

A Study of Aristotelian Demands for Some Psychological Views of the Emotions

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Ph. D.  
of Philosophy in the Department of  
Philosophy in the Graduate School  
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ABSTRACT

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation identifies 5 major demands regarding the role of the emotions in Aristotelian virtue theories and examines how well some contemporary psychological views of the emotions deal with these issues. The discussion of the role of emotion in Aristotelian virtue theory draws on Aristotle's texts and the works of Terence Irwin, Nancy Sherman, Martha Nussbaum, John Cooper, Rosalind Hursthouse and Arash Abizadeh. The discussion of the contemporary psychological views of the emotions is based on the work of Paul Griffiths in *What Emotions Really Are*, and focuses on his division of the study of emotion into affect programs and higher cognitive emotions.

The dissertation is divided in three chapters. The first chapter discusses Aristotelian definitions of emotion and outlines the following demands that psychological theories of emotion should be able to explain: (1) plausibility, (2) psychological harmony, (3) motivational support, (4) perception of moral salience and (5) training. The second chapter explains the psychological views that Griffiths focuses on, the affect program theory and the higher cognitive view, and highlights the areas relevant to the Aristotelian demands. The third chapter compares the contemporary theories of emotion discussed with Aristotelian views of emotion by taking the Aristotelian demands outlined in the first chapter and examining how the contemporary theories handle these issues. I conclude that the contemporary views do not adequately meet the Aristotelian demands and need to pay more attention to the Aristotelian view of emotion to achieve a more complete view. I argue that how a theory distinguishes between basic and higher cognitive emotions impacts the compatibility with Aristotelian notions of emotion and how it can meet its demands.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, for his support and wisdom and to my children Pablo and Gabriela.

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## Introduction

The general goal of this dissertation is to establish a dialogue between virtue theory and contemporary psychological theories of the emotions. In order to have a meaningful dialogue between psychology and ethics we must not only look at the areas of human psychology that ethical theories ignore, but we must also look at the issues raised in ethics that psychology does not address. This project focuses on whether and how some of the theories of emotion Paul Griffiths presents in his work, *What Emotions Really Are*, address some important points concerning the role of emotion in Aristotelian virtue theory. To achieve this goal I identify 5 issues or demands from virtue theory and consider how the psychological theories in the works mentioned might be able to speak to these issues: (1) plausibility, (2) psychological harmony, (3) motivational support, (4) perception of moral salience and (5) training.

I take Aristotelian virtue theory as the model of how emotions are typically understood within the framework of a moral theory because it addresses many of the crucial issues regarding the emotions and moral action that philosophers are still trying to solve. Aristotle's theory<sup>1</sup> is particularly helpful in this debate because Aristotelian moral psychology relies on an interesting and complex view of the relation between the rational and the non-rational that points to an alternative to the stereotypical reason/emotion divide. Most importantly, Aristotelian virtue theory continues to be applied and is more alive than ever, because it is a naturalistic normative theory that is realizable for human beings and it generates plausible phenomena that psychological theories should be able to explain. Therefore, for the purpose of this work I take for granted that the virtuous agent, as well as the other types of agents described by

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<sup>1</sup> Stoicism is another theory of historical significance that could serve the same purpose.

Aristotle, is plausible<sup>2</sup> and that studying the issues regarding emotion within the framework of a virtue theory can provide useful insight when reviewing psychological theories of the emotions.

In order to get a more complete view of all the roles attributed to emotion in virtue ethics, this project will rely on an Aristotelian inspired view of emotion (or neo-Aristotelian view) and thus draws from different sources and commentators of ancient philosophy, such as Terence Irwin, Nancy Sherman, Martha Nussbaum, John Cooper, and Rosalind Hursthouse. The discussion of the psychological views focuses on the work of Paul Griffiths on the emotions because he discusses the basic theories that give birth to the more recent psychological empirical research on the emotions. The analysis that I apply to these views will serve in future works to examine more elaborate views of the emotions.

The dissertation will be divided into three main parts. First I give an account of Aristotle's theory that will include a discussion of his moral psychology, his general characterization of emotion, and the role of emotion within his moral theory. From this discussion of the role of emotion in virtue theory I draw the demands that the contemporary psychological views of the emotions must meet in order to explain the phenomena of the virtuous character. Secondly, I turn to some of the psychological views presented by Griffiths and provide an account of what each of these views involves and how they can be relevant to the Aristotelian points. Finally, I proceed to open the dialogue between both approaches to the study of the emotions through a discussion of how well the psychological views can meet the Aristotelian demands. In the end the goal is to highlight areas of agreement as well as areas that the psychological

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<sup>2</sup> See Harman (1999, 2000) and Doris (1998, 2002) for a discussion of skepticism about the existence of character traits and Annas (forthcoming), Miller (2003) and Flanagan (2009) for defenses of the existence of character traits.

theories of the emotion need to pay more attention to in order to make communication between these two disciplines possible.

# 1. Aristotelian Theory Emotions in the Rhetoric and the Nichomachean Ethics

The emotions play a crucial role in Aristotle's moral theory and are very often discussed within this context. It is therefore difficult to give an Aristotelian definition of the emotions independently of his moral theory. Aristotle does not offer a systematic theory of the emotions in his ethical works. He does however consider the emotions in detail in the *Rhetoric* (*R*) and provides an account of their relation to virtue, how it affects the agent and what can be done to modify it, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*). This chapter gives an account of what emotions are for Aristotle and highlights important points regarding the relation between emotion and reason, the training of emotion and the relation between emotion and virtue. Following the discussion of the role of emotion in virtue I identify five demands that will serve as the main points of comparison with the psychological views in the subsequent chapters: (1) plausibility, (2) psychological harmony, (3) motivational support, (4) moral perception and (5) training. These demands represent important issues that psychological theories should pay attention to if we accept that Aristotelian emotion is a plausible model of how emotion operates in different types of character, including the virtuous agent.

## 1.1 Aristotle's General Account of Emotion

Before considering Aristotle's definition of the emotions I briefly examine the purpose of the *Rhetoric* and how the emotions are relevant to its goal. The discussion of what Aristotle says in this book about emotion and its role in persuasion is relevant to achieving a better understanding of his definition of emotion and the relation between emotion and judgment. In general the *Rhetoric* is about the art of persuasion and how to

achieve the goal of producing a desired judgment in the audience. Aristotle discusses three kinds of persuasion. The first kind of persuasion is achieved when the speaker convinces his audience that he has a particular character, i.e. a credible character.

Aristotle writes:

Proofs from character are produced, whenever the speech is given in such a way as to render the speaker worthy of credence – we more readily and sooner believe reasonable men on all matters in general and absolutely on questions where precision is impossible and two views can be maintained. (Aristotle, *R*, 1.2, 1356a 1-9)

Creating a perception of the speaker as credible is one way of getting them to believe what the rhetorician says. The second kind of persuasion is effective when the rhetorician produces in the audience a particular emotional state. Aristotle explains,

Proofs from the disposition of the audience are produced whenever they are induced by the speech into an emotional state. We do not give judgment in the same way when aggrieved and then pleased, in sympathy and in revulsion. (Aristotle, *R*, 1.2, 1356a 15-18)

With this type of persuasion the goal of the rhetorician is to change the audience's judgments by changing and manipulating their emotions and thus getting them to accept a particular judgment that they would not accept if they were in a different emotional state. Thirdly, the rhetorician can persuade through his own speech by providing a persuasive argument. Aristotle writes, "Finally, proof is achieved by the speech, when we demonstrate either a real or an apparent persuasive aspect of each particular matter" (*R*, 1.2, 1356a 21-23). In this last case, the argument itself will carry the convincing power. These three kinds of persuasion can work together in the process of eliciting a particular judgment from an audience. Hence, it is not sufficient for the rhetorician to present a persuasive and convincing argument, but it is also helpful to convince the audience that he has a trustworthy character. In addition, he must also change the emotional state of the audience to a state that is receptive to the particular

arguments he will present, because as Aristotle writes: "...things do not seem the same to those who love and those who hate, nor to those who are angry and those who are calm..." (Aristotle, *R*, 2.1, 1378a ). In short, the rhetorician must be concerned first with how the character we are perceived to have has an effect on our power to persuade others; second he must understand what the emotions are, how to manipulate them and how different emotions influence and alter people's judgments; and third the rhetorician must know how to present a valid argument. We can already see in this discussion that the emotions play a role in how the agent thinks, in the receptiveness to arguments and the acceptance of judgments. This will become relevant to our discussion of the role of emotion in virtue and practical reasoning.

After stating the different ways of persuading an audience and the role of emotion in this process, Aristotle proceeds to provide a more detailed account of what emotions are and why they are so important. We find the first general definition of the emotions in Book 2 of the Rhetoric,

They are things that change people so as to alter their judgments and are accompanied by *lupe* (conventionally translated "pain") and *hedone* (conventionally translated "pleasure"); for example anger, pity, fear, and the like, and their opposites. (Aristotle, *R*, 1378a 20-23)

Aristotle explains that the emotions have three elements. First, there is the psychological state or condition the person is in; second, there is the object of the emotion or that which the emotion is directed towards; and third we have the circumstances in which a person comes to have a particular emotion. Aristotle illustrates these necessary conditions for the existence of a particular emotional state by considering anger. He writes,

We must say what state men are in when they are angry, with what people they are accustomed to be angry, and in what circumstances. For if we have one or two, but not all, of these, it would be impossible to engender anger. And it is the same with the others. (Aristotle, *R*, 1378a25)

So, in the case of anger, the personal condition<sup>3</sup> of the agent includes the desire for revenge accompanied by pain or suffering. Aristotle explains that when men are in a state of “unrequited desire”, as when they are sick, or poor or thirsty, they are “hot tempered and easily provoked”. In other words, the person who is angry is prone or disposed to seek revenge and react accordingly due to his state of pain and suffering. In addition to being in this condition, the agent is angry with a particular person. The angry person will be angry with those who belittle or insult him for no apparent reason. And since according to Aristotle, “each man is guided towards his peculiar anger by his present suffering”, who the person is angry with will depend on his or her personal state. For instance, the poor person will be angry with those who attach little importance to his poverty, the hungry person will be angry towards those who interfere with his food and so on. The circumstances that contribute to the condition of anger would be the series of events that lead to and include the belittling and provocation of the agent. It follows from this discussion that emotions are, “agitated, affected states of mind, arising from the ways events and conditions strike the one affected, which are at the same time desires for a specific range of reactive behaviors or other changes in the situation as it appears to her or him to be” (Cooper, 1999, 422). We know so far that the emotions arise from a particular disposition of the agent to be affected by certain circumstances, in conjunction with the way the agent perceives those circumstances and events. At the same time once they arise, the emotions themselves will dispose or strongly move the person to react in particular ways, hence the description “agitated states of mind”. We also know that Aristotle believes that the rhetorician can induce

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<sup>3</sup> Here Aristotle is describing the actual experience of being angry (occurrent emotion) rather than the disposition to feeling anger. When we later talk about the virtues we will be referring to a disposition to have certain emotions, among other things. However, the occurrent emotion will have a dispositional element to it since when an agent is having an occurrent emotion, such as anger in this case, he or she will also be strongly disposed to perform certain actions, motivated by the desires, bodily reactions and pleasure and pain that are involved in feeling the emotion. For more on the definition of occurrent/dispositional emotion, see Nico Frijda (2008).

certain emotions in the audience to serve his own purpose. Hence, accepting a set of judgments as true (as in the case of the rhetorician) or interpreting a set of events as affecting the agent in a particular way (as in the case of anger) can cause an emotional response. This suggests that for Aristotle, there is a propositional element that is necessary, at least as a trigger of emotion.

## **1.2 Emotion and Reason: Aristotle's Psychology of the Emotion**

### **1.2.1 Parts of the Soul**

Now that we have a definition of the emotions and we know why the emotions are important for the rhetorician let's consider how they may be affected by judgments, and have an impact on them. In order for emotions to respond to our judgments there must be a relation between reason and the emotions. The question of what such a relation between the rational and the non-rational elements is for Aristotle, is not easy to answer. Here I provide a discussion of Aristotle's psychology. My goal is to show how reason and emotion are distinct from one other, but also in what way emotion may involve rational elements and vice versa. I discuss to what extent the Aristotelian emotions can be said to have cognitive aspects and whether they are as opposed to reason as it has been historically portrayed<sup>4</sup>.

In order to understand the relation between reason and emotion for Aristotle we must begin with his tripartite division of the soul. Aristotle divides the soul in three distinct parts: the rational (reason), the nutritive or appetitive (non-rational), and the spirited (non-rational that "shares" in reason) (Aristotle, *NE*, 1102a30-1103a5). The rational part of the soul is the part responsible for rational deliberation, the nutritive is the source of the appetites and the spirited is the source of emotion (anger being a

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<sup>4</sup> See Sherman (1997) and her discussion on common sense or stereotypical views on the emotions.



typical example of a non-rational impulse caused by the spirited part). This separation of the soul in three parts is based on the existence of sources of motivation other than reason. Aristotle takes for granted the motivational force of the rational part. John Cooper explains<sup>5</sup>, "reason is itself the source of a certain sort of desire, of a certain sort of psychological impulse or movement toward action" (Cooper, 1999, 240). It was uncontroversial in ancient philosophy (for Aristotle as well as for Plato and the Hellenistic philosophers) that reason is a source of motivation for action. A desire that derives from reason motivates both the self-controlled and the virtuous agent. The virtuous with regard to the appetites is the person who acts in moderation according to what reason dictates is the right thing to do, without even feeling the impulse or temptation to do otherwise. On the other hand, a self-controlled or continent agent is a person who acts in moderation with regard to the appetites because it is the right thing to do, as determined by reason, despite having desires to act contrary to it. Both of these types of characters exemplify how reason is a motivating force. Perhaps the force of reason as motivation is more evident in the case of the continent because he acts according to what reason dictates while feeling the pull of other sources of motivation. Similarly, the weak-willed agent (the incontinent with regard to the appetites) feels an impulse to do what is contrary to reason, but unlike the continent agent, acts according to the non-rational desire, satisfying his appetite. Both the self-controlled and the weak-willed agent have contradictory desires, one rational and one non-rational, the only difference is that "the weak-willed agent acts on the non-rational, the self-controlled person on the rational one" (Cooper, 1999, 241). The presence of these impulses to act contrary to reason serves as evidence of sources of motivation other than reason. Hence,

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<sup>5</sup> Not all Aristotelian commentators agree on a strong distinction between the spirited and the rational parts of the soul. Some like Sherman, stress the cognitive aspect of the emotion and a stronger relation between the spirited and the rational parts, while Cooper focuses on Aristotle's need for keeping the parts separate.

the existence of the opposing passions serves as evidence for the existence of the spirited part of the soul. The spirited part of the soul is, therefore, the source of the kinds of desires that constitute the emotions. Unlike the appetitive part, the spirited part “shares in reason”. But, what does Aristotle mean by “sharing in reason”? The appetitive part of the soul does not respond to reason and cannot be persuaded by it because, for instance, if one is hungry, no amount of convincing arguments will satisfy the hunger. Only food will satisfy hunger. But the spirited part can respond to reason given the right character and circumstances. Unlike the case of the appetites, arguments and judgments can influence and change our emotional state. We will discuss this issue in more detail when considering how judgments can influence emotion. For now, I am just concerned with giving an overview of the different parts of the soul and the kinds of desires that correspond to them.

There are then three kinds of desires (*orexis*) that correspond to the three parts of the soul. There is “rational wish” (*boulesis*), competitive impulse (*thumos*), and appetite (*epithumia*). The last two kinds of desires are, of course, the non-rational desires. What distinguishes the rational from the non-rational desires is their origin (Cooper, 1999, 242). Cooper writes,

Non-rational desires have other causes than reason, and these are the origin of whatever value-thoughts the desires may contain. Accordingly, non-rational desires (say a desire for something because it is pleasant, or an angry desire to strike back at someone) may on Aristotle’s theory perfectly well be propositional and conceptual in structure (they may be or involve the thought that something is pleasant or that someone has acted against oneself in an intolerable manner): that is not a feature reserved to rational desires, given the conception Aristotle is working with of reason. (Cooper, 1999, 243)

Cooper here explains that what makes a desire rational or non-rational is its origin and not its content or whether the desire involves propositions and judgments. His goal is to show that rational is not only what has conceptual content in the form of propositions.

Non-rational desires, like the desire to retaliate, may still involve a judgment, such as the judgment that my friend has betrayed me. But even though emotions may involve judgments, the desires that accompany them are not considered rational in this sense because they do not originate in the rational part of the soul. Our reasons for acting and valuing things that come from our rational capacity do not depend on the exercise of our non-rational capacities. According to Cooper's interpretation, "only rational desires (*boulesis*) rest on reason" (Cooper, 1999, 244). Reason operates by stepping back from any desires or considerations derived from non-rational faculties, like the appetitive and the spirited, and provides reasons for action on its own.

## **1.2.2 Aristotle's Rational Versus Non Rational Distinction**

### **1.2.2.1 Non-rational aspect of emotion**

Consequently there is a clear distinction between the rational and the non-rational capacities when it comes to the origin of our reasons for acting. In other words, when we talk about the source of the emotions we can say that the emotions are non-rational or not derived from reason defined as a capacity that provides justification for acting independently of our appetites and emotional states. This is what we may call the non-rational aspect of the emotions. The emotions, like the appetites, have an affective element or involve an urge to satisfy a desire, which motivates independently of rational deliberation. When we are in a certain emotional state we are motivated by the desire to seek and avoid the pleasure and pain associated with the satisfaction of the corresponding desire. When it comes to the appetites, satisfying the desire for drink, food, sex, etc. (depending on the appetite) brings pleasure and failing to satisfy such desire brings pain. Similarly, when it comes to the passions satisfying the desire for revenge (as in the case of anger) or the desire to flee (as in the case of fear) will bring

pleasure and not satisfying the desires that accompany the emotions will bring pain to the agent. It is in this sense that the pleasure and pain associated with the non-rational desires motivate. This type of motivation is precisely what distinguishes emotion from reason. In the virtuous agent, reason provides reasons for acting independently from pleasure and pain, the appetites, desires or any affective state. At this point a traditional question arises: if the rational is distinct from the non-rational, then how can there be any communication between these? How can the non-rational part “share in reason? How exactly is it possible for the rhetorician to have any influence on the audience’s emotional state, through persuasion?

#### **1.2.2.2 Cognitive aspects of emotion**

In order to answer these questions, we must first consider the ways the emotions might include or have cognitive elements. Of all the proponents of contemporary versions of Aristotelian virtue theories, Martha Nussbaum is known for emphasizing the cognitive aspects of emotion. When Nussbaum talks about the Aristotelian reason/emotion distinction, she is not talking about the traditional distinction between a faculty in charge of the formation and manipulation of concepts versus a non-conceptual irrational urge or impulse. Nussbaum (1994) explains the stereotypical reason/emotion distinction in *The Therapy of Desire*:

According to some influential modern views that have left a deep mark on popular stereotypes, emotions like grief, anger, and fear come from an animal irrational side of the personality that is to be sharply distinguished from its capacity for reasoning and for forming beliefs. Emotions are simply bodily reactions, whereas reasoning involves complex intentionality-directedness toward an object, a discriminating view of the object. Emotions are unlearned or innate, whereas beliefs are learned in society. Emotions are impervious to teaching and argument, beliefs can be modified by teaching. Emotions are present in animals and infants as well; belief and reasoning belong to mature human beings alone. These are some of the common clichés about emotion. (Nussbaum 1994, 79)

Note that “irrational” in the sense used here is not the same as non-rational as it applies to the parts of the soul. While irrational in the traditional stereotypical sense means completely independent from reason, in an Aristotelian view, non-rational does not entail that there is no participation in reason in any way. According to Nussbaum, an Aristotelian view of the emotions is different than the traditional conception of the emotions as uncontrollable impulses that have no intentional objects, do not involve any judgments and are not responsive to reason in any way. If we accept this view of the emotions as irrational reactions that behave like reflexes we can’t control, then it would be very problematic to have a moral theory that includes the emotions as part of what makes a person virtuous or an agent’s actions moral. If emotion could only behave as described above, the normative goal would naturally be (as in some other moral theories), to suppress emotion so that it provides as little interference to acting morally as possible. But that is not the case for Aristotle. When look deeper into Aristotelian moral psychology, we find that emotions are not just physical reactions that have to be subdued by force. His view of the emotions allows for the modification of emotion and makes emotion an intrinsically important element of the virtuous character. Some like Nussbaum and Sherman believe Aristotle can maintain the involvement of emotion in virtue theory, because his view is different from the modern stereotype. According to them, the main point that distinguishes Aristotle’s definition of the emotions from the stereotype is that for Aristotle (as well as for other ancient and Hellenistic philosophers), emotions have what we may call a cognitive component or aspect<sup>6</sup>. One of the reasons the emotions are said to be cognitive is because they have an intentional object or are

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<sup>6</sup> Even if we agree with Nussbaums’ view that Aristotelian emotion does not fit the modern stereotypes, we do not need to accept all that she attributes to the emotions. Some think she goes too far in making emotion too rational or cognitive.

directed at something. In *Making a Necessity of Virtue*, Nancy Sherman (1997) explains this feature of the emotions as being “forms of intentional awareness”. She writes,

Emotions are about something that we represent in thought. Emotions are intentional states. As such they have cognitive content. They are identified by that content, by what we dwell on, whether it be fleeting or with concentrated attention... Such an account need not exclude other features of emotion, such as awareness of physiological and behavioral response or felt sensations. The claim is that these, when present, are dependent on cognitive (i.e. descriptive and evaluative content), and are directed toward that content. (Sherman, 1997, 55)

We don't just feel an emotion in a directionless manner. If we recall the conditions that Aristotle lays out for anger in the *Rhetoric*, when we feel angry in the Aristotelian sense, we don't feel a vague form of anger directed at no one or nothing in particular. When we are angry we are angry towards somebody, and not just towards anybody, but towards someone who we think has harmed us. The important word here is “think” because whether we feel a particular emotion or not depends on our beliefs about the circumstances and the object of that emotion. If we believe someone or something will cause us imminent harm, we will feel fear, and so on. Without this condition anger will not arise. So, according to Sherman, in addition to having a non-rational component (such as a physiological response, feeling or affective element and behavioral disposition to act on such feelings and desires) the emotions also have what we may call a “cognitive content” in virtue of their object-directedness<sup>7</sup>. The content of the emotion is what the emotion is about or directed towards. Because this content depends on our beliefs about the persons, objects, events and circumstances involved, we can say that the emotions require beliefs and can be altered when those beliefs are modified. Because

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<sup>7</sup> The object-directedness of emotion is one of the reasons often used to justify the distinction between moods and emotions. Moods are not emotions because they don't have a particular object that serves to differentiate them from each other in the way that emotions are distinguished from other emotions through their content or what they represent.

the emotions involve beliefs, they can be assessed as rational or irrational depending on the status of the beliefs they are based on. Nussbaum explains,

Thus rather than having a simple dichotomy between the emotional and the (normatively) rational, we have a situation in which all emotions are to some degree “rational” in a descriptive sense—all are to some degree cognitive and based upon belief—and they may be then assessed, as beliefs are assessed for their normative status. (Nussbaum, 1994, 81)

For instance one can be justified in feeling anger if one believes that someone has been the victim of an unjust harm. But, if one finds out that the beliefs about what happened are mistaken, and one continues to feel anger, this anger would be unjustified and would be considered irrational in the same sense as an irrational fear is considered irrational. Just because they originate from what Aristotle calls a non-rational part of the soul (by which he means a part that is not reason), it does not mean that they act contrary to reason as irrational, primitive impulses or that they cannot have any conceptual or cognitive elements. Emotions, as opposed to the impulses that originate on the appetitive part of the soul, have a cognitive or conceptual element that is subject to evaluation and allows them to be “responsive” to rational argument given the right conditions and disposition of the agent. By “right conditions” I mean that in order to have emotions that behave in this way, we must be talking about a special type of agent who has a special type of character. Someone with this special kind of character must have had the kind of upbringing that enables one’s emotions to be receptive to corrections in judgments because not everyone’s emotions will respond to arguments in the same way. Emotions, thus, have a complex relation with reason that supports the possibility of being subject to redirection. What this interaction between reason and the emotions involves will be better understood once we consider the possibility of modifying emotion.

