



## ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF EMOTIONS\*

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### STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

#### Introduction

This paper reconstructs a general picture of Aristotle's theory of emotion developed in his major works. Most commentators express hesitation about whether it is possible to reconstruct such a theory of emotion in Aristotle's philosophy. Though I agree with much of the concern they raise, I still believe that there exists a coherent, somehow well-grounded, theory of emotion in Aristotle's philosophy. I argue that Aristotle's account of emotion cannot be interpreted as a pure cognitivism, like the Stoic's theory of emotion, or as a strong physicalism. Identifying different aspects of Aristotle's account of emotion, I have tried to demonstrate that there is a logical and conceptual connection between these different aspects such that both cognitive and affective aspects co-exist in his theory of emotions. Section one and two provide the metaphysical and psychological bases of Aristotle's theory of emotion. Section three is an attempt to identify the physical aspect of emotions in Aristotle, the aspect which he takes as essential to emotions. The cognitive aspect, in section four, deals with emotions in terms of beliefs, intentionality, and having the power of changing judgments. I conclude the paper with a discussion on the relationship between action and emotion in Aristotle.

#### 1. The Metaphysical Basis of Emotions

In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle offers four different senses of "pathos," with a larger metaphysical concern. In Aristotle, "pathos" does not refer to what we call "emotion," though it has a close conceptual connection with it, but rather to "affection," "experience" or "alteration." In the *Categories* a quality, Aristotle says, is something in virtue of which both things and people are qualified (Aristotle, 1984:9a32, 9b23-27). While Aristotle explicitly points out that there are different kinds of quality in respect of which people and things can be qualified (Aristotle, 1984:10a25), he thinks that these can be grouped and discussed under four major headings or kinds: (i) states and conditions, (ii) natural capacities and incapacities, (iii) external form of a thing, (iv) affections (pathē) and affective qualities.

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According to Aristotle, a complete account of what a particular thing is given can be achieved by looking for (1) that from which it is made (the material cause), (2) the structure or form in terms of which the matter comes to be something determinate (the formal cause), (3) the agent responsible for a quantity of matter's coming to be informed (the efficient cause), and (4) the purpose or goal of the compound of form and matter (the final cause). This is also the case in his theory of emotion. Therefore the inclusion of cognition, belief, intentionality and the bodily aspects to emotions can be explained within the context of his general teleological-functionalist theory of causation and explanation.

## 2. The Psychological Basis of Emotions

To provide a more clear understanding of Aristotle's theory of emotion, it is also necessary to look at his views on human psychology and soul, which are characteristically found in the *On the Soul*. The main focus of Aristotle's inquiry in this work is to discover the nature and the essence of soul, which is not limited to the human-soul. According to Aristotle, the soul is "the principle of animal life," whose knowledge contributes to the advance of truth in general and our understanding of nature (Aristotle, 1984:402a7-8). Since there are different kinds of living things forming an ascending scale –plants, animals, human beings, Aristotle suggests, we should ask the question 'What is its soul?' in each case or order of living things.

Our inquiry on the metaphysical and psychological bases of emotions implies that Aristotle's theory includes several complementary parts. Indeed, for Aristotle, emotions are complex phenomenon involving mainly cognitive, desiderative and affective aspects, aspects which are irreducible to each other. It is for this reason that his conception of emotions does not allow any reductionist project.

## 3. The Bodily Aspect of Emotions

Aristotle clearly offers certain connection or relation between the mental and physical states when explaining what anger is. For Aristotle, there are two different kinds of explanation for anger. The dialectician, who assigns the formal conditions, "would define e.g. anger as the appetite for returning pain for pain" (Aristotle, 1984:403a30-31). The physicist, on the other hand, who gives the material conditions, "would define it as a boiling of the blood or warm substance surrounding the heart" (Aristotle, 1984:403a30-403b1). In Aristotle's account, emotions can be described not only through physical states but also through mental states.

The upshot of this section is that, in Aristotle's account, emotions involve some kind of bodily sensations. When one becomes frightened some movements occurs around her/his heart, his temperature drops, and his complexion becomes pale (Aristotle, 1984:408b8, 432b31-433a1, 1389b32, 1128b13-14). But this does not make his account of emotions a mere physicalism, because he does not identify emotions with these bodily sensations nor does he make an ontological reduction of them to sensations. Aristotle only says that in defining emotions we can make reference both to physical or bodily and mental states.

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#### 4. The Desiderative Aspect: Pleasure and Pain in Emotions

Aristotle's discussion of pleasure sheds important light on his account of emotion, especially with respect to its intellectual aspect. For Aristotle, there are not only bodily pleasures but also mental or intellectual pleasures: the pleasures of reflecting on philosophical problems, the pleasures of playing chess, "the pleasures of learning and, among the sensuous pleasures, those of smell, and also many sounds and sights, and memories and hopes" (Aristotle, 1984:1173b16-18). Aristotelian emotions include a certain kind of cognitive states of the agent experiencing them.<sup>1</sup> Anger, Aristotle says, "must always be attended by a certain pleasure –that which arises from the expectation of revenge" (Aristotle, 1984:1378b2-3). As we shall explain in the following pages, within the cognitive aspect of emotions, such revenge relates to particular individuals, with certain beliefs being in the mind of the angry person.

#### 5. The Cognitive Aspect of Emotions

One of the uncontested views among commentators is that, in Aristotle's theory, emotions include cognition.<sup>2</sup> There are four important consequences of the inclusion of cognitions within emotions in Aristotle's theory: (1) beliefs are necessary ingredients of emotions; (2) emotions are intentional states; (3) beliefs distinguish the logical boundaries not only among particular emotions but also among the subjective experience of each emotion; and (4) judgments are affected or changed by emotions.

My idea is that the appearance-based view does not account for Aristotle's theory of emotion because it depends on a fragmentary reading of his account of psychology. This does not mean however that imagination as a faculty of discrimination has no role in Aristotle's account of emotion. Deliberative imagination plays a central role for it brings about the intentional object of emotions and thus serves to establish the evaluative ground of emotions.

We have seen that, in Aristotle's account, when beliefs change emotions also change.<sup>3</sup> If one does believe that there is a danger s\he fears but when s\he sees that there is no real danger at hand s\he does not fear at all but feels confidence. Aristotle not only points out that change in belief leads to change in emotion but also that change in emotion also brings about change in judgment.

#### 6. Action and Emotions

Aristotle's theory of action has long been interpreted as follows<sup>4</sup>:

Desire+ Belief → Action

<sup>1</sup> For a more elaborate discussion of the involvement of cognition in Aristotle's conception of emotion, see Fortenbaugh, William, W. (1970: 54).

<sup>2</sup> Fortenbaugh, for example, claims that on Aristotle's account of emotion, cognition is an essential element in emotion (1970: 42).

<sup>3</sup> Martha Nussbaum claims that for Aristotle "emotions are closely bound up with beliefs and judgments and thus are capable of being modified by the modification of beliefs and judgments" (1994: 97).

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Donald Davidson (1980) "Action, Reason and Causes" *Essays on Actions and Events*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

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In Aristotle, emotions are considered among the subclass of desires causing actions, together with beliefs or thoughts.

Given the distinction between rational and irrational desires, on the one hand, and the causal connection of emotions and actions, on the other, there appears an important conceptual difficulty in defending the rationality of emotions in Aristotle's account. I suggest that we need to identify two ways in which beliefs and rationality are connected to emotions. While in the first one, what I call narrow sense, certain beliefs and desires are intrinsic to an individual emotion, in the second one, which requires a wider deliberation, the relevant belief is extrinsic to the individual emotion.

