AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE PLACE OF EMOTIONS IN VIRTUE ETHICS
(A COMPARISON BETWEEN ARISTOTLE AND KANT)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHILOSOPHY

DECEMBER 2005
Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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This thesis was supported by Turkish Academy of Sciences as part of fellowship program for integrated doctoral studies in Turkey and abroad in Social Sciences and Humanities.
This dissertation examines the claim that, unlike utilitarianism and deontology, virtue ethics ascribes a positive role to emotions in moral evaluation by taking them as the constituents of moral goodness and moral value. I wish to identify the limit and scope of this claim and to show what kind of emotion theory is suitable for explaining the essential features of virtue ethics. To do so, I defend some kind of cognitivism, the cognitive-affective theory of emotion, as the most suitable theory for virtue ethics. I argue that the moral significance that virtue ethicists assign to emotions can only be explained by such a holistic and non-reductionist account of emotions. In order to demonstrate how the virtue ethicists’ positive treatment of emotions with respect to moral evaluations works in theory, I have looked at Aristotle’s theory of emotions and
ethics, paying special attention to his notion of the 'mean relative to us.'
We shall see that the 'mean relative to us,' which entails the existence of
suitable emotions being felt by the moral agent, is justified on the basis
of such an idea.

The other main purpose of this dissertation is to examine whether
Kant's ethics is compatible with virtue ethics. My interpretation is that
Kant's position on emotions oscillates between the negative and the
instrumentalist view, while Aristotle's view is moralist. I will argue that
even the most celebrated Kantian feeling of respect does not fall under
the moralist position. Although Kant recognizes emotions as morally
relevant in the determination of duties of virtue, the kind of roles he
assigns to them are merely aesthetic, instrumental, or ornamental and
regulative, all of which are secondary to pure practical reason. But, in
virtue ethics, emotions and feelings play actual causative roles. They can
both influence and be influenced from reason in the determination of
virtuous actions; they are therefore both causally active and morally
valuable in moral actions.

Keywords: emotion, virtue, cognitive theory of emotion, feeling theory of
emotion, virtue ethics, Kant's ethics and Aristotle's ethics, the mean
relative to us, respect, moral feeling.
ÖZ

ERDEM AHLAKINDA DUYGULARIN YERI ÜSTÜNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA
(ARİSTOTELES VE KANT KARŞILAŞTIRMASI)

Yazıcı, Aslı
Doktora, Felsefe Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam
Aralık 2005, 244 sayfa

Bu tez, yararcı ve deontolojik ahlak kuramlarının aksine, erdem ahlakının duyguları ahlaki değerin ve iyiliğin oluşturucu bir unsuru gören ahlaki değerlendirmede duygulara pozitif bir rol yüklediği görüşünü ele alır. Bu iddianın kapsam ve sınırlarının ne olduğunu araştırarak erdem ahlakının temel özelliklerini açıklamada ne tür bir duygusal kuramin uygun olduğunu göstermeye çalıştım. Buna yönelik olarak, bir tür bilişselci bir kuramin, bilişsel-duyusal (cognitive-affective) duygusal kuramin erdem ahlaki için en uygun kuram olduğunu, erdem ahlakının duygusala etfettiği önemin ancak böyle bir bütünsü ve indirgeme karşısında bir kuramla açıklanabileceğini savundum. Erdem ahlakının duygusala yönelik pozitif yaklaşımının kuramda nasıl işlediğini göstermek için Aristoteles'in duygusal felsefesini ve ahlak kuramını ele


Anahtar Kelimeler: duyguy, erdem, bilişsel duyu kuramı, duyusal duyu kuramı, erdem ahlaki, Kant ahlaki, Aristoteles ahlaki, bize göre orta, ahlaki duyu, saygı.
To Aslıhan Yazıcı,

our baby,

who never experienced any emotion but caused me to have deep feelings and emotions and

passed away during the initial phase of this dissertation
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to my advisor, Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam, for his expert, comments, suggestions and patient direction of my Ph. D. program. I would also like to thank other members of my dissertation committee, Prof. Dr. Yasin Ceylan, Prof. Dr. Sabri Büyükdüvenci, Associated Prof. Dr. Erdal Cengiz and Assistant Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman for providing valuable comments.

My sincere thanks go to Prof. Dr. Sue Campbell at Dalhousie University and Prof. Dr. Stephen Leighton at Queens’ University. Their support and encouragement are greatly appreciated. I am also grateful to all members of Philosophy Department at Dalhousie, at Queens’ University and at METU for their friendship and help. I would like to thank Turkish Academy of Sciences for providing financial support during my studies both in Turkey and in Canada.

My most appreciative and loving thanks go to my husband, Dr. Sedat Yazıcı. His patience, kindness, willingness to read chapters before they were ready for anyone to read them were essential. Without his constant love, unlimited support and sacrifice of time and energy this dissertation would be impossible. His questions and challenges
continually make me a better thinker. Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do.

Finally I would like to thank my parents and my friends, especially Leyla İpekk, for their support and patience.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Despite a great volume of works in recent literature and a long historical background, the status of virtue ethics among the traditional moral theories remains both questionable and ambiguous. Some moral theorists argue that virtue ethics is no more than a negative theory, used to indicate the deficiencies of modern moral theories. On the sympathetic side, some others claim that although virtue ethics has some advantages over the other moral theories, these do not make it an independent or unified theory. Martha Nussbaum, for example, claims that “virtue ethics is an obvious category mistake”\(^1\) because “it does not demarcate a distinctive approach that can usefully be contrasted with Kantian and Utilitarian ethics.”\(^2\) Her suggestion is that

\[\text{we do away with the category of “virtue ethics” in teaching and writing. If we need to have some categories, let us speak of Neo-Humeans and Neo-Aristotelians, of anti-Utilitarians, and anti-Kantians – and then, most importantly, let us get on with the serious work of characterizing the substantive views of each thinker about virtue, reason, desire,}\]

\(^1\) Nussbaum (1999: 165).
and emotion –and deciding what we ourselves want to say.\textsuperscript{3}

The argument behind the above suggestion arises not only from the question of parsimony, but also from the interpretation that all the essential claims put forward by those who call themselves virtue ethicists, Nussbaum argues, have already been recognized by deontological and consequentialist ethics.

For many of its proponents, however, virtue ethics has been recognized as a rival ethical theory to Kantianism and Utilitarianism in recent literature. The most important distinguishing feature of virtue ethics, they argue, is that in moral evaluation, unlike utilitarianism and deontology, it ascribes a positive role to emotions by taking them as the constituents of moral goodness and moral value. This is often indicated in contemporary literature, but very few works provide a detailed analysis of the role of emotions in virtue ethics.\textsuperscript{4}

One of the main purposes of this dissertation is therefore to set the limit and scope of the virtue ethicist idea with respect to the role or function of emotions and to show what kind of emotion theory is suitable for explaining the essential features of virtue ethics. My starting point is straightforward. In order for it not to remain an open question, I believe that the idea of the centrality of emotion to virtue ethics must be shown in

\textsuperscript{3} Nussbaum (1999: 201).

\textsuperscript{4} The most important works that discuss the problem of the connection between morality and emotions, including Aristotle's and Kant's views, are Sherman's book, Making Necessity of Virtue (1997) and Oakley's book, Morality and the Emotions (1992).
theory, not simply asserted. In a word, the success of virtue ethics in presenting itself as a unique or independent moral theory depends closely on such analysis. I hope to make some contribution to this debate in this regard.

The other main purpose of this dissertation is to examine whether Kant’s ethics is compatible with virtue ethics. The reawakening of virtue ethics in the last two decades has created a new interest not only in Aristotle’s moral theory but also in other traditional theories, most notably the Kantian ethics. This new interest in turn has also generated different interpretations of Kant’s moral theory, both from the Kantian and virtue ethicist perspectives, some of which are quite sympathetic. A number of virtue ethicists and/or Kant scholars have argued that Kant’s ethics can be regarded as a close friend of virtue ethics. According to Marcia Baron, “Kantian ethics is, it seems to me, much closer to virtue ethics than is usually supposed; indeed, it may be only a minority of virtue ethicists who hold positions that are at odds with Kantian ethics.”⁵ She goes on to argue that “if virtue ethicists are looking for a theory or approach which places emphasis on inner aspects of character, Kantian ethics would be a good candidate.”⁶

For commentators like Baron, the mistaken belief that Kant’s ethics is at odds with virtue ethics arises from a focus on the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and limited reading of Kant’s

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⁵ Baron (1997: 5).
⁶ Baron (1997: 37-8).
other works. There is some truth in this observation. Certainly, Kant’s ethics, especially his approach to virtues, cannot be understood and thereby would be incomplete without taking into account his ideas stated in the *Doctrine of Virtue* and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Moreover, there are some passages in his other works that are very surprising to those who think that Kant ignores the role of character in morality. In the *Education*, Kant unequivocally states that “Morality is a matter of character.”\(^7\) He also points out that the cultivation of moral capacity is a perfect duty to oneself and requires a certain obligation.

For the virtue ethicist commentators of Kant’s ethics, therefore, the truth is this:

> Kant’s ethics is particularly concerned with how to lead one’s life: what to aim at, how to conduct oneself, what dispositions to cultivate, what impulses to discourage. It is concerned with conduct, but not with isolated actions, not, that is, with individual actions considered in isolation from the agent’s maxims.\(^8\)

A similar compatibilist interpretation of the problem of the connection between emotions and moral judgments or actions in Kant’s ethics has also been defended. Some of these commentators claim not only that Kant recognizes the importance of virtues in human life, but that he also assigns a positive role to emotions in moral reasoning. According to Robert B. Louden, for example,

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\(^7\) Kant (1960b: 96).
\(^8\) Baron (1997: 38).
Kant’s position on the emotions and their role in action from virtue is not inconsistent with a virtue ethics’ view. It is remarkably close to Aristotle’s view, the major difference being that Kant was much more aware than Aristotle of the dangers of self-deception by emotional enthusiasm pretending to be moral inspiration.\(^9\)

The ethical theories of Aristotle and Kant are indeed helpful for comparing whether the essential claims of virtue ethics differ from deontological theories or if they find some room within them. My strategy is that if Kant’s moral theory does pass my emotion test, there is no in principle or substantial difference between virtue ethics and Kantian ethics in this regard. The kind of test I have in mind is one which aims at to determine the causal roles of emotions in moral actions with their moral values.

Determining the place of emotions in morality, however, is a very hard task. This is because the problem and nature of emotions create several antinomies, each one containing plausible arguments for opposite conclusions. Indeed, the general attitude and approach to emotions in the history of philosophy have appeared in the form of dichotomies like rational/irrational, intentional/unintentional, volitional/involitional, objective/subjective, active/passive, mental/physical etc.\(^{10}\) Given the implicit epistemic and ontological justifications stated within these dichotomies, the ideas developed by moral philosophers on

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\(^{10}\) For a more detailed discussion of these dichotomies See De Sousa Robert (1987:1-2).
the connection between emotions and morality, as I see the problem, can be classified as follows:

1. The negative view: This view takes emotions as destructive, spoiling and obstructive to moral reasoning because of their irrationality, unreliability and changeability. As such, they are incompatible with an impartial or universal perspective that is necessitated by morality. This view may accept that emotions are informative, that is, they are expressing the agents’ attitudes, beliefs and judgments, but it holds that they are all subjective. The typical philosophical school that most evidently belongs to this category is Stoicism, which suggests that emotions characteristically refer to objects and events that are beyond our control.

2. The instrumentalist view: Many philosophers argue that it is mistaken to hold that all emotions possess a unified nature or characteristic. On the contrary, some emotions are rational, active and voluntary, while others are irrational, passive and involuntary; some are desirable while others are undesirable. What is common to all emotions is the fact that they typically represent, influence and to some extent determine our way of seeing the world. According to this view, emotions are important not only because they make a substantial contribution to individual happiness but also because they enable us to see what is morally important. More characteristically, as Sherman puts it, emotions “help us
track the morally relevant ‘news’.” They also “prepare us for moral deliberation and choice. They serve as epistemological tools helping us to mark the moral occasion.” Accordingly, the contribution of emotions to the fulfillment of moral actions, though substantial, is contingent and only instrumentally valuable.

3. The moralist view: This view maintains that emotions are intrinsically valuable for they are a constituent part of moral judgments or actions. Emotions are necessary not only because they are a motivating factor in moral actions, but also because they play a determining role in the differentiation and nature of moral actions. Since emotions contain cognitive and desirative parts, they can move one to actions and thereby be reasons for acting. People act out of compassion, out of sympathy, out of love, out of pity. What makes their action moral is the very existence of certain kinds of emotions in a certain quality, degree and density that they can feel them.

My interpretation in this dissertation is that Kant’s position on emotions oscillates between the negative and the instrumentalist view, while Aristotle’s view is moralist. I will argue that even the most celebrated Kantian feeling of respect does not fall under (3). To support my argument, I offer five possible interpretations of Kant’s conception of duty, which is central to his ethics. I argue that even in lenient interpretation, there are severe conceptual and logical difficulties in

combining Kantian ethics with virtue ethics. In particular, I claim that Kant can have a virtue theory but not a virtue ethics. A virtue theory may or may not include emotions as part of a moral world, but a virtue ethics, both in the Aristotelian and the contemporary sense, must regard emotions as part and parcel of morality. Virtue ethics is both a moral and psychological theory, however Kant’s conception of virtue is exclusively limited and restrained by the procedural and metaphysical principles of his ethics.

The revival of virtue ethics has come about partly as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the way moral philosophy has been done in modern times. In Chapter II, I shall start by exploring the underlying assumptions of this dissatisfaction and then identify some alleged problems that the virtue ethicists hope to overcome. An important task in this chapter will be to present a systematic account of virtue ethics with a reconstruction of the main characteristics shared by all its forms. While many scholars of virtue ethics employ agent-prior, agent-focus and agent-based notions in describing the place of character or agent in virtue ethics, I want to demonstrate that the conceptual distinction among them is substantial for virtue ethics. In support of Slote’s radical version of virtue ethics I go on to suggest that virtue ethics, as an independent ethical theory, is best defended in its agent-based form.

Chapter III is concerned with the contemporary theories of emotion and with recent attempts to develop emotion theories that appear much more multifaceted. I will try to demonstrate a significant
bias in the contemporary works on emotions, especially those appearing before the 1990s, for they explore emotions either in affective or cognitive terms. By combining these two aspects, I will defend some kind of cognitivism, the cognitive-affective theory of emotion, as the most suitable theory for virtue ethics. As we shall see, the moral significance that virtue ethicists assign to emotions can only be explained by such a holistic and non-reductionist account of emotions.

In Chapter IV, I will try to reconstruct a general picture of Aristotle’s theory of emotion as it is presented in his major works, beginning with its metaphysical and psychological bases. We shall see that Aristotle’s theory of emotion is very much contemporary, not only in its problematic setting but also in its approach. I discuss the affective and cognitive aspects of his theory, which he thinks of as essential and inseparable to emotions. Within the cognitive aspect, Aristotle deals with emotions in terms of beliefs, intentionality, and of having the power of changing judgments. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the relationship between actions and emotions in Aristotle’s philosophy.

In order to present the conceptual and theoretical connection between Aristotle’s theory of emotion and his moral concepts and principles more cogently, Chapter V takes a new look at his ethics, in light of the consequences we reached in Chapter IV. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate how the virtue ethicists’ positive treatment of emotions with respect to moral evaluations works in theory. After outlining Aristotle’s understanding of good and of virtue in general, I discuss in
depth the foundations and principles of his theory of virtue, the connection of virtue to moral choice, reason and practical wisdom. The best way to see the place of emotions in Aristotle’s theory, I will argue, is his notion of the ‘mean relative to us’. We shall see that the ‘mean relative to us’ entails the existence of suitable emotions being felt by the moral agent.

In Chapter VI, I survey Kant’s moral theory given recent philosophical developments first by exploring the key concepts and ideas of his moral theory, - i.e., the good will, moral law, duty, maxim, categorical imperative- without providing any argument for or against it. I will then explain Kant’s classification of virtues in general and the distinction he draws between duties of right and duties of virtues. This will help us to underlie some bedrock principles of his conception of virtue. Third, in order to examine the validity of the virtue ethicist interpretation of Kant’s moral theory, I will identify five possible interpretations of Kant’s conception of “from duty.” Fourth, by introducing Kant’s concept of ‘respect as a moral feeling,’ which has a special status in his ethics, I will show how the virtue ethicist’s treatment of emotions as motivating factors is fundamentally different from Kant’s. In particular I will make the point that emotions do not play a constitutive or causative role with their distinguishing features in Kant’s account, nor do they have an intrinsic moral significance.

Let me finish this introduction with a personal confession. As mentioned earlier, the central question that led me to choose the subject
matter of this dissertation was that without a satisfactory analysis of the connection between emotions and moral evaluations or judgments, the virtue ethics’ claim about the centrality of emotions would only be spurious. I was well aware that this was a great task, requiring diligence, extensive knowledge and the ability to integrate disparate but related aspects of such a complex and comprehensive topic. After more than three years of research, I now fully recognize the weight that is on my shoulders. During the hard times that have often experienced, Heiddeger’s words with respect to the nature and definition of philosophy have been quite helpful: “Philosophy is a path along which we are traveling.” Many ideas I develop in this dissertation may require, as I am sure they do, much stronger argument, justification or explanation. I request the reader to think of this work as a journey, rather than as a completed task, on the path of such a comprehensive and difficult topic.
CHAPTER II

VIRTUE ETHICS

The revival of virtue ethics has come about in part as a result of the growing dissatisfaction with the way moral philosophy has been done in modern times. The objections have been that both utilitarianism and Kantianism are ill-founded and that there is “a radical one-sidedness” in modern theories for they give their account of what is to be moral only in terms of principles, duties or rules and therefore take “little or no account of qualities, of what people are.”