## **1.3 Can Emotions Be Controlled?**

### **1.3.1 Interaction of the Rational with the Spirited Part of the Soul**

The question of whether we have control over our emotions, and to what degree, is crucial to any moral theory that attributes to emotions a role in moral action. In order to understand an Aristotelian answer to these questions we must first discuss in what respect the rational part can influence the non-rational parts. Of the two non-rational parts of the soul, Aristotle describes the spirited as being the only one responsive to reason. We must understand what he means by 'responsive' before considering whether we can consciously influence our emotions and to what extent.

Aristotle explains in Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE), that the non-rational part "shares in reason in a way, in so far as it both listens to reason and obeys it" (1102b30). Cooper explains in detail what Aristotle might mean. First, he emphasizes that even though reason operates independently from non-rational desires, it can nevertheless gain control over these by "persuading them to obey". He uses anger as an example of what happens when the reason and emotion are opposed to each other and illustrates how such "persuasion" takes place. He writes,

If your reason thinks differently at any of the places where value-terms connected with good, right, ought and so on occur in this angry thought, you are internally not just pulled in different directions; you are thinking ultimately contradictory thoughts, one through your anger the other through your reason. For reason to persuade anger (in this particular case, or in general) is for it to get its own view of what is good to prevail, in the sense that this conception comes to be adopted by the non-rational part itself, as well. (Cooper, 1999, 245)

Thus, the rational part does not force the non-rational to follow it. To say that reason could force the emotions to comply would imply that reason is distinguished from the emotions in the stereotypical sense discussed by Nussbaum. But this is not the way Aristotle distinguishes emotion from reason. If the type of agent we are talking about



has strong emotions and desires towards what is not good and no knowledge or disposition to follow what is good, then we have a case where the passions must be countered by force. But by force Aristotle does not mean that emotion is subdued through the force of reason, but through pleasure and pain or reward and punishment (*NE*, 1104b 10-20).

When we act in accordance with reason in the presence of conflicting non-rational desires, we could say that reason wins, but not by “trumping” the emotional desires. Reason deliberates and changes the desire or emotion by giving the spirited part a different interpretation of the circumstances and a new set of judgments that can trigger a different emotion. The rational part needs to get the spirited to pay attention to a different set of considerations so that it “agrees” with reason in the sense that it responds according to what reason dictates is the appropriate emotional response. The rational part simply corrects the judgment that serves as the conceptual content of the emotion and that gives rise to a corresponding desire in the spirited part that does not contradict and supports the motivation that the rational part produces. Once the judgment changes, so does the emotion (if we are talking about someone already receptive to having their desires follow their acknowledgement of what is right). It is in this sense that the rational part can persuade the spirited part and get it to ‘listen’ to reason, more as two communicating agents in agreement or disagreement than two forces in battle.

In the case of anger, for example, once reason judges that the injury that provoked the anger was not really an injury or was not very severe, if the emotional part accepts it, then the anger will dissipate<sup>8</sup>. Let’s say that I am angry because I was

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<sup>8</sup> It is not clear how Aristotle would explain the inertia of emotions or when an emotion continues even after our judgments are corrected. I suspect, he would agree that the phenomenon exists, but that it should not be part of the virtuous character.

supposed to meet with a friend and the friend never showed up and did not call me to cancel. The belief that is supporting my anger in this case is that my friend is inconsiderate and irresponsible and had no regard for my time. Later I find out that my friend had a car accident on the way to meet me and is in the hospital. Reason then determines that the judgment that my friend had no good reason for not showing up and deliberately harmed me is incorrect. This new belief can convince the spirited part and once my erroneous judgment is corrected, I will typically stop feeling anger towards my friend. We must keep in mind that this process requires practice, training and the right upbringing. If one has not acquired the disposition to have the spirited part agree with the rational, then the conflict will not be resolved in favor of reason, because the emotions are strong impulses that without the proper character will tend to overwhelm the agent and motivate him or her to satisfy their own desires.

This interaction between the rational and the non-rational part of the soul responsible for the emotions supports the underlying assumption in the Rhetoric that it is possible to change the emotions of the audience by influencing the way they think. As we saw before, the rhetorician's goal is to manipulate the audience's emotions and he does so by altering their judgments through persuasion. The rhetorician provides the audience with reasons for feeling in certain ways by making things appear to them in a certain way. It does not matter whether things are actually in the way they are portrayed. For the purpose of effective rhetoric what matters is how things strike the audience. Just as in the anger example, once the audience is convinced and accepts the judgments that the rhetorician wants them to accept, if their emotional state changes as intended, they will in turn become receptive to the arguments that will follow. In a similar way, internally, reason provides the spirited part correction and guidance.

### **1.3.2 How Emotions Influence Judgments**

The rhetorician changes emotions by changing beliefs, but the ultimate goal is to influence judgments by inducing a particular emotional state in the audience. As Sherman explains,

Thus it is through discursive methods that the rhetorician, like the skilled writer, works on the emotions, changing the heart by changing belief. It is these changes of heart that will in turn inspire the right thoughts and action, in the case of the courtroom, a ballot cast in the right way. (Sherman, 1997, 56)

Emotions change people's judgments by changing the way they react to a particular scenario. There is then a dual aspect to the emotions. Emotions depend on the agent's judgments but at the same time they also influence judgments. The good rhetorician manipulates the audience's emotions by persuading them to accept new beliefs. He wants to change the audience's emotions so that he can ultimately change the way they think. The manipulation of the audience's emotional state is just a step in the goal of manipulating the audience's thinking. As Sherman suggests, different emotional states inspire different kinds of thoughts, desires and actions. This is why, in the courtroom, attorneys try to induce in the jury emotions such as sympathy for victim, and disgust or contempt for the suspect and the crime that occurred. If the emotions played no role in how we think, then the rhetorician would just try to convince the audience directly without paying attention to their emotional state. It is useful to the rhetorician to induce certain emotions in the audience because their emotional state makes them receptive to ideas and arguments in a different way.

### **1.3.3 Emotion and Habituation**

In order for the emotions to be responsive to reason, the spirited part of the soul must be receptive to change with a change in judgments. In other words, the agent must

already have the kind of character or disposition to react emotionally in the desired ways when presented with new beliefs. Only those predisposed to have the right kind of emotional response when presented with the right triggers, will have emotions and desires that will follow the dictates of reason and that will change when their beliefs are corrected. For instance, if the rhetorician is interested in causing contempt in his audience by talking about an unjust scenario, this will only have an effect on those that already respond to perceived injustice in that way.

This idea that the spirited part of the agent must be receptive to arguments is not discussed in the *Rhetoric*, but is examined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The disposition to have the morally appropriate response when exposed to different arguments or scenarios develops through a process Aristotle calls habituation. In Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains that arguments are not enough to change people and make them good. Arguments, Aristotle argues, only have an impact on those that already have a tendency to prefer what is good. Those who are used to following their feelings pursue the wrong kinds of pleasures and do what is right only out of fear of bad consequences. People with such flawed characters will not be convinced by argument because, as Aristotle explains when talking about those not educated properly, feelings have a tendency to resist argument. Aristotle writes,

Arguments and teaching surely do not influence everyone, but the soul of the student needs to have been prepared by habits for enjoying and hating finely, like ground that is to nourish seed. For someone whose life follows his feelings would not even listen to an argument turning him away, or comprehend it [if he did listen]; and in that state how could he be persuaded to change? And in general feelings seem to yield to force, not to argument. Hence he must already in some way have a character suitable for virtue, fond of what is fine and objecting to what is shameful. (*NE*, 1179b 24-32)

Hence, the young must be trained early on in life to perform the actions that accord with virtue and to find pleasure and pain respectively in the appropriate sorts of things.

Without this training, they will not find pleasure in living virtuously. Only after the right kind of upbringing they will begin to appreciate what is good and have the kind of character that will enable them to become virtuous. Only after repeatedly performing the actions that the virtuous person would perform, the young will begin to find pleasure and stop feeling pain when acting in accordance with virtue. And only after this training, a person will have the kind of character that makes the spirited part of the soul listen to reason. Without this kind of upbringing the spirited part of the soul will not listen to reason because as Aristotle mentions, feelings (when left untrained) cannot be altered by argument, only by force (*NE*, 1179b 25-30). This statement by Aristotle suggests that he thinks that once we have a certain emotion, it is difficult to change at will unless the person already has cultivated the spirited part so that it listens to reason and to arguments.

In the case of the virtuous agent, the spirited part not only listens to reason, more importantly, in this type of person the impulses against what reason dictates do not even arise. The virtuous agent does not have a conflict among the parts of his soul. There is harmony between reason and the non-rational parts of his soul, because this person has been habituated into having the right sorts of appetites and the right sorts of emotional responses in the first place. If given the case that this person's emotions are based on an erroneous belief, once that belief is corrected then the appropriate emotional response will follow. On the contrary, in the case of the incontinent agent, no convincing argument is going to change the existing appetites and desires and nothing except force will make this person follow what reason dictates.

Aristotle's comments imply that the rhetorician's methods will have effect on an audience that is already receptive to arguments. This is one way in which emotion can be manipulated or induced, by talking to the kind of audience that is already responsive

to certain cues and ideas. In other words, a story about suffering that is intended to create feelings of sympathy and compassion in the audience will not have its desired effect if the audience doesn't already have the disposition to become afflicted by other people's pain and suffering. But there is in Aristotle a deeper way to control our emotional disposition and character and that is through the right kind of upbringing modeled after what the virtuous person would do and feel in different situations. A person can be trained not only to have certain kinds of emotional responses when faced with particular kinds of situations, but also to have a character and disposition to have feelings that do not contradict reason and that do not create conflicting desires.

## ***1.4 Role of Emotion in Aristotelian Virtue Theory***

### **1.4.1 Overview**

The emotions play important roles in Aristotelian moral theory. The goal of this section is to discuss the various aspects in which the emotions contribute to life in accordance with virtue, given the psychology previously explained. Unlike the Stoic model in which the goal of the sage is to eliminate the passions, in Aristotle's view the emotions are crucial to virtue and to acting morally. The emotions are part of what constitute virtue, emotions (in conjunction with reason) motivate to act, and emotions reveal information about what we value and help create new values. These roles are relevant to this dissertation insofar as they point to the requirements the emotions would have to satisfy if we accept the claim that they are necessarily involved in our moral experience. Let me now turn to a discussion of what is involved in each role.

### **1.4.2 Emotion and Virtue**

The virtues are dispositions to act, think and feel excellently in the practical situations we encounter in life. The virtuous agent is not the one who acts in spite of

disruptive emotions or the one who eliminates emotions altogether. The virtuous agent is the one who has the disposition to have the right kind of emotional reactions that are consistent with reason and provide additional motivation to act in the appropriate ways. The emotional aspect is not only included in what is considered virtuous (right kinds of emotional responses) but is an inescapable aspect of human nature. According to Aristotle we can be properly or improperly disposed to have feelings because the manifestation of emotion admits of excess or deficiency (*NE*, 1106b 15-20). Just as an excess of exercise or not enough of it, is bad for our health, or too much or too little food is also bad for our bodies, similarly there's a vice in the excess or deficiency in the manifestation of the emotions. For instance we can get too angry, or have this feeling towards the wrong person, under inappropriate circumstances, or not get angry enough or when we are supposed to. But the virtuous person will get angry when reason dictates that the situation warrants it and will feel anger in the right degree, towards the right person, for the right amount of time and from a stable disposition. Aristotle writes,

The deficiency, whether it should be called unangriness [*aorgesia*], or whatever, is blamed. For those who do not get angry at the people at whom they should get angry seem dense, and also those who do not get angry in the manner they should and at the time and for the reasons they should. For they seem to be without perception or pain. And a person who is not angry will not defend himself; but to allow oneself and one's loved ones to be trampled underfoot and to overlook it is slavish. (*NE*, 1126a 3-8)

Hence the virtues concerning the emotions will consist in displaying emotion in a moderate way and what is moderate is defined by reason as the already virtuous person would define it. The virtues of character are therefore expressed when we have the right feelings, in the right way, at the right time, towards the right object, under the right circumstances and from a stable disposition (*NE*, 1106b15). Having a good moral character is to be excellently disposed regarding moral responsiveness. We are

evaluated as agents both in respect to how we act, but also in respect to how we feel. It is not enough to perform the right action as is determined by reason, but the right kind of emotional response must accompany the action<sup>9</sup>. As I mentioned before, the soul of the virtuous agent must be free of conflict. In other words, he or she cannot have desires that contradict what reason determines is the appropriate thing to do. Therefore, in becoming virtuous, our dispositions to respond emotionally must be developed in such a way that when faced with practical situations we express our emotions excellently. The fact that the presence of certain emotions is part of being a virtuous agent presupposes again that our emotions (or at least our disposition to have certain emotions) are, to some degree, modifiable and subject to learning.

### **1.4.3 Emotion and Motivation**

In addition to being a necessary condition for an action to be an expression of full virtue, emotions motivate action. They provide reasons for acting that can support or contradict reason. Regardless of whether they accord with our rational desires or not, emotions will move us towards acting in particular ways insofar as they include a desire in the Aristotelian view. If the emotions did not have any motivational force and were just a pleasurable or painful responses to situations then the distinction between the continent and the incontinent agents would lose its significance. What makes the continent agent special (though not quite virtuous) is precisely that he does the right thing in the presence of a strong urge to do what is contrary to reason and virtue. Nussbaum writes that emotions are “essential as forces motivating to virtuous action” (Nussbaum, 1994, 96). In the virtuous agent emotion provides motivation for acting that coincides with the motivation from reason and in conjunction with the desire that stems

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<sup>9</sup> We will see later how we need to emotionally react in particular ways in order to be virtuous, but also how we will probably not be able to determine, using our rational capacity alone, what the right thing to do is unless we already have the appropriate kind of character.



from the rational part they provide additional motivation in the right direction. Thus, the agent must have the right sort of emotional disposition, not just because character is subject to evaluation, but also because of the inclination to action it provides.

For an action to be considered an expression of virtue it must proceed from a “firm and unchanging” state of character (*NE*, 1105a30). Hence, it is not enough for emotion to be in line with the requirements of virtue as a motivational force, but virtuous action must also result from a stable and established character that provides reliable motivation to act virtuously. That is not to say that the virtuous agent does not act in accordance with virtue because it is what reason requires, or that our emotional disposition by itself blindly moves us to act virtuously. The agent must still perform the virtuous act because it is what virtue requires. But emotions are still “agitated states” that give us reasons for acting and in the case of the virtuous agent, they must be in harmony with reason and must not be disruptive. There cannot be conflicting motivations presenting reasons to act contrary to what is good. If the emotions in the virtuous agent are not disruptive does that mean that they are subdued? Are the emotions of the virtuous agent milder so that they can be “responsive” to reason or are they as “agitated” or passionate but justified and in harmony with reason? Can the virtuous agent have conflicting emotions that eventually get modified after deliberation? Aristotle’s discussion of the virtues suggests that the virtuous agent does experience emotion differently than the ordinary person. There are some negative<sup>10</sup> or excessive emotions that must be modified so that they just don’t arise in the virtuous agent. Fear of dying or losing a loved one, is not only honorable, but also necessary for the

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<sup>10</sup> By negative here I mean negative for Aristotle, which does not completely coincide with other lists of negative emotions. Some traditions, like Stoicism and Buddhism, seek to eliminate emotions that have a place in Aristotelian virtue such as fear and anger because they consider them to be destructive to the agent in some way or representations of the wrong kinds of values. Even though Aristotle includes fear and anger in the repertoire of emotions the virtuous character experiences, the emotion that the virtuous exhibit is felt under the right sorts of circumstances and towards the appropriate objects.

possession of full virtue. But fear of harmless things or complete lack of fear (a form of insensitivity) cannot be part of the virtuous character's disposition. Similarly, getting excessively angry, at the wrong people or for the wrong reasons is not the expression of virtue with regards to this emotion. On the other hand, there are situations when one should feel anger, as when things or people we value are damaged or wronged. Those who do not get angry under any circumstances show a lack of appreciation for the things that the virtuous person ought to value. Under normal circumstances, the virtuous agent feels anger in a moderate way, as reason would prescribe. Thus we can say that the virtuous agent will exhibit anger in a milder way than the normal person. This view rests on the assumption that "the emotions can be cultivated to support judgments of what is best" (Sherman, 1997, 96). Sherman points out that Aristotle is optimistic about the "plasticity" of emotion and thus considers psychological harmony to be a plausible goal. One objection to this view is that the emotions are unreliable and that psychic harmony goes against the inherent unpredictable nature of emotions<sup>11</sup>. When examining the psychological views on the emotions, we must ask in what sense emotions can be said to be motivational forces and whether and to what degree they can be cultivated to become reliable modes of response and sources of motivation that are at the same time in harmony with reason<sup>12</sup>.

#### **1.3.4 The Role of Emotion in Practical Reason**

Many of Aristotle's commentators agree that in addition to being sources of motivation and being subject to moral evaluation, the emotions are also necessarily involved in practical deliberation and moral action itself. Some suggest that without the

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<sup>11</sup> See Sherman (1997) for a discussion of this objection from a Kantian point of view and Nussbaum (1994) for a discussion of a similar objection from Stoicism.

<sup>12</sup> When discussing emotions as motivations, Sherman argues that this role is not as central in Aristotle's theory. She maintains that a general account of emotion need not include the desiderative aspect of emotion but it must include the cognitive and affective elements.

emotions, the moral agent will not be able to arrive at the particular right action called for by virtue given a particular set of circumstances. In the end we will see that the emotions are at the very least instrumental to and at the most constitutive of *phronêsis* or practical reason. But there is disagreement as to what this role is exactly. So, I now turn to the question of how the emotions are involved in practical reason and will examine several ways in which the emotions might play a role in this process.

*Phronêsis* or practical reasoning is the kind of knowledge that enables the *phronimos* or practically wise to make correct decisions about what ought to be done in particular practical situations. In other words, *phronêsis* or excellence in practical reason is excellence in choosing the right actions. The connection between the emotions and *phronêsis* ultimately depends on what the role of perception in practical deliberation turns out to be because of the connection between the emotions and moral perception. If we accept the view that emotion influences the way we see the world and how we assess a morally significant scenario, then to understand the role of emotion in practical deliberation we need to look at the role of moral perception in this process. How emotion plays a role in practical deliberation depends on how important is the perception of the moral features of a situation. In the practical reason literature, there are two main views of how practical deliberation works: particularism and generalism. My intention here is not to settle the generalism vs. particularism debate in Aristotle interpretations or to determine whether the practically wise person evaluates each case individually or applies general moral rules to particular cases before determining the right course of action. My aim is to explore the different plausible ways in which the emotions might play a role in perception and thus practical reason, starting with the least controversial role and moving on to more ambitious views recently developed by contemporary Aristotelian commentators.