### Conclusion

In the history of philosophy, emotions are generally seen as mere bodily reactions that are not under our control and thereby characterized as something that merely happen to us. Unlike Kant who takes affections of the mind as passive, Aristotle thinks that most affections are active and thus include some cognitive elements. His intentionalist account takes emotions "as selective responses to articulated features of our environment" (Sherman, 1989:169). In my attempt at identifying different aspects of Aristotle's account of emotion, I have tried to demonstrate that there is a logical and conceptual connection between these different aspects such that both cognitive and affective aspects co-exist in emotions. If I am right in this interpretation, it indicates that Aristotle's account of emotion cannot be interpreted as a pure cognitivism, like the Stoic's theory of emotion, or strong physicalism.

**Key Words:** Aristotle, emotions, cognitivism, physicalism, affection

## ARİSTOTELES'İN DUYGU KURAMI

### ÖZET

Bu makalenin amacı Aristoteles'in temel eserleri kapsamında duygu kuramının genel çerçevesini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Birçok yorumcu, Aristoteles'in bir duygu kuramının olup olmadığı konusunda ciddi tereddütleri olduklarını belirtmiştir. Bu tereddütleri kısmen paylaşmakla birlikte, bu makalede Aristoteles'in tutarlı ve iyi temellendirilmiş bir duygu kuramı olduğunu göstermeye çalışacağım. Aristoteles'in duygu kuramı ne Stoa duygu kuramı gibi salt bir bilişselci kuram, ne de bir fizikalist duygu kuramıdır. Aristoteles'in duygu kuramının farklı yönlerini ortaya koyarak onun duygu kuramında bilişsel ve duyuşsal boyutlar arasında mantıksal ve kavramsal bir ilişki olduğunu, bu iki unsurun duyguda birlikte yer aldığını temellendirmeye çalışacağım. Makalenin birinci ve ikinci kısımlarında Aristoteles'in duygu kuramının metafiziksel ve psikolojik yönleri ele alınmaktadır. Duyguların inanç, bilişsellik, yönelmişlik ve bedensel yönü Aristoteles'in ereksel-işlevsel nedensellik ve açıklama kuramı çerçevesinde ele alınmaktadır. Üçüncü kısımda ise duyguların fiziksel yönü gösterilmeye

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çalışılmaktadır ki, Aristoteles bunu duygular için özsel bir yön olarak görür. Ancak, onun duygu kuramı salt bir fizikalizm değildir çünkü duygular yalnızca fiziksel-bedensel yönleriyle tanımlanmazlar ve onlara indirgenemezler. Bilişsel boyutun ele alındığı dördüncü kısımda duygular inanç, yönelimsellik ve yargıları değiştirme açısından incelenmektedir. Bilişsel boyutu Aristoteles'in duygu kuramını tanımlayan önemli bir boyuttur ve her bireysel duygunun yeter nedenidir. Dolayısıyla, Aristoteles'in duygu kuramı ne salt fizikalist, ne de salt bilişselci kuramdır. Ona göre bu iki boyut birbirine indirgenemeyecek derecede özsel bir özelliğe sahiptir. Makaleyi Aristoteles'te duyguların eylem ile olan ilişkisi bakımından ele alındığı tartışma kısmıyla sonlandırıyorum.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aristoteles, Duygular, bilişselcilik, fizikalizm, etkilenim

### Introduction

My aim in this paper is to reconstruct a general picture of Aristotle's theory of emotion developed in his major works, the *Rhetoric*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Movement of Animals*, the *Topics*, the *On the Soul*, the *Categories*, and the *Metaphysics*. We should point out at the outset that it is really difficult to reconstruct Aristotle's theory of emotion. Part of the reason is that to develop a theory of emotion for Aristotle was of a secondary importance. He introduced his views on emotions in relation to other topics or issues. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics*, for example, emotions are discussed in terms of their significant role in the formation of character and that of virtue(s); in the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics*, they are identified as the qualities, alterations and movements; in the *On the Soul* they are explained as affections of the soul having both bodily and mental aspects; and in the *Rhetoric*, the question of emotion is basically a question of mental causation, that is, how they affect and change people's judgments.<sup>5</sup> Most commentators express hesitation about whether it is possible to reconstruct a theory of emotion in Aristotle's philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

Aristotle is a common sense philosopher, many of the essential claims of his practical philosophy are drawn from actual experience. This feature of his philosophy is of both an advantage and disadvantage. In one sense, one might find Aristotle's ideas philosophically uninteresting or dull. From another point of view, however, his philosophy is considered a touchstone for many contemporary philosophers in terms of moral psychology and the viability or practicability of moral theories. It is not a coincidence that several attempts to abstract and remove

<sup>5</sup> There are some further difficulties in the reconstruction of Aristotle's understanding of emotions. First, Aristotle's position toward Plato's philosophy is not clear. While there seems a clear influence of Plato arguably in his early works, some of his views on emotions are clearly in contrast to Plato's view. In the *Rhetoric*, for example, he accepts Plato's 'medical' or 'remedial' theory of emotions, whereas in his mature work on ethics, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he totally discards this theory. Another one arises from different senses of 'pathos' in Aristotle's works. In the narrow sense of the word, 'pathos' refers to 'emotion' or 'passion.' On the other hand, he uses it in a broad sense to refer to (1) affections of the human soul, (2) quality, (3) state or condition, (4) non-essential property, (5) accident, (6) feeling, (7) happening, (8) misfortune, (9) modification or alteration, (10) incident, (12) attribute. This cannot be taken as an inconsistency and opacity in Aristotle's philosophical terminology. Aristotle is a systematic philosopher and throughout his work he offers an account of 'pathos' that introduces a picture in which the narrow and the broad sense of "pathos" are logically interconnected and consistent with each other. For more on the broad concept of "pathos," see Amelie Rorty (1984: 521-546).

<sup>6</sup> Cooper, for example, says that "Aristotle provides no general, analytical account of the emotions anywhere in any of the ethical writings. And we are in for disappointment if we look for this in his supposedly scientific account of psychological matters in the *De Anima*" (1999: 406).

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moral philosophy from practical life and experience have led a return to Aristotle, whose virtue ethics and theory of emotion leave little unsaid. Indeed, almost all the claims or explorations made by the contemporary philosophers of emotion have already solid foundation in Aristotle's theory.

In order to reconstruct Aristotle's account of emotions I follow a deductive method, in a sense. After providing a general discussion on the ontological status of emotions in Aristotle's metaphysics, I will take a brief look at his conception of emotion in relation to his understanding of the soul, and then identify some specific aspects of his theory of emotion. More specifically, section one and two provide the metaphysical and psychological bases of Aristotle's theory of emotion. Section three is an attempt to identify the physical aspect of emotions in Aristotle, the aspect which he takes as essential to emotions. The cognitive aspect, in section four, deals with emotions in terms of beliefs, intentionality, and having the power of changing judgments. I conclude the paper with a discussion on the relationship between action and emotion in Aristotle.

### 1. The Metaphysical Basis of Emotions

In order to grasp a wider picture of Aristotle's theory of emotion it is useful to start with the ontological basis of emotion, which is provided in the *Metaphysics* and the *Categories*. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle offers four different senses of "pathos," with a larger metaphysical concern:

We call an affection [pathos] (1) a quality in respect of which a thing can be altered, e.g. white and black, sweet and bitter, heaviness and lightness, and all others of the kind. – (2) The already actualized alterations. –(3) Especially, injurious alterations and movements, and above all, painful injuries. –(4) Experiences pleasant or painful when on a large scale are called affections (Aristotle, 1984:1022b15-21).