I shall start by exploring the underlying assumptions of this dissatisfaction and then identify some alleged problems of modern moral theories, which the virtue ethicists hope to solve. I will then present, in a simple way, a systematic account of virtue ethics with a reconstruction of the main characteristics shared by all its forms. As to the status of virtue ethics, I will argue that the existence of different forms of virtue ethics or theory by itself does not nullify the possibility of its being a freestanding moral theory, nor does it imply a category mistake. Rather, the reason for so many forms of virtue ethics is that virtue ethics is a pluralist moral

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theory, consisting of different virtues that are intrinsically good. I will also suggest that virtue ethics as a freestanding ethical theory with its pluralistic character can better be justified in its agent-based form.

2. 1 The Need for a Socio-Psychological Turn in Modern Moral Theories

Utilitarianism and Kantianism, two major modern moral theories, have pervaded and deeply influenced the political, moral and cultural life of the Western world. Standing on the idea of efficiency, a value which is widely identified as the governing principle of the Western economic and social life, utilitarianism has been criticized as destructive to some other values such as justice, the rights of minorities, human dignity and integrity etc. Utilitarianism, as Nozick and Rawls have noted, takes individuals as something super persons and thereby fails to distinguish among persons. Transcending autonomy and human dignity, with the idea of enlightenment, Kantianism has been accused of ignoring the historical and communal aspects of human values for the sake of neutrality and universality. As such, it presupposes a disembodied self, entirely detached or abstracted from its social and historical contingencies. For many philosophers, most notably communitarians, both theories therefore fail to provide an appropriate moral and political psychology.

The first attacks against utilitarianism and Kantianism, launched by Anscombe, MacIntyre and Williams appeared more than four decades
ago. Writing in 1958, Elizabeth Anscombe argued that the notion of moral obligation and moral duty in these moral theories should be jettisoned because they are unintelligible outside a law-based conception of morality, which is itself unintelligible without recourse to a (divine) lawgiver.\textsuperscript{13} Having pointed out that moral philosophy is unprofitable without psychology, Anscombe accuses these moral theories of paying no attention to moral psychology. Thus modern philosophers should stop doing moral philosophy, she says, “until we have an adequate philosophy of psychology” leading us to make a conceptual shift from the most abstract terms involved in ethical thought, terms like right, good, ought, to richer and more concrete terms like sensitive and courageous.\textsuperscript{14}

Like Anscombe, MacIntyre wishes to move away from modern moral theories and back to Aristotle. He argues that the “enlightenment project” of justifying morality has failed because of the breakdown of a conceptual moral schema inherited from Aristotle. The language and the practice of morality today are in a state of grave disorder.\textsuperscript{15} What we have are “simulacra of morality,” the fragments of a former conceptual moral schema deprived from their original context of significance. Due to

\textsuperscript{13} Anscombe (1998: 30).
\textsuperscript{14} Anscombe (1998: 26).
\textsuperscript{15}MacIntyre (1984: 256). In After Virtue MacIntyre tries to find out a clear answer for the following question: Nietzsche or Aristotle? MacIntyre says that the argument leading him to pose this question mainly consists of two central premises. (1) The language and the practice of morality are in a grave disorder. (2) Aristotle and Nietzsche represent the only two compelling alternatives in contemporary moral theory. After discussing these two premises in a detailed way, MacIntyre claims that in order to comprehend the nature of the moral condition of modernity a history of ethical theory and practice should be written and read from an Aristotelian standpoint rather than a Nietzschean standpoint.
such deprivation moral notions such as “‘virtue’ and ‘justice’ and ‘piety’ and ‘duty’ and even ‘ought’ have become other than they once were.”

As a result, we have in reality lost both our theoretical and practical comprehension of morality. In order to restore some kind order, MacIntyre says, contemporary moral philosophy should provide a ‘core conception of virtues,’ which can be defined in terms of three stages:

The first stage requires a background account of what I shall call a practice, the second an account of what I have already characterized as the narrative order of a single human life and the third an account a good deal fuller than I have given up to now of what constitutes a moral tradition.

For MacIntyre, a practice is a “coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity.” There are external and internal dimensions of a practice with their corresponding goods. The internal goodness of a practice can be recognized and judged only by those with relevant experience of the practice. MacIntyre thinks that a virtue can be acquired through internal practices. He also points out that each human life is a “unity of a narrative embodied in a single life.” The meaning and ethical worth of any act can be grasped only as a part of that person’s life story. In an often-quoted passage, MacIntyre states:

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16 MacIntyre (1984: 10).
18 MacIntyre (1984: 187). MacIntyre’s complete definition of practice is this: “By a ‘practice’ I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and good involved, are systematically extended.”
we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone’s son or daughter, someone else’s cousin or uncle; I am citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles. As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. This is in part what gives my life its own moral particularity.\footnote{MacIntyre (1984: 220), emphasis added.}

The main idea behind the above passage is that a moral philosophy should presuppose not only history both in a general and particular sense but also have “some particular sociology as its counterpart.”\footnote{MacIntyre (1984: 225).} As MacIntyre says:

For every moral philosophy offers explicitly or implicitly at least a partial conceptual analysis of the relationship of an agent to his or her reasons, motives, intentions and actions, and in so doing generally presupposes some claim that these concepts are embodied or at least can be in the real social world.\footnote{MacIntyre (1984: 23)}

In light of this view, the claims of any moral theory will not be understood unless its “social embodiment” is spelled out, a task which has long been neglected in modern moral philosophy. Morality should be about how people live together, about society and thus history, not about hypothetically pre-social individuals. Thus any moral theory should have justifying ground to expose the social and historical dimensions of human life.
MacIntyre’s insistence upon “sociology” and “history” is conceptually tied to and in conformity with his explanation of tradition. This third stage of the core concept of virtue refers to those social structures emerging from communities in which people live and in terms of which they define themselves. A moral agent having a personal narrative knows that the story of her/his life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which s/he derives her/his identity.\(^{23}\)

The unity and identity of a human being, MacIntyre argues, is not possible without a community, rather, they go with the history of community in which people live. The community is the justifying ground of all her/his actions and values.

In agreement with MacIntyre, as well as with other communitarians, Bernard Williams contends that modern moral philosophy “is governed by a dream of a community of reason that is too far removed…from social and historical reality and from any concrete sense of a particular ethical life.”\(^{24}\) He characterizes “morality” as a “peculiar institution” with the work of Kant and its obsession with notions such as “obligation”, “duty” and “right.” This kind of morality is a “blame morality” because its notion of obligation is associated with the notion of blame. Like Anscombe he thinks that modern moral theories have given confidence to a legalistic view of moral obligation by emphasizing the notion of voluntary. A moral obligation applies to an agent with respect to

\(^{23}\) MacIntyre (1984: 221).

\(^{24}\) Williams (1993: 197).
an action only if the action is within the agent’s power. In this sense, the agent’s responsibility is determined by what is under her/his control, that is, what an agent ought to do implies what s/he can do. Williams finds such an understanding of obligation problematic, not only because it presents a deterministic (psychological) picture of moral obligation but also because it leads us to the paradox of moral luck.25

Williams’s virtue-based morality introduces a conception of ethics that is wider than the narrow and restricting blame morality. Ethics is about not only obligation and duty but also the moral agent’s character, dispositions and emotions, all of which are either neglected or rejected by modern theories as morally irrelevant. Ethics focuses on the agent’s sphere of concern for her/his friends, family and society and on making room for both social and personal ideals such as happiness and social justice.

The criticisms that I have discussed so far are not without counter-objections in the literature. First, from the universalist and objectivist standpoint, many philosophers argue that McIntyre’s account of virtue is subject to relativism in its three levels. Practice refers to the perspective and character traits of the judge, different traditions refer to different assessments of the actions done within each, and every narrative gives a subjective perspective. Second, as to the psychological basis of

25 The paradox of moral luck appears in cases like this: Suppose the case A: X drives 30 miles more than the speed limit and kills a child. The Case B: Y drives 30 miles more than the speed limit and does not kill anybody. From the Kantian point of view, both A and B are subject to the same punishment or blameworthiness. But the kind of morality we follow in the actual world suggests the other way. This is a case of moral luck.
obligation concepts, it has been pointed out that Anscombe is confusing moral obligations with the legal ones. As Baier has suggested, moral concepts do not “imply a moral legislator or moral authority whose say-so is the basis of moral norms.”\(^{26}\) One might also argue that the critics of modern moral theories wish to turn back to a moral conception that is psychologically more appropriate, but in doing so, they are also presupposing a return to a form of life that we have no real confrontation with today. This may not be the case for many of these philosophers, but all the critics we have discussed are frustrated with an ethics that omits an account of human flourishing and calls for a return to virtue ethics.

2. 2 Specific Problems with Utilitarianism and Kantianism

In light of the objections and counter arguments I have explored above, many moral theorists argue that the lack of some appropriate social and psychological context or ground in the modern moral theories creates several problems. Among them, the most prevalent is the so-called problem of the self-other asymmetry. In his article “Some Advantages of Virtue Ethics” Michael Slote accuses commonsense morality and Kantianism of giving “insufficient weight to the interests or well-being of moral agents and thus in an important sense to slight, devalue, or downgrade such agents.”\(^{27}\) They are both subject to self-other asymmetry either by not allowing agent-favoring permissions or by entailing agent-sacrificing permissions in their account of morally right

\(^{26}\) Baier (1988: 127-8).
\(^{27}\) Slote (1997a: 429).
actions. By agent-favoring permissions Slote means moral permissions that

allow the agent to favor herself to some extent over other people, to seek her own good on some occasions when she could do more good by trying to help others.\(^{28}\)

According to Slote, consequentialism allows neither agent-favoring nor agent-sacrificing permissions because it is entirely agent-neutral. He says

In consequentialism, if something is permitted with respect to one individual, it is acceptable with respect to any other individual as long as the causal-evaluative facts on which moral judgments are based remain otherwise the same.\(^{29}\)

Egoism is also asymmetric in a way that consequentialism is not. In egoism, the interests and well-being of others can be sacrificed for the sake of the agent’s own interest and well-being.

In common sense morality, Slote says, if one could easily prevent pain to another person, it is typically thought wrong not to do so, but not to avoid similar pain to oneself seems crazy or irrational, not morally wrong. Slote thinks that Kant’s ethics is also subject to this self-other asymmetry problem:

On Kant’s view, for example, we have an obligation to benefit or contribute to the happiness of other people, but no parallel obligation to seek our own well-being or happiness. We have a duty to develop our natural talents, a duty not to *harm* ourselves, and a duty of self-preservation that derives from our

\(^{28}\) Slote (1997a: 430).
\(^{29}\) Slote (1997a: 433).
other duties, but except insofar as it is necessary to fulfill those other obligations, we have no moral reason to make ourselves *happy* or *well-off*.\(^{30}\)

Slote’s self-other asymmetry argument has crucial moral implications. It characterizes the devaluation and deprecation of the importance of the moral agent and the individual concerns, projects and even desires of the moral agent. It implies a picture of a moral agent who is “valuationally selfless or self-abnegating with respect to her own actions.”\(^{31}\) Such an agent is one who is alienated from her own self-interests and welfare when she evaluates the ethical significance of her own actions.

Despite the plausibility of Slote’s argument, some comments are yet in order. First of all, Slote accepts without question that being symmetric *per se* is an admirable quality of any moral theory to apply to all relevant cases. Notice that Slote deduces the symmetric character of utilitarianism from its being a neutral moral theory. That is, for the utilitarian, each person is to count for one and no person, including the moral agent, for more than one. So, utilitarianism does not distinguish among persons. As we have seen, it is this feature of utilitarianism itself, however, that has been subject to a severe criticism for it may destroy the self-integrity of the moral agent.\(^{32}\) Being neutral or symmetric in every case, therefore is not always a desirable principle or tenet in moral consideration.

\(^{30}\) Slote (1992: 11).
\(^{31}\) Slote (1997b: 135)
\(^{32}\) See, for example, Bernard Williams (1973b).
Second, there is no conceptual evidence that Kant’s ethics gives less importance to the self in a way that any other cosmopolitan moral theory does. The idea that cosmopolitan or universal ethical theories base morality on the rational maximizing aspect of the self and thus overlooks the self’s identity, which is shaped by values, attachments and ends that one acquires thorough a plan of life, has often been pointed out by communitarian philosophers. It seems to me that Slote’s argument does say nothing more than this communitarian objection. Moreover, taken literally, there are some passages in Kant’s secondary works in which he seems to accept the symmetry tenet in ethics. As he says, “many writers have entirely omitted, or have falsely expounded, like Crugott, that section of ethics which contains the doctrine of duties towards one’s self.” Kant’s suicide example also implies that killing someone intentionally and committing suicide deserve equal moral consideration.

The second important problem that arises in utilitarianism and Kantianism is that they are vulnerable to “moral schizophrenia” due to their ignorance of the good life and happiness or human flourishing. As Stocker has noted, modern ethical theories necessitate a schizophrenia between reason and motive in vitally important and pervasive areas of value, or alternatively they allow us the harmony of a morally impoverished life, a life deeply deficient in what is valuable. ...As theories of mind, of reasons and motives, of human life and activity, they fail, not only by putting us in a position that is

33 Kant (1971: 204).
psychologically uncomfortable, difficult, or even untenable, but also by making us and our lives essentially fragmented and incoherent.\textsuperscript{34}

Stocker thinks that ethics needs to be based on ideas about human flourishing, and claims that the integration of reasons/justifications and motives/feelings is the mark of a good life and of happiness. In order to have a good life and be happy “we should be moved by our major values and we should value what our major motives seek.”\textsuperscript{35} In this regard, both utilitarianism and Kantianism make such harmony impossible by their “overconcentration” on duty, rightness and obligation and their ignorance of relations of motives to value. By making it impossible for a person to achieve a good life and happiness in an integrated way they require moral schizophrenia – “a split between one’s motives and one’s reasons.”\textsuperscript{36} To support his charge of the schizophrenia of modern moral theories Stocker provides a cogent example:

[N]ow, suppose you are in a hospital, recovering from a long illness. You are very bored and restless and at loose ends when Smith comes in once again. You are now convinced more than ever that he is a fine fellow and a real friend – taking so much time to cheer you up, traveling all the way across town, and so on. You are so effusive with your praise and thanks that he protests that he always tries to do what he thinks is his duty, what he thinks will be best. You at first think he is engaging a polite form of self-deprecation, relieving the moral burden. But the more you two speak, the more clear it becomes that he was telling the literal truth:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Stocker (1998: 68).
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Stocker (1998: 66).
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
that is not essentially because of you that he came
to see you, not because you are friends, but
because he thought it his duty, perhaps as a fellow
Christian or Communist or whatever, or simply
because he knows of no one more in need of
cheering up and no one easier to cheer up.  

Stocker's precise objection is that, given moral conceptions of
utilitarianism and Kantianism, it is not possible to harmonize moral
reasons/justifications with individuals’ occurent motives. In case of
utilitarianism, the reason or justification for an action (visiting a friend in
the hospital) must be that the action produces the most happiness of
those available to the agent, not one that is done from the motive of
caring about the beloved for its own sake. Similarly, for the Kantian, the
reason why the act is right and why the agent does the action, that is, the
motivating reason and the justifying reason, must be the same. The
implication is that, in our moral actions, we should ignore or get rid of our
emotions or affections to the subject to which our action is directed. Both
the Kantian and the utilitarian accounts of moral value are problematic
for they are too demanding and alienate a moral agent from her/his own
values, emotions, desires and projections. They canvas a picture of a
moral agent who sacrifices her/his own moral goals, plans, sense of
friendship and desires for the sake of others.

From a similar point of view, in “Moral Saints”, Susan Wolf
criticizes modern moral theories’ understanding of a “morally perfect
person.” She argues that utilitarianism and Kantianism require us to be

moral saints. While the “Loving Saint” is the model of utilitarianism, the “Rational Saint” is the model of Kantianism. Each theory ignores the distinguishing character and ability of a moral agent and demands of her/him to strive after an ideal of moral perfection they yield. Wolf claims that for the sake of the ideal of moral sainthood these theories put aside non-moral interests and tastes of the moral agent which are crucial elements of a good human life. Having separated the domain of morality from that of personal perfection, Wolf opposes the idea of the overriding authority of morality over personal perfection. As she says “moral ideals do not, and need not, make the best personal ideals.”

Ideally, morality and personal perfection go together, but when they clash, one will sometimes trump the other.

Notice that Wolf’s argument entails objections to certain forms of virtue ethics, too, especially the perfectionist forms of Aristotelian and the Stoic virtue ethics. One can also claim that for any kind of virtue ethics, being perfectionist is unavoidable because virtuous actions are not ordinary actions but actions that require certain skill, character trait and substantial effort. In this sense, most virtuous actions are too demanding, almost impossible to fulfill, for ordinary people.

