

Emotions and Cognition as Guide to Life

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Abstract

'mano matram jagat, mano kalpitam jagat' [In Sanskrit]

"the world is as the mind sees and feels it; the world is as the mind thinks of it"

(as quoted by T. N. Sethumadhavan, 2010).

A man's destiny is shaped by his thoughts and not by mere actions. A man is still considered pure even when he does certain unacceptable actions only per force, (on the demands of the situation or having a larger interest in mind) but with his mind detached. Like the one described above, there are innumerable instances in the Indian epics and the puranas which uphold this view. It believes and imbibes the responsibility that every man is accountable for each and every act and thought of his. This accountability brings caution and enables him to restrain himself from thinking or acting in haste. The mind has the potential of shaping a man's destiny. The five senses of a man are capable of enmeshing him in the mire of emotional upheavals. The mind which is superior to the senses, if controlled and focused, helps a man attain peace from within.

Introduction

Human civilization has achieved the engineering of the great Pyramids the elegance of Beethoven's Ninth symphony, the refinement of Dom Perignon, the efficiency of mass production, the triumph of the modern medicine, the cognizance of hetaeristic string theory, and the wonder of space exploration .Perhaps we can excused for tending to see our achievements as the outcome of pure reason and our distant past. "Through a reverse telescope that compresses it: a short time as hunter gatherers, a long time civilized people.(Ackerman,1910).

Despite the constrains of civilization however, human are also the source less rarefied achievements; the relentless exploitation of fossil fuels and rainforests, the apocalyptic peril of biological and nuclear welfare, and the savage horror of torture and genocide, to name but a few .We may sing in choirs and bridle our rages behind placid countences, but we petrol the world under the auspices of an affect system sculpted over millennia torture of evolutionary faces.

According to Brazier ,1960,emotions are shared across species –an observations are an obstacle to fulfilling human potential individuals are revered for cultivating tastes and seemingly dispassionate responses to life's challenges. Yet emotions, however archaic in origin, saturate human existence throughout the life span emotions guide, enrich, and ennoble life; they provide meaning to everyday existence; they render valuation placed on life and property. Emotions promote behaviors that protect life, and compel the termination of life .They can be essential ingredients for, as well as over whelming obstacles to ,optimizing human potential, and they often serve as the engines for

intellectual and cognitive development. The emergence of the study of cognition as a discipline within psychology began with the cognitive revolution, which is often characterized as a reaction to the dominance of behaviorism in the middle past century (Miller 2003). The cognitive revolution emphasized a view of human cognition as information processing. As a result, a primary goal of cognitive psychology was to explore “the way man collects, stores, modifies, and interprets environmental information or information already stored internally” (Lachman et al, 1979)

Research from social and cognitive psychology has shown that emotions are capable of being elicited quickly, effortlessly, automatically, or even unconsciously upon exposure to the relevant stimulus (Gazzaniga and Ledoux). In 1980 Zajonc observed when we meet a stranger, we know within a fraction of a second, whether we like the person or not. The reaction is and automatic instantaneous perhaps the feeling is not always aware of it, but the feeling is always there.Perhaps we have not developed an extensive and precise verbal representation in the non-verbal channel. If affect is not always transformed into semantic content but is instead often encoded in, for example, visceral or muscular symbols, we would expect information contained in feelings to be acquired, organized, categorized, represented and retrieved, somewhat differently than information having direct verbal referents.

Topology of Emotions and Development Emotional Elicitors:

‘Emotion,’ like the term “Cognition” refers to a class of elicitors behaviors, states, and experience. According to Lazarus (1982) In order for an emotion to occur, some stimulus event – what I will call the “emotional elicitor”-must trigger changes in the state of the organism. The triggering event may either be an external or internal stimulus. External elicitors may be non social (e.g. loud noise) or social (separation from a loved one). Internal elicitors may range from changes in specific physiological states to complex cognitive activities. Since it is obviously much harder to identify and manipulate an internal elicitor than an external one. These are lots of examples which we can take in daily life as a loud and sudden noise causes startling, and possibly fear, in organisms throughout their lives. The sight of food always serves as a positive elicitor, if one is hungry. It would therefore seem possible to imagine a class of events, either biologically determined or learned in a very beginning of life, that would consistently produce a particular emotional state. Even for this class or more automatic-like elicitors, the developmental experience of the organisms may be such as to inhibit or restrict the elicitor from operating in its natural way.