It is clear from the above paragraph that "pathos" does not refer to what we call "emotion," though it has a close conceptual connection with it, but rather to "affection," "experience" or "alteration." Aristotle does not give any further analysis of these four senses of "pathos" in the *Metaphysics*. To understand what he means by these four senses, especially by "affection" in the sense of "quality," we should look at his discussion of quality in the *Categories*. A quality, Aristotle says, is something in virtue of which both things and people are qualified (Aristotle, 1984: 9a32, 9b23-27). While Aristotle explicitly points out that there are different kinds of quality in respect of which people and things can be qualified (Aristotle, 1984:10a25), he thinks that these can be grouped and discussed under four major headings or kinds: (i) states and conditions, (ii) natural capacities and incapacities, (iii) external form of a thing, (iv) affections (pathē) and affective qualities.

The distinction between *state* and *condition* is done on the ground of two essential criteria, that is, the length of time and changeability (Ackrill, 1985:104). While "being more stable and lasting longer" (Aristotle, 1984:8b26-27) are the distinguishing qualities of a state, the qualities of being "easily changed and quickly changing" (Aristotle, 1984:9a35) belong to a condition. Some examples for the former are knowledge, virtue, justice and temperance, and examples for the latter are hotness, sweetness, chill, sickness and health (Aristotle, 1984:9a17-18). Under the second kind of quality, things or people can be qualified in terms of *natural capacity* and *natural incapacity*. People are called wrestler, runners, healthy or unhealthy. They are called or qualified in this way not because of some conditions they are in but because of "a natural capacity for doing something easily or for being unaffected" (Aristotle, 1984:9a17-18). The third kind of quality includes 'shape'

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and external form of each thing (Aristotle, 1984:10a11). The former refers to properties of geometrical lines and surface, whereas the latter refers to the configurations of each physical thing.<sup>7</sup>

The fourth kind of quality regards the distinction between *affective quality* and *affection* (Aristotle, 1984:9a29). Since this kind of quality is of crucial value and includes many ideas to understand what affection is, it deserves more discussion. Things are qualified by affective qualities when they possess them. Since honey possesses 'sweetness', it is called 'sweet.' Sweetness is an affective quality, not because honey is affected somehow, because sweetness possessed by honey produces a certain affection of taste, 'sweet' (Aristotle, 1984:9b7). We call the snow cold for the snow has 'coldness' affecting the sense of touch.

For Aristotle, an affective quality plays a causative role by producing affection(s). But not all affections are produced by affective qualities. Colorings such as darkness and paleness are not *productive* of affections and thus not affective qualities as 'sweetness,' 'coldness' and 'hotness' are. (Aristotle, 1984:9b10-11). Rather they are *produced by* another affection. (Aristotle, 1984, s. 9b13). Redness and paleness are not qualities but affections because "a man who reddens through shame is not called ruddy, nor one pales in fright pallid; rather he is said to have been affected somehow" (Aristotle, 1984:9b30-32).

Aristotle offers not only causal but also *relational* explanation for affective qualities because, in his account, the existence of affective qualities depends on the existence of an agent that can be affected by the affective qualities in question. Accordingly, we can sum up *the affective quality/affection* distinction in the *Categories* in this way: an affective quality is something that (a) either produces affection on the senses or (b) is produced by affection

In the *Categories* Aristotle claims that affections are not qualities (Aristotle, 1984:9b32, 10a10). In the *Metaphysics*, however, he calls "an affection a quality in respect of which a thing can be altered" (Aristotle, 1984:1022b15). One might take this as an apparent inconsistency between the two texts, but a careful reading of Aristotle's account of quality will make it clear that this is not so. To see why, we should bear in mind that, for Aristotle, qualities are both permanent states and easily changing conditions. Thus, when he says that affections are not qualities he means qualities in the sense of *state*. But in another sense, in the sense of *condition*, affections are qualities. When we say 'John in distress is bad-tempered *now*' we do not qualify John as 'being bad-tempered' but only say that he has "been affected somehow" (Aristotle, 1984:10a9). In this sense affections refer to nothing but to John's "undergoing experiences." They do not *necessarily* involve any psychological or intentional components. John, for example, can become 'bad tempered' or 'red-faced' without realizing what happens to him. Affections such as 'bad-tempered' and 'red-faced' are qualities that are *temporarily* applied to John and thus do not refer to John's permanent states. Thus, they are not qualities in the sense of states but qualities in the sense of short-lived conditions.

A final point with respect to the metaphysical basis of emotion in Aristotle's theory is this. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle claims that when we make an inquiry as to why something is predicable of something "we are seeking the causes" (Aristotle, 1984:1040a20-30). Given his functionalist methodology, the question of essence (what it is) and the question of cause (why it is) are the same. According to Aristotle, when we wish to explain, for example, *what* a bronze statue *is*, we inquire its essence. A complete account of what a particular thing is given can be achieved by looking for (1) that from which it is made (the material cause), (2) the structure or form in terms of which the matter comes to be something determinate (the formal cause), (3) the agent responsible for a quantity of matter's coming to be informed (the efficient cause), and (4) the

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed information see Akrill (1985: 107).

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purpose or goal of the compound of form and matter (the final cause). This is also the case in his theory of emotion. Therefore the inclusion of cognition, belief, intentionality and the bodily aspects to emotions can be explained within the context of his general teleological-functionalist theory of causation and explanation.

## 2. The Psychological Basis of Emotions

To provide a more clear understanding of Aristotle's theory of emotion, it is also necessary to look at his views on human psychology and soul, which are characteristically found in the *On the Soul*. The main focus of Aristotle's inquiry in this work is to discover the nature and the essence of soul, which is not limited to the human-soul. According to Aristotle, the soul is "the principle of animal life," whose knowledge contributes to the advance of truth in general and our understanding of nature (Aristotle, 1984:402a7-8). Since there are different kinds of living things forming an ascending scale –plants, animals, human beings, Aristotle suggests, we should ask the question 'What is its soul?' in each case or order of living things.

The soul of different living things is characterized by "psychic powers" as they have in their essence such capacity as self-nutrition, sensation, movement and thinking (Aristotle, 1984:413b10-12). All living things assimilate food, grow, reproduce and decay. Aristotle ascribes all these basic activities to the power of self-nutrition, which is the originative power in terms of which living things are differentiated from non-living things (Aristotle, 1984:413b1). That power, whose ultimate aim is to preserve both individual life and the species, is the characteristic and constitution of the plant-soul.

What distinguishes the animal-soul from the plant-soul is that animals have an additional higher psychic power, that is, sensation. One of the striking features of sensation, Aristotle says, is that "where there is sensation, there is also pleasure and pain, and, where these, necessarily also desire" (Aristotle, 1984:413b22-25). The cause of movement is also desire. Since animals have pleasure (pain) and desire, they are sentient being (Aristotle, 1984:413b222-25). The self-nutrition and sensation are also constitutive of the human-soul but with another addition of higher psychic power, "thinking" (Aristotle, 1984:413b25). The distinctive character of the human soul is thus its rationality. The rational activities of the soul determine what the human soul is.

