject cannot in the case at hand be guided merely by the constellations of natural properties she is aware of. As we have seen, threats are realized by substantially different constellations of such properties, and there are innumerable possible constellations instantiating threats.

One attractive option at this juncture is then to say that it is the emotion itself that provides the needed guidance. In other words, it is the way these various constellations of natural

properties constituting the relevant values are emotionally *experienced* that unifies these various constellations and guides the application of value concepts. For instance, it would be the subject's fear, i.e. her experience of threat, which guides her application of the concept of threat. Absent the evaluative measuring stick that is the emotional experience of the value, awareness of natural properties would never on its own justify the judgment that the value is instantiated. If evaluative categorization is essentially emotion-driven (D'Arms and Jacobson, 2010; McDowell, 1985; Wiggins, 1987), then there is a rationale for combining the simple view and emotional dogmatism.

This being said, the combination of the simple view and emotional dogmatism may be less felicitous than we made it seem. Dogmatism about the relation between emotions and judgments of value is a view that takes the relation between perceptual impressions and perceptual judgments as a paradigm of justification. Adopting the simple view ultimately means renouncing this paradigm for an important justification relation: the one that holds between emotions and their cognitive bases. This is because the simple view has it that emotions are justified by awareness of the relevant constellations of natural properties, rather than by a perception-like value impression. In other words, the simple view assumes that your fear of the dog is justified because you are aware of the dog's sharp teeth and erratic behavior, rather than because of a prior impression (or judgment) that the dog instantiates a threat.

This is no trivial concession. If emotions can be justified independently of prior value impressions, why deny that the same is true for value judgments like the value judgment that the dog is a threat? In the case of value judgments, it is also far from evident that the prior value impression adds anything to the justification already provided by the cognitive bases (Goldie, 2004). Now, given that emotional dogmatism claims that it is in virtue of being such value impressions that emotions justify value judgments, this line of thought again raises the issue of the epistemic redundancy of emotions. We have seen earlier that emotions may end up being epistemically redundant if their justification depends on a prior value impression. We now realize that the simple view poses a redundancy threat to any value impression, emotional or otherwise, claimed to justify the relevant judgments (Figure 62.11).

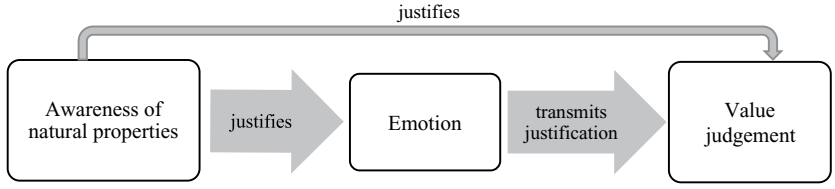

Figure 62.11 Epistemic redundancy of emotions: from awareness of natural properties to value judgments

In the context of the simple view, this criticism grounds what is known as a form of "buck passing" regarding the relation between value judgments and what justifies them. The central claim of the buck-passing account is that value (and value awareness) does not provide any additional justification to the (awareness of the) relevant constellation of natural properties. In the words of Scanlon (1998), who fathered the buck-passing account of value, we should avoid double-counting.

Those sensitive to this line of thought will insist that the considerations we have adduced show that emotions do not play a genuinely epistemic role in the sense that they do not provide additional evidence in favor of the relevant value judgments. For them, the fact that emotions themselves are justified or unjustified undermines the perceptual paradigm on which

dogmatist epistemology is built (Brady, 2013; Brogaard and Chudnoff, 2016; Deonna and Teroni, 2012a; Harrison, 2020). Emotions indeed function as pure messengers.

This conclusion does not speak against another epistemological view, namely that emotions play important roles in our *understanding* of the value concepts that we deploy in making these judgments. We explore the prospects of this view in the next section, but note that it is very different from the claim that emotions *justify* value judgments.

The simple view is defended in Deonna and Teroni (2012a: chap. 8, 2022) and Echeverri (2019). Ballard (2021), Milona and Naar (2020), and Mitchell (2017) are three discussions of how the cognitive bases of emotions impact on the perceptual model for understanding the role of emotions in the justification of value judgments. In-depth explorations of the nature of pre-emotional value apprehension can be found in Mitchell (2021: chap. 3) and Müller (2019: chap. 5).

Do Emotions Ground Understanding?