Development of Emotional States:

In the way of human emotional states are inferred constructs. These states are defined as particular constellations of changes in somatic and or neuro-physiological activity. Emotional states can occur without organisms being able to perceive these states. Individuals can be angry as consequences of particular elicitor and yet not perceive the angry state that they are in. An emotional may involve changes in neuro-physiological and vocal behavior. Two views exist concerning emotional states. According to the first, these are associated with specific receptors; indeed they constitute the activation of these receptors (Izard, 1977; Tamkins, 1962, 1963). In the second emotional states are not

associated with specific receptors and do not exist as specific changes; instead, they are general response tendencies associated with special cognitions. (Mandler 1975, 1980, Ortony, Clore and Collins, 1988, Schachter and Singer, 1962).

In the first view, specific emotional states are postulated that have concomitants physiological components and that are expressed in a specific facial and bodily behaviors. There is one to one correspondence between the emotion such as anger, fear, sadness or happiness and some internal specific state that matches this emotion.

Emotions and Cognition: A Systematic Relationship

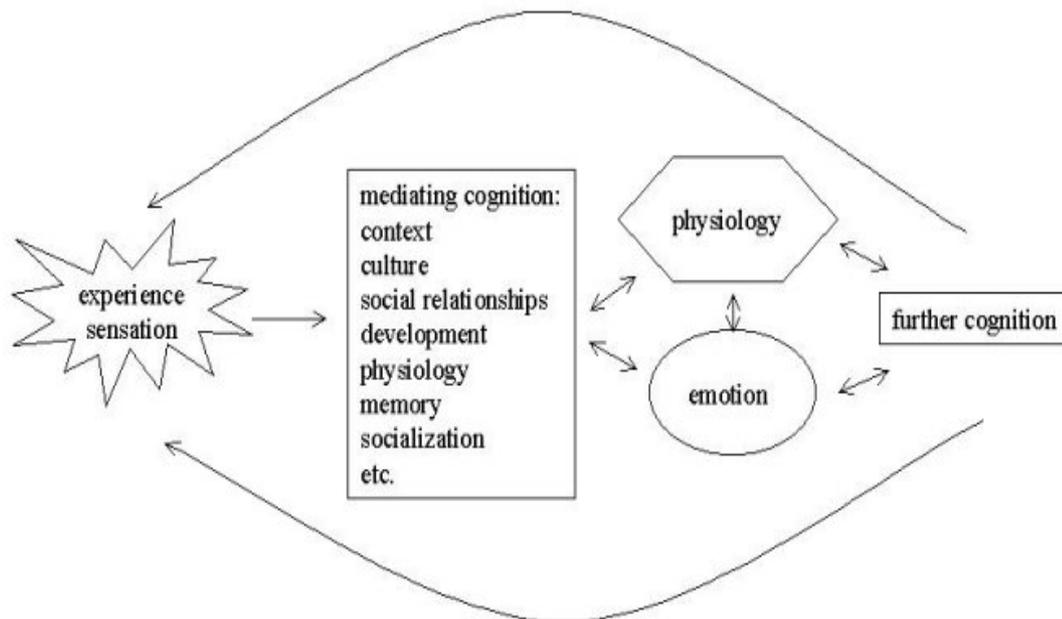
The data from numerous sources suggest that important cognition factors play a role in mediating the effects of classes of events in the elicitation of fear (Compas and Stenberg, 1981). Several of these cognitive processes are considered here and more could be probably be added to the list. These capacities are served as examples of the role that cognitive development of fear elicitors. First memory must play an important role in the elicitation of fear. Children must be able to recognize and associate past events that were noxious. The white coats of doctors maybe associated with pain and thus acquire the capacity to elicit fear. In terms of cognitive expectancy violation does not seem to be a fear elicitor. In fact violation of expectancy may be arousing and the particular emotion produced may depend on whether the organism can assimilate and control the event. (Lewis and Goldberg, 1969).

The development of other cognitive processes- categorization, classification, reasoning and the like –is also likely to influence which elicitors produce what emotional responses; for example failure in a task produces sadness in children prior to 24 months of age, while failure at a task after 24 months likely to produce different emotions, depending upon children's cognitive capacity.

David, Son and Fox, 1982; Nelson and Bosquet, 2000; Nelson and Bloom, 1977 explaining brain function and told that cognitive activity is seen as the determiner of specific emotions. We can say cognition is necessary for the producing specific emotions and emotional states in a person or in animal.