At this point, it is worth discussing an apparent confusion in Aristotle's account of psychology that creates a debate in recent literature. On the one hand, Aristotle says that the power of imagination is found in most animal species. On the other hand, in the *Movement of Animals* Aristotle explicitly speaks of both imagination and sensation as distinct faculties of discrimination that "are on common ground with thought" Aristotle, 1984:700b19-21). Some commentators of Aristotle take 'imagination' as a "by-product of sensation."<sup>8</sup> It is clear in Aristotle that emotions somehow depend on imagination. According to his taxonomy of living things, imagination is one of the faculties of discrimination found in both animals and human beings. Feelings, desires, pleasures and pains and emotions are also found in the beings, which have the psychic power of sensation. The absence of sensation in plants clearly indicates that plants have no feeling, no desire and no emotion in Aristotelian sense. Since both animals and humans are sentient beings it is natural that both have variety of feelings. Now the important question is this: on what ground can we distinguish between human feelings and animal feelings? On the ground of that identification, if possible, can we say that animals have emotions as humans do? These are questions, which I shall presently want to consider.

<sup>8</sup> For a more elaborate discussion on this issue see David Ross (1996) *Aristotle*, London, Routledge.(1949: 142).



For Aristotle, all sensation and thought or reason accompany with imagination. Yet there are two kinds of imagination characterizing an important difference between unreasoning animals and human beings, namely, sensitive and deliberative imagination. He says that sensitive imagination is “found in all animals, deliberative imagination only in those that are calculative” (Aristotle, 1984:434a6-7). Sensitive imagination is therefore at work not only in the presence of the sensible objects but also in the absence of the sensible object. In the cases of memories of past events, in dreaming, in thinking, in remembering, imagination is also at work (Aristotle, 1984:449b1-451a1). If we question the nature of human emotions we should talk about a combination of both sensitive and deliberative imagination because that combination is what makes humans sentient beings.

The connection between sensitive part and deliberative part in Aristotle's theory of emotion is also evident from some other textual evidence. In *On the Soul* Aristotle's explicitly speaks of a biological psychology with a threefold distinction between the nutritive, sensitive and cognitive faculties. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* however he puts aside this Platonic psychology and redraws the boundaries within human soul, which he now takes as having two parts, namely, the rational part and irrational part.<sup>9</sup> The irrational part of the soul is also divided into two elements, namely, the “vegetative” and the “appetitive” elements. By the former, Aristotle means the nutritive power of the soul all living things share because it fulfills the basic functions of a living thing to survive such as assimilating food, growing and reproducing. By its nature, the vegetative element has no share in reason. The appetitive and in general the desiring element, however, shares in reason, in so far as it listens to and obeys it (Aristotle, 1984:1102b29-33). He puts all emotions or passions within the irrational part and makes a connection between the rational and the irrational part in terms of the appetitive element's capacity of listening and obeying to reason. He explains the existence of appetitive element on the practical ground because he derives from it the fact that in the soul “there is something beside reason, resisting and opposing it” (Aristotle, 1984:1102b24). His derivation of the existence of an appetitive part of the soul depends on the practical affairs of daily life in which an apparent conflict between a thinking self and the emotional self is experienced. As a living thing a human being is a complex creature composed of the soul and body, the rational and irrational parts. However, that to enumerate the constitutive psychic powers or capacities of the human soul as self-nutrition, sensation, imagination and thinking is not enough to explain what the human soul *is*. The human soul, as Joachim says, is “not the nutritive faculty *plus* the sentient faculty *plus* the rational faculty.”<sup>10</sup> It must be more than the mere conjunction of these powers because it is defined through function(s) proper to the complex of its capacities of which are not necessary for its being but for its well-being for in terms of proper fulfillment of these capacities a human being achieves its flourishing (Aristotle, 1984:435b20-25).

Our inquiry on the metaphysical and psychological bases of emotions thus far implies that Aristotle's theory includes several complementary parts. Indeed, for Aristotle, emotions are complex phenomenon involving mainly cognitive, desiderative and affective aspects, aspects which are irreducible to each other. It is for this reason that his conception of emotions does not allow any reductionist project. In what follows, I will explain these different aspects of emotion, which Aristotle thinks are essential to their nature.

<sup>9</sup> See Fortenbaugh (1975: 26). He claims that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle introduces a bipartite psychology, which is of crucial value with respect to its indication of the place of ‘emotions’ in human soul. By calling that psychology “a peculiarly human psychology” Fortenbaugh makes a detailed comparison between Plato's and Aristotle's psychology and defends the advances of Aristotle's bipartite division of the human soul over Plato's tripartition.

<sup>10</sup> See Joachim (1951: 39).

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### 3. The Bodily Aspect of Emotions

The philosophic foundation of Aristotle's account of emotion could be seen to some extent in the question which he begins with his discussion: Are the affections of the soul "affections of the complex of body and soul, or is there any among them peculiar to the soul by itself?"<sup>11</sup> (Aristotle, 1984:403a3-5). This is a central question of modern philosophy of mind beginning from Descartes. Aristotle clearly offers certain connection or relation between the mental and physical states when explaining what anger *is*. For Aristotle, there are two different kinds of explanation for anger. The dialectician, who assigns the formal conditions, "would define e.g. anger as the appetite for returning pain for pain" (Aristotle, 1984:403a30-31). The physicist, on the other hand, who gives the material conditions, "would define it as a boiling of the blood or warm substance surrounding the heart" (Aristotle, 1984:403a30-403b1). Which one of these definitions should be taken by the genuine student of nature? The genuine student of nature, the philosopher, Aristotle says, should take both in order to grasp the essence of anger. Though material conditions can be thought to be separated from formal conditions in abstraction, these two conditions are not and cannot be abstracted from each other in experience (Aristotle, 1984:1101b25-30).

Aristotle also claims that it is not the soul which is angry but the man who is the composite of the soul and body. As he writes:

[T]o say that it is the soul which is *angry* is as if we were to say that it is the soul that weaves or builds houses. It is doubtless better to avoid saying that the soul pities or learns or thinks, and rather to say that *it is the man who does this with his soul* (Aristotle, 1984:408b12-15).

The man as the composite of the soul and body is the subject of psychic attributes such as loving, hating, being angry and thus the man rather than the soul is affected and moved by emotions and other affections. This is consistent with his description of the soul as "an independent substance implanted within us" and as being incapable of being destroyed and moved, something divine and impassible (Aristotle, 1984:408b18-30). The body is the *vehicle* of the soul and only through the body can it be moved (Aristotle, 1984:408a31-33). Nonetheless, we cannot ascribe a strong physicalist position to Aristotle because he also claims that nous, which is impassible and unmixed, is separable from the body in principle (Aristotle, 1984:430a18-19).

In the *On the Soul* Aristotle calls emotions "affections of the soul" and claims that emotions are "enmattered accounts" (Aristotle, 1984:403a25). For the majority of emotions, Aristotle holds that there is "no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without involving the body" (Aristotle, 1984:403a5-8). This claim is very important because it clearly puts forward the involvement of physical or bodily states in mental states. As Aristotle puts it in other way:

It seems that *all the affections of soul involve a body –passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving and hating: in all these there is a concurrent affection of the body*. In support of this view we may point to the fact that, while sometimes on the occasion of violent and striking occurrences there is no excitement or fear felt, on others faint and feeble stimulations produce these emotions, viz. when the body is already in a state of tension resembling its condition when we are angry. Here is a still clearer case: in the absence of any external cause of terror we find ourselves experiencing the feelings of man in terror. From all this it is

<sup>11</sup> With respect to discussions on whether the soul (psuchē), or intellect (nous), has separate existence independent of the body this question is of crucial value because "[i]f there is any way of acting or being acted upon proper to soul, soul will be capable of separate existence; if there is none, its separate existence impossible" *On the Soul* 403a10-13.

