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others cannot ignore or dismiss but must address in their own terms. Moral knowledge comes from outside, not inside the self. It requires openness to the claims and perspectives of others.

Democratic inquiry does not solve all problems in moral epistemology. Nor is contention the only path to moral insight. Sometimes the powerful can be stirred into recognition of the full humanity of subordinates through intimate association on terms of equality. This is a common pattern among feminist men. Condorcet found his intellectual soulmate in Sophie de Grouchy, John Stuart Mill in Harriet Taylor, William Thompson in Anna Doyle Wheeler. More generally, friendly or cooperative association across identity-group boundaries is key to prejudice reduction (Allport 1954), which checks a major source of moral error. In the absence of intimacy on terms of equality, people can be stirred to sympathetic moral recognition of others through autobiography, journalism, fiction, drama, painting, and other arts. Here too, the key to moral insight is receptiveness to others in their full humanity.

Every story we tell about how groups' moral convictions have changed implies a background moral epistemology. Time and again in the history of moral progress, the oppressed have taught moral lessons to the powerful. Time and again, the historical memories of dominant groups erase those events and replace them with an imagined rational reconstruction of the acquisition of moral insight through the self-sufficient reasoning of the dominant. What countries took the lead in insisting on the legal application of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to all human beings? The United Kingdom and France, perhaps, with their long human-rights traditions? No. Both countries argued vigorously for a "colonial clause" that would exclude colonial subjects from claiming the rights that the UDHR said all humans were entitled to simply because they are human. The United States? No. The United States joined England and France on the colonial clause, in return for their support of a "federal state clause", which would exempt the member states of any federal government from being subject to the law. The United States wanted to assure its southern states that ratification of the UDHR and its associated legally enforceable covenants would leave their systems of white supremacy intact. The countries that took the lead in insisting that the UDHR was really universal were former colonies of Europe and the United States, notably including India, the Philippines, and Panama (Roberts, 2014). We forget such histories at our moral peril, for progress in moral inquiry requires the practice of epistemic justice by and for all.

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Group Emotion and Group Understanding

Michael S. Brady

Introduction

It is a commonplace that our emotions can lead us astray, in action and in belief: Jane's fury at being overlooked for promotion might cause her to punch her boss; Joe's fear of the dark could convince him that there are monsters under the bed. But if individual emotional experiences have a bad reputation, group or collective emotion can often seem even worse. Partly this is due to the fact that group emotion can generate greater disvalue or evil than that typically caused by individual emotion—as illustrated by the Salem witch trials, stock-market runs, or football hooliganism. Partly this is because the group nature of the emotion generates attitudes and behaviours that are 'out of character', in the sense that they are states and actions that the individual wouldn't have and wouldn't perform without the influence of the group—as was the case with many individuals caught up in the public outpouring of grief when Princess Diana died.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to deny that sometimes individual and group emotions merit criticism along both epistemic and practical dimensions. Nevertheless, focusing on the negative outcomes of individual and group emotion should not blind us to the positive value that individual and group emotion can clearly have. It is obvious that individual emotions can have epistemic value in so far as they are apt or appropriate: think of the resentment a university lecturer might feel if the senior management award themselves a 10 per cent pay-rise while academic staff are forced to take a pay-cut. It is equally obvious that group emotion can have epistemic value in virtue of being apt or fitting too: think of the public anger when some MPs were filing bogus expenses claims, or the public pride and joy experienced in the United Kingdom during the 2012 Olympics.

In this chapter I want to make the case for the epistemic importance of group emotion along other dimensions, which are rather less obvious and which have been little discussed. In particular, I want to explain how group emotion can help to bring about the highest epistemic group good, namely *group understanding*. Moreover, I will argue that this group good would be difficult to achieve, in very many cases, in the absence of group emotion. Even if group emotion sometimes—indeed often—leads us astray, we would be worse off, from the standpoint of achieving the highest epistemic good, without it. The structure of the chapter is as follows. In section 1, I present a schematic account of the elements of individual and group emotion. In section 2, I explain how individual emotion plays an important role in enabling individuals to understand their evaluative situation. And in section 3, I argue that this provides a model of how group emotion can promote group understanding in an analogous way.