To sum up, all of the critics I have discussed would agree that many of the problems arising in modern moral theories could be solved by adopting a conception of morality which takes its starting point as the question “How should I live?”, rather than “What should I do?” In other

words, instead of pursuing purely action-based theories, which aspire to formulate some general principles of behavior that define our duties, we need a moral theory that takes virtues seriously as moral excellences contributing to a life of human fulfillment, certain personal dispositions, acquired moral education and capacities constructing a moral agent’s character and leading her/him to live a good life.

It is really difficult to decide whether we should give up such an action prior theory in consequence and adopt a virtue-based morality. But there are certainly substantial reasons to include virtues in our moral life. First, an important advantage of virtue ethics over the other moral conceptions stems from its being an agent prior theory. What is morally required is not something externally imposed upon the agent as a rule or principle. Once such a theory is adopted, it is more unlikely to experience individual conflicts between one’s desires or feelings and what needs to be done morally, because these two kinds of motive must be consistent in some way or be in harmony. Second, as Foot has stated, virtues are necessary for human flourishing so that without them human beings do not fare well. As she says, “virtues are in general beneficial characteristics, and indeed ones that a human being needs to have, for his own sake and that of his fellows.”

There is, however, a problem with the determination of whom should receive the benefit: the person who has the virtue or rather those who are to be affected. The answer is not so clear in every case of virtue. While courage, temperance and wisdom

39 Foot (2002: 3).
benefit both the agent and others, charity and justice are merely other-regarding virtues. Nonetheless, virtues are beneficial to humans either individually or collectively.

But being beneficial is not a distinguishing characteristic of the virtues; for there are many human qualities that may be similarly beneficial such as health and physical strength, powers of memory or concentration. What does distinguish virtues from other beneficial qualities? Foot claims that the virtues belong to the will, covering intentions, desires, willed dispositions. She remarks that “It is the will that is good in a man of virtue.”40 We cannot judge one who catches flu but we judge one who acts unjustly because of her/his intentions, desires and personal attitudes, that is, what is under her/his control. In a word, other beneficial human qualities are not virtues because they do not engage a person’s will, character, intention and desire. We need therefore a clear definition of virtue ethics which enables us to distinguish virtues from non-virtues.

2. 3. What is Virtue Ethics?

2.3. 1. Some Definitions

Virtue ethics is the oldest systematic moral conception as well as a new-fangled one. However, despite its long history, it is still a matter of dispute among moral philosophers as to which principles are to be included in the conception and definition of virtue ethics, and which ones

essentially or distinctly belong to it. In opposition to virtue ethics as an independent moral theory, Nussbaum thinks that the common ground shared by the defenders of “virtue theorists” is captured by three claims:

A. Moral philosophy should be concerned with the agent, as well as with choice and action.

B. Moral philosophy should therefore concern itself with motive and intention, emotion and desire: in general, with the character of the inner moral life, and with settled patterns of motive, emotion, and reasoning that leads us to call someone a person of certain sort (courageous, generous, moderate, just, etc.).

C. Moral philosophy should focus not only on isolated acts of choice, but also, and more importantly, on the whole course of the agent’s moral life, its patterns of commitment, conduct and also passion.\(^\text{41}\)

Having said that these three commitments sufficiently cover the essential claims of a virtue ethics, Nussbaum argues that they “involve no break with Kantian ethics, since Kant plainly agrees with all three of them, and wrote the *Tugendlehre* on that account.”\(^\text{42}\) She argues that since Kant has a theory of virtue he has a virtue ethics in the above sense. Moreover, the important figures of Utilitarianism such as Sidgwick and Mill, Nussbaum says, do not neglect the virtues, and, more importantly, they “certainly accept these three claims.”\(^\text{43}\) Sidgwick’s attempt to introduce virtues as a primary topic, his argument for a utilitarian basis in *The Method of Ethics*, and Bentham’s concerns with matters of moral psychology and analysis of varieties of motives,
intentions and types of human dispositions, Nussbaum believes, are evidence of the claim that they have a virtue theory. Along the same line of reasoning, she concludes:

How, then, could “virtue ethics” be a thing on its own, as opposed to Kantianism and Utilitarianism, when it is so obviously an important element of both of those ethical theories, as it is also a department inside other ethical theories, such as those of Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle?\(^{44}\)

I believe that Nussbaum’s argument with respect to virtue ethics as a unique moral theory is not convincing as it stands. First of all, her representation of the essential claims of virtue ethics is too floppy. What makes a moral theory a virtue ethics is not simply its focus on or attention to character and virtues, but rather, the kind of justificatory status that is assigned to them or whether or not it gives a primacy to these aretaic notions and features. As we shall see, the answer to these questions may make substantial differences both in the status of virtue ethics and in the differentiation of its variety of forms.

The most comprehensive and successful definition in the literature is Rosalind Hursthouse’s characterizations of general principles of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics, Hursthouse says, is described

(1) as an ethics which is ‘agent-centred’ rather than ‘act-centred’; (2) as concerned with Being rather than Doing: (3) as addressing itself to the question ‘What sort of person should I be?’ rather than to the question ‘What sorts of action should I do?’; (4) as taking certain aretaic concepts (\textit{good, excellence, virtue}) as basic rather than deontic ones (\textit{right},

\(^{44}\) Nussbaum (1999: 167).
duty, obligation); (5) as rejecting the idea that ethics is codifiable in rules or principles that can provide specific action guidance.

Notice that not all moral philosophers who are called virtue ethicist or theorist necessarily would accept and define virtue ethics in terms of these five claims. Rather, they include basic claims of virtue ethics, which can also be seen as a coherent position taken all together. As we shall see in Section 3.3, there are different ways in which a virtue ethics might be agent-centred or agent-relative. I should nonetheless state that Hursthouse’s characterization of virtue ethics is close to being comprehensive but it omits a distinctive feature: the assignation of a constitutive role to emotions. Now two questions arise from the above definition. Is the virtue ethics’ treatment of these claims radically different from the other traditional theories? If so, is it sufficient to treat virtue ethics as an independent moral theory? Keeping in mind these questions, in the next two sections, I will identify the place of virtue ethics among the other moral theories and describe its essential features.

2.3. 2. One Family or Several Relatives? : The Taxonomy of Virtue Ethics

The connection between virtue ethics and Kantianism and utilitarianism, on the one hand, and Aristotelian ethics and teleological and deontological ethics is not so clear. Needless to say, Aristotle’s conception of ethics is still a model for all forms of virtue ethics. For this reason, one way of defining virtue ethics has been to assert that “virtue

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ethics is what Aristotle did." However, there are several forms of virtue ethics in the contemporary literature, some of which are neo-Aristotelian, while others are deontological or utilitarian. Anscombe and Foot whose names have often been associated with the proponents of virtue ethics are widely known as neo-Aristotelian for they explicitly insist on a return to Aristotle’s way of thinking in modern moral philosophy. There are moral philosophers who merely refer to the Aristotelian background, rather than calling themselves virtue ethicists. Nussbaum, Annas, Louden, MacDowell and MacIntyre are among the thinkers who insist upon the Aristotelian background of virtue ethics.

An important determinant of the attitudes of those moral philosophers towards virtue ethics arises from their affinity with modern moral theories. As we have seen, the sympathy with virtue ethics has arisen from certain dissatisfaction with modern moral theories. In consequence, besides its Aristotelian forms, there appear two forms of modern virtue ethics. John McDowell, Iris Murdoch, Henry Richardson, Nancy Sherman, David Wiggins and Nussbaum are among the Kantian or nonconsequentialist virtue theorists who are motivated by dissatisfaction with utilitarianism. In particular, they question utilitarianism’s neglect of the plurality of good, technical understanding of reason, its non-cognitive conception of emotion and desire. They give practical reason a central role in our moral and political life, a conception

which insists on a synthesis of Aristotle and Kant. These philosophers are universalist and anti-relativist.

Other virtue ethicists or theorists, such as Annette Baier, Simon Bluckburn, Phillippa Foot, Aledsair MacIntyre, and Bernard Williams, on the other hand, take their starting point from certain dissatisfaction with Kantian ethics. These anti-Kantian “virtue theorists” question the dominant role Kant gives to reason in ethics. Committing to some form of cultural relativism, they are hostile to universal theorizing in ethics. Broadly speaking, nonconsequentialist and consequentialist forms of virtue theories are distinguished from each other according to how they respond to the values in the virtues. When the value of integrity, for example, is questioned, a nonconsequentialist would say that a virtuous agent exemplifies her/his commitment to being a person of integrity while a consequentialist would say that a virtuous person would promote integrity. There is, therefore, no unified form or tight family of virtue ethics in the contemporary literature, some of which are nonconsequentialist-oriented while others are consequentialist-oriented.

Furthermore, it has been customary, perhaps under the influence of Rawls’s taxonomy, to classify ethical theories in terms of the primacy of their determination and definition of what is the good and the right. Rawls’s classification of ethical theories corresponds to the teleological-deontological distinction. In teleological moral theories, which are consequentialist, Rawls says, “the good is defined independently from
the right and the right is defined as that maximizes the good.” In deontological theories, there is a priority of the right over the good. From the very existence of several forms of virtue ethics, and a contemporary tendency to classify ethical theories as deontological and teleological, one may think that there can only be two unique, independent and well-articulated ethical theories.

My suggestion is that this conclusion does not necessarily follow. As Watson argues, Rawls’s taxonomy does not apply to Aristotle’s moral theory. Rawls think that Aristotle’s ethics presents a conception of the good as the realization of human excellence and thus it is a perfectionist teleological ethics. However it is also the case that in Aristotle’s ethics the good cannot be determined independently of the right. This either means that Aristotle’s ethics is not teleological or that the priority condition that Rawls identifies for teleological theories is not convincing. Agreeing with John Cooper, Watson claims that the truth is that Aristotle’s ethics is neither teleological nor deontological, and thus Rawls’s teleological-deontological distinction fails to characterize views in which virtues play a central role.

Watson thinks that it is better to replace Rawls’s twofold schema of ethical theories with a threefold distinction, in terms of the explanatory

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primacy that each assigns to the moral concept.\textsuperscript{50} On this conceptual basis, it appears that there are three distinct types of moral theory that take three central concepts of moral philosophy as “the basic moral facts.” “Ethics of requirement” takes these basic moral facts to be facts about what actions are required; “ethics of outcome” takes these basic moral facts to be facts about the intrinsic values of possible outcomes of actions or traits; and “ethics of virtue or character” takes these basic moral facts to be facts about “people’s desires, ends, and dispositions”\textsuperscript{51} This, in short, is the quality of the agent’s character.\textsuperscript{52} An ethics of virtue constitutes an alternative to other theories because it gives the explanatory primacy to the concept of virtue, or to that of character. Given this distinction,

an ethics of virtue is not a particular claim about the priority of virtue over right conduct but the more general claim that action appraisal is derivative from the appraisal of character. Moral facts about actions are ancillary to these.\textsuperscript{53}

Watson’s threefold classification takes virtue ethics as a distinct category and might be very helpful. We can explain why there is a variety of virtue ethics. Part of the reason, in my view, is that, unlike utilitarianism and Kantianism, virtue ethics is a pluralist theory which assigns equal weight to different moral values or conceptions without imposing a hierarchy upon them. One can say that many of these values

\textsuperscript{50} Watson says, “On an ethics of virtue, how it is best or right or proper to conduct oneself is explained in terms of how it is best for a human being to be. I will call this the claim of explanatory primacy” (1997: 451).
\textsuperscript{51} Watson (1997: 456).
\textsuperscript{52} Watson (1997: 452).
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
are already recognized by modern moral theories. Unlike Nussbaum’s charge, however, this cannot be taken as undermining evidence against the status of virtue ethics as a unique moral category. Yet we still need a more convincing argument for a solid foundation that allows us to justify virtue ethics as an independent and unique ethical theory. The following section explains in part how such an argument can be drawn from the distinguishing features of virtue ethics, particularly from its pluralistic character.

2. 4. The Common Characteristics of All Forms of Virtue Ethics

2. 4. 1. The Primacy of Character

There has long been consensus on the aretaic basis of virtue ethics insofar as it is proper to regard ethical theories as either deontic or aretaic. While the primary concern of deontic judgments are the evaluations of actions or kinds of actions, aretaic judgments are concerned with the evaluations of persons, their character, intentions and motives. Deontic judgments, therefore, focus on whether an action is performed in accordance with a general rule or principle and is thus characterized as morally right or wrong; in the aretaic judgments the focus is on the psychology or on personal sources of agency. Thus, the

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54 Aretaic judgments differ from deontic judgments with respect to their predicates. Aretaic predicates such as good, bad, admirable, deplorable, courageous, cowardly have a comparative quality since we can speak of better and best, more or less admirable. However, since rightness is not a scalar quality we, however, cannot speak of right, righter and the rightnest.
moral value of an action is determined in terms of an agent’s inclinations and motives from which action springs. As Michael Slote has stated,

> A virtue ethics in the fullest sense must treat aretaic notions (like “good” or “excellent”) rather than deontic notions (like “morally wrong,” “ought,” “right,” and “obligation”) as primary, and it must put a greater emphasis on the ethical assessment of agents and their (inner) motives and character traits than it puts on the evaluation of acts and choices.55

This normative feature of virtue ethics is more clearly characterized by Frankena in his book *Ethics*. In Frankena’s view, virtue ethics has two distinctive or essential features. First, aretaic judgments are basic while deontic judgments are regarded as derivative, secondary or reducible to aretaic ones or totally eliminable; and second, in moral evaluation agent-evaluations are primary to act-evaluations.56 Accordingly, virtue ethics offers a conceptual shift from “doing” to “being,” which provides a different answer to the question of “What ought I to do?”

Instead of quoting a rule, we quote a quality of character, a virtue “Be brave,” “Be patient” or “Be lenient.”…Now the question “What ought I to do?” turns to the question “What ought to be?”…It is answered, not by quoting a rule or a set of rules, but describing a quality of character or a type of person.57

Kantian and Utilitarian moral theories only deal with what people should *do* as moral agents and they overlook who the moral agent *is*. In Aristotle’s moral theory, however, a quality of character is critical to the

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56 Frankena (1973: 63).
determination of a virtuous or morally good and right action. Performing a just action is not a fulfillment of an obligation, rather it is one which as a just man one would do. The ethics of doing is a morality of principles, the logic of which is quite simple: a moral agent determines what s/he ought to do by seeing whether it maximizes happiness or passes the test of universalization. However, in an ethics of being, character is both a state of being and in relation to doing. In this sense, "Being involves Doing." More precisely, the distinction between virtue ethics and deontological and utilitarian ethical theories with respect to moral judgments is this:

For deontologists,

An action is right iff it is in accord with a moral rule or principle.

For utilitarian, on the other hand,

An action is right iff it promotes the best consequences.

In utilitarian and deontological theories, when the agent meets a difficulty in everyday life s/he makes a decision to find a way out. The decision-making procedure reflects nothing but practical reason as a rule-governed and reason-based enterprise which can be applied on a case-by-case basis.

In virtue ethics,

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58 Mayo (1989: 199)
An action is right iff it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically (i.e. acting in character) do in the circumstances.\textsuperscript{60}

Virtue ethicists think that moral principles or rules are redundant for they are too abstract to provide helpful guidance in the complicated situations of everyday life. If such principles are insufficient to guide us, virtue ethicists say, some other factor, namely, character must be at work in real-life decision-making. Virtue ethics therefore gives primacy to character in the sense that character is essential in the justification of right action, while traditional moral theories assign character a secondary role in their account of right or wrong action. For the modern moral theories, character is important only because it promotes or contributes to the possibility of some particular desired actions, not because it constitutes in part the moral value of actions. In this regard, both Mill and Kant mention the importance of moral education.\textsuperscript{61}

Why is the primacy of character morally so important? This question cannot be fully answered without understanding the connection of character traits to moral value, and the relation of virtue and emotion. As I have explained, character traits or virtues are not merely dispositions to actions. They also include emotions, passions, desires and concerns. In this sense, as Robert C. Roberts states, “they are patterns of saliency, attention, perception and judgments.”\textsuperscript{62} So, more

\textsuperscript{60} Hursthouse (2001: 28).
\textsuperscript{61} For Kant’s views see his book, \textit{Education}. Mill also points out that children should be educated with a utilitarian perspective in order to follow utilitarian principles.
\textsuperscript{62} Roberts (1991: 329).
needs to be said about character traits or virtues, their moral values or status and normative bases.

2. 4. 2. Agent-Relative Account of Virtue

Virtue ethics regards goods as constituting a human flourishing. Some of these goods, such as friendship and integrity, are agent-relative while others, such as justice, are agent-neutral. According to Oakley, we describe a good as agent-relative when “its being a good of mine gives it additional moral importance (to me).” Agent-neutral goods derive no such additional moral importance from their being goods of mine, for they seek some generalizable rules or principles applicable to all similar cases.

Virtue ethics is an agent-relative morality, maintaining that the primary object of moral evaluation is the agent, virtuous or morally good person, not the intentional act or its consequences. However, Michael Slote argues that there are three forms in which a virtue ethics might be agent-relative: agent-focused, agent-prior and agent-based forms of virtue ethics. First, in the agent-focused theories of virtue ethics, “the understanding of the moral or ethical life primarily requires us to understand what it is to be a virtuous individual and/or what it is to have one or another particular virtue, conceived as an inner trait or disposition of individual.” Aristotle’s ethics, according to Slote, is an example of agent-focused theory. Aristotle concentrates more on the inner traits and

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63 Oakley (1996: 142).
64 Slote (2001: 4)
the character of the virtuous person rather than upon what makes actions right. Second, the agent-prior form of virtue ethics “treats the evaluation of actions as derivative from independent aretaic character evaluations.” According to Slote, Rosalind Hursthouse’s neo-Aristotelian, eudemonistic view is the best example of the agent-prior virtue ethics. In this view, the rightness or wrongness of acts depends on whether the virtuous individual would choose and perform them. A person is regarded as virtuous when s/he has all desirable character traits or virtues. In Hursthouse’s view act-evaluations are derived from the aretaic evaluation of character traits and motives which are themselves based on ethical facts about human well-being. In a word, what counts as a virtue and what a virtuous person would characteristically choose are grounded in eudemonia. For Slote, Hursthouse’s theory is agent-prior because, it is not the character evaluations, but the eudemonia is fundamental.