The generalist view claims that there is a set of universal codifiable rules or generalizations that the *phronimos* understands and knows how to apply correctly in choosing the morally correct action in particular situations. The *phronimos* would grasp not only what it means to be virtuous (codified in a set of general rules), but would recognize a given situation as an opportunity to perform a certain kind of virtuous action. What makes the *phronimos*' knowledge special is his ability to apply a general rule or principle correctly to particular situations, choosing therefore the right action that accords with virtue under any given circumstances. The recognition of a situation as an opportunity to act in accordance with virtue would in turn involve the *phronimos*' capacity to recognize whether the situation at hand can be subsumed under a particular rule. It seems that if this were the case, the emotions would play a very limited role, if any at all, in practical deliberation. If practical reason is a matter of understanding a set of rules, knowing when a case falls under a particular rule and applying it correctly, then the knowledge of the *phronimos* could be characterized as a type of theoretical knowledge and the process of practical deliberation as a matter of deductive demonstration. What distinguishes the *phronimos* from an ordinary agent is a more thorough and extensive knowledge of such sets of rules that serve as premises in a practical syllogism, an understanding of what types of action qualify as acting in accordance with the rules and the ability to recognize when a particular situation calls for the application of a particular rule and thus for the application of the practical syllogism. An example of such a rule would be 'One ought to act courageously'. Then let's say the agent is faced with a situation that calls for a courageous act. The following premise would be added, 'Performing this action would be courageous'. The practical conclusion would then be, 'I ought to do x'. What the *phronimos* knows then is what it means to be courageous (and virtuous in general) and which types of actions and under

what circumstances they can be said to be courageous. If all that matters is an intellectual grasp of concepts and codified rules and practical deliberation is reduced to logical demonstration involving a series of abstract rules, then how would the emotions be relevant to *phronêsis*?

But, even for the generalist there is room for perception of particulars to play a role, and therefore for emotion to have an influence. Irwin argues when discussing particularism vs. generalism, that the issue is not whether perception of particulars is important or even necessary to practical deliberation, but whether “perceptual judgments of particular situation are normatively prior to general rules” (Irwin, 2000, 102). He writes,

For particularists need not deny that there are true, even useful, general principles in ethics. Nor need ‘universalists’ deny that the trained perception of the virtuous agent is useful, even indispensable, for acting rightly and living well. The dispute seems to be about theoretical normative priority. (Irwin, 2000, 103)

According to Irwin, the generalist view is compatible with perception playing an important role in practical deliberations because whether ethical generalizations are what guide us in deciding what is right is a separate issue from what is necessary in the process of practical reasoning. In other words, even if we think that general moral laws determine what counts as the right thing to do, in the practical application of the rules we need a developed ability to perceive that a particular situation requires the application of a rule. Irwin admits that it is not practical to qualify generalizations so that they cover every possible exception that we may encounter in particular cases. But, he argues that having to appeal to perception as a “capacity to recognize ethically relevant aspects of particular situations” (Irwin, 2000, 119) to apply unqualified generalizations does not commit us to particularism or to denying the normative priority of general rules. General rules provide the normative guidance in practical

deliberation but they “do not prescribe precisely what ought to be done in a particular situation” (Irwin, 2000, 121). Moral perception is needed as an effective way of applying the rules by enabling us to recognize the special features of a situation that qualifies it as an instance in which a rule must be applied or as an instance of an exception to a rule. This perception involves the trained capacity to recognize the moral salience and relevance of the features of a particular situation that are necessary for deliberation. David Wiggins (1980) calls this ‘situational appreciation’. According to Irwin, this capacity does not include the power to decide among competing features. It is in virtue of his knowledge and acceptance of the set of rules that the *phronimos* knows what the right thing to do is and how to solve moral conflicts. The perception of the special features of the situation is secondary and instrumental to practical reason. We can then say that Irwin is a generalist about moral rules, but an instrumentalist about moral perception. On this view, perception of particulars by itself does not help us determine what kinds of actions are right, this comes from wisdom and the knowledge of what is good. But perception is a necessary skill and instrumental in the exercise of practical wisdom when encountering particular situations and determining what action to perform in each case. Other commentators, like Sherman, believe that perception and emotion are not just instrumental to practical reason and deliberation but actually help sort out values. In this view, how we feel and how this affects what features we notice in particular situations, reflect what is good. This role of emotion as a kind of norm enforcer is part of a bigger debate we don’t have time to explore here.

Irwin does not mention the emotions but some claim that this special ability that the *phronimos* must have, insofar as it is a perceptual ability, would be affected by emotional make-up and character. The idea is that when faced with a particular situation, whether we immediately note what is important and relevant or whether we

notice that it is a situation that demands the application of a particular rule, depends on the person's emotional make-up and character. For instance, a person with the disposition to be afraid of certain kinds of circumstances will tend to be more sensitive to notice the kinds of stimulus that will trigger the fear response and will tend to ignore other relevant features of the situation that will mitigate or prevent such response in other people. Once this agent is experiencing the occurrent state of fear then it becomes even more difficult to notice when a situation calls for the application of a particular rule because she is too disturbed and in the grip of a strong disruptive physiological experience. Hence both the character (disposition to react emotionally) and the emotional state (occurrent state) have an impact on practical deliberation because these can either prevent the process from even starting in the first place or in the case of the well-trained prudent person, enable the process of practical deliberation to be applied correctly. Training of the emotions cannot be separated from training of the perceptual capacity of the *phronimos* in habituation. The *phronimos* will not only have this capacity to recognize moral salience, but will also have the kind of character and emotional responses that support moral perception. In other words, the *phronimos* will not have the emotional dispositions that would interfere with his ability to perceive the morally significant features of a situation. On the contrary, he would have been trained to have precisely the kinds of emotional dispositions and responses necessary for noticing that a situation calls for a particular moral action.

There are an increasing number of Aristotelian commentators who reject the generalist view of practical reason and defend a version of Aristotelian particularism. What matters to this project is the extent to which the emotions could be involved in the process of practical reason for the purpose of exploring whether the contemporary moral theories of the emotions shed light on this subject. I do, however, consider the

particularist view to be the more plausible interpretation of Aristotle on this subject and the best characterization of how practical reason works in an Aristotelian inspired virtue ethics.

Aristotle is unclear about what practical reasoning specifically involves and does not even discuss particular examples of the practical syllogism that would apply to moral cases. This fact is taken by some proponents of particularism to support the interpretation that Aristotle did not intend to characterize practical reason as a deductive model<sup>13</sup>. Unlike Irwin, the Aristotelian particularists (Sherman, Cooper, Nussbaum, Hursthouse, and McDowell, among others) claim that Aristotle was committed to the view that virtuous action is not codifiable. They reject the view that the *phronimos*' knowledge consists of a set of universal and codified principles that constitute the decision procedure that allows the *phronimos* to discover the correct action to perform in particular circumstances. The particularist view suggests that practical deliberation is not a process of logical deduction that occurs independently of the passions. The point the particularists make is not just about an interpretation issue. They are not just claiming that Aristotle did not subscribe to a generalist view, but they make the stronger point that virtuous action is uncodifiable and that the knowledge of the *phronimos* cannot be acquired by learning a set of rules or generalizations. For the particularist, generalizations are summaries of the moral perceptions of particulars by the *phronimos*. Particularists do not deny the usefulness of generalizations as rules of thumb or as 'illustrations of virtue', but they do not believe that they are 'prescriptive rules of action' (Sherman, 1997, 270).

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<sup>13</sup> See Sherman (1997).



One of the roles that particularists attribute to perception is the ‘situational appreciation’<sup>14</sup> that Wiggins describes. Wiggins writes,

A man usually asks himself “What shall I do?” ... in response to a particular context. This will make particular and contingent demands on his moral or practical perception, but the relevant features of the situation may not jump to the eye. To see what they are, to prompt the imagination to play upon the question and let it activate in reflection and thought-experiment whatever concern and passions it should activate, may require a high order of situational appreciation, or as Aristotle would say, perception (*aisthesis*). (Wiggins, 1980, 232-233)

Wiggins here not only points out the necessary role of practical perception, but also elaborates on the sophisticated nature of this kind of perception. He notes that moral perception is not just a matter of passively seeing that some feature of a concrete situation is morally relevant, but requires for the agent to be actively engaged, both intellectually and emotionally. Nancy Sherman goes further in the role she attributes to emotion in this process. Wiggins explains how moral perception requires the exercise of cognitive capacities like reflection and imagination in conjunction with the activation of emotion, but Sherman identifies the moral perceptual capacity<sup>15</sup> with emotion. For her the emotions are ways of perceiving and are inseparable from our perceptual capacities. She describes the emotions as “ways of tracking the morally relevant news” (Sherman, 1997, 68). According to Sherman, the emotions are themselves the perceptual capacities involved in practical wisdom, not just instrumental to perception and practical deliberation. They highlight the relevant features of a situation and point to “possible occasions for moral choice” (Sherman, 1997, 68). They give us information that we

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<sup>14</sup> Note that Irwin would agree with this role of perception so long as it is not attributed normative priority to perception of particulars. He does not think that accepting this role amounts to particularism.

<sup>15</sup> We need to be cautious with Sherman and Nussbaum’s interpretation because they might be attributing more rational characteristics to the emotions than we may be able to find in Aristotle. This particular description of the emotions as perceptual capacities might go too far in attributing special roles to the emotions. They could have stopped at the claim that emotions affect perception and thus affect practical deliberation or that the emotions enhance our perceptual capacities. But they claim the emotions are constitutive of perception, or that perception occurs through the emotions.

would not notice without being emotionally engaged. They are ways of seeing that are essentially involved in the process of deliberation. Sherman writes,

Moreover, emotions draw us in a way that demands (and sometimes rivets) our attention, putting to the top of our priority orderings thoughts or actions regarding these matters. We focus with intensity and impact, making inferences that might not otherwise have arisen or be thought of in as compelling a way. Emotions thus prepare us for moral deliberation and choice. They serve as epistemological tools helping us to mark the moral occasion. (Sherman, 1997, 39-40)

So, the emotions according to Sherman do more than just influence perception. They are kinds of sensitivities that enable us to detect and attend to what is morally relevant, and are therefore constitutive of moral perception. Moral perception of particulars is “emotion-laden”. For instance, she explains that a capacity for pity helps us notice undue suffering in others (Sherman, 1997, 249), and more specifically it helps us identify with someone that is going through a particular difficult experience. But, they can only play this role if they have been properly cultivated through habituation. When we have not been trained to have the appropriate emotional response, the emotions become “epistemological handicaps”. The emotions should be cultivated so that they become reliable ways of reading our surroundings and thus of perceiving particulars. They are necessary in preparing us for moral deliberation insofar as they are necessary for noticing the circumstances that demand moral action<sup>16</sup> and the moral properties of particular situations. Emotion for Sherman is not just instrumental to practical reason or necessary but prior to practical deliberation. Sherman argues that the two important elements of practical reason: “a strong deliberative capacity and a grasp of particulars” (Sherman, 1997, 255) cannot be sharply distinguished from one another. She argues that the process of “seeing aright” involves more than just recognition of salience. The full

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<sup>16</sup> This idea is similar to de Sousa’s (1987) view of the role of emotion in moral perception.

process of practical deliberation involves description, redescription, evaluation and reevaluation of the case. This process involves considerable reflection and thought. And the perception of particulars is not a simple process of immediate recognition of important features. Moral perception, according to Sherman is a complex discursive process that involves interpretation. She writes,

Here it is important to remember Aristotle's insistence that the practically wise person is good at deliberating and that deliberation is a matter of inquiry or figuring out (NE, 1142b16-35). Circumstances present varying degrees of complexity, and depending on the complexities, circumspect vision may require a fair amount of studying and figuring out, describing and redescribing the case. Equally, it may involve reframing one's objectives in light of the relevance of these particulars. Forcing too tight a distinction between that aspect of practical wisdom which is a matter of grasping the particulars (*aesthesis*) and inquiry (*zetesis*) may be overly artificial and indeed highly misleading. (Sherman, 1997, 259)

Salience for Sherman is multifaceted and complex, and therefore perception of salience is not a straightforward passive capacity of noticing, but a complex process in which the *phronimos* must evaluate the situation in light of the requirements of a good life and make corrections along the way until arriving at the right interpretation. If we agree with Sherman's accounts of moral perception and the strong connection she makes between emotion and perception, we must conclude that the emotions are more than just instrumental to practical reason but are involved in the deliberative process itself since practical deliberation cannot occur without the process of perceiving particular features of situations and emotions are themselves ways of perceiving the world.

Nussbaum makes a similar point regarding the emotions and practical rationality. In Nussbaum's words, the emotions are part of practical rationality:

Emotions, in Aristotle's view, are not always correct, any more than beliefs or actions are always correct. They need to be educated, and brought into harmony with a correct view of the good human life. But, so educated, they are not just essential forces motivating to virtuous action, they are also, as I have suggested, recognitions of truth and value. And as

such they are not just instruments of virtue, they are constituent parts of virtuous agency... All of this is part of the equipment of the person of practical wisdom, part of what practical rationality is. Rationality recognizes truth and the recognition of some ethical truths is impossible without emotion; indeed, certain emotions centrally involve such recognitions. (Nussbaum, 1994, 96)

According to Nussbaum, it is not the case that for Aristotle an agent can recognize and figure out by reason alone what must be done and later have an appropriate emotion as an additional motivation to act. It is rather that emotions cannot be separated from the process of perception and recognition of moral values involved in practical deliberation. Emotions are not just instrumental in this view because they are part of what constitutes a good person who has practical wisdom and the disposition to “perceive that a situation is of a certain kind and to think, although perhaps not declaratively, that something ought to be done...” (Flanagan, 1991). Being virtuous means, among other things, seeing what needs to be seen and reacting appropriately, but the recognition of moral value and salience is always colored by the emotional dispositions and reactions we already display. We can call this view a moderate non-instrumentalist view of the emotions that identifies emotion with the process of perception in the deliberative process.

Another commentator that attributes a non-instrumentalist role to the emotions is Arash Abizadeh, but he goes further than Nussbaum and Sherman by commenting on ways the emotions are part of the deliberative process beyond perception. In his article ‘The Passions of the Wise’, Abizadeh (2002) argues for an even stronger view claiming that all aspects of the deliberative process are partly constituted by the emotions (*pathos*) and character (*êthos*) of the agent. He starts out by supporting the particularist view that according to Aristotle, universal laws are deficient in providing the correct course of action in certain cases, because of the universality of the law (NE, 5.10, 1137b 12-30). He

arrives at the same conclusions that all particularists hold: that “abstract reason is insufficient to issue in determinate normative injunctions in particular circumstances” and that “practical philosophy can never be fully codified in language as a series of antecedently specified set of general practical principles” (Abizadeh, 2002, 269). He then proceeds to demonstrate that *êthos* and *pathos* are constitutive of phronetic deliberation by establishing a parallel between the role of *êthos* and *pathos* in the art of rhetoric and the structural similarities with phronetic deliberation. Once he establishes that the “passionate element” present in every human being is necessary for deliberation concerning particulars (in order to render determinacy), Abizadeh proceeds to consider what exactly is the role of emotion, whether it is to render determinacy to practical judgments and whether it is constitutive of practical deliberation or just instrumental. He continues to explain that just as in rhetorical deliberation whether the audience finds a conclusion persuasive depends on their *êthos* and *pathos*, in individual phronetic deliberation, whether the *phronimos* finds a conclusion persuasive depends again on *êthos* and *pathos*. He claims that emotion is not instrumental to practical deliberation, but part of the deliberative process because excellence in deliberation and excellence in perception, both necessary to *phronêsis* are partly constituted by *êthos* and *pathos*. Perception is constituted by emotion because the *êthos* and *pathos* of both the rhetorician and the *phronimos* affect the perception of particulars relevant to deliberation including the *êthos* and *pathos* of the audience (in the case of rhetoric deliberation) and of the *phronimos* himself (in the case of the individual deliberator). Then according to Abizadeh, *êthos* and *pathos* are involved in deliberation itself because they make a difference to the outcome of deliberation by limiting the range of arguments available. By influencing the process of deliberation that is available they help to render determinate judgments. Just as for a speaker which kinds of arguments will be

persuasive to a particular audience depends on the audience's *êthos* and *pathos*, for the individual deliberator, his own emotions will determine what kinds of arguments he will find persuasive. For example, someone predisposed to have an irrational fear will not be easily persuaded that her fear is unfounded and the object in question is not harmful. In other words, we cannot use the same arguments to convince someone with this emotional disposition, as we would use to convince someone that did not. The range of effective arguments available is limited and influenced by emotional make-up and character. So the emotions and character of the agent directly affect deliberation and hence the outcome of deliberation. Another way in which emotion is involved in the process of deliberation is by shaping the premises involved in the arguments available by assigning priority to the different aspects of the situation. For example, Abizadeh explains, affection for a friend may be a good reason to give special consideration to that friend. Finally, the character and emotions of the agent provide wisdom of past experience to be consulted during practical deliberation.

Consulting how I feel about taking a course of action may provide me with important insight about its ethical validity if my character and emotions are virtuously formed. This insight is based on my previous experience which is unavailable in the form of an abstract set of principles codified in *logos*. (Abizadeh, 2002, 287). In conclusion Abizadeh writes,

Perception and deliberation are not discrete events; perception is constitutive of the deliberative process; and the *êthos* and *pathos* of the deliberator qua persuader are constitutive of that perception, and thereby the deliberative process. Furthermore, the *êthos* and *pathos* of the deliberator qua persuadee are directly constitutive of the deliberative process, in providing *pisteisis* that determines the range of potentially persuasive arguments. (Abizadeh, 2002, 288)

So, on this view, the role of the emotions is not limited to its involvement with perception, but goes beyond that by shaping the deliberative process itself, providing

reasons for adopting one kind of argument over another and by providing feedback necessary to revise our course of action. The emotions, according to this view, are not merely instrumental to practical deliberation providing just the preliminary information needed for the process of deliberation to take place independently of them. On the contrary, emotion is intrinsic to the process of deliberation and is involved in all of its aspects, not just perception of the morally salient features of a situation. I will call this the extreme non-instrumentalist view of emotion and practical deliberation.

#### **1.4.5 Demands for Contemporary Views**

So, what can we extrapolate from the discussion of Aristotelian psychology and the different ways emotion can be involved in the definition and exercise of virtue? We can derive five important points from the different roles emotion plays in contemporary virtue theories that the contemporary psychological views of the emotions must be able to speak to. First we have what I will call the plausibility demand<sup>17</sup>. Aristotle talks about four different kinds of character that are central in understanding the demands of virtue in human beings: we have the agent that does not follow the dictates of virtue but thinks that is the correct way to act and feel; we have the weak-willed agent or the agent that knows what is the right thing but doesn't do it because of a strong motivation against it; there is the strong-willed agent or agent that does what virtue requires because it is the right thing, but does not have the virtues of character and emotions that should accompany the actions; and finally there is the virtuous agent or the agent that has a reliable disposition to act, feel, perceive and judge situations in a moderate way that accords with what virtue requires. A psychological theory of the emotions must be able to explain the existence of these types of characters, especially the existence of the

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<sup>17</sup> This demand is inspired by Owen Flanagan's (1991) work on psychological realism in *Varieties of Moral Personalities* and the types of ideal characters that are possible for human beings.

virtuous agent and the way the emotions operate in this type of agent. The second demand for the psychological theories we can identify in the virtue theory literature is what I will call the psychological harmony demand. This requirement entails that internal psychological harmony must be possible. In other words, the character of the virtuous agent is such that the emotions that arise are those that accord with virtue and when they don't because of some mistake in the information provided to the agent, the emotions should be able to be corrected and respond to rational considerations. This demand is related to the first demand insofar as it is another version of psychological realism that speaks specifically about the internal struggle of the moral agent. It applies to the type of character we could have under the right kinds of circumstances that the research on the emotions may not address or fully be able to explain. A third demand that is related to the issue of psychological harmony regards the role of emotion as an irruptive motivational state. In the character of the virtuous agent where there is no conflict between reason and emotion, emotion must provide motivational support and cease to be an irruptive motivational force. The virtuous agent is still motivated to act because of what reason dictates is the right thing to do, but emotion becomes a source of motivation that simultaneously supports rational motivation. In addition to emotion becoming a motivational support for virtue, it must also support moral perception by helping us see situations differently and become sensitive to the morally relevant features of a situation. In Aristotelian virtue theories emotion plays an important role in practical deliberation so the fourth demand to be explained by contemporary research is how emotion changes our perception of the circumstances we encounter by making us more sensitive to moral salience. Finally, the fifth demand is the issue of plasticity and training of emotional dispositions<sup>18</sup>. In the Aristotelian view, emotion must be

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<sup>18</sup> A version of this demand is taken for granted by all contemporary definitions of virtue and has been at the



modifiable in a way that allows for the formation of a firm state of character from which the right kinds of actions, feelings, perceptions and judgments consistently and reliably emerge. In order to have the kind of character and roles for emotion described in the first four demands, we must also be able to explain that it is possible to transform emotion to meet those criteria. We should be able to contribute in some way (directly or indirectly) to the development and transformation of emotional dispositions if the virtuous agent is plausible. A virtuous character as a goal for human beings, is supposed to be the result of moral education and cultivation of character. But does the empirical research done independently from the questions raised by Aristotelian virtue theories address these issues? We must now look at some of the contemporary work on the emotions with these questions in mind.

## 2. Psychological Views of the Emotion in Griffith's Work

This chapter of the dissertation examines the psychological views of the emotions that Paul Griffiths (1997) discusses in his work *What Emotions Really Are* and the aspects that are relevant to the roles that emotion plays in Aristotelian virtue theory. The discussion of ways in which the emotions are part of virtue theory yielded five demands that any psychological theory of the emotions must answer to if we want to have a dialogue between the two disciplines: (1) Plausibility, (2) Psychological harmony, (3) Motivational support, (4) Perception of Moral Salience and (5) Training. These will serve as the background when we look at the theories Griffiths presents and will provide direction in identifying the relevant features of these views for the comparison with virtue theory.