1. Individual and Group Emotion

What is an emotion? There is—and this is hardly a surprise—a lack of consensus on the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be an emotion. But there is widespread agreement that paradigm cases of emotion involve a number of elements; rival accounts of emotion diverge, typically, on the issue of which of these elements is most important, or has explanatory priority. An example will help to illustrate this idea. Suppose that I've been interviewed for my dream job, and feel very happy about my performance. I form an expectation that I will be offered the job, given how well suited I am to the position, and how well I think that I performed at interview. The chair of the hiring committee now telephones to tell me that the job has been offered to someone else. Upon hearing this, I feel an immense and crushing disappointment. My emotional reaction has, it seems, certain 'parts' or 'elements'. These are: (i) a perceptual experience, in this case an auditory one, as of the chair telling me that I didn't get the job; (ii) a belief, following quickly and automatically from the auditory experience, that I didn't get the job; (iii) an appraisal or evaluation that this is a bad thing to happen, made worse because I had high hopes and expected to be offered the position; (iv) facial and bodily changes: my shoulders slump, my stomach lurches, I frown, I am on the verge of tears; (v) feelings, in this case an experience of negative affect or valence, which is (perhaps in part, perhaps in whole) an experience of the body and facial changes described above; (vi) motivational or action tendencies, such as to throw the phone across the room, to scream and shout, to head to the pub to drown my sorrows; (vii) cognitive changes: I focus on what I might have done wrong, I imagine telling my family that I didn't get the job, I think about the embarrassment of facing colleagues on Monday morning, and so on. A further element (viii), though not one that is best understood as part of the emotional experience, is widely agreed to be necessary for emotional experience; this is some underlying care and concern, in virtue of which the emotional reaction or response makes sense. In this instance, the additional element is a strong desire on my part to get the job, or some other care or concern that getting the job would ultimately satisfy.

Although almost everyone holds that these elements are involved in paradigmatic cases of emotional experience, there is, as noted, significant disagreement over which are essential, over the temporal and causal relations between the elements, and over relations of normative and explanatory priority between them. It is no part of my remit here to address, let alone settle, such disagreement. But I do want to note the obvious point that there must be some relations between these elements if we are entitled to regard them as parts of the *same* emotional experience. So at the very least, the auditory perception is a causal precursor to the belief that they were offering the job to someone else, which is a precursor to an evaluation of this as a bad thing. Perhaps the bodily, affective, motivational, and cognitive changes occur after we have evaluated the situation as bad, or perhaps some of them are prior to or simultaneous with this; but these too will be related to each other on whatever story we tell. For instance, we might claim that our attention is drawn to the event, or its badness, by the affective phenomenology of the experience; or we might claim that this phenomenology just is an experience of the behavioural imperative that is generated by an appraisal of the event as bad; and so forth. Whatever the correct account turns out to be, we can make this minimal claim: the elements of emotional experience enjoy causal and normative relations with each other, such that it makes sense to regard them as part of the same experience or the same mental state.

What, then, are group emotions? We might try to answer this question by providing accounts of group counterparts of the elements found in paradigmatic cases of individual emotion—that is, perception, belief, evaluation, facial and bodily changes, feelings, action-tendencies, and underlying concerns—and then saying something about how these group states are linked to form group emotion. But this strategy faces significant difficulties. Firstly, we might wonder whether there can be *genuinely* group mental states, or at best only an aggregate of individual mental states. Is there such a thing as genuinely group belief, for instance, or only an aggregate of individual beliefs? The task of answering this question is made more difficult when we recognize that there are significant differences between the kinds of things we identify as groups or collectives: a family, co-workers, followers of a religion, a scientific research

team, an institutional committee, a political party, a book club, a nation, a sporting crowd, hobbyists, lovers, an online gaming community, the rebel alliance. Isn't it possible, indeed likely, that the group beliefs of lovers will be very different, in metaphysical kind as well as propositional content, from the group beliefs of a political party, an online community, or a team of scientists?

Even if there are genuine group beliefs, and even if we apply this term to the same kind of state across different groups or collectives, we can nevertheless doubt that *some* elements of individual emotional experience have genuine group or collective counterparts: there are no such things as group bodily and facial changes, for instance; 'the body politic' and 'the face of the company' are clearly metaphorical uses. And even if we can make the case for genuine group beliefs and intentions, it will presumably be harder to make the case for genuine group feelings and memories. As a result, the prospects for this kind of answer to our question about the nature of group emotion seem dim.

I propose that we adopt another strategy, which is to employ a model of group emotion that emphasizes the links or connections between individual emotions, and remains (relatively) silent about the nature of group counterparts of belief, appraisal, bodily changes, action tendencies, and other elements of emotions as experienced by a single subject. In doing so, I am not just tailoring my account of group emotion so that it fits the positive case I want to make. For the account of group emotion I will employ is one that appears best fitted to illustrate the *negative* epistemological effects that group emotion can have. As a result, I want to make a case for the epistemic credentials of group emotion as it might be understood by those who are sceptical as to its epistemic worth.