Slote claims that only agent-based theories according to which a right action is defined in terms of its virtuous agent would count as agent-centred virtue ethics. Agent-focused theories emphasize character traits over rules and principles. Agent-prior theories derive act evaluations from evaluations about agents but they do not make agent-evaluations the primary concepts in the theory. Slote thinks that unlike Aristotle’s agent-focused theory, Martineau’s ethics and his own theory exemplify

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65 Ibid.
66 See, Hursthouse’s ideas where she says, for example, “A virtue is a character trait that a human being needs for eudaimonia, to flourish or live well.” (1999: 167).
an agent-based virtue ethics. In order to be an agent-based theory, an account “must derive its evaluations of human actions, whether aretaic or deontic, from independent and fundamental aretaic characterizations of the inner traits or motives of individuals or of the individuals themselves.” Slote argues that adopting the agent-based view is a radical move for virtue ethics because, according to this view, “the agent and her inner life are not fixed on any external or independent action-governing moral standard, but rather constitute in some sense the basis and measure of all moral activity.” In other words, the rightness of an act depends on its being done by someone who possesses admirable motivation.

Slote’s attempt to lay a solid foundation for virtue ethics is praiseworthy, as I believe, it is on the right track. If virtue ethics needs to be theoretical and have a foundation, the only plausible way of obtaining this foundation is to rely on the self-justifying ability of virtues. In this view, virtue ethics must be able to find justification by appeal to the inner trait of the agent, whose justification is not in turn obtained by appeal to any other principle or fact. In other words, the moral value of character must be self-justifying. To say simply that character itself is of moral value, without further qualification, is not to say that all character traits

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68 Slote (1997b: 207).
69 According to Slote, virtues are admirable character traits. Actions “have to exhibit, express, or reflect [virtuous] states or be such that they would exhibit, etc., such states if they occurred, in order to count as admirable or virtuous” (2001: 17).
are valuable, because there are both good and bad character traits. Only good character traits, or virtues, therefore have moral value.

Is there such a foundation for virtue ethics? In some forms of virtue ethics, it seems there is. We can argue that virtues and their corresponding duties are not derivative categories of secondary importance, rather, they are constructed by what any the good agent would do. The virtues themselves are not instrumentally valuable but rather intrinsically valuable. They are not valuable as a means to promoting or realizing some other value but rather they are valuable for their own sake. Justice, for example, is not valuable by virtue of its contribution to maximizing utility. It may bestow certain responsibilities upon us or on our society apart from any advantage because of the value it possesses in itself. Such a conception is non-teleological and non-Aristotelian in the sense that it does not draw virtues from some other higher good, but it adheres to the general characterization of virtue ethics in proposing a conception of the ideal person and the virtues that such a person possesses.

2. 4. 3. The Priority of Goodness Over Rightness

The conceptual distinction we have drawn above implies that, in virtue ethics, the good is a primary concept in terms of which the right can be defined. That means that no account of the right can be provided unless a sufficient account of what is good or valuable is given. According to virtue ethics, since aretaic notions are more foundational
than the deontological ones, the good precedes the right. In this sense both utilitarianism and virtue ethics stand in contrast to the Kantian ethics, but possibly for a different reason. In one way, since some forms of virtue ethics and utilitarianism are teleological the right is conceived as the constitutive or productive of some ultimate end, which is intrinsically good.

However, the very assertion of the priority of the good over the right does not make virtue ethics a teleological moral theory because there is another way of seeing the relationship between the good and the right. As Slote’s argument for an agent-based account of virtue ethics implies, the idea of the priority of good over the right can be defended in a non-teleological and non-inferential conception of virtues. While Slote argues that Aristotle’s virtue ethics is exclusively teleological, Oakley thinks that there are some virtues such as friendship which are intrinsically good.\(^70\) No matter which interpretation is correct, it is quite possible to argue for the moral value of virtues on non-inferential and non-teleological grounds. It is this form of virtue ethics that enables one to defend it as a pluralist and free-standing ethical theory.

2. 4. 4. A Pluralistic Account of Good

Utilitarianism and Kantianism are monist moral theories that rely on an ultimate rule or principle which is universal and thereby expected

\(^{70}\) Oakley (1996: 140).
to be applicable to all sorts of different kinds of situations.\textsuperscript{71} The virtue ethicist's argument for the self-justifying foundation of virtues, if plausible, at least intuitively, reinforces the argument that virtue ethics is a pluralist ethics. This argument suggests that there are many self-evident, basic prima facie duties such as justice, fidelity, courage and beneficence etc., that have no hierarchical ordering among them.

Virtue ethics, therefore, rejects the idea that ethics can be codified. The argument for this rejection is simply this: since problems we encounter in real life are different, various, diverse and distinct, and are also deeply related to many values, we should not expect to find their solution in one rigid and inflexible rule or principle without exception. The answers to the question "How should I live?" or "How ought I to be?" cannot be found in one rule or principle. Rules of ethics can at most be "rules of thumb" –rules that are true in the general sense. Good virtue ethics encompasses a range of valuable traits and activities that are considered essential for a good life. The value of these traits and activities cannot be cast in terms of a single overarching value. That is, virtues are irreducibly plural, intrinsic goods.\textsuperscript{72}

We should however be aware that the uncodifiability thesis is vulnerable to several criticisms. First, one might claim that the uncodifiability thesis is tantamount to the view that virtue ethics does not

\textsuperscript{71} Recently, some commentators have claimed that Kant's ethics is also pluralist in some sense. See, for example, Thomas E. Hill (1992: 743-762). "Kantian Pluralism", (1992: 743-762) and Respect, Pluralism and Justice (2000: 11-32).

\textsuperscript{72} Oakley (1996: 139).
and cannot propose any rules or principles, and thereby fails to provide some adequate action-guidance. According to Hursthouse, the problem does not arise from virtue ethics’ rejection of the significance of the rule following in ethics but from its understanding of what rule is. Virtue ethics denies the priority of mother’s-knee rules such as “Don’t lie”, “Keep promises” not only because they are wholly irrelevant to moral consideration, but rather because it sees the connection between virtues and moral rules in a different way:

Virtue ethicists want to emphasize the fact that, if children are to be thought to be honest, they must be taught to love and prize the truth, and that merely teaching them not to lie will not achieve this end. But they need not deny that, to achieve this end, teaching them not to lie is useful, or even indispensable. …[V]irtue ethics not only come up with rules (the v-rules, couched in terms derived from the virtue and vices) but, further, does not exclude the more familiar deontologists’ rules. The theoretical distinction between the two is that the familiar rules, and their applications in particular cases, are given entirely different backings. According to deontology, I must not tell this lie because, applying the (correct) rule ‘Don’t lie’ to this case, I find that lying is prohibited. According to virtue ethics, I must not tell this lie because it would be dishonest to do so, and dishonest is a vice.73

This paragraph implies two things. First of all, the very concepts of virtues such as honesty, courage, and justice are inherently educational and inspiring. But rules isolated from character are not so. Indeed, though not stated among its essential features, for virtue ethics, moral education is very important. Moreover, the grammar of virtue ethics is

different from the other major moral theories. Instead of talking about the concept of justice in isolation we talk about whether particular persons are just, courageous etc.

2. 4. 5. The Place of Emotions in Moral Motivation

Virtue ethics also parts company with both utilitarianism and Kantianism in its view of moral motivation. While deontologists claim that the preferred moral motive is the respect for the idea of duty (and that the good and virtuous person does his/her duty for duty’s sake), utilitarian theorists claim that the preferred moral motive is steady disposition to maximize utility. For virtue ethicists this preferred moral motivation is neither “respect for duty” nor “utility” but “virtues” themselves. In Hursthouse’s view, a virtue ethicist, especially a neo-Aristotelian, not only ascribes a positive role to emotions in moral motivation but also imbues the moral significance of virtues and vices with the moral significance of emotions. Hursthouse introduces a strong Aristotelian understanding of virtue according to which emotions are indispensable elements of virtues and vices. Therefore, the question of the moral significance of emotions is also a question of the significance of virtues and vices. As we shall see in Chapter IV, an Aristotelian would contend that any inquiry on the moral value of emotions is an inquiry on the moral value of the virtues and vices. According to this view, the virtues (or vices) are character traits, states of character, not only
disposed to act in desired ways, but also disposed to feel specific emotions on certain occasions in certain ways.

Unlike Kantian ethics, virtue ethics holds the position of “virtue for virtue’s sake” with respect to the moral motivation. Seeing emotions as part of moral evaluation forces us to recognize not only that the role of emotions in morality is a part of a general inquiry into the good life but also that virtues cannot be seen only as external expressions of actions. Rather, they express feelings, desires and attitudes; they are “characteristic of virtuous response to those values or valuable things.”

As Michael Stocker has elegantly put it, virtue ethicists espouse the idea “that emotions are constituents of various goods, that emotions are grounds of evaluations of people, actions and practices, and that emotions figure in making moral evaluations.” For virtue ethicists, therefore, the emotions have a complex and pervasive place in morality. Virtues shape both the actions or attitudes and the practical reasoning of the virtuous person in a characterizing way.

This chapter has shown how contemporary virtue ethicists wish to understand ethics in a sense that unifies social and psychological aspects of human nature. In this sense, virtue ethics is primarily a moral and psychological theory. Second, the way in which virtue ethicists see the subject matter of ethics entails not only a clear objection to modern moral theories but also a desire to return to Aristotelian moral thinking.

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74 Swanton (1997: 82)
Though virtue ethics was initially a protest against deontology and consequentialism, there have been substantial attempts to develop virtue ethics as a systematic and rival account. The future will show whether a much more coherent and more plausible virtue ethics is available. Although some versions of virtue ethics incorporate elements from Plato, Aquinas, Hume, Nietzsche and even from Kant, most virtue ethicists take their inspiration from Aristotle. In order to fully appreciate the general features of contemporary virtue ethics and to see how its moral and emotional aspects are integrated, I will continue my investigation in the next chapters, beginning with contemporary approaches to emotions.
CHAPTER III

CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO EMOTIONS

Emotions are perplexing, vague or clumsy, to use some words among many, not only in everyday life but also both in theorizing and identifying them. This is due in part to the fact that they have received little attention until quite recently from scientific and philosophical point of views, seen either as enemies of reason, diseases of the soul or pathological in the history of philosophy. Among others, an important difficulty in theorizing and understanding emotions is that the central problems of philosophy of emotion are essentially related to the problems of the philosophy of mind, about which it is relatively difficult to find a widely accepted view compared to some other branches of philosophy. Indeed, emotional states are ones among several kinds of states that the philosophy of mind deals with. So, the questions like ‘How should we understand the relationship between physical states and mental states?’, ‘Are they identical or two different substances?’ and

76 The persons who hold these ideas are most notably Plato, Stoics and Kant respectively. The idea that emotions and feelings are neglected in philosophy has been pointed out by several authors. As Melden writes: “The whole subject of feeling has been very badly mismanaged in philosophy. And it is scandalous that those who write in moral philosophy and in the philosophy of taste take little or no pain to get clear about what for them is a matter of fundamental importance” (1969:209-210).
‘Can we reduce mental states to physical ones?’ are also the questions that the theorists of emotion ask in some way.

From the above remarks, the reader should not get the impression that my primary concern in this chapter will be to seek which emotion theory is ontologically more accurate. Needless to say, ontological accuracy is philosophically very important and helpful for many aspects. However, such a task is not only hard to achieve but also beyond the scope of such a work whose central topic is ethics. Moreover, in order to forgo some possible disappointments, I also remind the reader that the account I defend here is not novel, or different from the one that may exist in contemporary literature. My aim in this chapter is rather to search out which theory can better justify and thereby be more explanatory in terms of the central claims of virtue ethics, and giving the theoretical advantages it holds.

This chapter begins with a conceptual analysis of the terms ‘emotion’, ‘feeling’, affectivity’, ‘inclination’, etc. I will then examine the two classical theories of emotion, namely, the feeling theory and the cognitive theory, intending to emphasize the strength and weakness of each. In section II, I focus on James’s account which takes emotions exclusively in bodily terms. Against the objection that he entirely overlooks the role of beliefs in emotions, I suggest that two arguments must be distinguished in James’s account as to the identity claim between the mental and physical states in emotions, and the causes of emotion. I argue that James does not overlook the role of beliefs in the
latter. In Section III, I maintain that although cognitivism is successful in appreciating various aspects of emotions, further conceptual distinction such as dispositional and episodic emotions is needed, together with the feeling aspect of emotions, for the successful analysis of emotions. I will conclude the chapter by emphasizing the significance of psychic feelings in human life and in explaining the connection between emotions and morality.

3. 1. The Language of Emotions

I begin with some clarifications of the words relating to emotion that we use in the philosophy of emotion and everyday life. Perhaps the best way to fulfill this task is to look at how the words emotion, feeling and affectivity are used or defined. In the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, emotion is defined as

> a total state of consciousness considered as involving a distinctive feeling-tone and a characteristic trends of activity aroused by a certain situation which is either perceived or ideally represented.\(^\text{77}\)

In the same dictionary, feeling-tone or affective-tone is described as “the ingredient of feeling that attaches to a mental state.”\(^\text{78}\) It has been a matter of dispute among psychologists whether there is a feeling-tone for every sensation, yet many scholars, following Aristotle, identify the feeling-tone of emotions as pleasure and pain.

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\(^\text{77}\)Peter Smith (1960: 316).
\(^\text{78}\) (Ibid: 23).
In the literature of the philosophy of emotion and of psychology, the terms feeling and affectivity are widely and interchangeably used. The confusion has been mostly on the distinction between emotion and feeling or affectivity. On the one hand, it is said that each emotion has a distinctive characteristic. There are certain qualitative differences between mental or physical states of fear and happiness. However, the feeling or affectivity of a particular emotion, its felt quality, may also change in degree and density from person to person.

I want to pursue my clarification of the language of emotions by discussing Ryle’s ideas. In his book, *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle adopts a folk-psychological strategy, which tries to understand what an emotion is by looking at how the word ‘emotion’ is used in the ordinary language. In ordinary language, he says, we sometimes use the word ‘emotion’ to refer to feelings, inclinations (or motives), moods, agitations (or commotions). He argues that the identification of emotions with feelings includes an important “verbal muddle” as well as logical one. In one sense feelings are used as referring to occurrences. If emotions are feelings, then emotions must also have occurrences. Ryle argues that in describing someone as vain we use the word ‘vain’, not refer to an ‘occurrence,’ but to her/his dispositional properties and expresses these properties in ‘whenever’ sentences. The logical muddle is that we cannot clearly explain the connection between a dispositional property (being vain) and its momentary actualization, or expression (feeling vain). Ryle not only denies that the ‘feeling vain’ causes ‘being vain’ but also denies
that there is any causal relation between ‘being vain’ and ‘feeling vain’. According to him, the relation can only be explained in a logical way with the help of hypothetical propositions; a man is not vain if he does not talk a lot about himself, or rejects criticisms about himself. Or, a man is not jealous if he does not doubt his partner or rent a detective to follow his partner all day. There seems to be a necessary connection between ‘being jealous’ and expressing a certain kind of behavior, but one could be jealous without renting a detective to follow her/his partner, which is contingently connected with being jealous.

Without committing to a verbal or logical confusion, Ryle thinks that the distinction among feelings, inclinations, moods and agitations can be stated as follows: Feelings are occurrences but the last three kinds of emotion words “are not occurrences and do not therefore take place either publicly or privately. They are propensities” of different kinds.\footnote{Ryle (1949: 83).} He takes feelings as referring to “thrills, twinges, pangs, throbs, wrenches, itches, prickings, chills, glows, loads, qualms, hankerings, curdlings, sinkings, tensions, gnawings and shocks.”\footnote{Ryle (1949: 83-84).} Not all feelings are of same kind, some are located in some part of the body, for example, the sinking feeling of despair in the pit of stomach; while others such as glows of pride pervade the whole body.

One way of distinguishing emotions or feelings from moods in the literature has been in terms of the object they accompany. It has been
widely accepted that while emotions have certain intentional objects, moods do not. Ryle’s analysis is consonant with this idea. He suggests that “[m]oods or frames of mind are, unlike motives, but like maladies and states of the weather, temporary conditions which in a certain way collect occurrences, but they are not themselves extra occurrences.”\(^81\)

But feelings “are things that come and go or wax and wane in a few seconds; they stab or they grumble; we feel them all over us or else in a particular part.”\(^82\)

Having explained some general features of the language of emotions, I want now turn to the two classical theories of emotion. Before doing this, it is useful to conclude this section with an often cited synopsis develop by William P. Alston, identifying the general factors that philosophers have considered as essential to emotions. Alston states these factors as follows:

1. A cognition of something as in some way desirable or undesirable.
2. Feelings of certain kinds.
3. Marked bodily sensations of certain kinds.
4. Involuntary bodily processes and overt expressions of certain kinds.
5. Tendencies to act in certain way.
6. An upset or disturbed condition of mind or body.\(^83\)

Theories of emotion take one or more of these items as constituent of emotions or their causes, effects or concomitant. There

\(^81\) Ryle (1949: 83).
\(^82\) Ryle (1949: 100).
\(^83\) Alston (1967: 480).
exist a variety of views in the literature with respect to the problems of emotions, it has been common to classify theories of emotion under two headings, namely the feeling theory and cognitivist theory.