I chose the views that Griffiths considers for this project, not because they haven't been explained elsewhere, but because of the way Griffiths approaches the study of emotion, which allows for using more than one theory for explaining everything we typically include under this term. Let me briefly explain what his approach is about. Griffiths (1997) believes that the study of the emotions cannot be done independently of science and empirical research and rejects the mainstream philosophical theories of emotion that have ignored this research, such as the propositional attitude theories of emotion (the theories based in the propositional attitudes of folk psychology) or any theories of emotion that have been developed in philosophy independently of the work in cognitive psychology. He also claims that the concept of emotion is just an arbitrary way of grouping a set of phenomena that have not much in common (Griffiths, 1997, 1). He argues that the concept of emotion is not useful in psychological theory. Griffiths writes,

It is meant to be a kind of psychological process that underlies a certain range of human behavior. But there is no one kind of process that underlies enough of this behavior to be identified with emotion. (Griffiths, 1997, 14)

According to Griffiths, all the phenomena that have been traditionally grouped together under the term “emotion” do not have enough in common to justify being treated as belonging to the same category. He divides the study of emotion into three parts: (1) affect programs (or basic emotions), (2) higher cognitive emotions and (3) socially constructed emotions (Griffiths, 1997, 14-17). For Griffiths these are not sub-categories of a general category called emotion that encompasses all the phenomena. He thinks affect programs, higher cognitive emotions and socially constructed emotions are so different from each other that they are not instances of the same kind. According to Griffiths, these categories represent distinct kinds of phenomena with very different characteristics.

The affect programs account for the stereotypical or basic emotions that behave like automatic, reflex-like, physiological responses to various stimuli: anger, fear, disgust, sadness, joy, and surprise<sup>1</sup>. This description of emotion does not explain more sophisticated emotions like: envy, love, guilt, jealousy and moral outrage, to name a few that, unlike the affect programs, involve higher cognitive processes. He claims that we need a different account of these higher cognitive emotions because they have different phylogenies, different adaptive functions, different neurosciences and different roles in human psychology. He also discusses traditional versions of socially constructed emotions. One of the examples he mentions is the “socially sustained pretenses” or disclaimed action emotions. These pretenses involve adopting a social role that allows the agent to exhibit certain kinds of behavior. Griffiths explains,

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<sup>1</sup> These are the most popular examples, but philosophers and psychologists have provided different lists of basic emotions. See Ekman (1999).

These responses are socially constructed emotions, for the same reason that “the vapors” was a socially constructed illness. The constructed state is an imitation of the original. Disclaimed action emotions are modeled on the local cultures’ conception of emotions. They aim to take advantage of the special status that emotions are accorded because of their passivity. Like socially constructed illnesses, disclaimed action emotions are actually very different from the phenomena on which they are modeled. (Griffiths, 1997, 245)

Newman’s (1964) work provides an example of this kind of phenomenon is what the people of Gururumba in New Guinea experience as the state of “being a wild pig”. They treat this state as an illness that affects men between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five and that is caused by the bite of the spirit of a member of the tribe who died recently. This disease makes these men go wild, damaging property and assaulting other people, but because it is recognized as a disease, men acting under this state are treated as if their actions are involuntary. This behavior tends to coincide with the times of most financial stress in a man’s life and justifies special treatment from the tribe to help with their obligations. Disclaimed actions such as these result from people learning what kinds of behaviors are socially acceptable under various circumstances, but the people exhibiting the behaviors and the culture in which this happens treat them as natural and inevitable reactions to the situations that trigger them. Social constructivists group phenomena like these under the concept of emotion because they produce passivity and the agents in these cases are not faking this response. But Griffiths points out that although the disclaimed actions look similar to the other emotions not learned in this way, these emotions “have no more in common with other emotions than a piece of playacting has in common with the behavior it imitates” (Griffiths, 1997, 15). They are just constructed acceptable ways of dealing with difficult life situations while acting out a specific social role. Griffiths discusses this particular case of socially constructed emotion to highlight problems with the social constructivist

approach to emotion and suggests an alternative “heterogeneous construction” of emotion that incorporates the insights from both evolutionary psychology and the social construction tradition (Griffiths, 1997, 137-167). This project focuses on the affect program emotions and the higher cognitive emotions, but there is a lot more to say about different versions of the social construction of emotions and how these might fit with an Aristotelian model of emotion.

In short, Griffiths’ division of the study of emotion into these parts is useful for the goal of this dissertation because it provides a framework for understanding fundamental differences between different kinds of emotion that are relevant for understanding the different roles emotion play in moral action. These major differences that can be construed as different kinds of emotion or of emotions at different stages of development are key to understanding why emotions operate in such different ways in different circumstances and different people. Even though for Griffiths the study of emotion is divided into these distinct sets of phenomena, he also recognizes that they are all kinds of “irruptive motivation states” which is also important for moral action. Hence, when looking at the affect program emotions and the higher cognitive emotions we must keep in mind the ways these can be passive and irruptive and in what ways they guide or interfere with planned action and the goals of virtue.

## ***2.1 The Affect Program Theory***

### **2.1.2 Definition**

The first category of emotion Griffiths highlights as a distinct class of phenomena is the ‘affect program theory’ based on the work of Paul Ekman and Friesen (1986) on facial expression of emotion. The affect program theory identifies emotions that are universal and cross-cultural, just as Darwin suggested regarding the facial expressions

of emotion. Ekman originally identified six basic emotions that fit this description based on observations of facial expressions: surprise, fear, anger, disgust, sadness and joy. Later in the 90's, relying not just on facial expression of emotions to individuate emotion, he expanded his list to include the following 15 basic emotions: fear, anger, disgust, sadness, contempt, shame, embarrassment, guilt, excitement, amusement, pride in achievement, satisfaction, sensory pleasure, relief and contentment (Ekman, 1999). He relies on several different criteria to distinguish emotions from one another, such as: "universal signals, distinctive physiology, automatic appraisal influenced by ontogenic and phylogenetic past, and commonalities in the antecedents events which call forth the emotion" (Ekman, 1999). This dissertation is not concerned with which particular emotions are basic. I take for granted the existence of these types of emotion that explain at least some of the phenomena we call emotion and my purpose here is to understand the characteristics these basic emotions have and how these could be relevant to a comparison with the Aristotelian notion of virtue. This discussion focuses on the ways in which they could affect us as moral agents, such as, how they affect our thinking and acting and whether we can control them or not. More specifically, this section highlights the attributes of these emotions that could explain the connection between emotion and different types of character, harmony of character, motivation that accords with virtue, perception of moral salience, and cultivation of character.

With these issues in mind let's look at the definition of affect programs. Griffiths writes,

The central idea of affect program theory is that emotional responses are complex, coordinated, and automated. They are complex because they involve several elements. These are usually taken to include (a) expressive facial changes, (b) musculoskeletal responses such as flinching and orienting, (c) expressive vocal changes, (d) endocrine system changes and consequent changes in the levels of hormones, and (e) autonomic nervous system changes... The affect program responses are coordinated

because the various elements occur together in recognizable patterns or sequences. They are automated because they unfold in this coordinated fashion without the need for conscious direction...The affect program is the coordinated set of changes that constitutes the emotional response. (Griffiths, 1997, 77)

In affect program emotions the whole body is engaged (not just the facial expressions) and all the elements of the response are automated and coordinated. For example, immediately after an organism encounters a stimulus that it identifies as dangerous, this activates the affect program response associated with fear or a complex response that includes: the stereotypical facial expressions associated with fear, fast breathing, heart racing, adrenaline surge, musculoskeletal preparation for fleeing, etc., in short, the fight or flight response. This response is involuntary because the mechanism that controls the response operates automatically and independently of the mechanisms we can consciously control. Ekman suggests that there is actually one single<sup>2</sup> neural structure or program responsible for controlling and coordinating all the elements of this emotional response, but what matters for us is that the response is involuntary, not how many different mechanisms control the response.

So, when these emotions are triggered we get an immediate complex physiological response controlled by the autonomic nervous system that is fast and automatic. On the speed and involuntary nature of affect programs, Ekman writes,

Emotions can have a very fast onset, beginning so quickly that they can happen before one is aware that they have begun. Quick onset is central to the adaptive value of emotions, mobilizing us quickly to respond to important events...Because emotions can occur with a very rapid onset, through automatic appraisal, with little awareness, and with involuntary changes in expression and physiology, we often experience emotions as

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<sup>2</sup> For a challenge to this view see the work of Neil McNaughton (1989) who claims that complex emotional responses appear to be coordinated and controlled by one system, when in fact there may be different parallel systems controlling different elements of the response. For instance, the facial changes and the autonomic nervous system changes may be controlled by two separate systems operating simultaneously but not coordinated by one single mechanism.

happening to us. Emotions are unbidden, not chosen by us (Ekman, 1999).

The evolutionary view of basic emotions emphasizes the function of emotion to prepare us to deal with various situations and encounters based on what had adaptive value in the past. Thus, current emotion reactions are a result of what has worked better in our evolutionary past to cope with adaptive situations, such as encounters with predators. When facing significant life situations, part of what had adaptive value in our evolutionary past was the speed of the response. For instance, when we face life-threatening encounters, it is better to have a fast reaction to the situation, even if it turns out the threat is not so severe, than to have a slow response that could jeopardize our safety. So, as far as the output side of the affect program is concerned, speed is advantageous. On the input-side of emotion, Ekman suggests there are two types of appraisal mechanisms that assess the stimulus that trigger the emotion, one automatic and one extended (Ekman, 1997). The automatic mechanism is fast and often operates without the agent's awareness. The automatic mechanism operates, for example, when the trigger of the response is a simple sense perception, such as the visual perception of an object that looks like a snake. The extended mechanism involves a slower and conscious process of appraisal of the situation that involves cognition. This mechanism explains a slower reaction time between stimulus and emotion response and the operation of triggers that were not the typical triggers in our evolutionary past. The extended mechanism of appraisal explains how in our current time things like words, exams, and other complex situations have become triggers of emotion. Some think that no matter which appraisal mechanism is operating, the response is completely controlled and influenced by biology and there's no room for social and cultural learning. Ekman doesn't go that far and admits that even when the automatic appraisal



mechanism is engaged, there is room for social and cultural learning to inform, amplify and modify the response within the parameters of our universal biological constraints.

So how is this all relevant to a comparison with Aristotelian emotion? Which aspects of the discussion of affect program emotions are relevant to answering the questions that Aristotelian virtue theory raises for theories of emotion? The first thing to notice is that this theory focuses on the physiological aspect of emotion very much like the stereotypical and most basic folk intuitions about emotion do. It also reinforces the view that emotion is essentially a passive experience we have no conscious control of. The fact that affect program emotions are fast, automatic responses beyond our control has the most relevance to the Aristotelian issues. If human beings are biologically disposed to have reactions that take over their bodies and affect the way they act, think and perceive situations with no conscious control on their part, we can see how this could be a problem for the development of virtue. The way the affect program emotions just seem to bypass conscious cognitive processes is significant to the discussion of the different types of character Aristotelians use as examples to illustrate what virtue is and what it is not. Understanding the description and function of the affect programs could explain the first Aristotelian demand: the character of those who know what is right and want to do what is right but continue to have emotions that contradict that realization, in some cases so strong that they act contrary to the judgments they accept. I'll say more about how these reactions can occur without interaction with rational processes in the next section when I discuss modularity and information encapsulation. The reflex-like and involuntary changes in physiology and expression that Ekman cites are pertinent to the second demand or the cultivation of a harmonious character that doesn't have conflicting inclinations, even if they are just internal and don't produce any action. When we do the comparative work later on, we must look at whether our biological

hardwiring to have these kinds of emotional reactions to specific kinds of stimulus for adaptive reasons, really presents a problem for the Aristotelian concept of a virtuous character devoid of conflict. But it is not sufficient that emotions should not contradict reason, but they should also provide a motivation in the direction of the prescriptions of virtue. Once we determine if the affect program reactions are the kinds of emotion Aristotle talks about, we need to also consider whether the affect program emotions allow for their modification to satisfy the requirements of virtue. Finally, a comparison with Aristotelian notions of emotion would benefit from looking more closely at how these reactions could affect our perception of the moral features of situations and practical reasoning.

### **2.1.2 Modularity**

A psychological system is modular when it is self-contained and operates independently of other systems. Affect program emotions are modular in this sense.

Griffiths writes,

The affect programs are short term, stereotypical responses involving facial expression, autonomic nervous system arousal and other elements. The same patterns of response occur in all cultures and homologous are found in related species. These patterns are triggered by a cognitive system which is “modular” in the sense that it does not freely exchange information with other cognitive processes. This system learns when to produce emotions by associating stimuli with broad, functional categories such as danger or loss. (Griffiths, 1997, 8)

So, to say that affect programs are triggered by a modular system means that once an object or situation has been assessed as representing a functional category, the response is controlled by systems that work relatively independently from other systems. Fodor (1981) developed a theory of modularity of mind in which input systems, such as sense perception, are modular, but higher cognitive processes, such as scientific and

mathematical reasoning are not. He identified certain features or properties that modular systems must have at least to some extent: (1) domain specificity (modules are specialized and work on particular kinds of inputs or stimuli), (2) information encapsulation (modular systems do not need to exchange information with other systems), (3) mandatory (the operation of the system is obligatory no matter what we believe or want), (4) fast speed (triggers produce a fast result because the systems do not need to exchange information with other systems and because the speed of outcome is advantageous) (5) shallow outputs (the outputs are simple), (6) limited accessibility (7) characteristic ontogeny (there is a regular pattern of history and development), (8) fixed neural architecture (the modular systems rely on particular neurological structures) (Fodor, 1981). I only focus on the features of modular systems that Ekman's emotion system shares with Fodor's and that have the most significance for the comparison between affect program emotions and Aristotelian descriptions of emotion, namely information encapsulation, speed and the mandatory nature of the system. The fact that affect programs are controlled by a modular system that has features such as these, explains why these types of responses are not subject to conscious control and do not respond to information that is accessible to other systems. For instance, if a system is mandatory this explains why agents often react to certain kinds of situation without consciously choosing to and why it is difficult to change a response that is already in motion, which speaks to the demand of psychological harmony in the agent, responsiveness to reason and modification of emotion.

If the system is informationally encapsulated this explains why some people have emotions that contradict their beliefs and conscious assessment of situations. Irrational fears, for instance, are cases where the response is activated even if the agent makes a different and contradictory conscious assessment of the object or situation. It

could also explain at least some instances of weakness of will and even strength of will, both of which involve the presence of emotions and desires that contradict the beliefs of the agent about what is the correct action and emotion to have. Thus, information encapsulation relates to the demands of plausibility, harmony and responsiveness to reason. If the response produced by the modular system is fast while bypassing other cognitive systems, this makes it even more difficult for the agent to attempt to make any modifications to the response. A better understanding of what makes these responses fast and automatic is relevant to the issue of harmony and motivational support, but also to the questions regarding the cultivation of emotion. When considering the issue of cultivation of emotion and character we should also look at how the affective system learns to associate stimulus with different and new categories.

I now turn to a closer look at the features of modularity starting with what information encapsulation entails and how it influences affect program emotions. The work of Zajonc (1980) provides evidence for this feature of modularity in emotional responses. He conducted a series of experiments to determine whether information was being exchanged between affective mechanisms and other systems. Subjects were presented with images and melodies for very short periods of time and with varying degrees of repetition. Then they were asked which items they preferred in order to determine the "exposure effect" or the relation between exposure and preference without the agent's conscious realization of the degree of exposure. He found that subjects preferred the items they were repeatedly exposed to, even though they had no memory of perceiving those images. This led Zajonc to conclude that: "the information had reached affective mechanisms without reaching the mechanism governing recall" (cited in Griffiths, 1997, 93). This shows that triggers can have a direct pathway into certain mechanisms without that information reaching other cognitive systems. He

writes: “affect and cognition are under the control of separate but partially independent systems, that can influence one another in a number of ways, and that both constitute independent sources of effects in information processing” (Zajonc, 1980, 151). Cognitive systems can have information that even contradicts the information and assessments made by the informationally encapsulated affect system but because for the most part they are not accessed by the affective mechanisms, they have no influence in the affective response. Thus, information encapsulation explains why we could have a fear of something we believe to be harmless. We may know and understand that the bug is harmless but we may still experience fear because that information is not exchanged with the modular system that controls the emotion response. In this sense affect program emotions can be similar to reflexes<sup>3</sup>.

Information encapsulation therefore entails that the system that controls the automatic response that characterizes the basic emotions can be independent of “higher cognitive systems” operating simultaneously in the brain. But, what exactly are these cognitive mechanisms that the affect programs do not interact with? Griffiths provides the following definition:

My own understanding of higher cognitive processes centers on the idea that they are the processes in which people use the information of the sort they verbally assent to (traditional beliefs) and the goals they can be brought to recognize (traditional desires) to guide relatively long-term action and to solve theoretical problems. (Griffiths, 1997, 92)

The higher cognitive systems are responsible for high-level cognitive processes such as reasoning, theorizing, planning, problem solving, scientific thinking and mathematical thinking, among others. These systems are not modular and access the information

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<sup>3</sup> Fodor (1981) distinguishes low level modular systems from reflexes (which are also modular) because unlike reflexes they are inferential or require some form of computation to produce the outcome. But like reflexes, they are encapsulated and don't access information in other cognitive domains.

contained in other cognitive systems to perform their function<sup>4</sup>. This is one of the main characteristics that distinguishes higher from lower level cognitive systems.

Nevertheless, affect program responses can result from an assessment that involves higher cognitive processes. Affect program responses can have two kinds of triggers: a direct input like a sense perception or an input that requires cognitive evaluation.

Regardless of how the emotion is triggered, once an assessment is made and the emotion response is set in motion there is almost no interaction with other systems. Ekman calls the mechanism that can trigger emotion independently of higher cognitive processes, the "automatic appraisal mechanism" or AAM. For example, in the case of fear of snakes the AAM quickly learns to associate the image of a snake with danger. Then, whenever the organism perceives something that looks like a real snake, that visual perception alone will instantly set off the complex, coordinated and involuntary autonomic nervous system response associated with fear: the facial expression will reflect fear, the heart will race, the palms will sweat, in short, the fight or flight response.

Higher cognitive processes can trigger the fear emotion when for instance a complex chain of reasoning yields the conclusion that a new stimulus is dangerous as in the case of fear of an exam. Griffiths explains,

It seems clear that emotions are sometimes triggered as a result of higher cognitive processes. A complex chain of reasoning may reveal that an entirely novel stimulus is dangerous, and fear ensues. It seems equally clear, however, that on other occasions, emotions are triggered despite, or in opposition to, higher cognitive processes. (Griffiths, 1997, 92)

Griffiths here is referring to the fact that some of the types of triggers we encounter today are not the same that our predecessors encountered and some may require more conscious evaluation and analysis in the appraisal stage. One way in which a higher cognitive process may trigger emotion is when imagining a certain kind of situation or

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<sup>4</sup> See Fodor (1981).

stimulus produces the emotional response. Griffiths also cites some evidence in support of the influence of higher cognitive processes on emotion by the manipulation of the interpretation of stimulus<sup>5</sup>. Once the response is set in motion, the information available is still limited to memory of previous associations with general categories, like danger, and the features of modularity still apply. Having a modular system in charge of producing the affect program response implies that the response is often immune to information reached by higher cognitive processes, but also that it can occur in contrast to it. There are various examples of such contradiction between response and beliefs held by the agent. The processes involved in the conscious evaluation of a stimulus may lead us to conclude that a particular emotion response is not warranted, but we may experience the emotion nonetheless. This explains cases of irrational fears or phobias, as well as the cases of weakness of will and continence in the Aristotelian literature. The difference between the weak and the strong-willed is whether they act on their emotional impulses or not, but in both cases they have emotions that produce inclinations to act contrary to what they believe is the right thing to do and feel. Or the evaluation of the stimulus may lead us to believe that a particular emotional response is called for and we may not experience it. If the higher cognitive process makes an assessment that does not produce the corresponding emotion response, we get what Griffiths calls “unemotional evaluations”. We could assent to the belief that something is dangerous, but fail to have the appropriate fear response. Similarly, this is the type of situation that could mark the difference between those who are truly virtuous and those who only act accordingly, but lack the kind of character that produces supporting emotions. We may want to have a reaction of anger or contempt when facing a case of injustice because we know it is what the virtuous would feel, but fail to react in such

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<sup>5</sup> See Lazarus, Coyne, and Folkman (1984).

way even after careful analysis<sup>6</sup>. These cases are key to this project because they present a view of emotion that seems difficult to reconcile with the Aristotelian view of emotion as plastic, modifiable and responsive to higher cognitive processes like practical reasoning. In the comparison with the Aristotelian views we must ask how affect program emotions that are informationally encapsulated can explain some of the behavior Aristotle identifies but also how it fails to address some of the features Aristotle attributes to emotion.

In addition to being encapsulated, modular systems are mandatory (or involuntary) and very fast. The AAM includes a simple form of memory for storing general kinds of stimulus that were previously associated with an emotional response. When faced with a new stimulus it is compared with these stored memories of the significant features of previous stimulus and their corresponding emotional response, producing a fast response (Griffiths, 1997, 92-93). Just as we cannot help but visually perceiving objects in the way that we do, no matter what contradicting beliefs we may have (as in the case of optical illusions), we cannot help but responding emotionally with fear to situations that strike us as dangerous (whether they are really dangerous or not). Ekman's work on cultural display rules suggests that even in cases where cognitive processes seem to be able to "block the automatic emotional responses by recruiting the bodily systems involved for other purposes" (Griffiths, 1997, 98), this occurs after the facial muscles are activated. The emotion response gets started even before we can consciously try to suppress it. He takes this as further support of information encapsulation. Hence, when we experience emotions like fear, the AAM will produce the appropriate response based on previous experience of the same type of stimulus and regardless of the information in higher cognitive processes. If the type of

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<sup>6</sup> When the affect program response is improperly activated, as in the case of epileptics, we may have emotional responses without an external stimulus and thus get an "objectless emotion".



stimulus encountered has been classified and experienced as dangerous before and it is currently perceived as such, then the fight or flight response will be initiated, even if it contradicts cognitive assessments of the situation or our desires about what the response should be. Accessing a limited amount of information and bypassing information contained in other systems allows the AAM to work fast in producing the response.

