

## **Explanation and Justification in the Affective Realm**

It is common practice to explain emotions, roughly conceived as temporary and superficial affective phenomena, by means of deeper and more long-standing affective phenomena such as sentiments, temperaments and character traits. Walt got angry at the slow driver in front of him because he is of the irascible kind (temperament), Skyler feels guilty not to report the tax fraud going on in her company because she is an honest person (character trait), and Jesse burst into tears upon receiving the news of his friend's death because he loved him (sentiment). These are perfectly ordinary and sensible folk psychological explanations. In addition to providing explanations, though, some long-standing affective phenomena are also often taken to be relevant to the justification of emotions. Indeed, we may think that they can count as reasons in favour or against having certain emotions. If Hank loves his children (sentiment) then it gives him reason to be worried when they're sick, and Marie's indignation at her neighbour's cheating on her husband is justified by the fact she is herself a loyal and faithful wife (character traits). The purpose of the present paper is to determine to which extent these explanatory and justificatory practices are in tune with, respectively, our psychological make-up and the nature of justification with respect to the emotions. Both affective explanations and justifications rely on the assumption that there are such long-standing affective phenomena as sentiments, temperaments or character traits. But while the former rely on the additional assumption that they can contribute to cause emotional episodes in one way or another, the latter require to conceive of some emotions' appropriateness as being at least in part dependant on the subject's broader affective profile. The structure of my essay will be the following. I will first clarify what is meant or should be meant by "emotion", "sentiment", "temperament", and "character trait". This improved understanding of the various phenomena that constitute the affective domain will then allow for a more fine-grained view of the different explanatory and justificatory relations one could attempt to argue for within it. More precisely, I will argue (alongside Deonna and Teroni 2012) that while reference to long-standing affective phenomena can indeed explain the occurrence of emotions, they never provide justificatory reasons for them. For example, while reference to being an inconsiderate person suitably explains why Gus has, say, hostile emotions, it cannot justify these emotions. Hence, or so I will argue, being a considerate person cannot justify any of my friendlier emotions either.

## **Bibliography**

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