3.2. The Feeling Theory of Emotion

The feeling theory holds that emotions are simply *feelings*. What characterizes a state of experience as an emotion and individuates it from others is its felt quality. Accordingly, for every particular emotion, there is a person who is in consciousness of a felt quality, which is accessible in no other way but to introspection.\(^8^4\) Given these general convictions, the feeling theory is of mostly Cartesian origin as it appears in the *Passions of the Soul*.\(^8^5\) For Descartes, human beings consist of two different substances, the mind and body, irreducible to one another. The chief functions of body are movement and heat produced by animal spirits.\(^8^6\) Of the two functions of the soul, on the other hand, one is to produce intentional actions directed to something immaterial or to move our body. The other is to produce passions of soul consisting of perceptions, feelings or emotions “which are caused, maintained and strengthened by some movements of the spirits.”\(^8^7\) Descartes takes passions of the soul as perceptions or a conscious state in which the

\(^{84}\) Ibid.

\(^{85}\) Not only Descartes but also Hume and Kant are among the thinkers in the tradition of faculty of psychology who claim that emotions or passions are feelings. Hume claims that passions as “impressions of reflection” are unique kinds of experience which arise as a result of sense perception and thought, while Kant thinks that emotions are modes of feeling, “where feeling is taken to be one of the ultimate faculties of the mind, along with cognition and will; so conceived, feeling is the faculty of being affected positively or negatively by objects cognized” (Alston: 1967: 480).

\(^{86}\) Descartes (1989:23).

\(^{87}\) Descartes (1989:34).
soul is passively affected. He therefore explains ‘passions,’ or emotions, in terms of physiological processes and claims that they have physical causes.\textsuperscript{88} Emotions or passions of the soul, for Descartes, are passive because in experiencing an emotion we are merely aware of what our soul \textit{feels} when there is something going on in the body.\textsuperscript{89} Descartes’s account is mostly based on what he calls subjective awareness of physiological changes, that is, introspection. However, introspecting lived experience only provides us with a subjective and an incommensurable account of emotions. For the behaviorist like Ryle, however, introspection is not a reliable scientific process, thereby an account of emotion must be based on the expressible side of emotions. Emotions are things which can not only be \textit{felt} but also \textit{expressed}.

There have been several versions of the feeling theory in the contemporary literature. William James, the most notorious representative of the contemporary feeling theory of emotion, also claims that an emotion is a \textit{feeling}. His understanding of emotion, however, can be taken as a radical rejection of the Cartesian account. In his well-known article ‘What is an Emotion?’ James constructs his own theory by criticizing the “common sense” view, which he describes in the following way.

Our natural way of thinking about these standard emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily

\textsuperscript{88} Descartes (1989: 34-41).
\textsuperscript{89} For a detailed discussion of Descartes’s account of emotion see Lyon (1980: 4).
expression...Common sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike.\textsuperscript{90}

The common sense view includes two presumptions. First, an emotion as a mental state is the instigator of its relevant bodily change, or that of the action. We meet a bear, are frightened and run. Second, the possibility of existence of any emotion without any bodily change, or physical disturbance is the case. We may meet a bear, are frightened but nevertheless not run. James argues that the order of the causal sequence in the common sense view is incorrect because only the physical disturbance, or bodily change, can be the motivational cause: “we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble.”\textsuperscript{91} Accordingly, the correct definition with respect to causal sequence is this: “the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion.”\textsuperscript{92} From the alleged priority of bodily changes, James infers the idea that emotion is simply the consciousness of bodily change.\textsuperscript{93} He offers an ontological reduction of emotions to the brain states by claiming that emotions “correspond to processes occurring in the motor and sensory centers” of the brain.\textsuperscript{94} The emotional brain-processes, he says, “not only resemble the ordinary sensorial brain-processes, but in very truth are nothing but such processes variously

\textsuperscript{90} James (1884: 189-190).
\textsuperscript{91} James (1884: 190).
\textsuperscript{92} James (1884: 189-190), James’s own emphasis.
\textsuperscript{93} Irons (1894: 77).
\textsuperscript{94} James (1884: 188).
combined.” By taking emotions as having the same status as the ordinary sensorial brain-processes he gives a physiological explanation of emotions.

Against the second presumption of the common sense view, James also claims that without bodily changes there would be no emotion. He thinks that the vital point of his theory lies on the question “Can we think grief without its tear, its sobs, its suffocation of the heart, its pang in the breast-bone?” In reply, he suggests:

If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its characteristic bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no “mind-stuff” out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains.

James argues that it is impossible to conceive what is left when all characteristic bodily expressions of grief are abstracted from the consciousness of it. If the abstraction of all characteristic bodily expressions of fear from its consciousness was possible, then the fear in question would be a state being “purely cognitive in form, pale, colourless, destitute of emotional warmth”, that is, “a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception.” We might, for example, recognize a thief at the door and judge that the best thing to be done is to call the

95 Ibid., James’s own emphasis.
96 James (1884: 194).
97 James (1884: 193).
98 See Irons (1894: 81). He says that James’s vital argument is limited into ways. First, the argument rests essentially on the impossibility of conceiving what is left when the bodily elements are abstracted from the concrete emotion. Second, it introduces the identification of feeling of bodily change with emotion.
99 James (1884:193).
police and wait without making noise. Nevertheless, we might not actually feel afraid.

James’s work received several objections in his time and continues to do so. Writing in 1893, Worcester argues that James’s theory of emotion

might perhaps suffice, without further explanation for such cases as the “spitting” of blind kittens at the smell of a dog, or the rage of a bull at the sight of a red cloth, or the startled feeling that we experience at a loud and unexpected sound, if the latter should be called an emotion. ¹⁰⁰

Neither running, Worcester says, nor any other bodily changes in fear are the necessary result of seeing a bear. For an armed hunter, he says, seeing a chained bear does not excite feeling of fear but pleasurable feelings at meeting one loose in the woods. He concludes that we do not run from the bear unless we suppose him capable of doing us bodily injury. In other words, I feel fear, not because I have the perception of bodily changes occurring as a result of seeing a bear, but because I have the belief that the bear is dangerous for me. Accordingly, the cause of emotion, Worcester argues, is not the bodily change but the mental state in question.

In a similar way, Irons, another contemporary of James, argues that if we accept the claim that bodily changes come first and that emotion is simply the consciousness of the bodily change(s) then we would not make a distinction between emotion and its object (cause).

¹⁰⁰ Worcester (1893: 287).
The priority of the bodily feeling, Irons claims, cannot be proved directly and all the attempts to prove may show the priority of the mental process. For example, when we listen to music we can have emotional excitement and organic perturbation at the same instant. We cannot assert the priority of the latter to the former.

In short, for many people, James not only overlooks the mental or cognitive aspect of emotion but also misrepresents the causal sequence in emotions. In order to clarify the dispute and to do justice between the two sides I think it is necessary to distinguish between the identity claim and the causal sequence argument in James’s account. Regarding the first, I take James as saying that what occurs in any case of emotion as a mental state is one and the same with its physical state. Since they are identical, there cannot be a causal sequence or priority between them. When we feel angry the mental state of my anger is identical with the physical state that takes place in my body. But the question “What did cause my emotion?”, either as a bodily change or mental state, is another question. Here James would accept, and does accept, that some kind of mental beliefs are causally relevant. Take his definition of emotion once again:

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\text{the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion.}\]

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101 Irons (1894: 79).
102 James (1884: 189-190), James's own emphasis.
So, the cause of the bodily change is the perception of the exciting fact. Needless to say, any perception of a particular case necessitates some kind of beliefs. I feel fear when I see a bear simply because I know and believe that it is dangerous. Without such a belief no fear would occur. Accordingly, James’s account can be stated more clearly in the following way:

The perception of the exiting fact $\Rightarrow$ Bodily change = feeling

*Seeing* the bear as a dangerous thing $\Rightarrow$ certain bodily change = fear

Those who argue that James entirely ignores the role of beliefs in emotions fail to see the causative role given to the conditional antecedent in the above material. The problem with James’s theory, I believe, is not that it entirely ignores the role of cognition or beliefs in emotions, but rather he oversimplifies their function and, most importantly, fails to recognize their roles in the differentiation of emotions or that whether the identity thesis he proposes is correct.

I have been arguing that the problem with James’s theory is not that it entails a misleading causal explanation or that it entirely fails to recognize the cognitive aspects of emotions. But rather, the identification of emotions with purely bodily feelings creates a serious problem when we think how we differentiate individual emotions. In James’s account emotions are differentiated from each other because each emotion involves the perception of a unique set of bodily changes. James introduces a sharp distinction between ‘*inward sensibilities*’ and
‘standard emotions’. He puts ‘surprise’, ‘curiosity’, ‘rapture’, ‘fear’, ‘anger’, ‘lust’, ‘greed’, ‘love’, ‘ambition’, ‘indignation’, ‘pride’ into the category of the standard emotions because they, he claims, have distinct bodily expressions, or physical disturbances. He extracts the moral, intellectual and aesthetic feelings from the category of the standard emotions because they appear “devoid at first sight of bodily results.” Thus, the theory he presents is not a comprehensive one because it applies only to the standard emotions, and not to all mental states that we may call emotion in general. James seems to construct a ‘natural kind’ for emotions by means of his definition of standard emotions: a standard emotion should have a distinct bodily expression, or physical disturbance, which is “strongly characterised both from within and without.” Standard emotions are directly or indirectly discernible because, as the “natural language” of emotions, bodily expressions, or physical disturbances, internally and/or externally characterize emotions.

However, recent discussions on emotions have clearly put forward the fact that emotions do not construct a natural kind. The argument is that the same kind of bodily change can be experienced in different emotional states. For example, I have sensation of heat in my face both when I am angry and when I am shamed. One might remind me that James does not identify emotions with bodily changes but perceptions, or feelings, of the bodily changes: “every one of the bodily changes,

103 James (1884: 189).
104 James (1884: 201).
105 James (1884: 189).
whatsoever it be, is felt, acutely or obscurely, the moment it occurs.”

The same objection rises again because I can feel the same bodily changes in different kinds of emotions (when I am angry and when I am shamed) and in the same kind of emotion (anger I felt last week and anger I feel today). As Worcester argues (standard) emotions are capable of infinite gradations in intensity. In this sense, James’s account of emotion is unable to give an adequate account for what essentially makes the difference between ‘the fear of losing one’s pocket handkerchief’ and ‘the fear of losing one’s fortune.’

Canon’s experimental studies on emotions maintain the similar point: “the same visceral changes occur in very different emotional states and in non-emotional states.” If the same kind of bodily change, or physical disturbance, are felt in different emotional states, and even felt in different degrees in the same emotion, then in what way can we differentiate individual emotions from each other?

The idea of the individuation of emotions has also been proven by some other experimental studies. In their study on the nature of emotions Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer reject James’s view of emotion as bodily feeling by attempting to show that awareness of emotion is more than an awareness of a physiological state. To do this the college students were randomly chosen and were given an adrenaline injection and placed in one of two different kinds of situations designed to arouse

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107 James (1884: 192), James’s own emphasis.
either “euphoria” or “anger” through the use of stooges. In order to show that emotions would vary with different “cognitions” they created four groups among students. In the first group the students were informed of the injection’s effects; in the second group they were misinformed, in the third group they were given no information of the injection’s effect and the fourth group they were given a placebo injection. For each group there was a stooge. The stooge was not neutral for each group. In some groups s/he acted out anger about a questionnaire that the subjects themselves were to fill out, while in others s/he acted out euphoria. As a result of their experiment Schachter and Singer found that students who were misinformed and uninformed about the cause of the physiological arousal were more likely to feel either angry or euphoric than subjects who were informed or given only a placebo injection. They conclude that

An emotional state may be considered a function of a state of physiological arousal and of a cognition appropriate to this state of arousal. The cognition, in a sense, exerts a steering function. Cognitions arising from the immediate situation as interpreted by past experience provide the framework within which one understands and labels his feelings. It is the cognition which determines whether the state of physiological arousal will be labeled as “anger,” “joy,” “fear” or whatever.110

Schachter and Singer agree with James that emotions involve bodily feelings, or physiological arousals, but they also argue that emotions are the cognitive activity of “labeling.” That is, an emotion is “a

joint function of a state of physiological arousal and an appropriate
cognition,\textsuperscript{111} not only in the phase of causation but also in its content.

James is right in claiming that we cannot explain an emotion with
a “feelingless cognition.”\textsuperscript{112} Emotion cannot be conceived as “dissociated
from all bodily feeling.”\textsuperscript{113} The conclusion he draws, that is, without bodily
feelings, every emotion “in turns tell(s) the same story,”\textsuperscript{114} is also correct.
But I argue that the opposite is also the case: without beliefs or cognition,
every emotion tells the same story.

Thus James’s identification of emotions with feelings overlooks
the intentionality of emotions and misrepresents the nature of
emotions.\textsuperscript{115} On this point Irons argues that, in explaining emotions,
James leaves out the spiritual element, or psyche, and thus gives an
account of emotion which does not include the subjective element of
feeling but only presents a ‘purely physiological,’ ‘sensational theory of
emotion.’ It is a theory of the brain causation which involves the denial of
the unity of conscious self as well as the unity of life.\textsuperscript{116}

If I saw an object of terror I should inevitably start,
tremble, or run away. But if I were not afraid the
object would not be an object of terror. In other
words, it is not the mere object which determines

\textsuperscript{111} Schachter and Singer (1962: 382).
\textsuperscript{112} James (1884: 194).
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} As many philosophers of emotion have indicated that emotions are intentional, that is, they are about something. In order for an emotion to exist there should be something, a situation, object or event. For a more detailed discussion of intentionality of emotions see Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, “Explaining Emotions” (1978), Ronald de Sousa, \textit{The Rationality of Emotion} (1987), Chapter 5, and Annette Baier, “What Emotions Are About” (1990).
\textsuperscript{116} Irons (1894: 92).
the physical effects, but the subjective feeling towards the object. This is what ultimately makes the object an object of terror, makes us start or tremble, is the spiritual element. ...An emotional class is not something objective; each subject to a great extent classifies in this regards for itself, and even here time and circumstance make alteration and render stability impossible.\footnote{Irons (1894: 84), Irons's own emphasis.}

Here again, James is correct in claiming that without bodily changes there would be no emotional warmth and the perception of the object would be purely cognitive. But as Irons pointed out, with the bodily changes alone the emotional warmth can in no way be accounted for. An emotion, he says, is not a bodily feeling but “feeling towards the object.” This characterizes the self’s reaction as a whole to the relevant object. This is the essential element in any emotion that expresses how the subject “feels in relation to the object” or “feels in regard to the objects.”\footnote{Irons (1894: 93).} Emotion theories like the Jamesian fail to appreciate the cognitive aspect of emotions in general but also overlook the distinction among occurrent, dispositional and background emotions, a distinction which is very important to contemporary theories of emotion.

3. 3. The Cognitive Theory of Emotion

Different versions of the cognitive theory of emotion appear in contemporary literature. They use different technical terms to explore what is essential to emotions such as evaluative judgments, intentionality, propositional emotions, paradigm scenarios, subjective engagement, and psychic feeling. The most characteristic among them is
the so-called pure cognitivism according to which emotions are in their essence beliefs, desires, intentional states or a combination of them. As such it is a theory whose origin goes back to the Stoics who take emotions as *false judgments* about the world and one’s place in it, about the goodness or badness of states of affairs.\(^{119}\) Emotions are necessarily false, the Stoics claims, because all the events taking place in the deterministic world-system are not under our control and thus to be conceived as morally neutral. On this ethical overloaded conception of emotion, feeling anger, for example, is making a judgment that someone has wronged you. The Stoic sage should see that actions of another person are not within our control and that feeling anger towards her/his actions leads us to nothing but makes us miserable and frustrated. The Stoic therapy makes the sage realize that since no action is truly voluntary no one ever wrongs anybody. Thus the sage puts aside all her/his emotions and reaches, or approximates to, the state of moral perfection. The good and happy life is achieved only by getting rid of all emotional attachments and involvement.

The most parsimonious type of the pure cognitive theory in the contemporary literature follows from Donald Davidson, who persistently argues in his work that rational actions in general and the intentional ones and emotions can be explained through interlocking combinations of beliefs and desires. The beliefs in these combinations are perceptual beliefs or other factual beliefs arrived at by perception or inference.\(^{119}\) See Long and Sedley (1997: 412).
whereas the desires are conative or affective states with thought content. In analyzing Hume’s account of pride Davidson overtly describes emotions in terms of propositional attitudes:

Suppose a man is proud that he has a beautiful house; then his state of mind is caused, according to Hume, by a belief that he has a beautiful house. What the man takes pride in, that is, the fact that he has a beautiful house, is identical with the content of his belief: one could say that the belief determines the object of pride.¹²⁰

Davidson describes belief not only as the main constitutive of pride but also the determinant of the intentional object of pride, while he takes the impressions and sensations as secondary in the constitution of pride and its object. He tries to show that between an emotion and its object, between an emotion and belief(s) on which it is based, there is a causal and logical relation, the syllogistic form of the latter stated in Barbara.¹²¹

(U) All who own a beautiful house are praiseworthy.
(P) I own a beautiful house.
(C) Therefore, I am praiseworthy.