The fast and automatic operation of the AAM will often generate emotional responses that are unnecessary or unwarranted. As explained above, we may be in situations where the assessment made by the higher cognitive processes is the correct one, but the AAM produces a response that cannot be justified by the stimulus that triggered it. We could have a full-fledged affect program fear response after perceiving a stimulus that later we determine not to be dangerous. Why did we end up with a system that produces responses we cannot control but is not always accurate? Why do intelligent beings like us continue to have affective modular processes that act in this way. Modular systems are evolutionary primitive because “they have their origin in phylogenetic predecessors who did not have general intelligence” (Griffiths, 1997, 94). Modules prevail in highly intelligent organisms because, Griffiths writes, “they provide relatively unintelligent but effective ways of performing certain low-level cognitive processes such as perception (and, I would add, immediate emotive response)” (Griffiths, 1997, 94)<sup>7</sup>. Hence, intelligent beings like us continue to have modular systems (like those responsible for the affect programs) because it is advantageous for survival to have systems that bypass our slower high level decision processes. Zajonc discusses the following example of the advantage of modularity:

If the rabbit is to escape, the action must be undertaken long before the completion of even a simple cognitive process—before, in fact, the rabbit has fully established and verified that a nearby movement might reveal a

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<sup>7</sup> See also Fodor (1983) and Rozin (1976) for more on the advantages of modular systems.

snake in all its coiled glory. The decision to run must be made on the basis of minimal cognitive engagement. (Zajonc, 1980, 156)

This case illustrates how a response that is mandatory, fast and involves a minimal amount of information and cognitive processing, achieves the goal of preparing the organism for vital actions for survival, such as fleeing in this case.

Our affective system continues to be modular, even if it is not always accurate in its response, because modularity produces critical behavior that would be compromised if non-modular systems were involved. Lack of accuracy is a small price to pay for speed and efficiency when we encounter situations of great significance to our well-being. It is more advantageous to overreact to stimuli once in a while than to fail to react with the appropriate response when necessary. It is better for survival to have a fast and reliable system for producing flight or fight responses, even if it reacts at times when it is not necessary and produces a response for things that are not really dangerous, than to fail to be prepared when our life is really in danger because the response is too slow or relies on a process of assessment that is subject to conscious control<sup>8</sup>. Regarding the advantages of having fast and unintelligent modular systems (sense perception and reflexes are other examples of such systems), Griffiths writes:

If a system is mandatory, there is no decision time incorporated in the response time. If the system operates on a limited database, which is chosen for its relevance to the question at hand, the procedures through which it must go in order to make its decision may be more rapid...The modularity of our perceptual processes means that we are compelled to consider data hostile to our present beliefs even if, eventually, we decide not to change them on the basis of those data. Similarly, the modularity of our emotional responses can be seen as a mechanism for saving us from our own intelligence by rapidly and involuntarily initiating essential behaviors. (Griffiths, 1997, 95)

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<sup>8</sup> For more on the existence of modular systems, their advantages over intelligent systems and why we continue to have them see Fodor (1983).

Here we see how the fast, reflex-like response that is required under certain circumstances is facilitated by a mandatory system that does not take into account other cognitive processes. We also understand how the way the affect program responses operate is consistent with an evolutionary explanation of their development and how modularity is exhibited in other systems. The fast and involuntary nature of the response can save us from our own intelligence when danger is imminent and taking our time to analyze the situation through higher cognitive thinking could be fatal. However, as I explained before, this is not to say that there are no situations in which an affect program response results from a higher cognitive analysis. But the operation of the AAM system, which facilitates a fast response in crucial situations, explains both the evolutionary advantage of having a modular system responsible for emotion responses and why they are so difficult to control. Given this explanation of how this system evolved and the function that modularity plays, we now have a better understanding of what we are dealing with when we discuss the role of emotion in virtue theory. When we consider the demands posed by the possibility of an agent having emotions that behave the way they do in the virtuous person, we need to take seriously the fact that we are disposed to have primitive emotions that developed in this way and that are controlled by modular systems. For a fruitful comparison and evaluation of whether affect program theories are open to deal with the demands of harmony, responsiveness to reason and control of emotion, we need to compare Aristotelian emotion with the characteristics of primitive emotions.

Another piece of evidence for the independence of emotion from higher cognitive systems and the primitive nature of emotion is the fact that the particular brain structures it relies on evolved earlier than the “intelligent, flexible cognitive systems characteristic of humans and other large mammals” (Griffiths, 1997, 96). The physiology

involved in the generation of affect programs supports the features of modularity discussed. In particular, the relation between the neural mechanisms that control these kinds of emotion and the systems that regulate involuntary reactions in the body provides additional evidence for the involuntary nature of affective responses. Research suggests that neural circuits in the limbic system control emotional responses. Within the limbic system, the hypothalamus<sup>9</sup> and the amygdalae play central roles in the manifestation of the affect program responses. Since one of the functions of the limbic system is to influence the autonomic nervous system, its role is consistent with features like modularity, mandatory nature and information encapsulation. The limbic system plays a role in the formation of memories by connecting emotional states with perceptions. It works by influencing the endocrine system and the autonomic nervous system. Some of its structures are involved with autonomic functions such as heart rate and blood pressure, others are involved with memory and others are involved with pleasure and rewards. The amygdalae, for instance, influences fear, jealousy and aggression and play a central role in the formation of memory of emotion. It indirectly activates the autonomic nervous system by sending signals to the hypothalamus, but it also influences reflexes, facial expressions and the release of dopamine, norepinephrine and epinephrine.

When we experience fear, for example, the sense perception information reaches the lateral nuclei of the amygdalae and there it develops associations with memories of the stimulus. The memories of the associations between stimulus and its effects then trigger the emotional response through activation of another amygdalae part called the central nucleus which is responsible for the typical fear responses: freezing, increased heart rate, increased respiration, and so on. So, the amygdalae are involved both in the

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of emotion and the limbic system's function see Damasio (1994).

formation of important memory associations and the process of conditioning and in the regulation of the physiological emotion responses (at least in the case of fear and anger). The function of the amygdalae in memory formation is important because, as we saw above, the formation of these kinds of memories is crucial for a fast triggering of emotion that bypasses conscious cognitive analysis. The hypothalamus regulates the production of hormones influencing the autonomic nervous system and affecting blood pressure, heart rate, hunger, thirst, etc. Hence the neural structures associated with emotion responses are the same structures that directly influence the autonomic nervous system, which is consistent with affect program emotions being involuntary. Thus the characteristics of the affect program responses are supported by the underlying physiology.

So far, it is clear what are some of the features that make affect programs a distinct class of emotion and why they are so ingrained and difficult to control through conscious cognitive processes. But if we are going to determine whether this theory adequately speaks to the demand of emotion modification, we also need to consider how the system learns and is subject to conditioning. The learning mechanism of the modular system that controls emotion is biased in favor of the conditioning and learning of the emotional responses. The learning mechanism of the affective system promotes the association between certain kinds of stimuli and the corresponding emotional responses regardless of contradicting beliefs. We are biologically predisposed to make strong associations between things like snakes or high altitudes and danger and consequently fear. We have a high sensitivity to the reaction of others to dangerous things like snakes, to the point that the slightest display of aversion or fear by others will typically produce that association in ourselves even if we haven't had any first hand negative experience with snakes and even if we have accepted evidence to the contrary.

So, the conditioning process of the stimulus does not need a lot of time or repeated exposure to work in establishing an association between stimulus and response. The system is also designed to learn and make associations through a separate mechanism that does not need to use the information in other cognitive systems. It establishes faster connections between certain objects and situations and their respective emotions. Once the memories of these associations are created they become the information that is accessed during the triggering of emotion by the AAM despite any contradicting beliefs we may have. Griffiths writes,

A single aversive experience or a single display of fear by a caregiver may result in a fear of, say, the dark that will be retained despite any amount of information about the harmlessness of darkness. Emotional responses do not seem to adjust themselves as readily as beliefs when new information is acquired about the environment. Sustained counterconditioning seems to be needed to delete an assessment once it has become linked to an affect program response. (Griffiths, 1997, 90-91)

This highlights precisely what Aristotle had observed, that emotions seem to respond to force, not argument or change in beliefs. Our affect system is quick to associate particular types of stimuli with certain categories and emotions and it is inclined to respond to some types of evidence, like the reactions of caregivers, more than others. Once certain associations are made, like those involving danger, these persist and require a process of re-learning to change. However, just because we are prepared to respond to certain kinds of stimuli more than others, this does not mean we need to face the same triggers our ancestors did in order to experience typical affect program emotions. New things can become stimuli of affect programs as a result of conditioning by making new associations and memories linking the new triggers to the same primitive reactions. The possibility of conditioning of the affect program triggers is the key to understanding if the affect program theory can explain the type of habituation and training of emotion Aristotle had in mind.

In short, affect programs are complex, automated responses coordinated by a central program that produces simultaneous interactions between different systems in the body. The responses are fast and involuntary. The exchange of information between the senses and the mechanisms that control the response is independent from the information accessible to higher cognitive processes. The higher cognitive processes may sometimes trigger the emotional response, but not always. In certain circumstances the emotion response occurs not only independently of higher cognitive processes but also in contrast to it. Evaluating something as dangerous can be done by two separate psychological systems: the affect program system (which is a “modular automatic appraisal mechanism”) or by the higher cognitive processes. Making the evaluation that something is dangerous can be done by either system by itself or by both at the same time. When it is done only by the modular system, we typically get a response even if we don’t accept the belief that the object is dangerous or even if we hold the conflicting belief that x is not dangerous at all. If the higher cognitive process makes an assessment that does not produce an emotion response, we will assent to the belief that x is dangerous but we will not exhibit an emotion response. If on the other hand x is evaluated at the same time as dangerous by both systems, we get a response that is warranted and consistent with the information in all the different types of cognitive processes. Perhaps this is the kind of harmony Aristotelians have in mind, but before answering this question, we need to look more carefully at the role that primitive emotions, that have the features of affect programs, can have in the Aristotelian view. When making the comparison between Aristotelian emotion and affect program emotions it is key to remember that I will be talking about responses that have all the features of modularity discussed and that have bias to become well established and be unresponsive to new information and changes in beliefs. But, this model that Griffiths

has synthesized, does not account for all the experiences we normally call emotion, such as love or guilt because these involve higher cognitive processes in a more significant way than the affect program emotions. His intention is to separate the set of emotions that fit the affect program description from the different kind of phenomena that has been mistakenly grouped together with the “short-term emotional responses”. I now turn to the higher cognitive emotions.

## **2.2 Higher Cognitive Emotions**

Griffiths recognizes that there are many so called “emotions” that do not fit the affect program model. He claims that those who want to apply the same theory to everything we call emotion or who try to say that anything that doesn’t fit one theory is not really an emotion, are wrong. Emotions like love, guilt and jealousy do not behave like the stereotypical responses we just examined, so we need a different theory to explain them. Some emotions, Griffiths writes, “do not display a stereotypical pattern of physiological effects...These emotions seem more integrated with cognitive activity leading to planned, long-term actions than the affect program responses” (Griffiths, 1997, 100). Some emotions are “sustained responses, not brief responses like the affect programs” (Griffiths, 1997, 102). Sometimes we use the same terms we use for affect programs to identify some of these emotions that behave differently than the affect program responses. For instance, there are cases of the emotion commonly called anger that do not fit the affect program response for anger. There are also many emotions that, unlike the affect programs, vary greatly from culture to culture. One example of this is the Japanese emotion, *amae*. *Amae* produces a feeling of satisfaction for depending on other people or organizations and it is an emotion that does not develop in western



cultures. Griffiths (1997, 100-106) argues that it is not useful to say that emotions that do not display the affect program characteristics are not really emotions or that they are not worthy of attention. One common response to explain the existence of these variations is to say that these emotions are just combinations of the affect program responses or elaborations of these. For instance, guilt could be described as a combination of the basic emotions of fear and sadness. Although Griffiths admits that there can certainly be combinations of affect program responses, but rejects the idea that all emotions can be explained in this way. He claims that there are emotions that clearly could not be just combinations of reflex-like emotions because they are cognitively involved with stimuli in a way that goes beyond the affect program responses' limitations. Griffiths explains that there is no equivalent research program or well-developed theory for the higher cognitive emotions as there is for the affect programs. There are various approaches to the study and explanation of such emotions but according to Griffiths the study of the higher cognitive emotions should be done separately, and not as a development of affect program research. What matters to this project is how explanations of higher cognitive emotions compare with the Aristotelian concept of emotion and if they can deal with issues regarding the role of emotion in virtue theory that the affect program theory cannot.

Griffiths turns to Robert Frank's work, *Passions within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* (1988), as an example of one way in which the framework for studying higher cognitive emotions may be filled out. Griffiths uses Frank's view as a starting point that he elaborates further to explore alternative ways of describing emotion. Frank provides what is called the "commitment model" of emotion. In this model,

Emotions often lead people to behave in ways which conflict with calculative rationality. Loyalty leads someone to keep an agreement, even when this brings them no advantage and there is no possibility of retribution...Frank proposes that "social" emotions including anger,

contempt, disgust, envy, shame, and guilt may be irruptive motivations designed to enforce commitment to strategies that would otherwise be disrupted by the calculations of self-interest. (Griffiths, 1997, 117-118).

Here, emotions are seen as “irrational” behavioral dispositions because they promote cooperation and alliances that contradict the calculations that promote self-interest.

Rational behaviors, on the other hand, are those behaviors that result from the calculations of self-interest that promote material advantage for the agent. Frank’s view focuses on the function of emotion as “an irruptive pattern of motivation” that promotes certain behaviors favorable to our long-term interest, even if it contradicts short-term gains. When considering this type of analysis of emotion, Griffiths focuses on the output side of emotion and how it can become integrated with higher cognitive processes. He is interested in how emotions that don’t arise as a result of the triggers that cause affect program emotions and that persist beyond a short reflex-like response, work with higher cognitive processes to perform certain functions and produce certain outcomes. So, this discussion will have greater implications on the demands regarding the role of emotion in motivation and harmony of character or how emotions affect behavior and support the dictates of reason in the Aristotelian view.

Examples of behaviors that often go against our short-term self-interest are altruistic actions like anonymous charitable contributions, keeping promises or commitments when there is no advantage for us, or vengeful actions that cause harm to ourselves. The explanation for these “irrational” actions, according to Frank, is that they are motivated by emotions like guilt, anger, envy, loyalty and love, whose purpose is to solve the dilemmas we encounter in our social interactions that cannot be solved through rational calculations of self-interest. In the commitment model, loyalty, for example, can interfere with one’s goal of getting a particular job that will improve one’s financial situation and provide social status. Emotions in this view provide incentives

for behaving in ways that compete with incentives produced by other sources and rational processes.

How exactly do these emotions motivate and end up winning over the motivation to do things that provide a bigger pay-off or less discomfort in the moment? What is the role of rational calculations in motivation? According to Frank, emotion is the ultimate and immediate cause of behavior (Frank, 1988, 53). Rational calculations can be indirect causes of motivation by informing the emotional response and producing the feelings that constitute the incentives for acting. He believes that rational calculations are necessary for morality, but that rationalists fail to recognize the role of feelings in motivation. Rational analysis for Frank is “but one among many inputs that produce the feeling states that directly motivate behavior” (Frank, 1988, 158). Emotions in turn motivate by acting as internal reward mechanisms. They provide pleasant or unpleasant feelings that provide us with incentives to act that can contradict the behaviors that produce other material advantages. So, it is the affective aspect of emotion or the feeling what acts as an internal source of reinforcement for behavior. The reward system works both ways: the feeling component of emotion could prevent us from doing something that will be rewarded externally, by providing an internal punishment in the form of unpleasant feelings or it could promote behaviors that will be externally punished by providing an internal reward or pleasant feelings. Guilt is an example of the former. Guilt may prevent us from entering into an agreement that we perceive to be unfair, even if it is advantageous for us to do so, because of the negative feelings it associates with the prospect of entering an unjust agreement. Being perceived by others as the kind of person who avoids unjust agreements, even if there is no possibility of others finding out, will ultimately be in the long-term interest of the agent.

Griffiths focuses on the role of emotion as irruptive patterns of motivations because he wants to find out if emotions that motivate in this way can be explained without appealing to the affect program theory. Although Frank admits that his view is consistent with evolutionary explanations of the development of emotion, he does not analyze emotion in terms of affect program vs. higher cognitive emotion. The analysis of Frank's model in those terms is Griffiths's elaboration on his view because he believes that not all the emotions that people consider (especially emotions like shame or guilt) can be explained by solely appealing to affect program emotions. Griffiths argues that Frank's model of emotion can be explained in two ways: as resulting from the direct effects of affect program responses (what seems to be Frank's view when he focuses on feelings as internal rewards) or as developments of affect programs that no longer involve these as causes or elements of the response. In the first case, Griffiths argues that the examples of emotion Frank talks about can get their motivational force from the existence of affect program emotion that provides the feelings necessary for altering behavior. In this explanation, the higher cognitive emotions recruit an affect program response or a combination of affect program responses to produce the basic feelings that become the incentives in the reward mechanism in favor of commitments that contradict other sources of motivation. For instance, the unpleasant feelings that constitute the internal incentive for action caused by guilt are the effects of the feelings associated with fear and sadness or maybe anger (depending on who you ask). Guilt involves the beliefs and analysis of a particular situation regarding the consequences of cheating, for instance, when we determine that we would derive great benefit from this action. The desire not to cheat is based on the general goal or commitment to honesty. The feelings that support our long term interests and commitments could be derivations of affect program responses. Even if the higher cognitive emotions get their motivational force

from a feeling caused by an affect program response, what characterizes these emotions in this view is that they involve a sophisticated combination or cluster of beliefs and desires that promote certain kinds of attachments and long-term goals.

The second way Griffiths suggests we can explain the model of higher cognitive emotions as irruptive motivational states is to describe them as relying on entirely different mechanisms than the affect program mechanisms. Griffiths writes, "...insisting that higher cognitive emotions must involve the occurrence of one of the known affect program states seems an unmotivated and restrictive assumption on future research" (Griffiths, 1997, 122). According to Griffiths, researchers developing Frank's ideas should be free to look for characteristic patterns of irruptive motivation that stand alone as pieces of psychological mechanism. His argument is that there are kinds of emotions, not included in the list of basic emotions, that resist being explained as a combination of affect programs and that can still fit Frank's commitment model of emotion because it is ambiguous in this respect. He thinks that anger, for example, does not need to play a role in all instances of vengeful behavior that Frank often discusses in his examples. Similarly, he believes that although emotions like fear and sadness experienced in childhood may have played a role in the development of emotions like guilt, they need not be involved in producing the unpleasant feelings that provide their motivational force. According to Griffiths, because many higher cognitive emotions behave so differently from affect program emotions, it is not only implausible that they are all combinations of primitive emotions, but that they are even controlled by the same neural mechanisms.

The important lesson Griffiths wants us to derive from Frank's theory is that even though affect program emotions and higher cognitive emotions are both passive and irruptive states, they do not serve the same function and are not passive and

irruptive in the same way. The affect programs' function is to provide a fast, automatic and reliable response that bypasses our rational mechanisms and assessments in order to ensure our survival and preservation. We are passive with respect to affect program emotions because they are involuntary and rapidly triggered by systems that for the most part do not interact with beliefs and desires we can consciously access. Once activated they are for the most part not under our control. They are irruptive because they can provide motivation to act that is contrary to rational calculations, plans or desires. The affect program emotion fear, for example, activates the fight or flight response, which prepares us for avoiding danger, independently of the conclusions reached by our cognitive processes or the desires we may have at the moment. Higher cognitive emotions, on the other hand, are passive and irruptive but in a different way and serve a different purpose. They are passive and irruptive because they provide motivation that interferes with our rational calculations of self-interest and our desires and long term plans to fulfill our goals. Their function is to solve commitment dilemmas by motivating us to act contrary to conflicting selfish desires. Griffiths thinks these two approaches provide explanations for the traditional problems raised by the reason/emotion conflicts because they justify why emotions are sources of motivation that contradict our beliefs and desires.

### ***2.3 Alternative View: Embodied Appraisal Theory***

For a better understanding of the role of higher cognitive emotions and how they differ from affect program emotions, it will be useful to contrast Griffiths' view with a different approach like the appraisal view of emotion. Even though the goal here is not to determine which theory is the most compatible with the Aristotelian demands (that

would not produce the most fruitful debate), analyzing the aspects of a theory that has better answers to these issues, supports the goal of highlighting those areas in other theories that need attention. This is why the embodied appraisal variation, like the one advanced by Jesse Prinz in *Gut Reactions* (2004), offers a good model for comparison. The embodied appraisal theory of emotion that I am about to describe differs from Griffiths' view in how it defines higher cognitive emotions and how it explains their function. Whether higher cognitive emotions involve basic emotions and how they affect motivation is important for this project and the comparison with Aristotelian emotion, because how emotion interacts with rational considerations and desires is relevant to how they can support virtuous action, respond to rational considerations and be subject to modification. If higher cognitive emotions don't necessarily include affect programs as elements (as Griffiths suggests) then they are not subject to the same limitations as affect program emotions. The embodied appraisal view suggests that higher cognitive emotions can involve basic emotions and continue to be cognitive in an important way, thus providing an alternative way in which higher cognitive emotions can contribute to the comparison with the Aristotelian role of emotion in virtue theory. I am interested in how the way appraisal theories distinguish primitive from higher cognitive emotions influence how to handle the Aristotelian issues examined.

Appraisal theories of emotion, in general, define emotion as "representations of organism-environment relations with respect to well-being" (Prinz, 2004, 52). Emotions represent the relations between organisms and their environment with regards to how well the organism is faring in the world. Each emotion is a representation of that in virtue of which the object of the emotion causes that emotion in us. For example, the death of a loved one causes the emotion of sadness in us, but sadness does not represent death. It represents loss or that in virtue of which any death causes sadness in us.