The picture of group emotion I will work with starts from something that ought to be acceptable to all, namely the view that group emotion involves or is partly constituted by individual emotions.[1] To illustrate, consider the student protests in London in 2011 over the Government's proposal to increase tuition fees. This is, plausibly, an instance of group anger. And at the very least, this group anger involves, or is partly constituted by, the individual anger that each student feels towards the decision about fee increases. Now the individual students in the group would each, typically, believe that fees are going to increase, appraise this as a bad thing, be motivated to respond in an appropriate way, experience bodily and facial changes as a feeling of anger, pay attention to the Government's proposal, and be concerned for their future studies. Of course, this is rather simplified, and we can be sure that there are significant differences between the students' experience of anger on a number of dimensions. Nevertheless, we might think that it makes sense to talk about the group anger over the fee increases only in so far as we have (enough) individuals who are undergoing individual emotional experiences of roughly this type.

However, a similarity or commonality in individual emotions to some event does not make this a group emotion. So the mere fact that many individual students feel anger towards the Government's decision does not suffice for there to be a group emotion. At the very least, individuals have to be *aware* that others are feeling as they are feeling, in order for there to be the possibility of group emotion. But beyond this, two further connections are important and prominent—especially in the kinds of group emotion often criticized for leading people astray. One is involved in the generation of new cases of individual emotion via 'emotional contagion', which is 'the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person and, consequently, to converge emotionally'.[2] Thus I might come to grieve at the death of Princess Diana as a result of becoming aware that others are grieving; their grief 'transfers' itself to me, in an automatic and non-conscious way. As a result of contagion, a certain emotion is conveyed to and spreads throughout some group; *we* come to grieve as a result of this process of mimicry and synchronization.

A second kind of connection, which is plausibly involved in cases where individuals who are already experiencing some emotion encounter others who are feeling the same way, is a form of acceptance and endorsement of the emotions of others. Thus *we* might come to be angry at the Principal's pay rise when we become mutually aware of the individual anger of others directed towards this event, and mutually accept and endorse the fact that others feel as we do. This need not involve anything like explicit endorsement or acceptance: we can welcome the fact that others are feeling in the same way without explicitly acknowledging that this is what we are doing, to ourselves or to others. Endorsement doesn't require reflection and deliberation resulting in anything like a *decision* to endorse how others feel. Instead, it is plausible to assume that the synchronization of individual emotions occurs as a result of a desire for what Hans Bernard Schmid terms 'affective conformity': the thought is 'that people *enjoy* being in the same affective state as those around them, independently of the

[1] In thinking about group or collective emotion I have benefitted greatly from reading the following works: Gilbert (2001); Schmid (2009); Salmela (2012). The thought that group emotion requires 'synchronization' between individual emotions, and that part of this process involves a desire for 'affective conformity', are due to Salmela and Schmid, respectively.

[2] Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994), 5.

mode of the feeling at stake. That's why sharing increases the joy, but diminishes the pain.'[3] In this way we welcome the fact that others are feeling as we do and identify our feeling with theirs, and this process of acknowledgement results in the convergence of our emotions with the emotions of those around us, such that it seems appropriate to refer to the resulting state as one of group or collective emotion.

This process of mutual awareness, emotional contagion, and affective conformity might also plausibly be viewed as resulting in group counterparts of the elements of individual emotional experience. Thus, the process of mutual awareness will result from (or indeed consist in) the individual attention of each person being focused both on some emotional object or event, and also focused on the fact that others are attending to this object or event. In this way we might talk about *our* attention being focused on the object or event in question: when we become mutually aware that we are all individually sad *about Princess Diana's death*, then we might say that Princess Diana's death becomes the object of group attention. By the same token, mutual awareness that others are undergoing a similar emotional experience involves awareness that others make similar appraisals of, have similar feelings about, and are similarly inclined to act with respect to the relevant object or event. In so far as we accept and endorse these similarities, we might talk about *our* appraisal of, feelings about, and behavioural tendencies towards such an object or event. So the process by which individual emotions are synchronized and converge can be regarded as a process in which the group comes to attend, appraise, feel, and be inclined towards action.