In this section, we consider the way emotions contribute to our understanding of value. Understanding, at least as developed in relation to the emotions, is an internalist notion: it has to do either with the subject's understanding of why something is the case, or with her understanding of what she means when she makes a value judgments.[10] We will consider two models of the relation between emotions and these notions of understanding. According to the first model, emotions play a purely *instrumental* role with respect to understanding why something has a given value. According to the second, emotions play a *constitutive* role with respect to understanding what we mean when we make value judgments. Let us consider them in turn.

Imagine being awakened in the middle of the night by some noise in the house. You feel scared. You immediately investigate the source of the noise, trying to establish whether there are indeed reasons to be scared, i.e. whether the situation is threatening. Or imagine eating breakfast, with shame progressively creeping in at the memory of last night's events. It dawns on you that you drank too much during the party. Trying to remember, you go over everything you think you have said, filling the blanks as it were. It looks increasingly clear that you made a fool of yourself. This example suggests that emotions can be in the business of initiating an epistemic search aimed at uncovering evidence for (or perhaps against) the emotions and for the corresponding value judgments. In other words, your creeping shame may alert you to the fact that you may have failed to live up to an ego ideal, which in turn prompts an epistemic search for evidence that you did in fact fail in this regard.

According to Brady (2013), this is the central role emotions play in relation to our understanding of value: emotions initiate and sustain a process that orients attention with the aim of uncovering evidence. In this model, emotions function a bit like "alarm bells" which signal the potential presence of a value and motivate the subject to check whether this initial evaluative verdict is appropriate or not. When everything goes well, the subject unearths evidence that puts her in a position to understand why her initial verdict is appropriate.

There are certainly situations in which emotions play such an instrumental role vis-à-vis understanding why something has a value. The key question is whether this exhausts the role of emotions in understanding. In a famous passage, Goldie (2000) evocatively illustrates the sense in which emotions may play a more constitutive role in the understanding of value. Asking us to contemplate what happens with him before and after he fell on ice, he writes:

> Then I only thought of the ice as dangerous; now I feel fear towards the ice. Of course it is true that I now do still think of the ice as in some way dangerous, but my way of thinking of it as dangerous is now distinct. Now I think of its dangerousness as

> emotionally relevant in a special way. Coming to think of it in this new way is not to be understood as consisting of thinking of it in the old way, plus some added-on phenomenal ingredient – feeling, perhaps; rather, the whole way of experiencing … the world is new … The difference between thinking of X as Y without feeling and thinking of X as Y with feeling will not just comprise a different attitude towards the same content – a thinking which earlier was without feeling and now is with feeling. The difference also lies in the content, although it might be that this difference cannot be captured in words. *(2000: 59–60)*

Without the capacity for fear, according to Goldie, we would not be capable of fully appreciating what we mean when we call the ice a danger (or a threat) after having experienced a fall on it. According to this second model, emotions play a *constitutive* role with respect to understanding what we mean when we make value judgments.

This way of connecting the understanding of a threat and, more generally, of values, with our emotional responses is at the heart of *neo-sentimentalism*.[11] The form of neo-sentimentalism that interests us here is the view that our understanding of what we mean when we say that a given value concept applies to a situation consists in understanding that a certain type of emotional response is appropriate to this situation. Understanding that walking on ice is dangerous is understanding that it makes fear *appropriate*, understanding that the joke is funny is understanding that it makes amusement *appropriate*, understanding that the gesture is offensive is understanding that it makes anger *appropriate*, etc. (see D'Arms, Chapter 59, this volume). By contrast with the view advocated by Brady (2013), in this case the role of emotions in value understanding is not merely instrumental, since the understanding itself is partly constituted by the emotions. The question is: in virtue of which aspect do the emotions play a constitutive role in value understanding? Let us try to get a grip on this much-debated issue.

We have worked with the widely accepted idea that emotions are experiences of values. One natural way of cashing out this idea is again in terms of the perceptual model which emotional dogmatism presupposes. As our understanding of the concept of red is grounded in our visual experiences of redness, our understanding of the concepts of offense or of the funny is grounded in emotional experiences of offensiveness (anger) or of funniness (amusement) (Johnston, 2001). A subject born blind may have some indirect grasp of color concepts, but she lacks an understanding of what she means by these concepts since she is deprived of the relevant color experiences. Similarly, someone incapable of anger or amusement would lack an understanding of what she means by the concepts of offense or funniness. This is to say that her use of these concepts would betray a different attitude toward the same contents in comparison to the uses of the same concepts by someone who has experienced anger or amusement. What deprives the emotion-less subject of understanding is a lack of experiences that make the relevant value properties manifest in the right way.