Lazarus (1991), the most influential proponent of the appraisal view of emotion, created a comprehensive list of these representations or core relational themes. Lazarus' list of themes captures the essence of each emotion. Here are some examples of emotions and their corresponding core relational themes: (1) anger: a demeaning offense against me and mine; (2) fright: facing an immediate, concrete, and overwhelming physical danger; (3) guilt: having transgressed a moral imperative; (4) shame: having failed to live up to an ego-ideal; (5) envy: wanting what someone else has; (6) compassion: being moved by another's suffering; (7) hope: fearing the worst by yearning for better; etc (Lazarus, 1991, Table 3.4, p. 122). The core relational themes capture the essence of the more specific appraisals or judgments that cause emotion. According to Lazarus, propositional attitudes or judgments prior to the physiological response are necessary for emotion. The appraisals are both preconditions and causes of emotion. In his appraisal views, even more primitive emotions involved cognitive appraisals. Prinz notes that in humans, basic emotions involve, in one way or another, a cognitive assessment. We are often frightened by "cognitively apperceived dangers", such as when we are walking down a dark street and we feel fear because we perceive the situation as dangerous (Prinz, 2004, 98). The judgments involved in this kind of emotion are similar to the judgments involved in higher cognitive emotions. This is important for a comparison with Aristotelian emotion because it includes a cognitive element that can be corrected and influenced by rational analysis of the situations we encounter in the world. If emotions are reactions to cognitive appraisals that can range from simple assessments to more cognitively elaborate appraisals, we can explain better the possibility of responsiveness to reason, and modification of emotional dispositions. Another important element of Lazarus' definition of emotion is that it attributes to emotion action tendencies. This aspect of Lazarus' appraisal theory is useful in a comparison with



Aristotelian views because Aristotle includes desire for action in his definition of emotion. Saying that emotions include or produce action tendencies, explains emotion's role as motivation for specific kinds of actions.

When analyzing different definitions of emotion for a comparison with Aristotle, we must keep in mind that Aristotle also emphasizes the physiological aspect of emotion. Of all the versions of appraisal theories, Jesse Prinz's embodied appraisal view of emotion is perhaps the one that emphasizes the somatic aspect of emotion the most. According to Prinz, emotions represent core relational themes (such as the ones identified by Lazarus) but they are caused by both the core themes and bodily changes in the agent. He argues that bodily changes reliably accompany the core themes and emotions track and detect both. He believes that we are wired or set up to experience certain bodily changes when each relational theme situation occurs, because the bodily changes prepare us for a response. So, for Prinz, all emotions are embodied or caused by a bodily reaction. One of the differences between Lazarus' and Prinz' theories is that in Prinz' view, judgments or disembodied appraisals, as he calls them, can cause emotion and be what emotion represents but are not necessary. Disembodied appraisals are just judgments or appraisals that do not depend on the perception of one's bodily changes. Just seeing an exam, for example, does not cause the bodily reaction associated with fear in me unless a disembodied judgment comes into play that considers the exam to be dangerous to me, causing the fear response. But, Prinz clarifies, not all fear responses require the disembodied judgment as a mediator. In the case of the fear of snakes, he adds, the response is triggered by the mere visual perception of the snake. No judgment or concept is needed as the cause of the bodily changes in order to explain the emotional response. As already discussed, the fear of snakes is a more primitive and basic kind of fear. Studies on primates suggest that primates and humans are

genetically predisposed to develop a fear of snakes. Prinz takes this as evidence to show that there is a spectrum of emotions and the same emotion can have a variety of different kinds of causes. Some emotions are more basic and triggered by simple perceptions of objects we are hard wired to have a certain primitive response to. But other emotions evolve through learning of what the primitive emotions represent and the application of those concepts to new situations. New disembodied propositions can become causes of emotion through a process of learning and repeated association with emotions experienced in the past.

According to Prinz, emotions are either basic, combinations of basic emotions, or develop from basic emotions as recalibrated appraisals. He recognizes the problem that there seem to be fundamental differences between pure embodied appraisals and embodied appraisals that involve judgments. In folk psychology, the basic emotions are differentiated by the embodied appraisals while the higher cognitive emotions are individuated by the “embodied appraisals plus disembodied judgments”. Prinz believes that higher cognitive emotions are either blends or combinations of basic emotions or they are recalibrated appraisals, not combinations of basic emotions and cognitive states like judgments. He recognizes that if we adopt a view of higher cognitive emotions that defines them as cognitive elaborations of basic emotions, containing both basic emotions plus cognitive elaborations, we would be dealing (as Griffiths suggests) with different psychological properties and we would have to appeal to different mechanisms to explain them (Prinz, 2004, 97). But according to Prinz, emotions are not this kind of composite. Just because they are caused by judgments does not mean they include judgments as components. He writes, “The conditions that elaborate them are prior conditions, not constituent parts” (Prinz, 2004, 98). On this view judgments serve to identify emotion, but they are not part of it. Emotions become

recalibrated appraisals when a new judgment begins to cause embodied appraisals that evolved to represent something else. When the embodied appraisal occurs under new conditions and is directed by new judgments, it comes to represent new things. For example, the embodied appraisal corresponding to anger evolved to represent an offense done to one self. Jealousy arises when the judgment that my lover has been unfaithful causes the embodied appraisal that usually accompanies anger redefining it as jealousy. On this model, jealousy continues to be an embodied appraisal because the embodied appraisal that represented anger is now qualified by a new set of conditions and judgments that makes it a representation of jealousy. Prinz explains, “when anger is caused by a judgment about infidelity, it would be accurate to say that it is both a state of anger and a state of jealousy. It simultaneously represents the fact that there has been a demeaning offense (the content of anger) and the fact that one’s lover has been unfaithful (the content of jealousy)” (Prinz, 2004, 100). The judgments are not constituent parts of the emotion, but they are prior conditions that help identify (or calibrate) the emotion by determining what the emotion represents. We must ask if it matters whether judgments are constituent parts of emotion when we explore the issue of responsiveness to rational considerations. We also need to consider whether the process of recalibration sufficiently explains how emotion responses can be modified to meet the Aristotelian process of habituation and re-training of emotion. The answers to these questions lie in the psychological properties the embodied appraisals possess.

So, what are the implications of unifying all emotional phenomena in this way? Emotion, whether it is a recalibrated appraisal or not, is always an embodied appraisal, hence all emotions share the properties of embodied appraisals. According to Prinz, all emotions including envy, jealousy and those typically characterized as higher cognitive,

include bodily responses, are partially modular and function as irruptive motivations. Being partly modular explains emotion's inertia in these emotions or the tendency of emotion to persist after the judgments that cause them have changed. Jealousy is an example of a higher cognitive emotion that may linger even after the evidence that caused the emotion to arise is proven to be false. Prinz argues that this couldn't happen if higher cognitive emotions were completely nonmodular and did not involve more basic and stubborn emotions such as anger. Prinz writes:

For example, though jealousy may arise in response to unencapsulated reasoning processes, once it is there the feeling of jealousy is hard to dispel by further deliberation...When one rescinds the hasty thoughts that spawned a bout of jealousy, the anger that had been contained in the jealousy may remain. Anger, unlike beliefs about infidelity, cannot simply be erased by a change in judgment. (Prinz, 2004, 96).

So, even though rational processes that are not modular can cause emotions, once activated the responses behave like the affect program emotions discussed earlier. This is reminiscent of what Aristotle says in regards to how emotion resists modification through argument. The idea that higher cognitive emotions can possess some of the features Griffiths attributes only to affect program emotions, such as modularity, is important to our discussion because Aristotle does not distinguish between higher cognitive vs. primitive emotion. He would agree that all emotions involve bodily changes and certain emotions, such as jealousy, by nature tend to resist change. The important question to consider when comparing these views to Aristotle's theory of emotion is whether an embodied appraisal view of emotion can explain the harmony between reason and emotion and the responsiveness to corrections in judgments that the virtuous agents possess.

In addition to being partly modular, Prinz emphasizes that emotions are irruptive motivational states. On this issue he agrees with Griffith's appeal to Frank to

explain how higher cognitive emotions interfere with rational calculations. The model of emotion as commitment enforcers explains “why emotions seem passive, drive action, and influence practical reasoning in seemingly irrational ways” (Prinz, 2004, 85). The only difference between Griffiths and Prinz on this matter is that for Prinz being irruptive is an important unifying role between basic and non-basic emotions whereas Griffiths does not think this feature is enough to group affect programs and higher cognitive emotions under the same category. Here the embodied appraisal view is subject to the same question as Griffiths’ higher cognitive emotions. For this project what matters is how theories that consider emotion’s role to be disruptive to motivation can explain emotion’s role as a supportive motivation that drives action and influences practical reason in ways that accord with practical rationality.

In short, a discussion of how appraisal views of emotion differentiate between affect program emotions and higher cognitive emotions or between basic and non-basic emotions and how different features of emotion help provide better answers to the Aristotelian demands, highlights the areas in the views discussed that need more attention for a better comparison with the Aristotelian point of view. Regardless of whether Griffiths is right in the end about the basic emotions thesis, what is relevant for this project is whether there are significant differences between basic emotions and higher cognitive emotions and how this impacts the dialogue with the Aristotelian view of emotion. For Griffiths, higher cognitive emotions, unlike affect programs, are non-modular, do not necessarily involve bodily changes, are integrated with higher cognitive processes and are irruptive to motivation. These features promise a better way to explain the possibility of emotion that follows rational considerations and that supports harmony between reason and emotion. On the embodied appraisal view, higher cognitive emotions are partially modular, involve bodily changes and are also integrated

with higher cognitive emotions and irruptive to motivation. If higher cognitive emotions behave more like affect programs it may be more difficult to explain harmony between reason and emotion. This characterization might be compatible with at least some Aristotelian definitions of emotion but it won't be compatible with the more "cognitive" interpretations of Aristotle's definition of emotion.

### **3. Dialogue Between the Aristotelian View and Contemporary Psychological Theories**

In the previous chapters I have examined the Aristotelian approach to emotion and some of the most prominent contemporary views on the subject. Now it is time to open the necessary dialogue between those two points of view. The most popular approach to a discussion of virtue theory in contemporary moral psychology is to look at the contemporary research for restrictions to place on the moral theory in search for a psychologically realistic theory. It is more common to look for ways in which contemporary views and definitions of emotion undermine the moral theories by providing a reality check that redefine the moral views as attainable ideals for human beings. This project, on the other hand, considers how a plausible moral theory that is based on specific characteristics of human psychology can contribute to the debate and highlights some of the issues that need attention. The contemporary research in psychology has as much to learn from the moral theories as the latter do from empirical research. The Aristotelian view highlights important issues that any moral theory that incorporates the emotions as essential elements of the moral life should consider. Aristotelian virtue theory continues to be relevant and very popular among contemporary moral theorists because it is a psychologically realistic normative view. Any psychological theory of the emotions must be able to answer the questions raised by Aristotle, but do they? In this chapter I take another look at the issues outlined in Aristotelian virtue theory and I consider how well the contemporary theories deal with them. The goal is to initiate a dialogue between the two approaches and achieve reflective equilibrium.

There are many versions of Aristotelian virtue theories, but they all have one thing in common: living excellently or in a way that accords with virtue involves not

just performing actions that manifest virtue, but also having a good or virtuous character. As Cooper writes in 'Aristotle's Moral Psychology' (1999), having a good character: "consists in a settled, trained disposition of a person's capacity and tendency to experience some range of nonrational desires, or other nonrational feelings, and, partly in consequence of those desires or feelings, to act in certain characteristic ways" (Cooper 1999, 235). The goal of virtue is fine action, but to be considered virtuous an agent must also have an excellent character or a disposition to have the correct feelings and desires. An Aristotelian notion of virtue requires a distinction between practical reason and nonrational feelings and desires. This view notes that feelings motivate to act independently of practical reason and don't always conform to rational considerations but it presumes that it is also possible for feelings to support reason. It is important in an Aristotelian view that the emotions not only influence judgments but are also influenced by judgments and "listen to" or "obey" reason. In addition to being in harmony with reason, emotion, according to some interpretations of Aristotle's theory, is involved in the process of practical deliberation by enhancing our sensitivity and perception of moral circumstances and considerations. Virtue theory entails that the disposition to have nonrational feelings needs to be shaped in a particular way to conform to and support the dictates of virtue. In short, these are some of the demands that virtue theory presents to psychological theories of the emotion:

1. Plausibility Demand: A psychological theory of emotion should be able to explain the different kinds of character Aristotle discusses: the vicious agent, the weak-willed (*akratic*) agent, the self-controlled agent and the virtuous agent.
2. Psychological harmony and responsiveness to reason: A theory of emotion should be able to explain the plausibility of psychological harmony in the agent and the responsiveness of emotion to rational considerations.



3. Emotion and motivational support: A theory of emotion should pay attention to the role of emotion not only as an irruptive motivational state, but also as a motivational support of reason.
4. Emotion and moral perception: A theory of emotion should be able to answer questions about the way emotion plays a role in practical deliberation by helping us see situations differently and influencing our sensitivity to moral considerations.
5. Training of emotional disposition: A theory of emotion should be able to explain how emotion might be modifiable in a way that allows for the formation of a firm and unchanging state of character from which virtuous action reliably and consistently emerges.

This chapter will discuss how some contemporary psychological views of the emotions would deal with these issues. The Aristotelian demands serve as points of comparison between the approaches presented and as tools to highlight important issues regarding the emotions that the psychological theories need to pay attention to. The goal of this chapter is to bring the discussion in the previous chapters together and determine the areas where there is more psychological research and debate needed in order to reach a better understanding of human nature and the role that emotion can play in a virtuous life. Though this dissertation focuses on what different psychological theories of emotion can explain when faced with the Aristotelian demands, this comparison also serves as a starting point for determining what adjustments could be made to the Aristotelian virtue theories to make them compatible with the contemporary research. In order to compare the Aristotelian view of emotion with the contemporary views we must consider whether the Aristotelian notion of emotion is of an automated, reflex-like response, or something more like a higher cognitive emotion. When Aristotle talks

about emotions like fear or anger he sometimes treats them like involuntary responses that do not respond to reason. As we saw previously, he describes emotion as a condition or state<sup>1</sup> of “unrequited desire”. The agent feels an urge to satisfy certain kinds of desires when experiencing an emotion. In the case of anger the person is “hot tempered and easily provoked” which produces a desire for vengeful action. Emotions for Aristotle inevitably involve bodily changes that produce desires to act in certain ways. He supports this view in *De Anima* where he writes, “It therefore 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” (*De Anima*, Book I, Chapter I, 403a 16). He explains that emotion can be described in two ways, as a physicist would describe it, focusing on the physical changes in the body, or as a dialectician, focusing on the appetites and desires for action. In the end he believes a description of emotion should encompass both since the desires are the form that manifest in the matter or the body. Cooper refers to the same idea when he writes: “Aristotle seems to recognize three central elements as constituting the emotions—they are agitated, affected, states of mind, arising from the ways events or conditions strike the one affected, which are at the same time desires for a specific range of reactive behaviors or other changes in the situation as it appears to her or him to be” (Cooper, 1999, 422). Under this definition, they are an independent source of motivation that can involve or be triggered by judgments and perceptions, but do not necessarily result from rational deliberation. Regarding whether one can persuade someone experiencing an

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<sup>1</sup> When Aristotle describes emotions as this kind of state involving pleasure and pain he seems to be describing an occurrent state. The occurrent state occurs when the agent is actually experiencing anger and that seems to be what Aristotle is referring to when he says that someone is hot tempered and having unsatisfied desires that cause pain. On the other hand the person experiencing anger is also disposed to act in certain ways. It seems that for Aristotle you don’t have to perform certain kinds of action in order to be in a state of anger, but you are disposed and strongly motivated to take certain stereotypical kinds of action such as seeking revenge. To have a virtue with regards to the emotions is to have a disposition to react in appropriate ways to particular circumstances.

emotion to change their emotional state, Aristotle writes: “in general feelings seem to yield to force, not to argument” (Aristotle, *NE*, 1179b30). Once one is experiencing an emotion it is very difficult to talk oneself out of it and one is strongly moved to act in certain ways. By characterizing emotion in this way, Aristotle highlights the passive<sup>2</sup> and involuntary nature of emotion.

In the *Rhetoric* when Aristotle recommends that the rhetorician induce certain emotions in the audience, he is taking advantage of emotion as an irruptive motivational state. He wants to induce in the audience a particular emotion because he knows that once the audience is in that state its members will be more likely to think and have the desire to act in certain ways. Here he is not necessarily talking exclusively about higher cognitive emotions since convincing someone that a certain kind of event has happened or is going to happen can induce primitive emotions like anger or fear. As we saw above, affect programs can have different types of triggers, including judgments, and they can be conceptual or involve thoughts. But once these emotions have been induced then Aristotle counts on them lingering and altering the way the members of the audience act, perceive and think. They will be in a particular physical state that will distract them and strongly move them to satisfy the desires that accompany their emotions. In other words, the rhetorician should use our passivity with regards to emotion to his advantage and manipulate the audience’s tendency to be convinced by certain kinds of arguments by inducing a particular emotion state. As he mentions, when a person is angry or sad or in pain (remember pain and pleasure accompany emotions) the person thinks differently or is predisposed to find certain arguments

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<sup>2</sup> Keep in mind that by “passive” I don’t mean that the emotions themselves are tame or subdued, but rather that we are passive with respect to emotion. Emotions tend to happen to us without conscious choice so by passive I mean that we cannot just willfully change our emotional state or prevent an emotion from arising when the affective system is triggered by a stimulus.

appealing. As Aristotle says one would not be convinced by the same arguments when one is afraid than when one is not.

So far it seems Aristotle's view is compatible with the affect program description of emotion because the automatic and reflex-like characteristic of the affect programs fits the lack of control and physical characteristics of Aristotelian emotion. The affect program description of emotion also supports the underlying assumption in the Rhetoric that one can induce emotions in an audience if the rhetorician knows exactly what kinds of judgments trigger a particular kind of response in people. This is accomplished today in movies, tv commercials and campaigns through a combination of visual images, music and ideas. If our emotion mechanisms were not modular then the kind of manipulation Aristotle is talking about would be much more difficult because the agent could just resist and control the emotional response and not be subject to manipulation. Furthermore, modularity and information encapsulation would explain the difficulty of changing an emotion by changing the judgments. It explains the phenomenon of emotion inertia or the lingering of an emotion even after the judgments that trigger it are corrected. For instance, we can imagine a situation in which an agent becomes really angry with someone because the other person broke a promise and later finds out that this person was justified in breaking the promise. The anger response may linger in the agent even after he/she becomes aware of the mitigating circumstances. The person may even ask, why am I still angry even though I shouldn't be?

But identifying Aristotelian emotions as affect programs would be incomplete. The affect program theory may provide an adequate way of describing some of the emotions Aristotle talks about, but in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle also talks about emotion as being responsive to reason and in agreement with rational considerations.

This characterization of emotion seems to contradict the impulsive description of emotion. So what is he talking about? Is he talking about higher cognitive emotions here or something else? The answers to these questions will become clear after I consider how the affect program theory and the higher cognitive views on emotion compare to the Aristotelian ideas on emotion.

I begin with a review of what he says about emotions and character and how they can be in harmony with reason before examining how the psychological views could explain the demands of plausibility and harmony of character. Of the non-rational parts of the soul that Aristotle talks about, one of them (the emotional, not the nutritive) has the potential to obey and be persuaded by reason, though it doesn't always do. Aristotle writes,

Another nature in the soul would also seem to be nonrational, though in a way it shares in reason...Clearly it is nonrational. For in the continent and the incontinent person we praise their reason, i.e. the [part] of the soul that has reason, because it exhorts them correctly and toward what is best; but they evidently also have in them some [other] part that is by nature something besides reason, conflicting and struggling with reason...However this [part] as well [as the rational part] appears, as we said, to share in reason. At any rate, in the continent person it obeys reason; and in the temperate and the brave person it presumably listens still better to reason, since there it agrees with reason in everything. (*NE*, 1102b 14-18)

Here Aristotle explains how the spirited part of the soul behaves differently with respect to the rational part in different agents, in this case concerning the appetites. The non-rational part of the soul responsible for emotion is the source of motivation against the rational part in the intemperate and incontinent agents. It follows reason in the continent because the continent ends up acting consistently with reason, satisfying the appetites in moderation. In the temperate it follows reason and provides motivation that is consistent with it in every respect, both in action and feelings. Even though he is talking about the interaction between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul

regarding the appetites, what he says about this interaction can be applied to the four general types of agents discussed in Chapter One. He makes an important distinction between the character of the ordinary person and the character of those brought up and taught in the right way, according to what virtue dictates. When discussing these types of characters we need to keep in mind how emotions may behave like an affect program, a higher cognitive emotion or something else such as a modified version of an affect program response.

First, there is the person who knows that his/her actions are base and consistent with vice, but does them anyway because he/she takes pleasure in the wrong things. This is a case of someone who does what his/her emotions dictate and whose emotions are misguided in most cases. This is the kind of person who has no desire to do the right thing or to have different emotions because he/she is not interested in having a virtuous character or acting in accordance with virtue. This agent only wants to satisfy his or her desires without any regard for what is right and typically experiences emotion in excess. For instance, in cases where bravery is called for this agent will feel excessive fear and cowardly avoid the situation or not enough fear and take unnecessary risks. In cases where the appetites are concerned this type of agent will have an insatiable desire for excessive amounts of food, drink, sex and the like and will act on this desire. In cases where anger is concerned, this type of agent will experience and display an excessive degree of anger and act irascibly or not enough and be insensible to pain and injustice. An agent, so vulnerable to emotion and desire, is not prepared to respond to reason and represents the young and the majority of the population. Aristotle writes,

For the many naturally obey fear, not shame; they avoid what is base because of the penalties, not because it is disgraceful. For since they live by their feelings, they pursue their proper pleasures and the sources of them, and avoid the opposed pains, and have not even a notion of what is fine and [hence] truly pleasant, since they have had no taste of it... What

argument could reform people like these? For it is impossible, or not easy, to alter by argument what has long been absorbed by habit. (Aristotle, *NE*, 1179b12)

So, those who prefer vice choose what is wrong not just because they have strong desires that move them to do so, but also because it is what they think they should do.

