EDITORIAL

Introduction: The Role of Emotions in Epistemic Practices and Communities

Laura Candiotto[1,2] · Jan Slaby[3]

It is widely assumed that emotions are crucial to human world-disclosure, as they bring us in touch with matters of concern and contribute to understanding the world and ourselves in evaluative terms. Despite these robust connections between the affective realm and knowledge, the relationship between the philosophy of emotion and the broader philosophical subfield of epistemology is not very close. While a relatively small but substantive group of emotion experts has long been exploring the epistemological significance of emotion, mainstream epistemologists have been reluctant to turn to emotions as a factor in knowledge-generation. Despite this relative distance between the fields, some significant work has been done in the epistemology of emotions in the last decades (de Sousa 1987; Hookway 2000; Brun et al. 2008; Morton 2010; Brady 2013; Mitchell 2017; Candiotto 2019). Through an investigation into the functions of emotions in our epistemic life, scholars considered the weight of emotions and other affective states in, for instance, nurturing moral concerns (Solomon 1976; Helm 2001; Roeser and Todd 2014) and informing decision-making (Isen 2000; Kirman et al. 2010; Mendonça & Sàágua 2019). At the same time, social epistemology has challenged the traditional individualist assumptions of epistemology and has developed many different paths of inquiry into the epistemology of collective agents (Gilbert 1987; Schmitt 1994; Bird 2014). In the last several years in particular, there has been a considerable turn away from classical individualist positions towards socially situated approaches to knowledge and knowledge-production.

In this special issue, we reconsider the epistemic value of emotions at the intersection of these two debates. The contributed authors revisit the general question in virtue of which features emotions are epistemically effective (if they are) and bring it to the debate on social epistemology by focusing on epistemic practices and communities. This includes renewed reflection on the concept of practice and the constitutive dimensions and normative profile of collective practices. With our focus on epistemic practices and communities, we bring the epistemology of emotion out of the ivory tower and support a bottom-up philosophical approach to our real-life epistemic activities with a specific emphasis on their particular social location. This allows us to consider both their beneficial and detrimental roles. On one side, emotions can nourish collaboration between the different members of epistemic communities; on the other, they can be a source of discrimination and exclusion of minorities.

This special issue brings together several new lines of inquiry, such as novel approaches to the relationship between emotion and collective epistemic agency, more radically embodied and situated approaches to emotional intentionality, and a heightened focus on the entanglement of emotional comportment with socio-political, especially institutional, contexts. Given these diverse but importantly interrelated issues, this special issue includes contributions from different philosophical orientations and methodologies, in particular approaches from analytical philosophy, phenomenology, 4E cognition and predictive processing, situated affectivity, virtue and vice epistemology, cultural and media studies, pragmatism, feminist epistemology, and critical social philosophy.

With this breadth of philosophical outlooks applied to a timely topic that connects several philosophical subject areas, this special issue offers a map of new terrain to explore.

✉ Laura Candiotto
laura.candiotto@upce.cz

Jan Slaby
jan.slaby@fu-berlin.de

[1] Institute of Philosophy, Free University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

[2] Centre for Ethics, University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czechia

[3] Institute of Philosophy & CRC 1171 Affective Societies, Free University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

The following are some of the questions addressed in the collected papers and offered to the readers for further investigation: What is the role of emotions in epistemic practices like collective inquiry, critical thinking, and testimony? Is their epistemic function dependent upon its enactment in practice? Does their epistemic value increase or decrease in relation to the epistemic practices' social location? Can emotions be a source of epistemic transformation in a collaborative setting? What is the emotion's role in social movements that bring forward alternative imaginaries? What does it mean to cultivate our affective disruptability in epistemic contexts? What is the impact of local affective arrangements on epistemic communities, offline and online? Under what circumstances will emotions no longer support the ethics of knowledge? In what way is the epistemic relevance of emotions problematic? When are emotions a source of privilege, exclusion, and stereotype? What conceptual frameworks are required to assess the emotions' normative value concerning epistemic communities and worlds-making? How to bring together value objectivity with radical situatedness?

The special issue comprises eight papers that cover a range of themes pertaining to the epistemic role of emotions in social and collective settings. In "Epistemic Emotions and Co-Inquiry: A situated Approach," Laura Candiotto advances a situated account of epistemic emotions by charging virtue epistemology of individualism and unworldliness. She locates the epistemic role of emotions in collaborative inquiry: emotions are not epistemic per se, but they can be knowledge-conducive if embedded in a co-inquiry epistemic culture and scaffolded by habits of co-inquiry.