This is, of course, merely a sketch or outline of one model of group emotion. But it does seem to capture a good deal of what people mean when they refer to group emotion. Moreover, by emphasizing the processes of emotional contagion and affective conformity, the model seems to include the kinds of non-rational and non-conscious processes that many will regard as having deleterious effects on our epistemic lives. For we ought not, other things being equal, to have emotional states because other people are in those states and because we want there to be conformity between ourselves and others. Emotions, after all, are representational states involving appraisals of our environment; and representational states ought to be responsive to evidence rather than desire. The model should therefore be acceptable to those who are sceptical as to the practical and epistemic benefits of group emotion. As a result, I will assume that something like this model of group emotion is correct, and proceed to argue that group emotion, understood in this way, is extremely important, if not essential, for the production of the highest group epistemic good. In the next section I'll begin this argument by showing how individual emotion is essential for providing us with individual understanding, and, in section 3, I will make an analogous case for group emotion and group understanding.

[3] Schmid (2009), 66.

2. Individual Emotion and Understanding

I have argued elsewhere that individual emotions can have significant epistemic value under the right conditions; and one important way in which they do so is in the promotion of our *understanding* of our world and of ourselves.[4] Central to this argument is the fact that emotion and attention are very closely linked. One aspect of this relationship is that emotions can make things *salient* for us, or can alert us to potentially important objects and events. For example, my anxiety over my new white carpet makes salient the fact that you're drinking red wine; my fear when camping in the woods draws my attention to all of the sounds outwith the tent; my delight at being reunited with my beloved makes salient all of the wonderful things about her; and so on for many other cases of emotion.

However, emotions such as fear and joy do not just automatically and reflexively direct and focus attention; one of the other things that emotions tend to do is to *capture* and *consume* attention. To say that attention is captured and consumed by emotional objects and events is to say that such objects and events hold sway over us, often making it difficult for us to disengage our attention and shift focus elsewhere. Think, for instance, about what it is like when one is awoken, in the dead of night, by a noise outside of the tent and experience fear. In normal circumstances one's fear is *not* over very quickly; rather, one remains in a fearful state as one listens attentively for further noises, tries to think of possible non-threatening explanations, rehearses strategies for dealing with the potential danger, considers possible escape routes, and so on. Similar points can be made about jealousy, anger, resentment, sadness, shame, guilt, love, and many other emotions.

Now the reflexive and automatic focusing of attention in emotional experience can enable us to quickly and efficiently notice things that are important for us to notice, and so can have epistemic value along this dimension. Might attentional consumption have a similarly valuable role to play in our emotional lives? I think it does. For one of the important things that attentional persistence can do is to

[4] In Brady (2013). The caveat about conditions is of course important; clearly I don't want to argue that emotions always make us better off from the practical or epistemic standpoint. But I do want to say that without emotions it would be difficult for us to attain the most valuable epistemic good of understanding, and that it is to this extent that emotions have significant epistemic value. The reasons for thinking emotions important in this way will be explored in what follows.

enhance our representation of potentially significant objects and events, by enabling us to discover reasons which bear on the accuracy of our initial emotional appraisals.[5] In other words, the persistence of attention can facilitate, by motivating the search for and discovery of reasons, a judgement as to whether emotional appearance in this instance matches evaluative reality.[6] If this is correct, then emotions involve two important links with attention: they can direct and focus attention, thereby alerting us to the presence of potentially important or significant objects in our environment; and they can capture and consume attention, thereby enabling us to determine whether things are as they emotionally appear.

Note that there is a need for reassessment, and for a number of reasons. One is that 'fast and frugal' emotional responses can be relatively indiscriminate. In other words, the appraisals involved in many emotional responses are 'quick and dirty': very rapid but relatively coarse responses to emotional objects and events. This is why people are reflexively, automatically, and indiscriminately afraid of things like crawling insects, loud noises, looming objects, and so on, only some of which will actually be dangerous.[7] So discrimination is the price that has to be paid for ensuring speed of response; it is, nevertheless, a price that is worth paying in certain circumstances, given that it is better to have an emotional system that responds very quickly to all such things than it is to have a more discriminating evaluative system that responds more slowly.[8]

Another reason is that, as Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobsen have pointed out, 'emotions involve powerful motivational tendencies, so regulating them is an indirect way of regulating behaviour'.[9] As D'Arms puts things elsewhere:

> states such as anger, envy, and shame, for instance, involve motivational tendencies: toward retaliation, competition, or concealment, respectively. Because it matters very much to each of us how we act, there's reason to think about what to be angry, envious or ashamed of. These facts generate an important role for intrapersonal criticism and reflection that an agent can undertake concerning the appropriateness of these irruptive, motivating emotions.[10]

In so far as emotions facilitate such reflection on the appraisals that partly constitute the emotional responses themselves, through the consumption of attention on to the objects of those responses, then emotions have value in enabling us to achieve a more discriminating response, and in allowing us to control and regulate our emotional take on the world.