The beliefs and attitudes on which an emotion is based rationalize (give reasons for) and cause the emotion. By representing emotions as the logical outcomes of belief and desires Davidson’s account makes a contribution to the explanation of the rationality of emotions. Emotions by themselves cannot be described as rational or irrational, as reasonable

¹²¹ Davidson (1976: 751). See also Solomon (2003: 42-56). Solomon claims that in explaining Hume’s cognitive theory of pride Davidson fails to provide an account of the object of emotion and its relation to the emotion. The object of emotion, he says, is not always a proposition, or not “reason for” the emotion but “what the emotion is about.”
or unreasonable but they can be described so in terms of the combinations of beliefs and desires producing them as rational and irrational, or reasonable or unreasonable. Davidson’s construction of Hume’s account of pride over-intellectualizes emotions because in such a construction beliefs can show one’s emotion to be rational in the sense of being based on a sort of syllogistic reasoning.122

In the *Action, Emotion and Will*, like Davidson, Anthony Kenny claims that the subject’s belief determines the object of emotion and thus emotion itself. Kenny’s main thesis is that each emotion must have a discernable character or the subject experiencing the emotion must see it as having that character:

> If a man says that he is afraid of winning of £10,000 in the pools, we want to ask him more: does he believe that money corrupts, or does he expect to lose his friends, or to be annoyed by begging letters, or what? If we can elicit from him only descriptions of the good aspects of the situation, then we cannot understand why he reports his emotion as fear and not as hope.123

Thus, for Kenny, beliefs not only determine (intentionally) the object of emotions but also differentiate one particular emotion from the other. Beliefs give a distinguishing feature to each emotion.

Robert C. Solomon, the other proponent of contemporary pure cognitive theory, points out that emotions “are about the world” or more specifically “subjective engagements in the world.” As he says:

Emotions are constitutional judgments. They do not just find interpretations and evaluations in our world … [t]hey constitute them. We do not live in Reality but in surreality, a world that is populated with objects of value and objects of fear, gains and losses, honors and injustices, intimacies and inequalities. It is our passions –and our emotions in particular –that set up this world, constitute the framework within which our knowledge of the facts has some meaning, some “relevance” to us. This is why I insist that the emotions are constitutive judgments; they do not find but “set up” our surreality. They do not apply but supply the framework of values which give our experience some meaning.

According to Solomon, “what is “constituted” in emotions is not knowledge but meanings.” Accordingly, an emotion is not defined in terms of a fact but in terms of its intentional object: It is not the fact that John stole my car is what I am angry about. I am angry about the intentional object “that John stole my car.” The object of an emotion, or what it is about, is defined by normative judgment. “My-anger-at-John-stealing-my-car” is inseparable from “my judgment that John in so doing wronged me.” Emotions, for Solomon, are reactions to something that happens to us. In this sense, “to have an emotion is to hold a normative judgment about one’s situation.” Therefore, “emotions are judgments –

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128 Solomon (2003:8).
normative and often moral judgments.” Solomon also claims that emotions are rational in the sense in which judgments can be rational. Judgments are actions aiming at changing the world. If emotions are judgments, he says, they are actions aiming at changing the world. In this sense, emotions are purposive, serving the ends of the agent, thereby can be rationally explainable. As such, they involve desire, expectation, purposes, and attitudes.

While Solomon clearly points out that “emotions are interestingly similar to beliefs” he nonetheless deliberately prefers to use judgment instead of belief. The reason given for this is that beliefs typically characterize—states. Beliefs are not experiences but dispositions. Solomon then claims that, “belief may be perfectly appropriate in explaining emotion but it is inappropriate in the analysis of emotion.” More interestingly, while Solomon thinks that being experienced is essential to analyze emotions in terms of judgments, he argues that affectivity, that is, being felt, is not even necessary for emotions. Take the following passage:

Emotions typically involve feelings. Perhaps they essentially involve feelings. But feelings are never sufficient to differentiate and identify emotions, and an emotion is never simply a feeling, not even a feeling plus anything. Moreover, it is clear that one can have an emotion without feeling anything. One can be angry without feeling angry: one can be angry for three days or five years and not feel

\[129\] Solomon (2003: 7)
\[130\] Ibid.
\[131\] Solomon (2003: 8)
anything identifiable as a feeling of anger continuously through that prolonged period.\footnote{Solomon (2003: 5).}

The same idea appears in his another work:

it is so important to insist not only that an emotion is not identical with a feeling but that a feeling is not even a component of emotion …the feelings are at most an accompaniment to the anger, like the excitable fans following an athletic team.\footnote{Solomon (1993: 118).}

Notice that Solomon is not only saying that feeling is not sufficient for emotions but also that it is not necessary either. I will return to the question of feeling in emotions, however let me pursue my discussion by identifying another inconsistency that arises in Solomon’s early works when he says that states or dispositions are also irrelevant to the analysis of emotions. Yet it is the same Solomon who accepts a holistic account of emotion. In identifying emotions as judgments he says:

An emotion is not an isolated judgment, but a system of judgments which is in turn a sub-system of the whole of our way(s) of viewing the world …Each emotion is …a particular focusing of judgmental structures through which the person constructs his or her own view of the world and gives it significance.\footnote{Solomon (1978: 187).}

It is not difficult to observe however that our way of seeing the world is not simply constituted by judgments that occur in a particular time and place towards particular objects or people. Rather it arises from an enduring process of interaction which in turn determines or at least influences our way of interpreting and seeing the world. This clearly
identifies a holistic account of emotions in which dispositional beliefs are causally operative. It seems to me that Solomon cannot defend a holistic account of emotions without bringing dispositional beliefs to the analysis of emotions.

Solomon’s early idea that emotions are simply judgments has raised several other objections. Since judgments are said to be the determinant of emotions “it is no surprise that emotions change with our opinion”\textsuperscript{135} It is evident that emotions can and do change with newly-adopted perspective or gained knowledge but change in belief does not guarantee a change in emotion.\textsuperscript{136} One can mistakenly believe that some particular persons who work around have stolen her/his valet, and be too angry. But when she/he learns that it was not so, rather the valet is on the desk, his/her anger may not disappear abruptly. In reply, Solomon would say that what remains unchanged is not emotions but the feeling. The reason for this, he would say, is that “the feeling subsides more slowly than the anger” but the feeling in question, Solomon says, “is not a feeling of anger. Now it is just a feeling.”\textsuperscript{137} This conclusion seems not only very awkward but also refutable even from some textbook knowledge on emotions. Only a nonearthy person perhaps is unable to identify the feeling of anger from the feeling of fear and cannot say what is going on in her/his blood when these two emotions cease to exist once the judgments change.

\textsuperscript{135} Solomon (2003: 5).
\textsuperscript{136} Rorty (1978: 139).
\textsuperscript{137} Solomon (2003: 6).
The reason why Solomon’s position leads to such a clear mistaken conclusion is due to his failure to see the feeling as a necessary component for emotions in his early works. In his latest work, Solomon confesses that “I am now coming to appreciate that accounting for the feelings (not just sensations) in emotions is not a secondary concern and not independent of appreciating the essential role of the body in emotional experience.” After a series of works over thirty years, Solomon came to the conclusion that the feeling is a necessary component in emotions.

I also believe that Solomon’s denial of dispositional beliefs or judgments in emotions is also vulnerable to a strong objection. Take another counter-example provided by Cheshire Calhoun in which one experiences strong conflict between her/his emotions and beliefs:

Raised in a conservative household, Tess acquired, among other beliefs, the belief that homosexuality is unnatural and immoral. But in college, both friends and professors challenged this. After extensive discussion and reflection, Tess came to believe that homosexuality is neither unnatural nor immoral. But several years later, she suddenly discovered that a good friend is a lesbian and she experienced feelings of shock and revulsion. According to Calhoun, to have an emotion is not necessarily to believe x (x: homosexuality is neither unnatural nor immoral) but rather to see the world as x (seeing homosexuality as unnatural or immoral). Calhoun concludes, I think mistakenly, that there is no necessary component in emotions.

139 Calhoun (1984: 331).
connection between emotion and belief. She thus claims that cognitive theorists who think that emotions are beliefs have been misled. Calhoun is right in claiming that to say that emotions are belief is simply wrong. But, she is wrong in concluding from this that they are not essential to emotions.

Calhoun’s homosexuality example, however, reveals an important distinction, a distinction which is drawn by different notions such as occurrent and dispositional emotional states. An occurrent use of an emotion refers to an actual emotional state while a dispositional use refers to a liability or proneness to get into an actual emotional state. The term ‘anger,’ for example, can be used both occurrently and dispositionally. When I say that “my father is angry with me for taking his car” this could mean either that my father is in an actual emotional state in which he raises his tone of his voice, has a red face, etc. But when I say “my father is an angry man” this refers to a disposition for my father. The same distinction is also drawn under the name of the episodic-

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140 Nussbaum distinguishes dispositional emotions not only from episodic ones but also from background emotions. Background emotions are also persisting emotions. The distinguishing feature of them is that they have “unnoticed unless a circumstance calls them into view” (2001:70). Think the sadness of a mother whose child died here and now. Her sadness refers to an episodic emotion which is occurrent now. Her sadness might continue and make some changes in her character in the rest of her life without being consciously noticed all time. Such kind of sadness refers to a background emotion. But there are people who always have a strong tendency to experience sadness when face with small or big misfortunes in their life. This kind of sadness is a dispositional emotion. There are also people who are sad but their sadness is objectless—the mood which occurs as a result of the lack of intentional object. All these distinct kinds of emotions clearly point out the complex nature of emotions and give some important clues about mental states to which we refer as emotions. They are closely related to our beliefs and thoughts. They are not unchanging states but episodic, dynamic and dispositional states which come and go, and wax and wane in person’s life.
dispositional distinction. Episodic states are the states with determinate duration while dispositional states are the enduring or persisting states in personality. Similarly, the distinction between episodic and dispositional states is the distinction between one who is jealous of someone in a certain time and under certain conditions and one who is by nature a jealous person and dispositionally jealous.

For the many cognitivists in recent literature, beliefs are among the essential components of emotions, including dispositional, but emotions can include many other components such as the evaluative, appetitive, behavioral, and affective as well. It is very interesting that all these components or aspects of something essential to emotions can be found in John Dewey’s account. To further my discussion, I want now to make use of his account of emotion, which is important not only historically but also theoretically.

By attacking James’s account, Dewey develops a phenomenological picture of concrete-emotional experience, which consists of three phases: it has (1) an affect (feeling, or quale, or seizure), (2) a disposition, a mode of conduct, a way of behaving, (3) its “object” or intellectual content. In a passage where these three aspects are stated, Dewey defines emotion in the following way:

\[
\text{Emotion in its entirety is a mode of behaviour which is purposive, or has an intellectual content, and which also reflects itself into feeling or Affects, as}
\]
the subjective valuation of that which is objectively expressed in the idea or purpose.\footnote{Dewey (1965: 233).}

In the first place, an affect, for Dewey, is \textit{feeling} quale, or emotional seizure of the emotion. He claims that, in explaining emotion, James is not dealing with emotion as a concrete-emotion experience but with an abstraction from the actual emotion of that element which gives its differentia. Such an account takes emotions as fragmentary experience and is thus unable to explain why and how affect is related to other phases of the whole concrete-emotional experience. For Dewey, the problem is that the ‘feel of anger’ (affect) can be intellectually abstracted from the relevant emotional experience of anger, but in reality it has no existence by itself. This means that affect has only relational existence – that is, it exists through behavioral and intentional components of emotion. Secondly, closely associated with this aspect, Dewey points out that an emotion not only includes a certain feeling, or seizure, of the relevant experience, but also a certain practical attitude, or certain tendency to act, in relation to the experience. Thirdly, an emotion is also of an intellectual content or intentional object: an emotion is always about some particular thing, person, event etc. For Dewey an object or idea is an abstraction from the activity. The abstraction of the object assigns a value to the object and thus creates the ground on which an affect is somehow related to the object. He explains the
object’s relation to affect as follows: an object is “the specific quality...to which the seizure” or affect, attaches.\textsuperscript{142}

Pure feeling theories take the mind or the self as something always passively affected. If the mind has nothing to with the occurrence or presence of emotions, either concomitantly or prior to it, we are left as someone or something whose actions are strictly determined by external forces or facts. On the other side, some philosophers, who appreciate the cognitive and volitional aspects of human actions, have taken the human mind as something ahistorical. Against this, Dewey presents a Hegelian version of Aristotle’s view of emotion. With respect to its attempt to explain affect in relation to the wholeness of concrete emotional experience, his holistic account is of crucial value. In this view, the human mind cannot be taken as something ahistorical when we think about its intellectual, intentional, behavioral and emotional activities.


So far I have tried to show that neither the physicalist nor the cognitivist accounts are adequate. Without taking elements from both sides and integrating them, neither of these theories allows us to distinguish emotions from non-emotional phenomenon, one emotion type from the other, nor an individual’s emotional experiences for the same emotion type. Many cognitivists today, like Solomon, accept that

\textsuperscript{142} Dewey (1965: 238).
emotions include feelings. Their attention nonetheless focuses on the different role that the cognitive part plays in emotions. Nussbaum, who calls her theory of emotions “cognitive-evaluative view,” for example, claims that emotions are evaluative judgments.\textsuperscript{143} Emotions do not exemplify simple ways of \textit{seeing} an object. Rather, they are a complex set of beliefs about the object constituted by the person’s \textit{seeing as}. Beliefs are essential to the identity of emotions for they make requisite discriminations among emotion types. Due to the intentional perceptions and beliefs involved in emotions, Nussbaum claims, emotions are related to value: when a person experiences a proper emotion like grief s/he sees the object of her/his emotion invested with value or importance. Nussbaum claims that the opponents of the cognitivist view, who dissociate emotion from belief, cut off “emotion from what is not only a necessary condition of itself, but also a part of its identity.”\textsuperscript{144} Within the cognitivist side, I have tried to argue that it is essential to include dispositional states among the nature of emotions. We have also seen that there is strong conceptual and empirical evidence in support of the view that feeling or affectivity is essential to the nature and explanation of emotions.

There is a further question, however, on how we should understand emotional affectivity. ‘Should we understand ‘emotional affectivity’ only in terms of physical feelings?’ By affectivity one may not

\textsuperscript{143} Nussbaum (2001: 23).
\textsuperscript{144} Nussbaum (2001: 30).
only refer to bodily (physical) feelings but also to psychic (non-bodily) feelings. In evaluating affectivity with respect to non-bodily or psychic feelings it is important to keep in mind that bodily feeling particularly refers to a specific condition which should be always felt. A disposition cannot be felt by itself, rather, it provides or somewhat determines the context of particular emotions. However, in the case of psychic (non-bodily) feelings there may not be a specific condition which is needed to be felt. In other words, while the bodily feeling needs to be felt in order to be an emotion, the psychic feeling may not be. For example, a woman who lost her child can bear her pain over time but cannot feel the pain of the lost at every minute of her life. This is because, as we have seen, non-bodily feeling can be both dispositional and occurent.

The idea that the concept of emotion is insufficient without including the role of psychic feelings was first defended by Michael Stocker in 1983 and later developed by Justin Oakley. On the basis of the above conceptual distinction, Oakley argues that the fact that we may sometime have emotion without affect does not show that affectivity is unnecessary to emotions, rather, it shows that the concept of emotion cannot be understood in terms of feeling alone.\footnote{Oakley (1993: 9).} With respect to the role of affectivity in emotion and human life in general, Oakley says that

the psychic dimension of emotional affectivity is the mental ‘tone’ which affects us when we have an emotion, and which characteristically permeates our perceptions, desires, and actions in ways which we are not always aware of. This emotional tone

145 Oakley (1993: 9).
can affect our lives for extended periods, as in cases of enduring emotions such as the love and grief.\footnote{Oakley (1993: 11).}

Here Oakley is talking about something we deeply value in life. We often hear people say how important the lack or presence of a certain experience that they missed or lived was for their individual biography. Consider the importance of occurent or non-occurent psychic feelings in these cases: a middle-aged woman who never talked with her mother, a child who lost her family in a terrible accident, a lover whose marriage proposal is being accepted by the beloved, the actress who first learnt that she won an Oscar. What is important for those people was not the lack or presence of certain physical changes in their body, but rather the significance of those psychic feelings having been experienced or unexperienced.

I therefore contend that reductionist accounts or strategies that attempt to find examples in which one can feel an emotion without bodily feeling, or vice versa, unavoidably fail. I am aware that my reconstruction of contemporary theories of emotion in this chapter as such, as well as the ideas of those philosophers I have discussed, can be subject to certain criticisms. Among others, the most important objection might be that the componentist approach to emotions is committed to some kind of dualism or pluralism. This is a legitimate objection. To say that emotions include both bodily and cognitive aspects implies that they include at least two different properties, irreducible to one another, in...
their nature. But in saying this, we are not denying that they can refer to
the same object. There is certainly some connection between the bodily
and cognitive aspects of emotions, however, no sufficient argument has
yet been given as to whether they are functionally or numerically
identical, or whether there appears to be an epiphenomenal connection
between them. I personally believe that any componentist account of
emotions presupposes at least a supervenience theory of mind.