On this view, the contribution of emotion to our understanding of value concepts is due to the fact that emotions *represent values in a quasi-perceptual manner*. Our value concepts are concepts of appropriate emotions, where "appropriate" means representing correctly in this quasi-perceptual manner (Tappolet, 2016: chap. 3). For example, our concept of the dangerous is the concept of what fear appropriately represents, our concept of the offensive is the concept of what anger appropriately represents, our concept of the funny is the concept of what amusement appropriately represents, and so on.

According to an alternative approach, the contribution of emotions to our understanding of value concepts has a different origin. Rather than being experiences that make value manifest in a quasi-perceptual manner, emotions organize and occupy attention in specific ways.

Our concepts of the relevant values are claimed be the concepts of what *merits to occupy attention in specific ways*. For example, the concept of threat is the concept of something that merits to occupy attention in the way characteristic of fear, the concept of offense is the concept of something that merits to occupy attention in the way characteristic of anger, and the concept of the funny is the concept of what merits to occupy attention in the way characteristic of amusement. And when we deplore a lack of emotion in ourselves or others, we claim that an object would merit to occupy attention in a given way.

A popular approach to further specify these ways of occupying attention consists in emphasizing the fact that emotions involve tendencies to act (e.g. Dewey, 1895; Frijda, 1986, 2007; Gert, 2016; Scarantino, 2014). Accordingly, concepts such as those of threat, offense, and funniness are concepts of distinct forms of engagement with the environment – avoidance in the case of threat, aggression in the case of offense, and laughter in the case of funniness. On this view, our value concepts are concepts of appropriate emotions, where "appropriate" means meriting certain forms of agential engagement (Deonna and Teroni, 2021). The relevant agential engagement is not simply a matter of what action tendency is appropriate: the engagement must also be of the right intensity, of the right duration, and so on – in short, the object must occupy attention in the right way. This second approach allows emotions to be appropriate when given values are present without representing those values – what is appropriate is the form of engagement to the value.

To sum up, neo-sentimentalism holds that emotions essentially contribute to our understanding of the value domain, in the sense that value concepts are concepts of appropriate emotions. We have presented two ways of developing this line of thought, which differ in the specific contribution they claim emotions to make: emotions can be appropriate either because the values they represent are instantiated, or because the forms of agential engagement they generate make sense as responses to those values. In both cases, and in contrast with the approaches to justification we have discussed in the previous sections, understanding consists in the subject's reflexive perspective on her emotional life and its connection to the value domain.

Once the subject appreciates that a certain emotional response to a value is appropriate, she understands what she means when she makes a value judgment. But there are two ways we can interpret the notion of appropriateness at stake, depending on how we interpret the nature of values. Suppose we are objectivists about values. In that case, appropriateness will be a matter of the emotion's matching an independent evaluative reality. As a result, the concept of appropriate emotion is the concept of an emotion that matches the relevant independent value (e.g. Tappolet, 2016). The concept of appropriate anger at a toddler being harshly beaten by his father, for instance, is the concept of an episode of anger that matches the objective fact that a toddler is unjustly treated. Suppose now that we are subjectivists about values. In that case, there is no independent evaluative reality for the emotion to match. The concept of appropriate emotion is rather the concept of an emotion that accords with the subject's attitudes (attachments, cares, concerns, desires) (Roberts, 2003; Todd, 2014). The concept of appropriate anger at a toddler being beaten is the concept of an episode of anger that accords with the subject's commitments with regard to, say, the role of physical punishment in parental education.

Whichever model we employ to capture the role of emotions in value understanding, the idea is that someone who is deprived of emotions lacks a fundamental entry point into the value domain. For that reason, she is dramatically impaired in her capacity to develop a rich repertoire of value concepts and to reflect about the world in evaluative terms (Deonna and Teroni, 2021).

Conclusion and Future Directions

In this chapter, we have explored how the emotions bear on the central epistemic notions of knowledge, justification, and understanding of values. We have argued that value knowledge is a matter of producing value judgments which are true and justified. We have distinguished externalist notions of justification, which take value judgments to be justified when elicited by emotions that are reliable signs of values, from internalist notions of justification, which take value judgments to be justified when elicited by emotions that are experiences of those values. We have considered some ways to integrate these two models, which share the insight that justification is always defeasible in light of information about defeaters.