There is, moreover, considerable evidence that emotions do indeed promote such reflection and reappraisal, and that part of their epistemic value precisely consists in the fact that reflection and reappraisal will often not occur—or will be more costly and less effective—in the absence of emotion. This is evidence that *reason alone* is ill-suited to the important task of facilitating more accurate emotional appraisals. Phenomenological support for the idea that emotions facilitate reappraisal, through effects on attention, is common: we often *feel the need* to discover reasons and evidence—when awoken by a strange noise, we seek out evidence to confirm (or hopefully disconfirm) our initial assessment that we are in danger. When jealous we feel a motivation to seek confirming (or hopefully disconfirming) evidence of infidelity. So a need to discover reasons is often felt as emotion persists. Moreover, it also seems true that when we are no longer emotional we usually *lack* the motivation to check or assess the accuracy of our initial emotional appraisals. If I no longer feel afraid, then it is unlikely that I'll bother myself much with seeking evidence as to whether or not I'm in danger. If I no longer feel jealous, it is doubtful whether my attention will remain fixed on the prospect of infidelity, or that I will expend effort in an attempt to determine whether or not my partner really is unfaithful.

The phenomenological evidence fits in nicely with views in psychology which suggest that appraisal and reappraisal is an ongoing process in emotional experience. Thus, Klaus Scherer has argued that 'emotion *decouples* stimulus and response', allowing a 'latency period between stimulus evaluation and reaction'.[11] On his view, 'the first major function [of the latency period] is the ongoing analysis of the stimulus event, which allows the organism to arrive at a more detailed or more realistic conclusion and may lead to a re-evaluation and consequently a revision of the original appraisal'.[12] In the same vein, Richard Lazarus writes:

> [f]or people to react with an emotion, the relevance of what is happening to their well-being must be sensed, as well as whether this has negative or positive implications. We do

[5] See de Sousa (1988), 196. I claim that this is one of the things that attentional persistence can do, because I think that it can have other roles or functions as well, in particular a monitoring function of keeping the object in view so as to promote the correct behavioural response.

[6] See Lee Anna Clark and David Watson, who write that, 'triggered by environmental events, emotions act as salient internal stimuli that alert the organism to *the need for further information gathering* and action': Clark and Watson (1994), 131 (my italics.) On my view, this need is best served through the consumption of attention in emotional experience.

[7] See e.g. Barrett (2005).

[8] As Phoebe Ellsworth writes, 'one of the central functions of emotion is to motivate the organism to respond quickly and effectively to environmental threats as they arise. Generally the costs of failing to respond soon enough are far greater than the costs of responding when it is not really necessary... It is far safer for an organism to be calibrated to feel emotion when it is not warranted—to have a hypersensitive system—than it is to have a system that postpones the initiation of emotional processes until there is no question that they are justified.' Ellsworth (1994), 194.

[9] In D'Arms and Jacobsen (2006), 99–126.

[10] D'Arms (2005), 8.

[11] Scherer (1994), 128.

[12] Scherer (1994), 129.

not stop with a hasty and incomplete cognitive evaluation—this constitutes an incompleted task, which the person or animal is compelled to pursue further—until what is happening can be understood in a way that is relevant to efforts at coping. Although the initial appraisal may be hasty and limited, if the opportunity for further investigation of what is happening presents itself, it would be a strange creature that let things drop before a full functional understanding has been achieved.[13]

If Lazarus is right, the compulsion or motivation to investigate further and to attain a more accurate appraisal is the norm: it is not just that we sometimes feel the need to investigate when we have the opportunity, but rather that feeling the need to investigate when we have the chance is what normal humans do.[14]