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obvious that *the affections of soul are enmattered accounts*. Consequently their definitions ought to correspond, e.g. anger should be defined as a certain mode of movement of such and such a body (or part or faculty of a body) by this or that cause and for this and that end (Aristotle, 1984:403a16-29).

From the opening sentence of the above paragraph it is clear that bodily or physiological changes accompany with emotions. But is the connection in question necessary or contingent? Aristotle's *homonymy principle*, which holds that the form and matter of living things are the soul and body of living things respectively, throws some light on this question. According to this principle the essential nature of a thing is given in terms of its form or function.<sup>12</sup> The eye is defined not in terms of what it is made of but in terms of its function, or its form – what it *does*, what it is *for*: The eye *is* the eye because it *does* see or is *for* seeing. We can abstract “eye” from “seeing” in thought. What we abstracted in thought is only the eye in name or figure. Does the homonymy principle overlook the material condition of the soul? As Aristotle indicates in the example of saw, although we can make a wooden saw, it cannot be a real saw because within its essential nature wood does not include any potentiality to be a saw, but some iron does.

So, the homonymy principle puts forward not only that what the soul *is*, its function or form but also that the soul is the complex of the form and the matter. Given this connection, defining emotions as “enmattered accounts” or “forms that involve matter” means that in each particular case of anger, for example, there is a concurrent affection of body for the existence of anger depends on its realization in the matter<sup>13</sup> (Aristotle, 1984:403a25, 403b3). But this does not mean that anger is reduced to the boiling of the blood around the heart because anger is the form of “*this* sort of body and *this* sort of matter” (Aristotle, 1984:403b10-15). So, while there is a contingent relation between this matter and this form, the connection between the formal and bodily aspects of anger is necessary *per se*. In other words, although Aristotle denies the existence of an absolute necessity between this sort of body and this sort of matter he thinks that there is a hypothetical necessity between them, a necessity that requires a reference to both matter and form for a complete definition. As he says:

Perhaps however the necessary does inter the definition too. If we define the work of a saw as a certain kind of dividing, that will not be possible unless the saw has teeth of a certain sort, and it will not have these teeth unless it is made of iron. Thus certain parts of the definition or account of the thing are as it were the material side of the definition (Aristotle, 1984:403a30-403b1).

Commentators like Jonathan Barnes claim that Aristotle's over-all position is a weak physicalism.<sup>14</sup> Barnes thinks that while Aristotle holds a non-physicalist position with respect to two important psychic functions (nous (intellect) and orexis (desire)), his position with respect to some affections of the soul is a weak physicalism. Since “the definitions of the emotions include reference to (parts of) the body” part of the meaning of “x is angry” in Aristotle, “is the blood about x's heart is boiling” (Barnes, 1971:107).

<sup>12</sup> See Nussbaum (1978: 100-106) She introduces a detailed account of Aristotle's functionalism in her translation of, and interpretative essays on, Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium*.

<sup>13</sup> In the following of this quote he says that “the affections of the soul, insofar as they are such as passion and fear, are inseparable from the natural matters of animals” *On the Soul* 403b18.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed discussion of materialism, functionalism and dualism in Aristotle's philosophy see Manning (1985).

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In Aristotle's account, however, emotions can be described not only through physical states but also through mental states. Does this create a problem for the claim of weak physicalism? It seems that description of emotions in terms of mental states does not create any problem for weak physicalism. In a Davidsonian reading of Aristotle, while an emotion can be defined or described in quite different ways, this does not create a claim against the identity of the physical and the mental, because the alleged identity is about the event itself, not its different descriptions. It is evident that Aristotle does define anger in two different ways, that is, as "boiling of the blood or warm substance surrounding the heart" (Aristotle, 1984:403a31-b1) and as "a desire accompanied by pain, for a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight at the hands of men who have no call to slight oneself or one's friends" (Aristotle, 1984:1378a30-33). The physicalist would say that these two descriptions refer to the same emotion, that is, anger. In Aristotle's metaphysics these two descriptions indeed refer to the formal and bodily aspect of anger. It is worth mentioning that, though not absolute, Aristotle takes for granted a hypothetically necessary connection between the formal and the bodily aspect of anger. Instead of a physicalist interpretation, I think that a functionalist interpretation seems to be more appropriate to Aristotle's account of emotion.

The upshot of this section is that, in Aristotle's account, emotions involve some kind of bodily sensations. When one becomes frightened some movements occurs around her/his heart, his temperature drops, and his complexion becomes pale (Aristotle, 1984:408b8, 432b31-433a1, 1389b32, 1128b13-14). But this does not make his account of emotions a mere physicalism, because he does not identify emotions with these bodily sensations nor does he make an ontological reduction of them to sensations. Aristotle only says that in defining emotions we can make reference both to physical or bodily and mental states.

#### 4. The Desiderative Aspect: Pleasure and Pain in Emotions

Thus far I have deliberately omitted to quote some definitions of emotions from Aristotle. The reason for this is not only that we find very few definitions in Aristotle but also that all his definitions reflect only some particular aspects of his theory. Take the following one, for example, which is given in terms of particular emotions:

By passions I mean appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain<sup>15</sup> (Aristotle, 1984:1105b21-23).

Another definition is in the *Eudemian Ethics*. Here again, pleasure and pain are identified as the accompaniment of emotions. As he says:

By passions I mean such as anger, fear, shame, sensual desire –in general, all that is usually followed of itself by sensuous pleasure or pain (Aristotle, 1984:1220b10-15).

From these two definitions, it is evident that, for Aristotle, an important feature of emotions is that they are accompanied by (sensuous) pleasure or pain. Anger, for example, is defined as "a desire accompanied by pain" (Aristotle, 1984:1378a31). But, anger is also defined as a desire for revenge accompanied by pleasure. From Aristotle's discussion we learn that most emotions have an intrinsically mixed nature because of the fact that emotional states are based on the recognition of a need and that they contain certain expectation of their assignment.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>In the *Rhetoric* II Aristotle introduces a detailed discussion of particular emotions. Cooper claims that the list of emotions given in this work is not comprehensive one because in this work some emotions such as grief, pride, erotic love, joy, yearning and regret is not mentioned (1993: 197).

<sup>16</sup>It is very interesting that Aristotle speaks of the mixed nature of emotions in the *Rhetoric* but not in his ethics. One reason for this difference might be that he discusses variety characters of pleasure in terms of its relation to some other

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Aristotle's discussion of pleasure sheds important light on his account of emotion, especially with respect to its intellectual aspect. He begins his discussion by critically examining the ideas defended by earlier thinkers and then constructs his own view of pleasure. In relation to his understanding of pleasure we can discern three separate discussions, one is in the *Rhetoric* and the other two is in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *Rhetoric* he defines pleasure as a movement. This is Plato's view of pleasure according to which pain is the lack of a natural condition and pleasure is the replenishment of that lack.<sup>17</sup> In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he rejects this idea and provides two different definitions, namely, pleasure as an impeded activity and pleasure as the completion of an activity. He now thinks that Platonist theory of pleasure takes only the bodily aspect of pleasures into account and overlooks 'psychic', or mental, aspect of pleasures.

For Aristotle, there are therefore not only bodily pleasures but also mental or intellectual pleasures: the pleasures of reflecting on philosophical problems, the pleasures of playing chess, "the pleasures of learning and, among the sensuous pleasures, those of smell, and also many sounds and sights, and memories and hopes" (Aristotle, 1984:1173b16-18). The intellectual pleasures do not require any replenishment of the 'pain' in previous sense – they are not a "result of either defect or excess." The reason why people generally think that pleasure is bad, Aristotle says, is simply because the kind of pleasure they have in mind is typically bodily pleasure. Unlike Plato and Epicureans, the intellectual aspect in Aristotle's theory is striking. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he claims that pleasure is a form of consciousness just like 'seeing' is (Aristotle, 1984:1174a14-16).