Sympathy has usually been taken as a contributing factor to interpersonal understanding. In "Sympathy, Interpersonal Awareness and Acknowledgment," Moritz Mueller challenges this view by arguing that sympathy is a form of interpersonal acknowledgment instead. It follows that sympathy has a practical significance: a way of directly apprehending other sentient beings as they are. But understanding the realities of others can be difficult, especially when emotions are embedded in highly charged socio-political divergences. Imke von Maur tackles this problem in her "The epistemic value of affective disruptability" by addressing the inability to think differently. Through an analysis of the reasons for this inability, and in particular, by focusing on the habitual dimension of emotions, she argues that emotions can be a source of change if a pluralistic emotion repertoire is cultivated.

Josè Araja and Simon Palacios, in "Stereotypes, Ingroup Emotions and the inner predictive machinery of testimony," identify intergroup emotions as the source of stereotypes. A detailed analysis of the reductionist/anti-reductionist debate about testimonial justification suggests that the underlying monitoring mechanism amounts to emotion-based stereotyping.

In "ProAna Worlds: Affectivity and Echo Chambers Online," Lucy Osler and Joel Krueger discuss the role of affectivity in online sociality and its impact on worlds-making. Specifically, they consider how Pro-Anorexia (ProAna) websites help drive and maintain Anorexia Nervosa (AN) practices. Emancipating from an individualist account of AN, they stress the social and affective dimensions of Pro-Ana communities and argue that they do not simply furnish members with AN-related information but form ProAna worlds. In short, online ProAna communities are "worlds" with epistemic and affective significance for individuals.

In "Embodied Institutions and Epistemic Exclusions: Affect in the Academy," Millicent Churcher explores the intersection between emotions, affect, social imaginaries, and institutions through the lens of epistemic power in the academy. She argues that attending this intersection is critical for a fuller understanding of how emotional dynamics can assist to entrench, but also disrupt, asymmetries of epistemic privilege that cut across lines of race, sex, and other markers of social difference. The issue of race is tackled by Michelle Maiese as well in her "White Supremacy as an Affective Milieu." By employing the conceptual tools of situated affectivity (specifically, affective arrangements and milieu) together with an organicist account of habit, Maiese discusses the workings of white supremacy in the United States. Since racist habits are formed throughout learning and ongoing affective engagement, she argues for a deep entanglement of the emotional and epistemic dimensions in affective milieus as cognitive habitats.

Matthew Crippen ends the special issue with a paper titled "Emotional Environments: Selective Permeability, Political Affordances and Normative Settings." He introduces the notion of "political affordances." Through a rich and multifaced engagement with different scenarios, Crippen focuses on how affordances are values, and so they implicitly filter and segregate according to various social divisions. He points to the normative openings and closures of cultural spaces and the role of affectivity in carving out the social world.

References

Bird A (2014) When Is There a Group That Knows? In *Essays in Collective Epistemology*, ed. J. Lackey 2014: 42–63. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Brady M (2013) *Emotional Insight: The Epistemic Role of Emotional Experience Oxford: Oxford University Press*

Brun G, Doğuoğlu U, Kuenzle D (eds) (2008) Epistemology and Emotions. Ashgate, Aldershot

Candiotto L (ed) (2019) The Value of Emotions for Knowledge. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham

de Sousa R (1987) The Rationality of Emotion. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA

Gilbert M (1987) Modelling Collective Belief Synthese 73(1):185–204

Helm B (2001) *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hookway C (2000) Regulating Inquiry: Virtue, Doubt, and Sentiment. In: Axtell G (ed) Knowledge, Belief, and Character. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, pp 149–160

Isen AM (2000) Positive Affect and Decision Making. In: Lewis M, Haviland-Jones J (eds) Handbook of Emotions. Guilford Press, New York, pp 417–435

Kirman A, Livet P, Teschl M (eds) (2010) Rationality and Emotions. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 365 (1538)

Mendonça & Sàágua (2019) Emotional Reflexivity in Reasoning: The Function of Describing the Environment in Emotion Regulation. In: Candiotto L (ed) The Value of Emotions in Knowledge. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp 121–142

Mitchell J (2017) The Epistemology of Emotional Experience dialectica 71(1):57–84

Morton A (2010) Epistemic Emotions. In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, Goldie P (ed) 385–399. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Roeser S, Todd C (eds) (2014) Emotions and Value. Oxford University Press, Oxford

Schmitt F (ed) (1994) Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD

Solomon R (1976) The Passions. Doubleday, New York, NY