The idea that emotion plays the role of facilitating reflection and reappraisal through the capture of attention, and that reason alone is not up to this task, also finds support in the writings of Thomas Reid, who is one of the few philosophers to be concerned with the connection between emotion and attention. Reid claims that '[i]t requires a strong degree of curiosity, or some more important passion, to give us that interest in an object which is necessary to our giving attention to it. And, without attention, we can form no true and stable judgement of any object.'[15] And: '[a]ttention may be given to any object, either of sense or of intellect, in order to form a distinct notion of it, or to discover its nature, its attributes, or its relations and so great is the effect of attention, that, without it, it is impossible to acquire or retain a distinct notion of any object of thought.'[16] So for Reid, emotion (or 'passion') is necessary for us to pay attention to some object or event, and paying attention is necessary for us to form an accurate ('a true and stable') judgement about that object or event. Reid would therefore be sympathetic to the idea that emotional control of attention facilitates a better grasp of our evaluative situation, by making us aware of the reasons that have a bearing in these circumstances. Now although Reid's claims about necessity are too strong, since we can intentionally fix our attention onto some object in the absence of emotion, he is nevertheless surely correct to stress the importance of emotion in the direction and control of attention, and the importance of attention to an accurate evaluation of our circumstances. Although we *can* intentionally fix and direct our attention onto some object or event, this is usually very costly in terms of mental resources, in which case there is a significant advantage in having a system which keeps our attention fixed with little in the way of conscious effort on our part. If considerations of mental economy speak in favour of the automatic and reflexive direction and focus of attention in emotional experience, then similar considerations speak to the emotional consumption of attention. So even if the emotional consumption of attention is not strictly necessary for us to get an accurate picture of our evaluative situation, the emotional governance of attention for this end is extremely valuable.

How, then, is all of this related to the epistemic goal of understanding? The simple answer is that the search for and discovery of reasons that bear on the accuracy of our (initial) emotional response is a search for features that constitute reasons as to why some object or event has an evaluative property like 'dangerous' or 'shameful'. But then the reassessment of our initial emotional appraisal will involve trying to *understand* one's evaluative situation: for an attempt to discover why an object is dangerous or why it is harmless just is an attempt to achieve an evaluative understanding of the relevant object or event. Understanding, after all, involves a grasp or awareness of the connections or links between various items. It involves seeing how things fit together, how features are related, how facts support and explain other facts. Discovery of the danger-making features of some object or event is a discovery of how these features support and explain another feature, namely dangerousness; we thus make sense of the dangerousness of the object or event when we come to grasp the reasons why it is dangerous, rather than simply coming to grasp *that* the object is dangerous. As a result, the search for and discovery of reasons that emotional experience facilitates is a search for an accurate understanding of value; and when this search is successful, and we grasp why the object is dangerous (if it is), we do not just attain a more accurate emotional judgement about our situation—although this is certainly of epistemic importance and value. We also attain an understanding of our evaluative environment. Indeed, given the importance of emotion in motivating the search for reasons, we can doubt that the epistemic goal of understanding would be (easily) achievable in the absence of emotion. If this is correct, then emotions are of considerable importance in enabling us to achieve one of the highest epistemic goods.

In the following section I'll show how this account can be extended, and will argue that group emotion has significant epistemic value in facilitating group understanding of important objects and events.

3. Group Emotion and Group Understanding

I want to argue that group emotion can parallel individual emotion in having epistemic value along two dimensions. First, group emotion can draw attention to some important or significant event; second, it can motivate or facilitate group

[13] Lazarus (1994), 215.

[14] There is, moreover, considerable neurophysiological evidence for the view that attentional persistence promotes enhanced representation of emotional stimuli. See e.g. LeDoux (1996).

[15] Reid (1969), 184–5. [16] Reid (1969), 76–7.

understanding of that event. In particular, I will focus on one important way in which group emotions generated by emotional contagion and affective conformity can effectively bring about these epistemic goods, by drawing the attention of those in power to the importance of some event, and by motivating *them* to arrive at and make available to the group an understanding of that event. The thought that group emotion can have epistemic value in this way can be illustrated if we focus on the institution of the *public inquiry*.

The idea that there is a connection between group emotion and public inquiry is apparent from even a brief survey of newspapers and websites. For instance, in June 2013 the *Financial Times* reported that 'Dublin aims to set up a public inquiry into the banking crash in the autumn in response to deep public anger caused by the broadcast of taped phone calls suggesting Anglo Irish Bank deliberately misled the previous government into supporting the lender during the financial crisis'.[17] This is a case where group emotion *generates* a public inquiry, as a result of the recognition of such anger by a governing body, and a desire of that body to address this anger through setting up an inquiry. There are very many cases which display the same structure: in 2011, public outrage at phone-hacking by employees of News International was a major factor in motivating the Levenson Inquiry; anger at the spiralling costs of the Scottish Parliament Building motivated the Fraser Inquiry in 2004. Indeed, the UK Government's own list of public inquiries inclines one to believe that group or public emotion (typically anger, in its various forms) was a motivating factor in generating most if not all of the recent cases where an inquiry has been set up.[18]