As I have pointed out at the very beginning of this chapter,
ontological questions with respect to emotions are important and
certainly serve our understanding of the nature of emotions. But since
ethical questions are typically normative questions, any inquiry regarding
the connection between emotions and moral judgments and principles
requires evaluative and explanatory powers as much as possible, rather
than reductive principles. The physicalist focuses exclusively on the
identity of bodily and mental states in emotions, for the moral-cognitivist,
however, psychic feelings are more substantial. It should be clear from
our explanations in this chapter why the evaluative feature of emotional
judgments is of crucial importance with regard to explaining the close
connection between morality and emotion. We shall begin to see in the
next chapters how Aristotle, the founding father of virtue ethics, makes
use of such a connection.
ARISTOTLE’S LEGACY: THE COMPONENTIST VIEW OF EMOTION

Aristotle is a common sense philosopher, many of the essential claims of his practical philosophy are drawn from actual experience. This feature of his philosophy is of both an advantage and disadvantage. In one sense, one might find Aristotle’s ideas philosophically uninteresting or dull. From another point of view, however, his philosophy is considered a touchstone for many contemporary philosophers in terms of moral psychology and the viability or practicability of moral theories. It is not a coincidence that several attempts to abstract and remove moral philosophy from practical life and experience have led a return to Aristotle, whose virtue ethics and theory of emotion leave little unsaid. Indeed, as we shall see in this chapter, almost all the claims or explorations made by the contemporary philosophers of emotion have already solid foundation in Aristotle’s theory.

Having read the previous chapter, the reader may consider this chapter simply as historical background to theory of emotion, or think of Aristotle as very much a contemporary philosopher. I will not spoil
Aristotle’s ideas on emotions to make this chapter more interesting. Since my aim is to provide a theoretical foundation for further discussions in the next chapters, I merely present his views in a systematic way, as far as I can do. My overarching aim is therefore to reconstruct a general picture of Aristotle’s theory of emotion developed in his major works, the *Rhetoric*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Movement of Animals*, the *Topics*, the *On the Soul*, the *Categories*, and the *Metaphysics*. Most commentators express hesitation about whether it is possible to reconstruct such a theory of emotion in Aristotle’s philosophy.\textsuperscript{147} Though I agree with much of the concern they raise, I still believe that there exists a coherent, somehow well-grounded, theory of emotion in Aristotle’s philosophy.

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

\textsuperscript{147} Cooper, for example, says that “Aristotle provides no general, analytical account of the emotions anywhere in any of the ethical writings. And we are in for disappointment if we look for this in his supposedly scientific account of psychological matters in the *De Anima*” (1999: 406).
having the power of changing judgments. I conclude this chapter with a
discussion on the relationship between action and emotion in Aristotle.

4. 1 The Metaphysical Basis of Emotions

We should point out at the outset that it is really difficult to
reconstruct Aristotle’s theory of emotion. Part of the reason is that to
develop a theory of emotion for Aristotle was of a secondary importance.
He introduced his views on emotions in relation to other topics or issues.
In the Nicomachean Ethics and the Eudeman Ethics, for example,
emotions are discussed in terms of their significant role in the formation
of character and that of virtue(s); in the Categories and the Metaphysics,
they are identified as the qualities, alterations and movements; in the On
the Soul they are explained as affections of the soul having both bodily
and mental aspects; and in the Rhetoric, the question of emotion is
basically a question of mental causation, that is, how they affect and
change people’s judgments. 148

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

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

It is clear from the above paragraph that “pathos” does not refer to what we call “emotion,” though it has a close conceptual connection with it, but rather to “affection,” “experience” or “alteration.” Aristotle does not give any further analysis of these four senses of “pathos” in the *Metaphysics*. To understand what he means by these four senses, especially by “affection” in the sense of “quality,” we should look at his discussion of quality in the *Categories*. A quality, Aristotle says, is something in virtue of which both things and people are qualified.  

While Aristotle explicitly points out that there are different kinds of quality in respect of which people and things can be qualified, he thinks that these can be grouped and discussed under four major headings or kinds: (i) states and conditions, (ii) natural capacities and incapacities, (iii) external form of a thing, (iv) affections (pathē) and affective qualities.

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149 *Metaphysics* 1022b15-21.
150 *Categories* 9a32, 9b23-27.
151 *Categories* 10a25.
The distinction between state and condition is done on the ground of two essential criteria, that is, the length of time and changeability.\textsuperscript{152} While “being more stable and lasting longer”\textsuperscript{153} are the distinguishing qualities of a state, the qualities of being “easily changed and quickly changing”\textsuperscript{154} belong to a condition. Some examples for the former are knowledge, virtue, justice and temperance, and examples for the latter are hotness, sweetness, chill, sickness and health.\textsuperscript{155} Under the second kind of quality, things or people can be qualified in terms of natural capacity and natural incapacity. People are called wrestler, runners, healthy or unhealthy. They are called or qualified in this way not because of some conditions they are in but because of “a natural capacity for doing something easily or for being unaffected.”\textsuperscript{156} The third kind of quality includes ‘shape’ and external form of each thing.\textsuperscript{157} The former refers to properties of geometrical lines and surface, whereas the latter refers to the configurations of each physical thing.\textsuperscript{158}

The fourth kind of quality regards the distinction between affective quality and affection.\textsuperscript{159} Since this kind of quality is of crucial value and includes many ideas to understand what affection is, it deserves more discussion. Things are qualified by affective qualities when they possess

\textsuperscript{152} Akrill (1985: 104).
\textsuperscript{153} Categories 8b26-27.
\textsuperscript{154} Categories 8b35-37.
\textsuperscript{155} See Categories 9a10. There is a logical relation between states and conditions in a way that all states can be regarded as conditions “but conditions are not necessarily states.”
\textsuperscript{156} Categories 9a17-18.
\textsuperscript{157} Categories 10a11.
\textsuperscript{158} For a detailed information see Akrill (1985: 107).
\textsuperscript{159} Categories 9a29.
them. Since honey possesses ‘sweetness’, it is called ‘sweet.’ Sweetness is an affective quality, not because honey is affected somehow, because sweetness possessed by honey produces a certain affection of taste, ‘sweet’.\(^{160}\) We call the snow cold for the snow has ‘coldness’ affecting the sense of touch.

For Aristotle, an affective quality plays a causative role by producing affection(s). But not all affections are produced by affective qualities. Colorings such as darkness and paleness are not productive of affections and thus not affective qualities as ‘sweetness,’ ‘coldness’ and ‘hotness’ are.\(^ {161}\) Rather they are produced by another affection.\(^ {162}\) Redness and paleness are not qualities but affections because “a man who reddens through shame is not called ruddy, nor one pales in fright pallid; rather he is said to have been affected somehow.”\(^ {163}\)

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

\(^{160}\) \textit{Categories} 9b7. Affective quality in this sense is the reminiscent of Locke’s secondary quality.

\(^{161}\) \textit{Categories} 9b10-11.

\(^{162}\) \textit{Categories} 9b13.

\(^{163}\) \textit{Categories} 9b30-32.
In the *Categories* Aristotle claims that affections are not qualities.\textsuperscript{164} In the *Metaphysics*, however, he calls “an affection a quality in respect of which a thing can be altered.”\textsuperscript{165} One might take this as an apparent inconsistency between the two texts, but a careful reading of Aristotle’s account of quality will make it clear that this is not so. To see why, we should bear in mind that, for Aristotle, qualities are both permanent states and easily changing conditions. Thus, when he says that affections are not qualities he means qualities in the sense of *state*. But in another sense, in the sense of *condition*, affections are qualities. When we say ‘John in distress is bad-tempered now’ we do not qualify John as ‘being bad-tempered’ but only say that he has “been affected somehow.”\textsuperscript{166} In this sense affections refer to nothing but to John’s “undergoing experiences.” They do not necessarily involve any psychological or intentional components. John, for example, can become ‘bad tempered’ or ‘red-faced’ without realizing what happens to him. Affections such as ‘bad-tempered’ and ‘red-faced’ are qualities that are *temporarily* applied to John and thus do not refer to John’s permanent states. Thus, they are not qualities in the sense of states but qualities in the sense of short-lived conditions.

A final point with respect to the metaphysical basis of emotion in Aristotle’s theory is this. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle claims that when we make an inquiry as to why something is predicable of something “we are

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{164} *Categories* 9b32, 10a10.
\item \textsuperscript{165} *Metaphysics* 1022b15.
\item \textsuperscript{166} *Categories* 10a9.
\end{itemize}
seeking the causes.”\textsuperscript{167} Given his functionalist methodology, the question of essence (what it is) and the question of cause (why it is) are the same. According to Aristotle, when we wish to explain, for example, \emph{what} a bronze statue \textit{is}, we inquire its essence. A complete account of what a particular thing is given can be achieved by looking for (1) that from which it is made (the material cause), (2) the structure or form in terms of which the matter comes to be something determinate (the formal cause), (3) the agent responsible for a quantity of matter’s coming to be informed (the efficient cause), and (4) the purpose or goal of the compound of form and matter (the final cause). This is also the case in his theory of emotion. Therefore the inclusion of cognition, belief, intentionality and the bodily aspects to emotions can be explained within the context of his general teleological-functionalist theory of causation and explanation.

4.2. The Psychological Basis of Emotions

To provide a more clear understanding of Aristotle’s theory of emotion, it is also necessary to look at his views on human psychology and soul, which are characteristically found in the \textit{On the Soul}. The main focus of Aristotle’s inquiry in this work is to discover the nature and the essence of soul, which is not limited to the human-soul. According to Aristotle, the soul is “the principle of animal life,” whose knowledge contributes to the advance of truth in general and our understanding of nature.\textsuperscript{168} Since there are different kinds of living things forming an

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Metaphysics} 1040a20-30.
\textsuperscript{168} \textit{On the Soul} 402a7-8.
ascending scale – plants, animals, human beings, Aristotle suggests, we should ask the question ‘What is its soul?’ in each case or order of living things.

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

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

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\textsuperscript{169} On the Soul/413b10-12.  
\textsuperscript{170} On the Soul/413b1.  
\textsuperscript{171} On the Soul/413b22-25.  
\textsuperscript{172} On the Soul/413b22-25.  
\textsuperscript{173} On the Soul/413b25.
At this point, it is worth discussing an apparent confusion in Aristotle’s account of psychology that creates a debate in recent literature. On the one hand, Aristotle says that the power of imagination is found in most animal species. On the other hand, in the *Movement of Animals* Aristotle explicitly speaks of both imagination and sensation as distinct faculties of discrimination that “are on common ground with thought.”\(^{174}\) Some commentators of Aristotle take ‘imagination’ as a “by-product of sensation.”\(^{175}\) It is clear in Aristotle that emotions somehow depend on imagination. According to his taxonomy of living things, imagination is one of the faculties of discrimination found in both animals and human beings. Feelings, desires, pleasures and pains and emotions are also found in the beings, which have the psychic power of sensation. The absence of sensation in plants clearly indicates that plants have no feeling, no desire and no emotion in Aristotelian sense. Since both animals and humans are sentient beings it is natural that both have variety of feelings. Now the important question is this: on what ground can we distinguish between human feelings and animal feelings? On the ground of that identification, if possible, can we say that animals have emotions as humans do? These are questions, which I shall presently want to consider.

For Aristotle, all sensation and thought or reason accompany with imagination. Yet there are two kinds of imagination characterizing an

\(^{174}\) *Movement of Animals* 700b19-21.

\(^{175}\) For a more elaborate discussion on this issue see Ross (1949: 142).
important difference between unreasoning animals and human beings, namely, sensitive and deliberative imagination. He says that sensitive imagination is “found in all animals, deliberative imagination only in those that are calculative.” Sensitive imagination is therefore at work not only in the presence of the sensible objects but also in the absence of the sensible object. In the cases of memories of past events, in dreaming, in thinking, in remembering, imagination is also at work. If we question the nature of human emotions we should talk about a combination of both sensitive and deliberative imagination because that combination is what makes humans sentient beings.

The connection between sensitive part and deliberative part in Aristotle’s theory of emotion is also evident from some other textual evidence. In On the Soul Aristotle’s explicitly speaks of a biological psychology with a threefold distinction between the nutritive, sensitive and cognitive faculties. In the Nicomachean Ethics however he puts aside this Platonic psychology and redraws the boundaries within human soul, which he now takes as having two parts, namely, the rational part and irrational part. The irrational part of the soul is also divided into two elements, namely, the “vegetative” and the “appetitive” elements. By the former, Aristotle means the nutritive power of the soul all living things

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176 On the Soul 434a6-7.  
177 On Memory 449b1-451a1, On the Soul 428a8-15.  
178 See Fortenbaugh (1975: 26). He claims that in the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle introduces a bipartite psychology, which is of crucial value with respect to its indication of the place of ‘emotions’ in human soul. By calling that psychology “a peculiarly human psychology” Fortenbaugh makes a detailed comparison between Plato’s and Aristotle’s psychology and defends the advances of Aristotle’s bipartite division of the human soul over Plato’s tripartition.
share because it fulfills the basic functions of a living thing to survive such as assimilating food, growing and reproducing. By its nature, the vegetative element has no share in reason. The appetitive and in general the desiring element, however, shares in reason, in so far as it listens to and obeys it.\textsuperscript{179} He puts all emotions or passions within the irrational part and makes a connection between the rational and the irrational part in terms of the appetitive element’s capacity of listening and obeying to reason. He explains the existence of appetitive element on the practical ground because he derives from it the fact that in the soul “there is something beside reason, resisting and opposing it.”\textsuperscript{180} His derivation of the existence of an appetitive part of the soul depends on the practical affairs of daily life in which an apparent conflict between a thinking self and the emotional self is experienced. As a living thing a human being is a complex creature composed of the soul and body, the rational and irrational parts. However, that to enumerate the constitutive psychic powers or capacities of the human soul as self-nutrition, sensation, imagination and thinking is not enough to explain what the human soul is. The human soul, as Joachim says, is “not the nutritive faculty \textit{plus} the sentient faculty \textit{plus} the rational faculty.”\textsuperscript{181} It must be more than the mere conjunction of these powers because it is defined through function(s) proper to the complex of its capacities of which are not

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1102b29-33.
\textsuperscript{180} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1102b24.
\textsuperscript{181} See Joachim (1951: 39).
necessary for its being but for its well-being for in terms of proper fulfillment of these capacities a human being achieves its flourishing.\textsuperscript{182}

I will come back to the debate with respect to the place of sensation and deliberation in Aristotle’s theory of emotion. Let me conclude this section with a brief summary. Our inquiry on the metaphysical and psychological bases of emotions thus far implies that Aristotle’s theory includes several complementary parts. Indeed, for Aristotle, emotions are complex phenomenon involving mainly cognitive, desiderative and affective aspects, aspects which are irreducible to each other. It is for this reason that his conception of emotions does not allow any reductionist project. In what follows, I will explain these different aspects of emotion, which Aristotle thinks are essential to their nature.

4. 3. The Bodily Aspect of Emotions

The philosophic foundation of Aristotle’s account of emotion could be seen to some extent in the question which he begins with his discussion: Are the affections of the soul “affections of the complex of body and soul, or is there any among them peculiar to the soul by itself?”\textsuperscript{183} As we have seen in the previous chapter, this is a central question of modern philosophy of mind beginning from Descartes. Aristotle clearly offers certain connection or relation between the mental

\textsuperscript{182} On the Soul 435b20-25.
\textsuperscript{183} On the Soul 403a3-5. With respect to discussions on whether the soul (psuchē), or intellect (nous), has separate existence independent of the body this question is of crucial value because “[i]f there is any way of acting or being acted upon proper to soul, soul will be capable of separate existence; if there is none, its separate existence impossible” On the Soul 403a10-13.
and physical states when explaining what anger is. For Aristotle, there are two different kinds of explanation for anger. The dialectician, who assigns the formal conditions, "would define e.g. anger as the appetite for returning pain for pain."\textsuperscript{184} The physicist, on the other hand, who gives the material conditions, "would define it as a boiling of the blood or warm substance surrounding the heart."\textsuperscript{185} Which one of these definitions should be taken by the genuine student of nature? The genuine student of nature, the philosopher, Aristotle says, should take both in order to grasp the essence of anger. Though material conditions can be thought to be separated from formal conditions in abstraction, these two conditions are not and cannot be abstracted from each other in experience.\textsuperscript{186}

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

\begin{quote}
[T]o say that it is the soul which is \textit{angry} is as if we were to say that it is the soul that weaves or builds houses. It is doubtless better to avoid saying that the soul pities or learns or thinks, and rather to say that \textit{it is the man who does this with his soul}.\textsuperscript{187}
\end{quote}

The man as the composite of the soul and body is the subject of psychic attributes such as loving, hating, being angry and thus the man rather than the soul is affected and moved by emotions and other affections. This is consistent with his description of the soul as “an

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{184} \textit{On the Soul} 403a30-31.
\item \textsuperscript{185} \textit{On the Soul} 403a30-403b1.
\item \textsuperscript{186} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1101b25-30.
\item \textsuperscript{187} \textit{On the Soul} 408b12-15, emphasis added.
\end{itemize}
independent substance implanted within us” and as being incapable of being destroyed and moved, something divine and impassible.\textsuperscript{188} The body is the \textit{vehicle} of the soul and only through the body can it be moved.\textsuperscript{189} Nonetheless, we cannot ascribe a strong physicalist position to Aristotle because he also claims that nous, which is impassible and unmixed, is separable from the body in principle.\textsuperscript{190}

In the \textit{On the Soul} Aristotle calls emotions “affections of the soul” and claims that emotions are “enmattered accounts.”\textsuperscript{191} For the majority of emotions, Aristotle holds that there is “no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without involving the body.”\textsuperscript{192} This claim is very important because it clearly puts forward the involvement of physical or bodily states in mental states. As Aristotle puts it in other way:

\begin{quote}
It seems that all the affections of soul involve a body – passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving and hating: in all these there is a concurrent affection of the body. In support of this view we may point to the fact that, while sometimes on the occasion of violent and striking occurrences there is no excitement or fear felt, on others faint and feeble stimulations produce these emotions, viz. when the body is already in a state of tension resembling its condition when we are angry. Here is a still clearer case: in the absence of any external cause of terror we find ourselves experiencing the feelings of man in terror. From all this it is obvious that the affections of soul are enmattered accounts. Consequently their definitions ought to correspond, e.g. anger should be defined as a certain mode of movement of such and such a body (or part or
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{188} On the Soul/408b18-30.  \\
\textsuperscript{189} On the Soul/408a31-33.  \\
\textsuperscript{190} On the Soul 430a18-19.  \\
\textsuperscript{191} On the Soul 403a25.  \\
\textsuperscript{192} On the Soul/403a5-8.
\end{flushright}
faculty of a body) by this or that cause and for this and that end.193

From the opening sentence of the above paragraph it is clear that bodily or physiological changes accompany with emotions. But is the connection in question necessary or contingent? Aristotle’s homonym principle, which holds that the form and matter of living things are the soul and body of living things respectively, throws some light on this question. According to this principle the essential nature of a thing is given in terms of its form or function.194 The eye is defined not in terms of what it is made of but in terms of its function, or its form – what it does, what it is for. The eye is the eye because it does see or is for seeing. We can abstract “eye” from “seeing” in thought. What we abstracted in thought is only the eye in name or figure. Does the homonymy principle overlook the material condition of the soul? As Aristotle indicates in the example of saw, although we can make a wooden saw, it cannot be a real saw because within its essential nature wood does not include any potentiality to be a saw, but some iron does.