Our next topic has been the justification of emotions themselves in light of their cognitive bases. We have compared and contrasted the view that values must be apprehended prior to the elicitation of the emotion from the view that emoters must be aware only of the natural properties instantiating the relevant values. We have explored the extent to which each of these accounts makes the emotions themselves redundant in the justificatory process. Finally, we have considered how emotions can be conducive to our understanding of values.

We have distinguished the *instrumental* role emotions can play with respect to understanding why something has a given value from the *constitutive* role they can play with respect to understanding what we mean when we make value judgments. We have concluded by contrasting two ways to think of values as consisting of appropriate emotional responses, one which assumes that emotions are appropriate when the values they represent are instantiated and the other which assumes that emotions are appropriate when the forms of agential engagement they engender make sense in the presence of the relevant values.

Notes

1 The paradigmatic view in philosophy is that judgments consist in taking the relevant propositions to be true, where this presupposes mastery and deployment of the concepts that feature in this proposition (Schwitzgebel, 2021). This will play an important role in what follows.

2 "Evidence" is here used to refer to considerations or reasons in favor of a judgment (or another type of attitude) that have a close relation to truth – some even assume that evidence consists of all propositions known to be true (Williamson 2000). Other types of reasons may speak in favor of a judgment without having this relation to truth. One may for instance have a *strategic* or *prudential* reason to make a judgment – the fact that one would be pleased if one believed being charming is a prudential consideration in favor of that judgment. One may also have a *moral* reason to make or refrain from making a judgment, e.g. when one refrains from judging that someone is dishonest because he is one's friend. In this chapter we are interested only in the first kind of reasons in favor of judgments.

3 An important issue that we shall leave aside concerns how much evidence is sufficient for being justified in making a judgment. We shall rest content with the idea that justification is a function of evidence and that it constitutes a central dimension of knowledge.

4 Given the purposes of this chapter, we shall rely on an intuitive conception of what concepts and concept mastery are. Interested readers can consult Margolis and Laurence (2015).

5 In this context, the externalist has to specify the scope of the relevant cognitive processes that determine whether reliability is achieved. For example, in order to determine the reliability of the cognitive process going from fear to the judgment that there is a threat, we need to establish whether such a cognitive process is to be evaluated relative to all threats, or relative to threats at night, or relative to threats at night in a particular neighborhood, etc. This will give us different notions of reliability (see Alston 1995 for discussion).

6 Observe in passing that we face here a consideration that has been at the center of appraisal theories since their inception (e.g. Arnold, 1960; Moors et al., 2013; Scherer, 2001). According to these theories, we respond emotionally in the specific ways we do because of how we appraise (i.e. evaluate) our environment.

7 The same holds of the prior value judgment view, which deprives emotions of independent ability to lend support to value judgments for even more straightforward reasons.
8 Observe also that the combination of the prior value impression view and the idea that emotions are experiences of value is psychologically suspect: are all cases of justified emotions characterized by a double experience of value, one taking place before the emotion and one during the emotion? The conviction that they are not so characterized explains why some of those who believe in prior value impressions have rejected the idea that emotions are experiences of values (e.g. Müller, 2019).
9 There may be different explanations of this counterfactual sensitivity (e.g. the "wiring" may be innate, or it may result from a process of acculturation or habit formation). For attempts at implementing this idea, see Echeverri (2019), and Deonna and Teroni (2012a).
10 An important issue which we cannot explore here is that of the relation between justification and understanding. We will only note an important distinction. For the externalist, justification and understanding are radically different: justification is purely a matter of reliability, whereas understanding requires the subject to take a perspective on her emotions, how they are elicited, the reliability of the relevant processes, etc. For the internalist, on the other hand, the two notions are close to one another: justification is already anchored in the subject's perspective. The specific relation between justification and understanding will depend on the particular constraints the internalist puts on justification.
11 Neo-sentimentalism is nowadays associated to the work of D'Arms and Jacobson (2000, 2010; see also D'Arms, Chapter 59, this volume). The neo-sentimentalist program is structurally identical to the so-called fitting-attitude analysis of value, but with a distinctive emphasis on the emotions. On the fitting-attitude analysis of value, its history, and contemporary debates surrounding it, see Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen (2004).

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