Why is there such a close connection between group or public emotion and the setting up of public inquiries?[19] A central reason is that public inquiries are held with respect to events about which there is group or public concern.[20] It is plausible to maintain, in light of this, that group emotion can play the epistemic role of alerting or drawing the attention of *the governing body* to the fact that some event *is* of considerable public concern. In other words, group emotions can let the governing body know that something is of concern or importance to them, and hence is a proper subject or target for a public inquiry. Just as individual emotion can focus an individual's attention on to some important object or event, so too can group emotion draw a governing body's attention to some event that is of significance to the group. Moreover, and to mirror arguments made earlier, in the absence of group emotion to draw attention to the event, it is highly unlikely that the governing body will recognize it as an event that is of concern to the group, and hence as one that might merit a public inquiry. For if the public do not react emotionally to the event, this is good evidence that the event fails to impinge upon something that matters to them, and hence good evidence that it is not an event of public concern. Group emotion might therefore be regarded as very important to, if not essential to, the generation of public inquiries set up to address and respond to public concerns.

What, then, of the link between public inquiries that are generated by group emotion, and group understanding? Here the connection is straightforward: for one of the central aims of public inquiries is, precisely, to arrive at and to make available to the some public group an understanding of the event that is of concern to that group.[21] As a result, group emotion can promote group understanding by generating inquires that aim at and, when successful, achieve an understanding of some event, where this understanding is then conveyed to the group via a public report.

This is supported both by a general account of the role of public inquiries, and by particular examples of such. Lord Laming, who chaired the Victoria Climbié Inquiry in 2001, proposed the following account of the general aims of public inquiries. On his view, inquiries:

> provide an assurance that the facts surrounding an alleged failure will be subjected to objective scrutiny. *They are expected to reach judgements on why terrible events happened.* They often make recommendations on how such events might be prevented in future. They may give relief to some and allow the expression of anger and outrage to others. They are often disturbing and painful events. *They should improve our understanding of*

[17] *Financial Times* (2013).

[18] See e.g. the list at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/public-inquiries-inquests.htm>.

[19] I talk of group *or* public anger here merely to reflect that sometimes the emotion will be that of a particularly well-defined group of citizens, and sometimes the emotion will be shared by a much larger group so that it is perhaps appropriate to talk about emotion that is felt by the public at large. The latter case is still a form of group emotion, if there is common public knowledge that others share the emotion. I'd like to thank a reviewer for this volume for pushing me to be clearer on this point.

[20] At least, this is the case according to the UK Government's Enquiries Act, 2005, §1: 'A Minister may cause an inquiry to be held under this Act in relation to a case where it appears to him that—(a) particular events have caused, or are capable of causing, public concern, or (b) there is public concern that particular events may have occurred.' <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/12/section/1>.

[21] Of course, there are other things that both the group emotion and the public inquiry aim at: holding the guilty to account, enacting changes in procedures and laws, reassuring the public, and the like. But none of these would seem to conflict with the goal of understanding, and indeed, it is plausible that successful achievement of these is more likely if understanding has been achieved. So recognition that there are other goals is clearly compatible with my thesis about the epistemic value of collective emotion.

complex issues. At best they change attitudes, policies and practice. That being so they occupy an important place in our society.[22]

I've highlighted two places where the idea that the role of public inquiries is to promote understanding is explicitly stated. It is not implausible to hold that Lord Laming's statement reflects a widely held view about the role and function of public inquiries: of what public inquiries are and what public inquiries do.

Let us turn now to a particular example. In 2013 the Francis Report was published. This was the result of a public inquiry into the failings of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. The Report points out that, 'between 2005 and 2008 conditions of appalling care were able to flourish in the main hospital serving the people of Stafford [in the UK] and its surrounding area'.[23] Basic care for patients in the hospital was severely lacking, and the mortality rate was exceptionally high; estimates are that between 500 and 1,200 additional people died there in the three-year period in comparison to NHS mortality figures for the rest of the United Kingdom. This generated significant public alarm. Now, as Robert Francis's 'Introduction' to the Report states, these failings were uncovered in the main 'because of the persistent complaints made by a very determined group of patients and those close to them. *This group wanted to know why they and their loved ones had been failed so badly.*'[24] The Inquiry was set up, at least in part, to provide such understanding. This reading is supported elsewhere in the Report. Francis notes that in 2010 the Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, explaining his decision to hold a public inquiry, told the House of Commons: 'So why another inquiry? We know only too well every harrowing detail of what happened at Mid Staffordshire and the failings of the trust, *but we are still little closer to understanding how that was allowed to happen by the wider system.* The families of those patients who suffered so dreadfully deserve to know, and so too does every NHS patient in this country.'[25] The failings of the Trust were common and public knowledge; so the public inquiry was not set up to tell us that there *were* failings. Instead, given this knowledge, the inquiry aimed at providing the families of patients, and indeed 'every NHS patient in this country', with an understanding of why there were such failings.

