

**Georg Brun, Ulvi Doguoglu, Dominique Kuenzle, eds.**  
*Epistemology and Emotions.*  
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There will come a time when theories that reject an epistemic role for emotion will seem quaint. Although we are not there yet, philosophers and moral psychologists have become increasingly interested in the role emotions play in perception, belief, and knowledge over the past century. This volume presents the current state of affairs -- the positions, the debates, the quandaries -- with admirable concision, panache, and best of all, no shortage of productive dispute.

Things get off to a rollicking start with the introductory essay by editors Georg Brun, Ulvi Doguoglu, and Dominique Kuenzle, which summarizes the major claims, issues, and questions addressed by the essays that follow. The pressing questions are, first, whether emotions can perform epistemic functions, leading us closer to knowledge, and second, if the answer is yes, which emotions can perform these functions.

As a consequence of Descartes' insistence that knowledge be certain, fallible emotion has been seen as at best irrelevant to post-enlightenment epistemology, at worst an obstacle. That we are asking these questions now, in the face of resistance by traditional epistemologists, is a consequence of many factors, the editors argue, among which are: debates concerning the justification condition of the tripartite definition of knowledge; the shift to examining epistemic activities rather than static concepts or states; interest in the properties of epistemic agents among virtue epistemologists, social epistemologists and feminist epistemologists and philosophers of science; the post-Quinian naturalization of epistemology; and renewed interest in the philosophy of emotion generally.

Catherine Z. Elgin argues that emotions provide access to salient information that we would otherwise miss, response-dependent properties such as admirability, which depend on emotion for meaning -- as well as evidence of response-independent properties, such as trust, that trigger our awareness of the response-dependent properties. We take our feeling of trust as evidence that someone is trustworthy, or admirable. That emotion makes certain features of a person salient. Furthermore, emotions can be refined to become ever more reliable, gradually decreasing the chances of error. Although Elgin builds toward the conclusion that we ought to rely on the arts to refine our emotional perception, the conclusion is the weakest part of the essay, perhaps because she spends less than a page arguing for it directly. It is not obvious to me why the arts better help one hone emotional perception than, say, diverse social interactions.

Moving away from perception, Christopher Hookway deals explicitly with the role of emotion in evaluation. Since emotions and other affective states can be rational or irrational, the rationality of our emotions should affect the overall rationality of our beliefs. In particular, rational emotions should help lead us toward true beliefs. The rationality of our beliefs is affected by the information to which we attend, and emotions lead us to attend to some information while disregarding the rest. The sheer volume of information available to our senses at any given moment cannot be thoroughly attended to in the finite time we have, using our finite energies. Rational emotions will direct us to the information most relevant to the beliefs we wish to justify, not only in regard to particular beliefs but in the sense of general habits as well. 'Epistemic success requires that *salience tracks relevance*: what we find ourselves disposed to attend to should be what it is relevant that we attend to' (58). Hookway delves into the emotional character of our immediate evaluations, the motivational role of emotions, and how emotions lead evaluations to spread as well, before moving on to a fascinating discussion of the role of doubt, ultimately emotional in nature, in epistemic inquiry.

Alessandra Tanesini follows Hookway with an essay on emotions as salience generators, enabling us to determine which lines of inquiry are worth following. Emotions in this role are aspects of 'an intellectual virtue of epistemic humility', that is, of fallibilism (67). Tanesini presents the selection of salient information and inquiries as an essential part of reason, a part which is inextricably tied to emotion. Emotions, as salience generators, are pre-doxastic and immediate. Tanesini provides a marvelous account of the ways in which emotions guide perception in multiple contexts, noting along the way Antonio Damasio's work, which indicates a close, perhaps interdependent, relationship between rationality and emotional depth. She notes, too, that emotions can be normatively evaluated and are used in rational explanations. It makes sense to aid one's child because one loves him. She finishes by presenting fallibilism as the intellectual virtue of epistemic humility, which is marked by affective attitudes of disregard for social status and of devotion to inquiry, openness to the ideas of others, the motivation to learn from others, and an appropriately measured sense of the value of one's own beliefs.

Sabine A. Doring uses the puzzle of how emotions and beliefs can conflict without contradiction to explore how the two differ in content and in attitude. Hume provided the classic example of such a conflict without contradiction: one may fear falling even though one knows one is in no danger of falling. The emotion and the belief conflict but do not contradict, since one does not entail rejection of the other. The solution is to treat the matter as one of calibration -- the emotion, in this case, needs to be calibrated through better judgment and knowledge, a rational process in which the accuracy of one's affective state is investigated, compared to what one knows, and revised accordingly. This will not always be successful, but the situation is analogous to optical illusions that can, similarly, be dispelled by learning more about why one is experiencing the illusion and what is really going on.