Defending a fine-grained account of action, Aristotle argues that pleasure is a complete activity "when it has made what it aims at" (Aristotle, 1984:1174a20-21). One principle in distinguishing between complete and incomplete activities is in terms of time sequence. For example, seeing a child playing with a dog in the garden and building a temple are two different activities. The former one is a complete activity while the latter is a 'movement' or 'incomplete' activity. Seeing the child playing with her/his dog, lasts for a period of time. But building a temple, consisting of parts with different ends in each stage, needs a different time sequence in order to fulfill its aim. It becomes a complete activity only when the temple is completed. Similarly, pleasure is a complete activity only if it completes the end it aims at.

The connection between pleasure and activity in Aristotle's account is stronger than the above relationship. The connection is a mutual one because, as Aristotle contends, "without activity pleasure does not arise, and every activity is completed by pleasure" (Aristotle, 1984:1175a20-21). If emotions are the activities of the soul, as he claims, then such a mutual connection is also the case between pleasure and emotion accompanied by the pleasure in question: the pleasure that accompanies completes the emotion (Leighton, 1982:157). Consider anger and shame again, within which they include pain in their formal definitions. The question now is this: 'Is pain completing anger peculiar to anger, or is it identical with the pain completing shame?' In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle gives some reasons to think that for every emotion there is a specific pleasure and pain not shared by any other emotion. He says

[T]hings different in kind are ... completed by different things ... and, similarly, we think that activities differing in kind are completed by things differing in kind. Now the activities of thought differ from those of the senses, and among themselves, in kind; so, therefore, do the pleasures that complete them (Aristotle, 1984:1175a22-28).

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topics. Another reason might be the influence of Plato in Aristotle's early works. More on this topic, see Dorethea Frede (1996).

<sup>17</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the comparison of Aristotle's and Plato's account of pleasure see Gerd, Van Riel (2000: 119-137), "Aristotle's Definition of Pleasure: A Refutation of the Platonic Account."

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Since the pain of anger should differ from that of shame in kind, the pain completing anger should be peculiar to anger and not shared by another emotion. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, too, Aristotle speaks of the inclusion of pleasure and pain in the concept of emotion by saying that “the passions are distinguished by pleasure and pain” (Aristotle, 1984:1221b36-37).

One way of analyzing the question of emotion tone in Aristotle would be in generic terms, that is, all emotions are identified by a pleasure or pain peculiar to them, the idea which I have been exploring. Implicit in his general account on the connection between pleasures and activities, Aristotle’s idea of the ‘accompaniment’ of pleasure and pain with emotions also manifests in his analysis of particular emotions. Anger, here again, is defined as “a desire accompanied by pain” (Aristotle, 1984:1378a31). Fear is another emotion being defined as feeling accompanied by a pain (Aristotle, 1984:1382a22-23). Shame is also “defined as pain or disturbance” (Aristotle, 1984:1383b15). Pity, kindness, indignation, envy, and emulation are among emotions accompanying with pain (Aristotle, 1984:1385b11-1386b11, 138a15-1385b11, 1386b10, 1387b21, 1388a30). In the light of all these definitions of individual emotions, we can say that when Aristotle speaks of the ‘accompaniment’ of pleasure and pain he means the inclusion of pleasure and pain within the concept of emotion.<sup>18</sup>

But the conceptual connection between emotion and accompanying pleasure and pain is not only a generic one. In Aristotle’s account, the distinguishing feature of each emotion is also given through pleasure or pain. The emotional experience would also change from person to person for each individual anger. Aristotelian emotions include a certain kind of cognitive states of the agent experiencing them.<sup>19</sup> Anger, Aristotle says, “must always be attended by a certain pleasure –that which arises from the expectation of revenge” (Aristotle, 1984:1378b2-3). As we shall explain in the following pages, within the cognitive aspect of emotions, such revenge relates to particular individuals, with certain beliefs being in the mind of the angry person.

### 5. The Cognitive Aspect of Emotions

One of the uncontested views among commentators is that, in Aristotle’s theory, emotions include cognition.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Aristotle believes that an analysis of anger, for example, makes it necessary to look at “what the state of mind of angry people is, who the people are with whom they usually get angry; and on what grounds they get angry with them” (Aristotle, 1984:1378a24-26). In general, any analysis of emotion makes it necessary to consider the agent’s dispositions, the intentional objects of emotion and reasons (causes) of emotion (Aristotle, 1984:1378a25-26). There are four important consequences of the inclusion of cognitions within emotions in Aristotle’s theory: (1) beliefs are necessary ingredients of emotions; (2) emotions are intentional states; (3) beliefs distinguish the logical boundaries not only among particular emotions but also among the subjective experience of each emotion; and (4) judgments are affected or changed by emotions. In the following pages, I will discuss some implications of these consequences by clarifying the nature of the inclusion of cognition within emotions.

<sup>18</sup> In “Aristotle and the Emotions” Stephen Leighton discusses the accompanying relationship between emotions and pleasure/pain. He claims that “[t]he pleasure or pain is part of the concept of the emotion; neither is separable from the emotion. For each emotion-type there is a type of pleasure or pain peculiar to that emotion. They complete the emotion.” (1982: 157). He also maintains that “the role of pleasure and pain in emotion is not exhausted by “accompanying” relationship. ...in addition to the pain or pleasure of the emotion, contemplating and achieving the aim of the emotion (where appropriate) is pleasant, the bodily precondition for the emotion may be pleasant or painful, and so on” (1982: 157).

<sup>19</sup> For a more elaborate discussion of the involvement of cognition in Aristotle’s conception of emotion, see Fortenbaugh, William, W. (1970: 54).

<sup>20</sup> Fortenbaugh, for example, claims that on Aristotle’s account of emotion, cognition is an essential element in emotion (1970: 42).

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In addition to physical responses, which we have explained in section 4.1, Aristotle's definitions or forms of particular emotions also include cognitive responses. As he says, "both pain and belief seem to be predicated of anger in what it is; for the angry man is both in pain and also believes that he is slighted" (Aristotle, 1984:127b30-31). The form of anger in the *Rhetoric* includes two cognitive responses. First, as a final cause, the definition of anger includes "a desire...for a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight at the hands of men who have no call to slight oneself or one's friends" (Aristotle, 1984:1378a30-33). Second, as an affective cause, the definition of anger includes the efficient cause, that is, the belief that there is a conspicuous slight in virtue of which anger occurs. The involvement of belief in emotion appears more clearly in the following passage:

If fear is associated with the expectation that something destructive will happen to us, plainly *nobody will be afraid who believes nothing can happen to him*; we shall not fear things that we believe cannot happen to us, nor people who we believe cannot inflict them upon us; nor shall we be afraid at times when we think ourselves safe from them. It follows therefore that *fear is felt by those who believe something to be likely to happen to them*, at the hands of particular persons, in a particular form, and at a particular time (Aristotle, 1984:1382b29-1383a2).

From the above paragraph, as well as some others, it is clear that 'belief' is both the essential and efficient cause of fear. Since no one can be afraid unless s/he thinks herself/himself in danger, fear should necessarily involve the belief that something harmful is likely to happen because of some perceived threat. Since the belief constitutes the essential and the efficient causes of fear, for Aristotle, it is included in the formal definition of anger.