If this is correct—and there seems to be a strong correlation between general claims about the aims of public inquiries and the published reports of such inquiries—then we can hold that group emotion has epistemic value in so far as it generates public inquiries that aim at and, when successful, provide group understanding of some important or significant event. It is, moreover, plausible to hold that in many cases inquiries would not be set up and understanding not achieved in the absence of group emotion. Recall, in support, the description in the Francis Report of 'persistent complaints made by a very determined group of patients and those close to them'. It is plausible to suppose that part of what made the patients and those close to them so determined, and part of what motivated them to make persistent complaints, was the persistence of their anger, which kept attention fixed on the terrible things that had happened, which generated the need to find out why these things had happened, and which motivated and coordinated their behaviour so as to alert the governing body to such events. Once again, in the absence of emotion it is difficult to envisage the patients and those close to them being so determined or persistent; that level of focus and determination is difficult to achieve in the absence of emotion. As a result, group emotion would seem very important, if not essential, for the kind of attentional focus and persistence that is needed in order to alert some governing body to an important event, and to keep attention fixed on that event until understanding is achieved and shared.

4. Conclusion

If all of this is correct, then there is reason to be more optimistic about the epistemic value of group emotion than people have tended to be. In particular, we have reason to be more optimistic about group emotion that has been generated by processes—such as emotional contagion and affective conformity—that seem ill-suited to producing states of epistemic worth. For the kinds of group emotion that result from these processes can still play the significant role of alerting governing bodies to the fact that something important is of concern to the public, and motivating the governing bodies to satisfy this concern by promoting an improved public understanding of the events in question.

Of course, none of this supports the idea that group emotion always makes us better off, or never leads us astray. Clearly there can be serious and negative epistemic effects of group emotion. Furthermore, none of this implies that governing bodies set up public inquiries because they have a genuine desire to

[22] Lord Laming (2004) (emphasis mine).

[23] Francis (2003), 13.

[24] Francis (2003), 13 (emphasis mine).

[25] Francis (2003), 15 (emphasis mine). Lansley continues, on p. 16: 'Why did the primary care trust and strategic health authority not see what was happening and intervene earlier? How was the trust able to gain foundation status while clinical standards were so poor? Why did the regulatory bodies not act sooner to investigate a trust whose mortality rates had been significantly higher than the average since 2003 and whose record in dealing with serious complaints was so poor? The public deserve answers.' Here too we see the central idea, namely, that public inquiries aim at answering such questions and providing the public with an understanding of the moral wrong.

arrive at an understanding and to convey this to the general public. Perhaps the motives of the governing body are (as is often the case) rather more dubious and self-serving than this. Nevertheless, none of that counts against my general point, which is that there are epistemic goods that we would be very hard pressed to achieve in the absence of group emotion. And perhaps, if we think that the epistemic good of understanding is worth the epistemic dangers and disadvantages that group emotions can bring, we might be inclined to view group emotion in a more favourable light than we have previously.

6

Changing Our Mind

Glen Pettigrove

Introduction

For creatures like us, the journey to knowledge follows an oddly circuitous route. We seldom proceed by steady steps in a single direction. Rather, we follow hunches, make intuitive leaps, wander down blind alleys, backtrack, and suddenly stumble upon a more promising path. So if we are to prove capable of increasing our store of knowledge, one of the things we must learn is to revise our beliefs. The same holds true for the groups of which we are a part. If they are to prove capable of possessing and increasing their knowledge, they too will need to be capable of revising their beliefs. While the nature of collective knowledge has begun to receive more attention in recent years, surprisingly little work has been done on the process of belief revision that makes it possible. And that which has been done has focused on a very particular kind of community and a very particular kind of knowledge, namely the scientific community and scientific knowledge. My aim is to extend the analysis of collective belief revision to a different sort of community and a different sort of knowledge, namely, moral communities and moral knowledge. This chapter will suggest that, whatever one's preferred account of what groups know, we need a richer account of belief revision to support it than has been offered thus far. And it will propose one such alternative.

1. Current Accounts of Collective Knowledge and Collective Belief Revision

Over the past twenty-five years Margaret Gilbert has been developing a distinctive account of collective agency (1989, 1996, 2000, 2013). In the course of so doing she has defended not only claims about collective agents and their actions