Second, we have the weak-willed agent or *akratic* (incontinent with regard to the appetites). For this agent, emotions move him to act contrary to what reason dictates is the right thing to do and the agent follows this impulse to satisfy the desires that accompany the emotions despite knowing and wanting to do the right thing. For instance, we know that there is no real danger in front of us and we want to stand firm, but we run nonetheless. Some of the cases of weakness of will can be easily explained by reference to the affect programs and their modularity. The case of those who choose vice and the case of the *akratic* are both cases where emotion is the motivation force for acting morally wrong. In the former case it is what the agent wants and thinks is right and in the latter case their emotions contradict their rational deliberations and knowledge of what is right.

Third, we have the case of the strong-willed or self-controlled agent (continent about the appetites) or the agent that knows what the right thing to do is and does it, but has emotions and desires that remain contrary to what virtue requires. In this case, emotions contrary to what reason dictates are present but the agent resists the urge to fulfill the desires that accompany them. This agent may stand in the face of danger, but still feel fear and a great pull to run away. This is not a case of virtue because of the presence of conflicting desires. For an action to count as expressing virtue it must stem from a virtuous character and an agent's character exhibits virtue when his or her emotions are in agreement with reason. Fourth there is the virtuous agent, the one who does what virtue require and whose emotions "follow" and "agree" with reason. There

are no conflicting emotions in this agent's soul. In other words, there are no impulses or desires to be fulfilled that provide any motivation to act contrary to reason.

Where do the contemporary theories fit in? How can they deal with these alternative characters or do they address these at all? The first case, the case of the agent motivated to act contrary to virtue is not that interesting. In this case there is agreement between what the agent thinks is best and the desires and emotions. It is easy to see how the affect program theory would explain this kind of behavior. The agent subject to involuntary desires and taken over by emotion sees no problem in acting on them. The higher cognitive emotions in this agent also support short-term self-interest calculations and opportunistic behavior.

The case of the incontinent or weak-willed is a problem that needs explanation. How can a person know that something is the case but fail to act consistently with the beliefs about the situation and the desires to perform the actions that correspond? The affect program theory provides a good explanation of how this is possible. The affect program theory easily deals with this situation because it is consistent with the classic definition of emotions as impulsive, disruptive and unresponsive to rational considerations. No matter what we think about the situation at hand, our emotions will move us to act contrary to our rational desires and no attempts at convincing us to act differently will succeed. Irrational fears are good examples of this case. Information encapsulation and modularity explain well how it is possible to know that something is not really dangerous and still have the physiological reaction of fear. If two separate processes that don't have any communication with each other are responsible for the emotional response and the formulation and processing of prudential judgments respectively, then it makes sense that one could be motivated to act contrary to what one accepts as good or in one's best interest. The affect program description of emotion also



explains the inertia of emotion. Once a particular emotional response is triggered, even if we become aware that the circumstances are different, the emotional response will continue to play itself out. I don't think, given Aristotle's division of the soul into parts and what he says in *De Anima*, that he would disagree with the affect program description of basic or primitive emotions. Each part of the soul could correspond to separate neurological mechanisms. If Aristotle had been aware of the affect program research, I speculate that he would agree that it explains well how emotions are able to motivate while ignoring reason and why we have to use force when someone is overtaken by emotion and not listening to arguments.

When it comes to emotions that do not fit the affect program description, such as jealousy, guilt, love and shame among others, the higher cognitive emotion model inspired by Frank, would also be able to explain weakness of will. Since the focus in this model is that emotion is an irruptive motivational state that does not support certain kinds of rational considerations, it is easy to see how these kinds of emotion can take over and motivate action contrary to what we think is the right thing to do in a particular situation. Frank developed his commitment model of emotion precisely as an answer to a kind of "irrational action", so in this sense it can justify action that goes against means-ends reasoning. If some emotions, as Griffiths suggests, are not controlled by the same involuntary mechanism as affect programs, they can still be irruptive and provide a motivation to act contrary to reason (which for Aristotle means, contrary to virtue). Aristotle might agree that even if higher cognitive emotions are more integrated with cognitive processes and less primitive than basic emotions, they can still contradict reason and be misguided by being associated with pleasure and pain in the wrong way.

The third case, the case of the strong-willed or self-controlled, is a little more difficult to explain since in this type of agent emotions “obey” reason at least in the sense that the agent is still capable of doing the right thing despite an inclination not to. This is still consistent with emotions being disruptive because for emotions to qualify as disruptive we don’t necessarily have to act on them. The internal struggle and pull the continent agent feels to act against what reason dictates is enough to qualify as a disruptive motivational state. But even if we accept this definition of irruptive, the affect program theory would have to explain why emotion is weaker as a motivational force and how rational considerations manage to prevail in such situations, even with the presence of a strong and involuntary impulse to act differently. We can come up with plenty of plausible examples for the self-controlled agent. Imagine an alcoholic who manages to resist the urge to drink despite a strong inclination to do so. Or consider the agent who does something strictly because it is the right thing to do, despite a motivation to do something different and follow conflicting desires. In this case we need an explanation from the contemporary views for how, given the nature of primitive emotions, it is possible for some agents to overcome these emotions, like great fear, while other agents cannot resist the urge and act on them. How is it possible for reason to get the edge over the emotion impulse when the mechanisms underlying emotion are involuntary and encapsulated? Is it that reason just happens to provide a stronger motivation independently of what the affective mechanism is doing? Or, as Aristotle suggests, is there some communication between reason and emotion such that emotion responds to reason, adapts to what reason considers is right and provides an additional motivation for acting? For Aristotle even if there is a strong internal conflict in this kind of agent, emotion still “shares” some in reason and that’s why the self-controlled is better and much closer to virtue than the weak-willed. The continent does

what is right because it is right and not because of stubbornness or coincidence.

Aristotle writes: "Another sort of person is contrary to him (the incontinent). [This is the continent person] who abides [by reason] and does not abandon himself, not because of his feelings at least. It is evident from this that the continent person's state is excellent, and the incontinent person's state is base" (Aristotle, *NE*, 1151a28). The continent person does what is right, following reason despite desires to act contrary to virtue because it is what virtue requires. One could argue that perhaps this is possible because emotion in this sort of person is weak and thus the desires to act contrary to reason are easy to resist. But for Aristotle, the emotions and corresponding desires the self-controlled resists are not necessarily weaker. He illustrates this idea by contrasting the continent with the incontinent when he writes,

Further, if the continent person must have strong and base appetites, the temperate person will not be continent nor the continent person temperate. For the temperate person is not the sort to have either excessive or base appetites; but [the continent person] must have both...For if his appetites are good, the state that prevents him from following them must be base, so that not all continence is excellent. If, on the other hand, the appetites are weak and not base, continence is nothing impressive; and if they are base and weak, it is nothing great. (Aristotle, *NE*, 1146a10)

Hence, the continence that is excellent, admirable, and close to virtue (though not virtue itself) is what obtains when the agent follows reason in the presence of strong contrary desires. When it comes to affect programs it is difficult to explain why, in the presence of a strong automated and involuntary response, some people act and avoid the object or situation, as in most cases of primitive fear, while others can't resist even if they want to. For Aristotle, it is plausible for both subjects to experience a similar fear response, but for one of them to act accordingly and for the other to act contrary to it because the difference is in their training and not necessarily in the strength of the response itself. This is a possibility that those developing the affect program theory should explain, but

do not address. But even though this is an area that contemporary research needs to address, there is nothing in the definition of affect programs that says a person feeling a particular emotional response needs to act a certain way in order for it to count as an affect program. Fear of flying prevents some people from getting on the plane while others may actually fly experiencing the full-fledged fear response during the flight. Of course, emotions wouldn't be as significant in our lives if they didn't also motivate us to act in certain ways. Fear does make a person more likely to avoid its object, but it is not a necessary condition that he/she does. What characterizes the affect program response is the involuntary physiological response. So even though the affect program theory does not explain how the emotional response motivates and what determines its motivational force, it does not contradict the plausibility of the self-controlled agent.

When it comes to the higher cognitive emotions we don't have much information on how strong these emotions are as irruptive states. Again, it is not clear why in some cases we can experience these emotions without having to act on them and why in other situations the emotions move us to act in ways that contradict certain types of rational considerations. Aristotle's case of the strong-willed agent presents the possibility of experiencing strong emotion like jealousy or love and not acting on it for the sake of virtue. In Frank's model, the higher cognitive emotions are by definition irruptive to motivation from other rational sources, so it is not clear how this theory would explain resistance to such desires.

Finally, there is the case of the virtuous agent and how the psychological theories can explain it. This is perhaps the most difficult type of agent and character to explain because the virtuous agent not only acts according to what reason and virtue dictate, but also has no contrary or conflicting desires. The character of the virtuous agent is such that there is agreement between reason and emotion, so when considering this case I

will be dealing with the second Aristotelian demand or the requirement for harmony in the soul. A theory of emotion should be able to explain the kind of psychological harmony and the responsiveness of emotion to rational considerations that Aristotle attributes to those brought up to have a life of virtue. The desires, impulses and physical reactions that comprise the emotional response in the virtuous agent do not contradict what reason determines to be right. The virtuous agent's character is such that when faced with different circumstances the emotions that arise will neither be excessive nor deficient; they will express virtue and be the right response in the right measure and at the right time. Sometimes there will be circumstances in which the information involved in triggering an emotion is false or incomplete. In these situations the character of the virtuous agent must allow for the adjustment of the emotion once the judgments are corrected because it is not enough to exhibit the appropriate response in different circumstances, but emotion must also respond to changes in rational considerations and adjust accordingly. If we look at various psychological theories and how they deal with this issue, we will not find any discussion of the possibility of a person who does not experience any type of irrational or undesirable emotion. Aristotle recognizes that virtue is difficult to achieve and that only a select group of people, who grow up under special circumstances, is able to have the emotional responses that virtue prescribes. Even if that is the case, the contemporary theories would still have to consider this possibility and account for how primitive emotions that are evolutionarily advantageous would arise only at the right time and in the right measure. This possibility will be very difficult for the affect program to account for because the responses for these emotions are automated, reflex-like and, for the most part, independent of other mechanisms. It will be even more difficult for the affect program theory to explain how an occurrent primitive emotion can be corrected (or made

responsive to reason) once the response is happening. Griffiths cites Ekman's work on cultural display rules and the way in which members of some cultures attempt to control part of their emotional response:

In studies of facial expression in Japanese and American students Ekman and his collaborators found that the Japanese suppressed their facial expressions in the presence of authority figures. They superimposed voluntary muscle movements so as to produce a polite smile. These voluntary movements were initiated so quickly that the initial emotional expressions could be detected only by using frame-by-frame analysis of videotapes. (Griffiths, 1997, 156)

This example illustrates the point that some people try to consciously control some aspects of the involuntary affect program response by masking, in this case, the corresponding facial expressions. But this is not exactly what Aristotle had in mind when talking about how emotions can react to reason and changes in judgments. It is not the case that the virtuous agent learns to mask the underlying emotional response and fake the appropriate one. The emotion and thus the response itself must change in the agent according to changes in the judgments that play a role in triggering it.

Aristotle would agree that there are many emotions that in most people behave like affect programs. The affect program description of emotion is compatible with his description of emotion as agitated states that are unresponsive to reason. However, in the virtuous agent we find emotions that are easily corrected, not reflex-like and consistent with reason. Aristotle would agree that there are cases where emotions like guilt, envy, benevolence and those Griffiths regards as highly cognitive, don't exhibit the same characteristics of primitive emotions. When this happens this is due to conditioning and training of character, not because emotion is a different kind of phenomena. Emotions manifest themselves differently, with different intensity, duration and responsiveness to reason, depending on the condition of the agent. Having emotions that involve more sophisticated processes and judgments does not

mean they qualify as the type of emotions a virtuous person must exhibit. Even when Aristotle talks about anger or fear, when it comes to the virtuous agent, the response is not an irrational reflex that takes over, but a response that comes up under the right circumstances due to practical wisdom. How do the psychological views I describe here deal with this possibility of the existence of the virtuous person? The affect program description is limited when it comes to considering the possibility of having emotions that are responsive and in harmony with reason since by definition these emotions are involuntary and rely on mechanisms that operate independently of other rationally integrated mechanisms. This theory explains the behavior of stereotypical uncontrollable or irrational emotions that most people experience and we can relate to, but it doesn't explain the type of character that characterizes a virtuous agent.

We would expect the discussion on the higher cognitive emotions to be more helpful in explaining the virtuous character but it doesn't account for the possibility of a character devoid of emotions that conflict with reason. It seems that higher cognitive emotions described as commitment enforcers are compatible with the character required by the virtuous agent because such commitments as loyalty, friendship and altruism are in fact part of what virtue requires and call for emotions such as benevolence, sympathy, compassion and so on. But these would still need to be expressed in the appropriate way, to the appropriate degree and for the right reasons in order to count as expressions of virtue. Even if these higher cognitive emotions happened to be in line with the requirements of virtue, other elements are necessary for the expression of full virtue. As Hursthouse points out, having an inclination to benefit others and to have positive feelings towards others is not a sufficient condition for acting in accordance with virtue. She writes,

In short, the emotions of sympathy, compassion and love, viewed simply as psychological phenomena, are no guarantee of right action or acting

well. There is nothing about them, qua natural inclinations, which guarantees that they occur ‘in complete harmony with reason’, that is, that they occur when, and only when, they should, towards the people whose circumstances should occasion them, consistently, on reasonable grounds and to an appropriate degree, as Aristotelian virtue requires. (Hursthouse, 1999, 102)

So, even the case of the positive higher cognitive emotions, there are a lot more demands for emotion to meet than just enforcing certain commitments. The contemporary views describe the higher cognitive emotions as disruptive and enforcers of commitments contrary to calculations of self-interest. But for Aristotle, virtue is, after all, the ultimate expression of human excellence and promotes what is truly good for us. If the emotional dispositions are the correct ones but there is no harmony because they conflict with rational calculations, then we are not talking about a virtuous person. Having emotions that promote maintaining certain kinds of commitments, even if they are for the good of others, while contradicting other rational demands and desires does not promote the kind of harmony of character that the virtuous agent must possess. The virtuous would not have this conflict because they would not define rational action in terms of self-interest. Frank’s theory has the potential for explaining the virtuous character if the emotions that develop are those that promote the right kinds of commitments and that are consistent with rational considerations of what is virtuous to do and feel. The issue of whether these higher cognitive emotions can be responsive to reason in the way that Aristotle describes highlights an area where we need more discussion in contemporary moral psychology. Characterizing higher cognitive emotions as more sophisticated and connected to reason in some way, is not enough to determine if they meet the criteria of Aristotelian emotion that is always in line with practical reason and responds to changes in judgments and information. The second Aristotelian demand this dissertation highlights or the requirement of harmony of



character calls for an agreement between reason and emotion that is not explained by just identifying a group of emotions that does not share the characteristics of affect programs. Even if Griffiths is right about emotions like guilt, shame and envy (among others) that seem to be more cognitively involved and play a role in motivating plans of action (Griffiths, 1997, 102), we still have the problem of whether they can conform to the rational considerations of virtue. What matters for Aristotelian virtues of character, is not whether emotion interferes with rationality defined as the promotion of self-interest, but whether emotion supports the dictates of reason as conceived by the virtuous agent. They cannot be sources of irruptive motivations if by irruptive we mean that they interfere with rational calculations of any kind. In addition, excellence in the expression of emotion cannot occur if the agent is subject to inflexible, uncontrollable and involuntary responses. The character of a virtuous agent should be such that it reacts to a realization that one's judgments needs to be revised and corrected given new and updated information. An attempt to explain harmony of character cannot be sufficiently achieved by appealing to a different class of emotion, because we still need to deal with the issue of what happens to affect program emotions when we become virtuous. If Griffiths is right about the separation of emotion into these categories, then we need separate explanations for the Aristotelian issues, one for each theory.

The appraisal perspective on higher cognitive emotions is more helpful for dealing with the question of responsiveness to reason, given that it emphasizes the conceptual element of emotion. When talking about appraisal theories, Griffiths writes,

Guilt, shame, resentment, for example, seem connected by their very definitions to a range of sophisticated conceptual abilities. This perspective is supported by the psychological literature on emotional appraisal. The influential account of Lazarus (1991) suggests that each emotion is caused by an appraisal whose content can be captured by a 'core relational theme'. Guilt is caused by the appraisal that one has transgressed a moral imperative, and shame by the appraisal that one has

failed to live up to an ego ideal. These appear to be paradigmatically conceptual thoughts, which demand possession of concepts such as “moral imperative”, “self”, and “ideal”. (Griffiths, 9-10, 2008)

This association of emotion with an appraisal that requires conceptual content<sup>3</sup> seems to be the kind of emotion that an Aristotelian view needs in order to meet the requirement that emotion is responsive to judgments. Emotion here is not just caused by an appraisal, but depends on the possession of concepts that can be mistaken and thus corrected. It could be possible in this view to have agents who reliably makes the right kinds of appraisals, possesses the correct concepts and understanding of what virtue entails, and is disposed to have emotions that dissipate when they find that they made the wrong appraisal due to circumstances beyond their control. But we must question whether making the definition of emotion more “cognitive” or “conceptual” is the best way to explain virtuous character and the disposition to have harmony between reason and emotion. When examining views for a comparison with the Aristotelian perspective we should not forget the physiological aspect of emotion that Aristotle also includes. It is important that we do not neglect the effects of the bodily changes because a definition of emotion that includes concepts as elements of emotion is not enough for explaining how the involuntary bodily responses come to be in harmony with reason. One of the advantages of the embodied appraisal approach is that it preserves the physical manifestation of emotion that is a necessary element in the Aristotelian view. A description of emotion that emphasizes both the conceptual and physical aspects of emotion and that describes higher cognitive emotions as derivations of primitive emotion has the potential for providing an explanation of harmony that brings together the bodily changes and the judgments that trigger them. Even though embodied

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<sup>3</sup> Griffiths does not agree with this description of emotion. In recent work (Griffiths, 2008) he defends a situated perspective of emotion. Revised versions of appraisal theories, such as Prinz’ embodied appraisals and others, eliminate the necessity of conceptual content in emotion, which Griffiths finds problematic.

appraisals include bodily changes, somatic feelings and action tendencies, they involve cognitive evaluation as causes of emotion. Prinz writes,

At least in humans, even basic emotions involve, in one way or another, a cognitive assessment. We are often frightened by “cognitively apperceived dangers”, such as when we are walking down a dark street and we feel fear because we perceive the situation as dangerous... Emotions of any kind are embedded in rich cognitive episodes. (Prinz, 2004, 98)

On this view complex thoughts or judgments can be the cause of basic and higher cognitive emotions alike. Even though they are not constituent parts of emotion, cognitive assessments can “buffer, elicit, and elaborate” (Prinz, 2004, 98) embodied appraisals and play a role in identifying different emotions. The question for this view is whether conditioning agents to having certain kinds of judgments and situations elicit particular emotions in them, is enough for the kind of harmony Aristotelians describe.

Similar problems arise when we consider the next Aristotelian demand for emotion as motivational support. This demand entails the requirement that a theory of emotions must pay attention to emotion as motivational support of reason and not just as an irruptive motivational state. In Aristotelian virtue theory, emotion provides additional motivation to act consistently with virtue. It is important for emotion not to contradict rational considerations, but the manifestation of emotion also needs to support the dictates of reason. As explained before, emotion involves physiological changes and desires that motivate us to act in certain ways. In virtue theory, reason provides a motivation for acting but emotion provides additional motivation for doing what virtue requires of us. Given the way the psychological theories explained here describe the role of emotion, I don't think any of these views would have a problem describing emotion as having powerful motivational force. The function of affect programs is to provide “rapid, fail-safe responses to stimuli correlated with basic

survival needs" (Griffiths, 1997, 247). Affect program responses evolved to prepare us for advantageous behaviors and therefore predispose us to act. The motivation to act that they produce, arises surprisingly fast, as a result of an autonomic response and in the form of a primitive preparedness to respond in ways that were advantageous for our species. If emotion only operates as a quick response to situations we are hard-wired to respond to in specific ways and for evolutionary reasons, it is difficult to see how it could become a motivation to support other considerations. We must grant that even the virtuous agent is allowed to be subject to powerful primitive emotions as in the case of fear for one's life. But even in those situations the agent must be conditioned to react in ways that exhibit the virtues. For instance, fear for one's life is acceptable, but courage requires that the virtuous resist this fear in certain kinds of situations as in the case of a battle. Without an explanation of whether affect program emotions can be trained to motivate in the direction of virtue, it seems that we will always be vulnerable to their activation when we encounter the various stimuli that elicit them and that there is little we can do when this happens. But if there is a way to manipulate and develop these types of emotion to support virtue, they could be exactly what Aristotle needs in a virtuous agent to provide a fast and reliable response to morally pressing situations, not for the purpose of survival but for the new purpose of living in an excellent way. I'll continue to explore this possibility when I discuss the demand for training of emotion.

As we saw above, even though Griffiths describes higher cognitive emotions as integrated with higher cognitive processes, they are also defined as irruptive to behavior and reinforced by pleasure or pain. I must qualify what being irruptive to behavior means and if it really contradicts virtue. If being irruptive to behavior means that these emotions contradict what we determine to be the right thing to do, then this model is not helpful for answering the Aristotelian demand. But, if it only means that these emotions

contradict rational calculations of short-term self-interest while moving us to honor things like friendship, loyalty and honorable commitments, then this model might be compatible with the Aristotelian requirements for the motivational support of virtue. But saying that higher cognitive emotions can support virtue is not enough. We must still determine whether we can develop in an agent the disposition to feel emotions like, guilt, shame, resentment, envy and embarrassment when it is appropriate for virtue and to the degree that is needed for virtue. If we take the Aristotelian demand seriously it should be possible for emotions, of any kind, to be sources of desires to do what we determine, through rational deliberation, to be the right actions to take.