Comparing epistemologies that value reflective assessment over immediate affective assessment, Daniel Dohr asks whether the latter demand a kind of judgment that differs from the norm. Specifically, he distinguishes between the claim that such immediate assessments are a necessary characteristic of 'blameless' epistemic activity, and the claim that immediate affective assessment has a role to play in justification. Dohr argues against the latter claim and in favour of the former. Justification is a matter of reflection, which admits of degrees and involves some judgment, but is less prone to problems than 'phenomena of epistemic immediacy' such as affective assessment, sense perception, and rule-following.

Markus Wild brings a critical eye to bear on various attempts to determine the proper role of emotion in epistemology. Much depends, of course, on the theory of emotion that we accept. The traditional project, that persistent pursuit of proper justification or warrant, focused on epistemic activities rather than cognitive states, often ignoring the role of epistemic agents and non-cognitive mental states. So intent was the traditional project on epistemic success that it was left especially vulnerable to skepticism.

The new 'inclusive project' focuses on the power of emotions to determine salience and to provide order to epistemic activity. Wild finds several problems with the inclusive project: emotion isn't like knowledge in relevant ways, it can and should be over-ridden from time to time by reason, its influence may be harmful, and it can lead us to find salience where salience need not be found. Some have sought refuge from these problems in 'virtue responsibilism', a marriage of emotions with virtue epistemology that treats intellectual virtues like moral virtues, i.e., traits of character embodied by ideal epistemic agents. Yet that is grounded in a problematic notion of character, Wild insists, one that postulates fixed traits that guide action in all situations. While it's true that the view of character Wild dismisses isn't supported by some social psychologists, other accounts of character and selfhood are (and, it might be said, we should be careful with the 'It's wrong because my favorite social psychologist said so' sort of argument). Nothing about virtue responsibilism ties it necessarily to a naive account of character ignorant of the influence of social and environmental factors.

In an often amusing chapter, Peter Goldie also argues that the utility of emotions in tracking salience and regulating inquiry has been overstated. Like Wild, he pushes for recognition of the distorting and misleading effects of emotion, which can be both systematic and subtle -- especially the most ancient and primal emotions, the ones that evolved because of their survival value in environments vastly different from those faced today. Returning to Hume on the moral sentiments, Goldie notes that our emotions are biased by relationships (e.g., we judge the actions of our children differently than the actions of strangers) and proximity (e.g., we feel more for those near to us geographically, ideologically, etc.). These biases can be corrected only by reason.

Paul Thagard argues that if emotions, desires, and beliefs are all patterns of neural activity, then emotions are at least as relevant as beliefs and desires as contributors to knowledge, impediments to knowledge, and components of knowledge. Thagard is mostly concerned with noting deficiencies in the account of emotions as propositional attitudes. The argument is quite weak, resting on questionable premises that are connected neither to each other nor the conclusion they are intended to support. It begins with an uncritical acceptance of inference to the best explanation as the standard by which all theoretical entities must be justified. Why? Because it is popular in ‘science and everyday life’. Even if that were true, it would not follow that we should accept it as the gold standard for all theoretical explanations. Thagard moves on to assume that explanation must refer to a postulated causal relationship, which might have been defensible if he had argued for it. On these bases, he declares that abstract entities are not causally linked with observable phenomena. In fact, he defines propositions out of the picture by declaring that they cannot make anything happen because they are not part of a physical mechanism -- an argument that relies on bold assertion to mask the fact that it hasn’t made a case. Thagard’s account of the epistemic relevance of emotions is cursory and unsophisticated.

The second naturalistic essay, by Ronald de Sousa, is a slight improvement, though the arguments are still not as robust as those in earlier chapters. De Sousa outlines how the ‘intuitive system’ of unconscious mental processes and the ‘analytic system’ of conscious and intentional mental processes work together ‘uneasily’ with the aid of emotions that influence thought and inquiry. After reviewing the roles emotions play in rational thought and action, De Sousa looks at the effects of fear on belief and provides examples of epistemic emotions: some kinds of fear and greed, doubt, certainty, knowing, and familiarity. Drugs can also influence emotions, and here he notes the increase in trust caused by oxytocin. At this point, the role of emotions in reasoning is ‘no longer controversial’. De Sousa, meet Thagard and Goldie. To be fair, de Sousa makes frequent reference to other essays in this book, including Goldie’s. In fact, what de Sousa provides is a wide-ranging review of the literature that brings in a variety of issues, problems, insights and observations to tease the reader as the book draws to a close.

Though a slim volume of just nine essays, *Epistemology and Emotions* is worth purchasing for its introduction alone, a near perfect summary of the theoretical activity behind the resurgence of interest in the function of emotions in epistemology. In a few pages, we are treated to lucid précis of the main positions, a fascinating account of the debates regarding the variety of emotions and the differences between affective states (such as emotions and moods), theories of emotion, and the various arguments against emotion’s epistemological significance. The fact that at least five of the essays are excellent presentations of the major positions makes this book a must-have for any philosopher interested in emotion, epistemology, or both.

**Michael K. Potter**  
University of Windsor