As it might be seen, my interpretation of Aristotle's theory of emotion is consonant with the so-called "belief-based view,"<sup>21</sup> according to which beliefs and judgments constitute the content of emotions. However, as we have discussed in section 4.2, on the "appearance-based view," images, appearances or perceptual beliefs, rather than thoughts or judgments, are the efficient causes of emotions.<sup>22</sup> Cooper, for example, points out that "Aristotle is quite firm and explicit that the emotion arises from one's having the impression or appearance (*phantasia*)" (Cooper, 1999:416). Juha Sihvola provides another appearance-based view of the Aristotelian fear by connecting some pieces of Aristotle's definition of fear in the following way.

Aristotle defines fear as 'a certain kind of pain and disturbance out of the appearance (*φαντασία*) of an impeding destructive or painful bad thing' (*Rhet II 5*, 1382a21-3), adds that these bad things must 'appear (*φαντασία*) to be close and not far-off' (*Rhet II 5*, 1382a24-5), and finally remarks that 'it is necessary that those things are fearful that appear (*φαντασία*) to have a great power to destroy or cause harms that lead to great pain' (*Rhet II 5*, 1382a28-30, Sihvola, 1996:116).

The idea therefore is that belief is not a necessary condition for fear but appearance. I believe that Cooper and Sihvola's interpretation is misleading for it depends on a partial description of the Aristotelian definition of fear. It is correct that images or appearances are part of emotions for all beliefs include imagination as all emotions include belief. As we have seen, all animals, for Aristotle, have the psychic power of sensation and all living things having that power also have the power of imagination –one of the faculties of discrimination besides thought and sensation

<sup>21</sup> For the most important defenders of belief-based view see especially Fortenbaugh (1975) and Leighton (1982).

<sup>22</sup> See Elizabeth Belfiore (1992). She introduces *phantasia* as the efficient cause of Aristotelian fear, pity and shame.

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(Aristotle, 1984:700b13-701a6). Imagination for him is a psychic faculty that is common to all animals. It is for this reason that in the *History of Animals* Aristotle speaks of a dolphin acting as if out of pity, speaks of a bison acting as if it feels distress and fear, and speaks of an eagle that seems to expel dung out of jealousy (Aristotle, 1984:619b27-31, 630b8-13, 631a15-20). Indeed, Aristotle ascribes some emotion-like feelings to animals but he nonetheless distinguishes human emotions from these feelings both on conceptual and ontological grounds. Stated in Aristotle's own terminology, human emotions involve "psychic power," namely, "the power of thinking and thought," (Aristotle, 1984:414a29, 414b19) whereas animals never have this power. As he says, "in the brutes though we often find imagination we never find belief" (Aristotle, 1984:428a21).

So, both human and animal emotions can include images or appearances as a result of the functioning of the psychic power of imagination, but it is impossible to distinguish human emotions from animal emotions on the ground of imagination. Certain passage from Aristotle make Cooper's and Sihvola's interpretations incorrect. According to Aristotle, "when we think something to be fearful or threatening, emotion is immediately produced, and so too with what is encouraging; but when we merely imagine we remain as unaffected as persons who are looking at a painting of some dreadful or encouraging scene" (Aristotle, 1984:427b21-24).

My conclusion is that the appearance-based view does not account for Aristotle's theory of emotion because it depends on a fragmentary reading of his account of psychology. This does not mean however that imagination as a faculty of discrimination has no role in Aristotle's account of emotion. Deliberative imagination plays a central role for it brings about the intentional object of emotions and thus serves to establish the evaluative ground of emotions.

The cognitive aspect of emotions can be seen more clearly in the intentional character of emotions. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle says that anger "must always be felt towards some particular individual, e.g. Cleon, and not man in general" (Aristotle, 1984:1377a33-34). This feature distinguishes anger from hatred. While both anger and hatred have the feature of being directness in a general sense, anger is an emotion but hatred is not. This is so because anger is concerned with and directed at particular individuals such as Callias, or Socrates, hatred is not. Rather, it is directed "against classes." In general, we all hate any thief and any informer, but we feel anger towards some particular persons.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, in Aristotle's analysis, it is also implicit that the intentional object of anger refers to or is felt towards voluntary actions and autonomous persons. We feel angry because we think that some particular persons slight us. We should also think or know that such a "slighting is a voluntary act" (Aristotle, 1984:1380a9). An involuntarily slighting, on the other hand, does not stir anger. We do not feel anger towards people "who cannot be aware of our anger, and we cease to be angry with people once they are dead" (Aristotle, 1984:1380b25-26). There are some difficulties in interpreting Aristotle's position here. On the one hand, these words can be taken as referring to a capability or potentiality with respect to awareness. I do not feel anger towards a stone because I know that it cannot be aware of my anger. It seems that the above quotation clearly endorses this condition or reading. But we can still ask whether the condition of awareness must be a *de facto* awareness on the part of the slighter. More specifically, is it also necessary for the person who slights us to be aware of my anger? Aristotle's discussion of anger by the slighting example seems to imply that the condition of awareness is a mutual one. Though it is still an open question whether or not such a mutuality condition is also required for all particular anger cases, what is

<sup>23</sup> The interpretation of Aristotelian emotions as having an intentional object is a widely accepted view among contemporary philosophers. As Nussbaum has put it, in Aristotle's account of emotions "emotions are forms of intentional awareness directed at or about an object, in which the object figures as it is seen from the creature's point of view." Nussbaum (1994: 80).

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clear in Aristotle's theory of emotion is that it is not and cannot be required for each particular emotion. To think otherwise would be to contradict with the idea of the differentiae of particular emotions.

By way of contrast between anger and fear, here again, I want now to explain the idea of the differentiae of the particular emotions. Unlike anger, to be afraid of something we need not know or be aware that the action done toward me is a voluntary one. It is sufficient for something's being harmful in order to make me fear. It is also not necessary for the fearer to be aware of my fear. Since a bear is not and cannot be voluntary for its harming me, and nor can it be aware of that, I do not get angry with a bear, but I do fear it. What distinguishes these two particular emotions is the set of beliefs that each emotion involves. This being the case, it is also fact that the individual experience of each particular emotion and thereby its corresponding belief, may change considerably from person to person. As Aristotle points out,

a sick man is angered by disregard of his illness, a poor man by disregard of his poverty, a man waging war by disregard of the war he is waging, a lover by disregard of his love, and so in other cases too. Each man is predisposed, by the emotion now controlling him, *to his own particular anger* (Aristotle, 1984:1379a19-22).

In Aristotle's theory, therefore, beliefs are not only constituent parts of emotions but also differentiating features. Given such features they possess in their nature, emotions play a further role in the cognitive world of individuals. In the first chapter of the *Rhetoric* Book 2, Aristotle gives another definition of emotion by saying that "emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments" (Aristotle, 1984:1378a20-21). To show how, Aristotle provides several examples from daily life experience:

When people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry or hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity: when they feel friendly to the man who comes before them for judgement, they regard him as having done little wrong, if any; when they feel hostile, they take the opposite view. Again, if they are eager for, and have good hopes of, a thing that will be pleasant if it happens, they think that it certainly will happen and be good for them; and whereas if they are indifferent or annoyed, they do not think so (Aristotle, 1984:1377b30-1378a6).