I will now explore the next Aristotelian demand regarding emotion and moral perception. Again, any theory of emotion should pay attention to how emotion can support virtuous action by influencing our sensitivity to moral salience. The issue of emotion and moral perception is another area where it is uncontroversial for any theory to admit that emotion affects how we see things. Ekman writes,

I expect that specific emotions regulate the way in which we think, and that this will be evident in memories, imagery and expectations. I suspect that the relationship between emotions and thoughts is not solely a function of social learning because of biological constraints put on the cognitive system as well as the emotion system. (Ekman, 1999)

Although Ekman here recognizes that emotion has some impact on cognitive processes, there is not much elaboration (at least on the theories explored above) on how exactly emotion affects practical reasoning and to what degree. Most theories focus on the input side of emotion and what causes emotion, but don't pay enough attention to the output side of emotion and how it could affect perceiving and other cognitive processes.

Ekman suggests that how emotion impacts how we think is limited by biology, but we don't know if the limitations he is talking about are relevant to the specific Aristotelian concerns about perception of situations. Griffiths also comments on how affect

programs can influence other cognitive processes when he writes: "The occurrence of an affect program could, for example, call up memories associated with that emotion...It could call into play special decision rules, such as making risk-averse choices in the context of fear" (Griffiths, 1997, 121). On an Aristotelian view we need more than a general way in which a short and intense emotion temporarily affects our perception of a situation and the associations we make with events and objects in memories. Even if we take a merely instrumental view of emotion and perception, the virtuous agent must not only feel the right kinds of emotion, but the emotions must help in enhancing the sensitivity of the agent to situations that need attention and action. As Aristotle himself suggests, things appear differently to people depending on the emotions they feel. The character or disposition to feel emotion will also have an effect on how the agent sees the world and deliberates to reach a practical result. A person who has a tendency to feel compassion and sympathy towards others will be more sensitive to identifying the situations and/or people who require the corresponding sympathetic gesture. Agents already affected by emotion, positive or negative, will also view the circumstances they encounter during that period differently. A joyous person does not have the same perspective as a sad person whose focus is on the loss and pain, or as an angry person whose focus is on the pain of betrayal and the opportunities for retaliation. The goal of the virtuous agent is to have the emotional disposition that will help in identifying the events that call for the expression of virtue and to feel the kinds of emotion that will continue to support the right perception of events. Before a virtuous person performs a charitable act, she must recognize that there is someone in need and the opportunity for helping. Sometimes such opportunities are not as obvious to those that have not been trained to recognize them. The recognition that a situation calls for a particular reaction or action depends on what the agent has been taught to notice and the associations made

between having, or being disposed to having certain emotions and different events. Even if emotion is merely instrumental to practical deliberation, it still impacts what we notice and what we ignore, supporting virtue or distracting from the requirements of virtue. Thus, a psychological theory of emotion must pay attention to how emotion helps or interferes with the perception of moral salience in particular. Psychological theories must pay more attention to emotion as irruptive sources of perception. The more extreme view that emotion not only influences perception, but shapes the way we think and deliberate when faced with situations that require practical deliberation, by putting constraints both on what we notice and on the structure of the arguments that will appeal to us, requires an even more detailed consideration of the interaction between emotion and rational processes. We need a better understanding of how emotion affects perception in the context of virtue that goes beyond how emotion affects action.

All these questions lead to the final issue to consider, the demand for modification and training of emotion. If Aristotelians are right, psychological theories of emotion should explain how emotion could be cultivated or modified to fulfill the requirements of virtue. So, I now turn to the question of whether the psychological theories of affect program emotions and higher cognitive emotions, adequately address the possibility of training and modification of emotion in the Aristotelian way. Aristotle accounts for the existence of the virtuous agent, not by distinguishing emotions as primitive vs. cognitive, but by distinguishing emotion in those agents who have been properly brought up and those who are too young or have not had the proper upbringing. If the virtuous agent is a plausible type of agent, it must be possible for emotion to be trained to meet the requirements of virtue. Let's review what Aristotle says about moral education to determine how the contemporary views may deal with

the last demand for the contemporary views we will discuss here. For Aristotle the emotions behave similar to the stereotypical affect programs in the young and the uneducated<sup>4</sup>. When one has not been brought up in the proper way, one will continue to be motivated by emotions and the appetites and one will not find pleasure and pain in the right sorts of things and in the correct circumstances. But with the right upbringing it is possible, according to Aristotle, to change character and develop a reliable disposition<sup>5</sup> to act and feel in certain ways and to find pleasure and pain in different things. As Hursthouse explains, the type of character that the virtuous person possesses involves more than just a tendency to act, but deep-rooted and well-established excellent ways to act and feel that involve wisdom. She writes,

One important fact about people's virtues and vices is that, once acquired, they are strongly entrenched, precisely because they involve so much more than mere tendencies to act in certain ways. A change in such character traits is a profound change, one that goes, as we say, 'all the way down'. Such a change can happen slowly, but on the rare occasions when it happens suddenly, the change calls for special explanations-religious conversion, an experience that changes the person's whole outlook on life, brain damage or drugs. It is certainly not a change that one can just decide to bring about oneself overnight, as one might decide to break the habit of a lifetime and cease to have coffee for breakfast. (Hursthouse, 1999, 12)

Hursthouse points out that the virtues are not just tendencies or habits to act and feel in certain ways, but well established states of character that produce reliable feelings and actions for the right reasons. A virtue is not just a disposition to behave in certain ways because it takes practical wisdom to act and feel in the appropriate way given specific

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<sup>4</sup> See Hursthouse (1999) for a discussion of why in an Aristotelian theory emotions in children are not the same as the emotions in adults who are not well brought up. Here I will focus on the aspects that adults share with young agents in so far as they may be dominated by emotion and thus lack the corresponding virtues.

<sup>5</sup> When I talk about character I will be talking about the disposition to behave or experience certain emotions, but this disposition has a direct effect on how the occurrent emotions behave in the agent. A virtuous agent will be excellent in all aspects of moral action. This agent will have a virtuous character or firm and reliable disposition to react and behave in certain ways but will also display virtue in the actual emotions he or she experiences.



circumstances. This shift in character requires time and the appropriate upbringing under the right circumstances. Even Aristotle admits that most people are not well brought up and do not have full virtue because it is difficult to achieve this state of character. The young as well as many adults lack practical wisdom and continue to be guided by their passions. But for those few who go through the right process, their characters are transformed in such a way that their actions stem from practical wisdom, the right reasons for acting and a character that simultaneously exhibits virtue in the expression of emotion and supports rational considerations. This, according to Aristotle, is achieved through a process of habituation that entails repeatedly exposing the agents to different circumstances that call for the exercise of virtue, making the agent act appropriately and using pleasure or pain to make the right sorts of associations. At the beginning the agent is not going to act virtuously on her own or experience the desired emotions, but eventually a shift occurs and the agent begins to feel pleasure in acting virtuously and pain in going against virtue on her own. With time, exposure to different circumstances and practice, the agent develops the practical wisdom necessary to determine what kind of action is appropriate in different situations and begins to express the right kinds of emotions. This training reaches a point where even more primitive emotions like anger and fear get to the point where the appropriate kinds of situations trigger them. It is not the case that virtuous agents never feel anger or fear<sup>6</sup>, or that these cease to be physical reactions, but rather that they arise when it is appropriate for the virtuous agent to feel such emotions and to the appropriate degree. Agents in training must, in a way, be desensitized to old causes of emotion and learn to have the emotional responses that a virtuous person must have, when the virtuous

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<sup>6</sup> Unlike the case of the Stoic sages, the goal in achieving Aristotelian virtue is not to eliminate the passions or change our judgments of what is truly good and what we value to the point that almost all emotional reactions cease to arise.

person has them. They must also begin to recognize the reasons why this is good and what virtue requires. Even after the agents comes to fully understanding why training their character in that way is what accords with virtue, the new associations must be well established and become like second nature because the agent must not stop to ponder how she must react and why, with every situation she encounters in life. The agent's reasons for acting will still stem from rational choice resulting from practical reason, not inclination, but the agent's emotional state will be in line with that choice providing the appropriate feelings and consistent desires to act.

When we look at the contemporary views under discussion, we find that there is a lot of work to be done when it comes to the topic of the training of emotion. The emphasis of affect program descriptions is on the involuntary nature of emotion and information encapsulation. This focus seems to indicate that such responses could not be modified. The closest the affect program theories come to considering the modification of emotion is when they talk about a new stimulus that was not selected for causing an affect program response. We saw this in the example of fear of things like exams and other anxiety causing events that our ancestors did not encounter, but that we have learned to associate with danger and thus to exhibit the same primitive fear response we are hard-wired to experience towards things like snakes. Aristotle would certainly be interested in this discussion because when he talks about habituation he seems to be implying that we need to replace some of the causes of emotion and make new associations between new stimuli and the emotional responses that a virtuous person must have.

Another aspect of the affect program project that would be appealing to Aristotle is how ingrained these emotional responses can be, since the virtuous agents often need to have a reliable and fast (when the situation requires it) response that is not always the

result of slow deliberation. Past experiences and exposure to different kinds of situations prepare the person to respond in a way that with time becomes faster and more natural to the agent. The neural mechanisms that control the affect program responses would certainly support this aspect of the virtuous character. Insofar as basic emotions are concerned, the process of habituation would be taking advantage of this system and manipulating it to replace the typical causes of emotion with the desired ones. The affect program theory does not explore the plausibility of modifying basic emotions such as fear and anger over a period of time, through a methodical process and for the purpose of moral training. Saying that emotions are controlled by processes beyond immediate cognitive control only means that certain emotions in certain types of characters would be very difficult to control once they are triggered, but it doesn't address the issue of whether and how one could cultivate a character that produces emotional reactions that fit certain criteria and that do not contradict rational considerations based on the definition of virtue. Information encapsulation and modularity explain irrational fears, but do not address how we could start with primitive emotions and somehow cultivate them so that they only arise under specific conditions like those that trigger emotion in the virtuous agent.

If we accept the Aristotelian suggestions for emotion, we must consider the possibility of cultivating a character that doesn't exhibit irrational fears, unjustified anger, etc. Aristotelians go even further. They suggest that certain emotions must not arise, but also that the virtuous agent must have the kinds of emotional responses that respond to arguments and changes in judgments and assessments of situations. This aspect of virtuous action is more difficult to explain using only the model for affect programs. Once an emotion gets started, if we are talking about an affect program, it will be over before we can make any conscious attempts to change it. Here Aristotelians

would either have to allow the virtuous agents the experience of fast and involuntary emotions under certain circumstances or claim that the virtuous will not even be susceptible to these because they will be replaced by milder and more responsive emotions during training. How different emotions become responsive to reason depends on the version of Aristotelian theory we look at since they range in how cognitive emotion turns out to be. But, regardless of which Aristotelian view we consider, they all agree that most of the emotions that the virtuous agent exhibits are not fast, involuntary responses that take over. Perhaps one of the reasons virtuous people are so rare is that our biology makes it more difficult to have excellent emotional disposition and we need a very special kind of upbringing and training to change that. But if we accept the Aristotelian ideas as plausible, we must look for explanations of possible ways to train and modify these involuntary and automatic responses, in order to bridge the gaps between virtue theory and contemporary psychology.

When we look to the higher cognitive emotions, we have to ask the same question: are these emotions that can be developed to fit the criteria of the virtue theories? In some cases some of these emotions will even have to be eliminated because certain negative emotions such as jealousy have no place in the virtuous character. Going back to Frank's ideas about emotion, whether we can modify these higher cognitive emotions will depend on how strong the affective element that accompanies them is. Since these emotions get their motivational force and irruptive description from the feeling associated with the commitment, a theory of emotional development should look at how to establish and change the commitments of the agent through changing the feelings associated with such commitments. In the case of loyalty, the goal would be to teach the agent to have feelings that support the commitment to the right kind of people, but also to the appropriate degree. If we accept the view that higher cognitive emotions

are effects of basic emotions, then we run into similar issues as when we talk about modifying affect program emotions. We can imagine a system of habituation that works on manipulating the positive and negative feelings associated with different types of commitments, but if higher cognitive emotions are derivations or combinations of basic emotions, we still need to explain how the virtuous agent could have emotions that behave in some ways like affect program responses. The description of higher cognitive emotions as emotions that developed from the experience of basic emotions, but that do not have the same properties of affect program responses, seems like a view more compatible with the Aristotelian demands. This model opens up the possibility for emotions that build on primitive emotions and go beyond them by engaging other mechanisms that do not produce a rapid and cognitively impenetrable response and by including beliefs and desires as elements of the emotion, not just triggers.

The appraisal theories go even further in defining higher cognitive emotion as a derivation of primitive emotions. This is an advantage because Aristotle starts with untrained characters, subject to involuntary emotions, that get transformed into characters that exhibit emotions that seem more integrated with beliefs and desires and that support the dictates of reason. Embodied appraisal theories start out with basic emotions we are hard wired to experience with specific triggers similar to affect program emotions. But instead of explaining higher cognitive emotions as completely different from primitive emotions, on this view there is a spectrum of emotion ranging from basic to more sophisticated. Emotions can develop and evolve through a process of recognizing what the primitive emotions represent for us and how we relate to the world and later making new associations between new objects and situations and the same appraisals. Repeated associations of new situations with past experiences of emotion establish new judgments and propositions as causes of emotion for affect

program emotions and higher cognitive emotions alike. This kind of conditioning could explain how the virtuous agent develops the disposition to react emotionally to the appropriate situations and triggers in a way that manifests wisdom.

The replacement of the triggers of emotion in ordinary agents with those that cause the appropriate emotions in virtuous agents partially explains the character of the virtuous person. When emotion is triggered in the virtuous agent, the agent must have harmony and a kind of command of character that seems to be incompatible with the features of basic emotions, such as the affect program responses. The key to understanding how the embodied appraisal views can explain the possibility of emotion having any kind of responsiveness to rational considerations is in the partial modularity of the affective mechanisms. Frank suggests this idea when he writes,

We now know, of course, that there are virtually no nerve pathways that are not at least partly subject to conscious manipulation. The accomplished yogi, for example, can regulate body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure, and other metabolic processes that in most people are well beyond purposeful control. Even untrained people, with effort, are often able to suppress deeply habituated movements and actions. (Frank, 1988, 118-119)

Frank is merely pointing out that even modular processes are not completely involuntary and with specific training we can acquire control over the most automatic processes. Emotions are controlled by some of the processes that are the most difficult to consciously control, but perhaps this disposition can be manipulated and modified over a period of time so that the fast and involuntary types of responses arise only under a small set of circumstances.

Embodied appraisal theories explain how primitive emotions can acquire new causes, but they also make room for the cognitive aspect of emotion by identifying them with appraisals. The embodied appraisal model allows for an evolution of emotion in the agent that becomes more involved with cognitive processes through learning while

maintaining the physical changes that characterize emotion and provide their influence on motivation and our perceptual capacities. This preservation of the affective element and the cognitive development of primitive emotions provide an explanation of how emotions like anger can initially operate as a primitive emotion, but can evolve into a more complex emotion like jealousy, which is a more elaborate representation of what anger used to represent (there has been a demeaning offense towards me). The new judgment and appraisal of the situation qualifies the offense as infidelity (instead of a different emotion). Without the evaluation that identifies the situation as this kind of offense, we would just have basic anger, but without the affective reaction that accompanies jealousy we could hardly identify the state of jealousy as an irruptive state that affects our desires and the way we think and perceive. If higher cognitive emotions are elaborations of primitive emotions, they interfere with our thinking process in the same way as the primitive emotions do. Fear would make us more sensitive and alert to avoiding the dangerous object or situation we are in, anger would make us more attentive to rectifying the offense suffered, and so on. The affective element also explains why in certain instances higher cognitive emotions might linger even after the original appraisal that caused them has been corrected (Prinz, 2004, 96). The uncomfortable feeling of anger qualified as jealousy, may continue even after one finds out that the infidelity did not occur after all.

Aristotelians could agree with these explanations of different phenomena, but going back to the Aristotelian demands, we need to ask is this enough to explain the development of the virtuous character? While Aristotelians might agree with a more unified theory of emotion that talks about the evolution of emotion in the agent and recognizes the strong physiological changes that misguides those who are not yet virtuous, we are missing an account of how this affective element can be trained to be of

service to virtue and how some emotions could be eliminated or subdued all together. An emotion that tends to linger in the agent after the cognitive appraisals have been corrected, should not be part of the virtuous agent's reactions to situations and the disposition to react in such a way should thus be removed (or at least subdued) from the agents' character through training. Some emotions should not be part of the virtuous character just because of their negative nature. But other emotions (even anger under certain circumstances) should be part of the virtuous agents' reactions and the disposition to experience them should be promoted and cultivated. The emotions that the virtuous agents experience will still have an affective aspect that will continue to motivate action as virtue requires and will change the way we think and perceive situations, but in a desired way. We could say that emotion in the virtuous remains irruptive because it influences the agent in various ways, but not in a negative way or against rational considerations as both Griffiths and Prinz suggest. We get part of what is needed for the process of habituation but we are still missing important details regarding the modification of the output of emotion. On the views explained we get a general idea of how the causes and triggers of emotion could be replaced, but we don't see an account of how the intensity of the emotional responses could be modified. We also need an account of how certain negative emotions can be eliminated while others more positive ones emphasized.

To summarize, there are lots of areas that the psychological views of emotion still need to develop and elaborate to provide explanations for the issues inspired by Aristotelian virtue theories with regards to the emotions and virtue. Depending on which psychological features of emotion a theory emphasizes and how it accounts for some of the different ways emotions manifest, we get a clearer idea of how some of the Aristotelian demands can be explained. (1) The demand for an explanation of how



emotion can lead to seemingly irrational action can be explained by modularity in the affect programs and by the role of commitment enforcers in the higher cognitive view that Griffiths discusses. (2) The demand for an explanation of harmony of character is met by explaining the possibility of emotion not contradicting reason and by explaining the possibility of having emotions that react and follow changes and corrections in the judgments that cause them. The way Griffiths divides the study of emotion and his emphasis on the involuntary and automatic features of affect programs that distinguish them from higher cognitive emotions suggests that affect programs would not change according to rational considerations, but higher cognitive emotions would respond to information in other systems. One of the problems with this view is that we need an explanation of how affect program responses can be modified to fit the virtuous character. Another problem for this view is that it relies on a definition of higher cognitive emotions as commitment enforcers that arise as contradictions to rational calculations of short-term self-interest. Even if higher cognitive emotions are subject to rational influence, on this model we don't get the psychological harmony that Aristotelians want. A look at embodied appraisal views suggests that even the more basic emotional responses may be more cognitively penetrable than originally thought. (3) In addition to an explanation of how emotion can stop contradicting reason, we need an explanation of how emotion can be a source of additional supportive motivation for the rational calculations of virtue. This is a difficult question to answer when the psychological theories emphasize the role of emotion as irruptive motivational states both for affect program and higher cognitive emotions. (4) We need more research and discussion on how emotion impacts cognitive processes important to moral action, such as perception and practical reasoning. The Aristotelian discussion of the impact of emotion on perceptions of moral salience and on the way we think and even become

convinced by arguments provides a good model for the specific areas the psychological theories should pay attention to when considering how emotion influences higher cognitive processes. (5) Finally, psychological theories should be able to explain the different ways our emotional dispositions could be modified, cultivated or adapted, especially given their tendency to disrupt our desires and rational deliberations of what we should do. Aristotle provides a plausible goal for the disposition to emotionally react consistently with virtue and hints at what the training of character would involve. Even though affect program emotions tend to be involuntary, automatic and modular, we can learn to associate new kinds of stimulus with the responses and replace the triggers of particular emotions with those that would trigger them in the virtuous agent. Similarly, embodied appraisal views of emotion suggest that through a process of recalibration, new judgments can recruit the physiological responses associated with basic emotions and produce new appraisals or emotions. But these explanations, though helpful and part of what habituation of character must involve, are not enough to produce a virtuous character. If psychological theories focus on how affect program emotions are only partly modular this may be a good starting point for learning about the kind of conditioning we need to explain the development of the virtuous character, but more needs to be said about how to achieve the kind of character that has harmony and produces motivations in the direction that virtue requires.

It may very well be the case that we need more than one theory to explain all the different phenomena we call emotion in all the different characters we derive from Aristotle, but my aim here is to initiate the dialogue and provide a model for how the necessary comparisons between the different approaches to the study of emotion can be made. As some critics of the experiments cited by situationists have suggested, perhaps we have not encountered subjects to study who resemble the virtuous. But observing

those who approach Aristotle's requirements for being virtuous is as important for a comparison between moral theories and psychological theories as is studying psychopaths and those in the other extreme.

## Conclusion

Why does it matter whether a theory meets the Aristotelian demands? If they are interested in defining emotion and finding the best theory that describes this phenomena, why should they even look at normative theories about how we should live and what kind of character we should have? I hope that by making these comparisons between different psychological views we get a sense of which areas have been ignored and need attention to arrive at better and more comprehensive theories of emotion. When we look at Aristotelian theories of the emotions we have a normative theory that rests on plausible assumptions about human psychology. Even if it is rare, the virtuous character and how emotion plays a role in it provides a model that raises interesting questions that would enrich the psychological research if they took it more seriously. We see something similar happening in the recent interest in studying the Buddhist monks' brains. No matter what theory we look at, it is not enough to just take the definition of virtue and try to apply it directly to theories of emotion. Part of the work that needs to be done is to look closely at all the implications of Aristotelian theory for a definition of emotion and find ways to establish a dialogue between very different areas of discourse. This project constitutes an initial attempt at making such comparisons easier and more intelligible. Future projects should look at more recent developments in Griffiths' (2008) work on the situated perspective on emotion, cultural constructivist accounts of emotion and more recent work on Aristotelian virtue theories. As new Aristotelian views and psychological theories of the emotions arise we can continue to use this model for future analysis and comparison.

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## **Biography**

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