Emotion and Cognition Model

This model includes elements of emotion and cognition working in concert as based on current research. This research situates both emotion and cognition in the individual head. Basically, a person interprets sensations through cognition. This "mediating cognition" allows the individual to determine the appropriate emotional and/or physiological reaction taking into account factors such as social relationships, culture, and memory. The resulting reaction may take the form of an emotion such as fear and/or a physiological response such as sweaty palms. These cognitively determined reactions then undergo more cognition which may lead to subsequent emotional and/or physiological reactions or may bring on completely new sensations.



Emotions Influence Thinking

Most people cope satisfactorily with the problems of daily life but make egregious errors in tests of reasoning .This discrepancy is the fundamental paradox of rationality .Its resolution illuminates the inter relations between emotion and reason. A clear case of emotions governing thinking occurs in decision making .We can say a happy state of mind can improve performance.

Supporting Studies and Experiments:

Isen, Daubman, and Nowicki (1987),for instance ,examined Duncker’s “Candle Problem, “in which a subject is given only a candle and a box of tacks and must fix the candle to a wall. The problems can be solved only if the subject realizes that the box of tacks should itself be emptied and pinned to the wall as a support for the candle. One group of subjects was shown a humorous movie clip to induce happiness and significantly more of them solved the problem than these of groups shown a sad clip,and emotionally neutral clip, or no clip at all, but emotions can pre occupy people and there by impair their thinking .In a study of complex reasoning.

Oaksford, Morrs ,Grainger and Williams (1995)also showed clips of movies to different groups of subjects to make them happy or sad .The task was determine what information was relevant to testing the truth or falsity of a conditional rule (i.e Wason’s seletion task).Neither group performed as well as those who were shown an emotionally neutral films or no films at all.

One pertinent factor is the appropriateness of the emotion to the task in hand .If you feel happy because you have just keen amused by a clip from a comedy ,then your emotion is

irrelevant to testing the truth or falsity of a conditional rule –unless it is about the movie. Suppose you have 10 seconds to answer the following question; “I am worse than my boss. My boss is worse than my colleagues. Who is worse?”If you are in a normal frame of mind or anxious ,than as power and Wypes (1996)have shown ,you are more likely together with this sort of problem than with one about happiness. If you are depressed about negative states of affairs and your performance is not adversely affected. Your emotional reaction also has a qualitative effect on how you reason.

One another study has shown the dysphasic emotion and a counter factual thinking. A person drove to the airport to catch a plan and that on the way he stopped for a drink. He reached airport 5 minute late and missed his flight for an important business meeting .He was in pain and highly disappointed .His emotions were liable to lead him to think to himself. “If only I hadn’t stopped to have a drink, then I wouldn’t have missed my flight.”This conditional thought is counter factual and it expresses a causal relation (Miller and JohnsonLaired,1976).It conveys two states of affairs .First it presents the facts of matter. “I stopped to have a drink .I missed my flight “. Second it conveys an alternative possibility to what actually happened and in this counter factual world. “I did not stop to have a drink .I did not miss my flight.

As Ruth Byrne (1977)and her colleagues have shown , counter makes certain inferences easier because they spell out these two possibilities .One reason why people entertain such counterfactuals is to correct plans that did not work .Hence ,When things go badly ,you often think about counterfactual possibilities .(landman1993).

Thinking Influence Emotions:

We can say that cognition evaluations are rapid and rudimentary .A striking feature of work and art and fiction is that they can emotions .We have real feelings for imaginary events, which –even as you laugh or weep – you know to be fictitious .Music is still mare mysterious, since it can move you even through it refers to nothing .The oddity of real emotions to unreal events appears to be universal to all epochs and cultures.

Supporting Studies:

The rudimentary nature of cognition appraisals is borne out by studies of the cues to action and attitudes. Bargh (1992)has shown that participants who should sentence anagrams about from the experiment more slowly than those who unscrambled sentences about other topics .Thus emotions and stereotyped attitudes are automatically elicited without our awareness. Ledoux (1997)has identified two routes for information amygdale. The slow route goes from the sensory thalamus (a way station for perceptual information)to the amygdale by way of cortex .The fast route , however goes directly from the sensory thalamus to the amygdale. Because it by pass the cortex the signal depends on only a crude analysis .It is purely emotional: One feels fearful without knowing why. Only the cortical route allows one access to a full representation of what caused the responses.

Conclusion

According to Aristotle, that an emotion can be appropriate or inappropriate, foolish or prudent, not just on the basis of whether or not it is acceptable in the circumstances in question, but on the basis of the perception, beliefs and memory, thinking, desires of the individual. The fact that emotions consist at least in part of cognitions means that they can be evaluated in terms of the same epistemic and ethical criteria that we use to evaluate beliefs and intentions.

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