From this quotation it is clear that our judgments can be changed in conformity with the emotions we experience.<sup>24</sup> We have seen that, in Aristotle's account, when beliefs change emotions also change.<sup>25</sup> If one does believe that there is a danger s\he fears but when s\he sees that there is no real danger at hand s\he does not fear at all but feels confidence. Aristotle not only points out that change in belief leads to change in emotion but also that change in emotion also brings about change in judgment.

## 6. Action and Emotions

We have seen so far that emotions are connected to certain kinds of pleasures and pains, that they are closely connected to certain kinds of cognitive states of the agent who experience

<sup>24</sup> For a more detailed discussion of how emotions change judgments in Aristotle's account see Leighton (1982).

<sup>25</sup> Martha Nussbaum claims that for Aristotle "emotions are closely bound up with beliefs and judgments and thus are capable of being modified by the modification of beliefs and judgments" (1994: 97).

them, and that most of the emotions involve certain kinds of desires. Taken together, all three features play a causative role both in the mental states and the actions of the agents.

Given the causal role we identify here, it remains to show how Aristotle's conception of emotion can be brought to bear on his theory of action. The basic claim of the rationalist account of Aristotle's theory of action is explained in the *Movement of Animals*, where he seeks the origin of movements in a living creature (Aristotle, 1984: 700b11). As he says:

For all living things both move and are moved for the sake of something, so that this is the limit of all their movement –that for the sake of which. Now we see that living creature is moved by intellect, imagination, purpose, wish and appetite. And all these are reducible to thought and desire (Aristotle, 1984:700b14-26).

Stated simply and formally, Aristotle's theory of action has long been interpreted as follows<sup>26</sup>:

Desire+ Belief → Action

Having distinguished self-doing actions from actions arising out of nature, chance or compulsion, Aristotle identifies the causes of the former in this way:

All actions that *are* due to a man himself and caused by himself are due either to habit or to desire; and of the latter, some are due to rational desire, the others to irrational. Rational desire is wishing, and wishing is a desire for good. ...Irrational desire is twofold, viz. anger and appetite (Aristotle, 1984:1368b37-1389a4).

Aristotle tries to explain how desire and reason must be combined in order for action to result. Assimilating Plato's discussion of the tripartite division of the soul he identifies three species of desire (orexis): wish (boulēsis), passion (thumos) and appetite (epithumia).<sup>27</sup> Here the word passion (thumos) is used to designate one of the species of desire such as anger, fear, love, hate, envy, pity, shame, etc. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle speaks of emotions as motives for actions and includes them among seven possible "causes of action," that is, "chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reasoning, anger, or appetite" (Aristotle, 1984:1369a5-6). Emotions are therefore considered among the subclass of desires causing actions, together with beliefs or thoughts.

Given the distinction between rational and irrational desires, on the one hand, and the causal connection of emotions and actions, on the other, there appears an important conceptual difficulty in defending the rationality of emotions in Aristotle's account. I suggest that we need to identify two ways in which beliefs and rationality are connected to emotions. While in the first one, what I call narrow sense, certain beliefs and desires are intrinsic to an individual emotion, in the second one, which requires a wider deliberation, the relevant belief is extrinsic to the individual emotion.

To show this, we should remind that for Aristotle every desire is relative to an end (Aristotle, 1984:428a21). There are two kinds of desire, that is, rational desire for the good and

<sup>26</sup> See for example, Donald Davidson (1980) "Action, Reason and Causes" *Essays on Actions and Events*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

<sup>27</sup> There has been some disagreement on the translation of the Greek word boulēsis in the literature. While Ross translates it as "rational wish" Irwin and others translate it as "wish." Here I prefer to use Irwin's translation. The same disagreement is the case for the words 'thumos' and 'epithumia.' Cooper, for example, translates the former as "spirited desire" and the later as "appetitive desire" (1999: 420-21), while some other scholars translate them as "passion" and "appetite" respectively. For more on Aristotle's understanding of 'desire' see Cooper (1999: 239-244).

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irrational desire. This distinction between rational and irrational desires corresponds to the distinction between sensitive and deliberative imagination. Animals having only the capacity of sensation can have irrational desires while, in addition to irrational desires because of their having capacity of reasoning, human beings can have rational desires. Aristotle uses the term 'emotion' as a generic term for irrational desires and he sums up his discussion of the causes of actions by saying that actions are caused by "either reasoning or emotion" (Aristotle, 1984:1369a17-18). Moreover, his explanation of irrational desire seems to be in agreement with his definition of emotions which are accompanied by pleasure and pain. As he says, as an irrational desire "appetite is *desire for pleasure*" (Aristotle, 1984:1370a16-17). But among appetitive desires, some are irrational and some others are associated with the rational. The irrational appetitive desires are those originating in the body, such as hunger, thirst, sex, smell, hearing and vision (Aristotle, 1984:1370a21-25). They do not arise out of "any opinion held by the mind" (Aristotle, 1984:1370a20) but from the needs of the body.

Different from the irrational appetitive desires, however, emotions have a capacity to obey reason. As Aristotle remarks:

*reason or imagination informs us that we have been insulted or slighted, and anger, reasoning as it were that anything like this must be fought against, boils up straightway; while appetite, if reason or perception merely says that an object is pleasant, springs to the enjoyment of it. Therefore anger obeys reason in a sense, but appetite does not (Aristotle, 1984:1149a31-1149b1).*

Here is the first sense in which emotions obey reason and as such they are causally relevant to action. Given the desirative aspect of emotions, since fear is painful, it provides at least *prima facie* grounds for removing oneself from fear-inducing circumstances. The kind of belief and desire that causes the agent to act in a certain way is relatively intrinsic to the emotion itself. For example,

Your seeing the bear + your belief that the bear is dangerous + your desire to be rid of dangerous things  $\Rightarrow$  your action.

Notice that nothing has been specified as to the way you have acted to be rid of the bear. There is certainly a desire here, which can be satisfied in a different way. But the belief or reason that lead you to act in a certain way to be rid of such a dangerous situation may and would somehow require deliberation and choice. So, in this wider sense, an emotion plus some kind of belief and reason might be the cause of an action where the belief is external to the kind of emotion. For example, you might think that the best thing to do is to kill the bear, if possible, to remove yourself from such a dangerous situation, or alternatively, you might think that it is better to run away. Either way, the rationality of your emotion and its corresponding action would depend on your deliberative reasoning. Emotion is still a part of action, it causes action in conjunction with deliberative reasoning. My interpretation is that it is within this second sense that we can understand the rationality of emotions in Aristotle and the moral value assigned to them thereby. This is the way in which a virtuous person typically sees moral matters.

Aristotle suggests that each individual emotion can be fully analyzed by looking at, first, the condition of person prone to the individual emotion, second, the objects of the individual emotion, and third, the ground of the individual emotion. What is common to all three ways of analyses is the idea that some kind of cognition is both essential to, and the efficient cause of, each individual emotion. This makes clear that emotions are not blind impulses. When a person responds emotionally she/he is not the victim of some automatic reflex.

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In the history of philosophy, emotions are generally seen as mere bodily reactions that are not under our control and thereby characterized as something that merely happen to us. Unlike Kant who takes affections of the mind as passive, Aristotle thinks that most affections are active and thus include some cognitive elements. His intentionalist account takes emotions “as selective responses to articulated features of our environment” (Sherman, 1989:169). In my attempt at identifying different aspects of Aristotle’s account of emotion, I have tried to demonstrate that there is a logical and conceptual connection between these different aspects such that both cognitive and affective aspects co-exist in emotions. If I am right in this interpretation, it indicates that Aristotle’s account of emotion cannot be interpreted as a pure cognitivism, like the Stoic’s theory of emotion, or strong physicalism.

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