So, the homonymy principle puts forward not only that what the soul is, its function or form but also that the soul is the complex of the form and the matter. Given this connection, defining emotions as “enmattered accounts” or “forms that involve matter” means that in each particular case of anger, for example, there is a concurrent affection of

193 On the Soul 403a16-29, emphasis added.
194 See Nussbaum (1978: 100-106) She introduces a detailed account of Aristotle’s functionalism in her translation of, and interpretative essays on, Aristotle’s De Motu Animalium.
body for the existence of anger depends on its realization in the matter. But this does not mean that anger is reduced to the boiling of the blood around the heart because anger is the form of "this sort of body and this sort of matter." So, while there is a contingent relation between this matter and this form, the connection between the formal and bodily aspects of anger is necessary per se. In other words, although Aristotle denies the existence of an absolute necessity between this sort of body and this sort of matter he thinks that there is a hypothetical necessity between them, a necessity that requires a reference to both matter and form for a complete definition. As he says:

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

Commentators like Jonathan Barnes claim that Aristotle's over-all position is a weak physicalism. Barnes thinks that while Aristotle holds a non-physicalist position with respect to two important psychic functions (nous (intellect) and orexis (desire)), his position with respect to some affections of the soul is a weak physicalism. Since “the definitions of the

\[195\] On the Soul/403a25, 403b3. In the following of this quote he says that “the affections of the soul, insofar as they are such as passion and fear, are inseparable from the natural matters of animals” On the Soul/403b18.

\[196\] On the Soul/403b10-15.

\[197\] On the Soul/403a30-403b1.

\[198\] For a more detailed discussion of materialism, functionalism and dualism in Aristotle’s philosophy see Manning (1985).
emotions include reference to (parts of) the body” part of the meaning of “x is angry” in Aristotle, “is the blood about x’s heart is boiling.”

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

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200 On the Soul 403a31-b1.
201 Rhetoric 1378a30-33.
The upshot of this section is that, in Aristotle’s account, emotions involve some kind of bodily sensations. When one becomes frightened some movements occur around her/his heart, his temperature drops, and his complexion becomes pale. But this does not make his account of emotions a mere physicalism, because he does not identify emotions with these bodily sensations nor does he make an ontological reduction of them to sensations. Aristotle only says that in defining emotions we can make reference both to physical or bodily and mental states.

4.4 The Desiderative Aspect: Pleasure and Pain in Emotions

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

By passions I mean appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain.

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

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203 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b21-23. In the *Rhetoric* II Aristotle introduces a detailed discussion of particular emotions. Cooper claims that the list of emotions given in this work is not comprehensive one because in this work some emotions such as grief, pride, erotic love, joy, yearning and regret is not mentioned (1993: 197).
By passions I mean such as anger, fear, shame, sensual desire—in general, all that is usually followed of itself by sensuous pleasure or pain. 204

From these two definitions, it is evident that, for Aristotle, an important feature of emotions is that they are accompanied by (sensuous) pleasure or pain. Anger, for example, is defined as “a desire accompanied by pain.” 205 But, anger is also defined as a desire for revenge accompanied by pleasure. From Aristotle’s discussion we learn that most emotions have an intrinsically mixed nature because of the fact that emotional states are based on the recognition of a need and that they contain certain expectation of their assignment. 206

Aristotle’s discussion of pleasure sheds important light on his account of emotion, especially with respect to its intellectual aspect. He begins his discussion by critically examining the ideas defended by earlier thinkers and then constructs his own view of pleasure. In relation to his understanding of pleasure we can discern three separate discussions, one is in the Rhetoric and the other two is in the Nicomachean Ethics. In the Rhetoric he defines pleasure as a movement. This is Plato’s view of pleasure according to which pain is the lack of a natural condition and pleasure is the replenishment of that

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204 Eudemian Ethics 1220b10-15. It should be noted that in the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle does not claim that emotions accompany with ‘sensuous’ pleasure and pain. The only place he speaks of emotions in terms of ‘sensuous’ pleasure and pain is in the Eudemian Ethics.

205 Rhetoric 1378a31.

206 It is very interesting that Aristotle speaks of the mixed nature of emotions in the Rhetoric but not in his ethics. One reason for this difference might be that he discusses variety characters of pleasure in terms of its relation to some other topics. Another reason might be the influence of Plato in Aristotle’s early works. More on this topic, see Dorethea Frede (1996).
lack. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he rejects this idea and provides two different definitions, namely, pleasure as an impeded activity and pleasure as the completion of an activity. He now thinks that Platonist theory of pleasure takes only the bodily aspect of pleasures into account and overlooks ‘psychic’, or mental, aspect of pleasures.

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

Defending a fine-grained account of action, Aristotle argues that pleasure is a complete activity “when it has made what it aims at.” One principle in distinguishing between complete and incomplete activities is

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208 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1173b16-18.
209 *Magna Moralia* 1204b10.
210 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1174a14-16.
211 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1174a20-21.
in terms of time sequence. For example, seeing a child playing with a
dog in the garden and building a temple are two different activities. The
former one is a complete activity while the latter is a ‘movement’ or
‘incomplete’ activity. Seeing the child playing with her/his dog, lasts for a
period of time. But building a temple, consisting of parts with different
ends in each stage, needs a different time sequence in order to fulfill its
aim. It becomes a complete activity only when the temple is completed.
Similarly, pleasure is a complete activity only if it completes the end it
aims at.

The connection between pleasure and activity in Aristotle’s
account is stronger than the above relationship. The connection is a
mutual one because, as Aristotle contends, “without activity pleasure
does not arise, and every activity is completed by pleasure.”212 If
emotions are the activities of the soul, as he claims, then such a mutual
connection is also the case between pleasure and emotion accompanied
by the pleasure in question: the pleasure that accompanies completes
the emotion.213 Consider anger and shame again, within which they
include pain in their formal definitions. The question now is this: ‘Is pain
completing anger peculiar to anger, or is it identical with the pain
completing shame?’ In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle gives some
reasons to think that for every emotion there is a specific pleasure and
pain not shared by any other emotion. He says

212 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1175a20-21.
[T]hings different in kind are ... completed by
different things ... and, similarly, we think that
activities differing in kind are completed by things
differing in kind. Now the activities of thought differ
from those of the senses, and among themselves,
in kind; so, therefore, do the pleasures that
complete them.\textsuperscript{214}

Since the pain of anger should differ from that of shame in kind,
the pain completing anger should be peculiar to anger and not shared by
another emotion. In the \textit{Eudemian Ethics}, too, Aristotle speaks of the
inclusion of pleasure and pain in the concept of emotion by saying that
"the passions are distinguished by pleasure and pain."\textsuperscript{215}

One way of analyzing the question of emotion tone in Aristotle
would be in generic terms, that is, all emotions are identified by a
pleasure or pain peculiar to them, the idea which I have been exploring.
Implicit in his general account on the connection between pleasures and
activities, Aristotle's idea of the 'accompaniment' of pleasure and pain
with emotions also manifests in his analysis of particular emotions.
Anger, here again, is defined as "a desire accompanied by pain"\textsuperscript{216} Fear
is another emotion being defined as feeling accompanied by a pain.\textsuperscript{217}
Shame is also "defined as pain or disturbance."\textsuperscript{218} Pity, kindness,
indignation, envy, and emulation are among emotions accompanying
with pain.\textsuperscript{219} In the light of all these definitions of individual emotions, we
can say that when Aristotle speaks of the 'accompaniment' of pleasure

\textsuperscript{214} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1175a22-28, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{215} \textit{Eudemian Ethics} 1221b36-37.
\textsuperscript{216} \textit{Rhetoric} 1378a31.
\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Rhetoric} 1382a22-23.
\textsuperscript{218} \textit{Rhetoric} 1383b15.
\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Rhetoric} 1385b11-1386b11, 1385a15-1385b11, 1386b10, 1387b21, 1388a30.
and pain he means the inclusion of pleasure and pain within the concept of emotion.\textsuperscript{220}

But the conceptual connection between emotion and accompanying pleasure and pain is not only a generic one. In Aristotle’s account, the distinguishing feature of each emotion is also given through pleasure or pain. The emotional experience would also change from person to person for each individual anger. Aristotelian emotions include a certain kind of cognitive states of the agent experiencing them.\textsuperscript{221}

Anger, Aristotle says, “must always be attended by a certain pleasure – that which arises from the expectation of revenge.”\textsuperscript{222} As we shall explain in the following pages, within the cognitive aspect of emotions, such revenge relates to particular individuals, with certain beliefs being in the mind of the angry person.

4.5 The Cognitive Aspect of Emotions

One of the uncontested views among commentators is that, in Aristotle’s theory, emotions include cognition.\textsuperscript{223} Indeed, Aristotle believes that an analysis of anger, for example, makes it necessary to

\textsuperscript{220} In “Aristotle and the Emotions” Stephen Leighton discusses the accompanying relationship between emotions and pleasure/pain. He claims that “[t]he pleasure or pain is part of the concept of the emotion; neither is separable from the emotion. For each emotion-type there is a type of pleasure or pain peculiar to that emotion. They complete the emotion.” (1982: 157). He also maintains that “the role of pleasure and pain in emotion is not exhausted by “accompanying” relationship. …in addition to the pain or pleasure of the emotion, contemplating and achieving the aim of the emotion (where appropriate) is pleasant, the bodily precondition for the emotion may be pleasant or painful, and so on” (1982: 157).

\textsuperscript{221} For a more elaborate discussion of the involvement of cognition in Aristotle’s conception of emotion, see Fortenbaugh, William, W. (1970: 54).

\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Rhetoric} 1378b2-3.

\textsuperscript{223} Fortenbaugh, for example, claims that on Aristotle’s account of emotion, cognition is an essential element in emotion (1970: 42).
look at “what the state of mind of angry people is, who the people are with whom they usually get angry; and on what grounds they get angry with them.” In general, any analysis of emotion makes it necessary to consider the agent’s dispositions, the intentional objects of emotion and reasons (causes) of emotion. There are four important consequences of the inclusion of cognitions within emotions in Aristotle’s theory: (1) beliefs are necessary ingredients of emotions; (2) emotions are intentional states; (3) beliefs distinguish the logical boundaries not only among particular emotions but also among the subjective experience of each emotion; and (4) judgments are affected or changed by emotions. In the following pages, I will discuss some implications of these consequences by clarifying the nature of the inclusion of cognition within emotions.

In addition to physical responses, which we have explained in section 4.1, Aristotle’s definitions or forms of particular emotions also include cognitive responses. As he says, “both pain and belief seem to be predicated of anger in what it is; for the angry man is both in pain and also believes that he is slighted.” The form of anger in the Rhetoric includes two cognitive responses. First, as a final cause, the definition of anger includes “a desire…for a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight at the hands of men who have no call to slight oneself or one’s

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224 Rhetoric 1378a24-26.
226 Topics 127b30-31.
friends." Second, as an affective cause, the definition of anger includes the efficient cause, that is, the belief that there is a conspicuous slight in virtue of which anger occurs. The involvement of belief in emotion appears more clearly in the following passage:

If fear is associated with the expectation that something destructive will happen to us, plainly nobody will be afraid who believes nothing can happen to him; we shall not fear things that we believe cannot happen to us, nor people who we believe cannot inflict them upon us; nor shall we be afraid at times when we think ourselves safe from them. It follows therefore that fear is felt by those who believe something to be likely to happen to them, at the hands of particular persons, in a particular form, and at a particular time.\(^\text{228}\)

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

As it might be seen, my interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of emotion is consonant with the so-called “belief-based view,”\(^\text{229}\) according to which beliefs and judgments constitute the content of emotions. However, as we have discussed in section 4.2, on the “appearance-

\(^{227}\) Rhetoric 1378a30-33.
\(^{228}\) Rhetoric 1382b29-1383a2, emphasis added.
\(^{229}\) For the most important defenders of belief-based view see especially Fortenbaugh (1975) and Leighton (1982).
based view,” images, appearances or perceptual beliefs, rather than thoughts or judgments, are the efficient causes of emotions.\textsuperscript{230} Cooper, for example, points out that “Aristotle is quite firm and explicit that the emotion arises from one’s having the impression or appearance (\textit{phantasia}).”\textsuperscript{231} Juha Sihvola provides another appearance-based view of the Aristotelian fear by connecting some pieces of Aristotle’s definition of fear in the following way.

Aristotle defines fear as ‘a certain kind of pain and disturbance out of the appearance (\textit{phantasia}) of an impeding destructive or painful bad thing’ (\textit{Rhet II} 5, 1382a21-3), adds that these bad things must ‘appear (\textit{phantasia}) to be close and not far-off (\textit{Rhet II} 5, 1382a24-5), and finally remarks that ‘it is necessary that those things are fearful that appear (\textit{phantasia}) to have a great power to destroy or cause harms that lead to great pain (\textit{Rhet II} 5, 1382a28-30).’\textsuperscript{232}

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

\textsuperscript{230} See Elizabeth Belfiore (1992). She introduces phantasia as the efficient cause of Aristotelian fear, pity and shame.
\textsuperscript{231} Cooper (1999: 416).
\textsuperscript{232} Juha Sihvola (1996: 116).
sensation.\textsuperscript{233} Imagination for him is a psychic faculty that is common to all animals. It is for this reason that in the \textit{History of Animals} Aristotle speaks of a dolphin acting as if out of pity, speaks of a bison acting as if it feels distress and fear, and speaks of an eagle that seems to expel dung out of jealousy.\textsuperscript{234} Indeed, Aristotle ascribes some emotion-like feelings to animals but he nonetheless distinguishes human emotions from these feelings both on conceptual and ontological grounds. Stated in Aristotle’s own terminology, human emotions involve “psychic power,” namely, “the power of thinking and thought,”\textsuperscript{235} whereas animals never have this power. As he says, “in the brutes though we often find imagination we never find belief.”\textsuperscript{236}

So, both human and animal emotions can include images or appearances as a result of the functioning of the psychic power of imagination, but it is impossible to distinguish human emotions from animal emotions on the ground of imagination. Certain passage from Aristotle make Cooper’s and Sihvola’s interpretations incorrect. According to Aristotle, “when we think something to be fearful or threatening, emotion is immediately produced, and so too with what is encouraging; but when we merely imagine we remain as unaffected as

\begin{footnotes}
\item[233] Movement of Animals 700b13-701a6.
\item[234] History of Animals 619b27-31, 630b8-13, 631a15-20. For a more detailed discussion on whether Aristotle claims that like humans animals have emotions see Juha Sihvola (1996).
\item[235] On the Soul 414a29, 414b19.
\item[236] On the Soul 428a 21.
\end{footnotes}
persons who are looking at a painting of some dreadful or encouraging scene." 237

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

The cognitive aspect of emotions can be seen more clearly in the intentional character of emotions. In the Rhetoric Aristotle says that anger “must always be felt towards some particular individual, e.g. Cleon, and not man in general.” 238 This feature distinguishes anger from hatred. While both anger and hatred have the feature of being directness in a general sense, anger is an emotion but hatred is not. This is so because anger is concerned with and directed at particular individuals such as Callias, or Socrates, hatred is not. Rather, it is directed “against classes.” In general, we all hate any thief and any informer, but we feel anger towards some particular persons. 239

238 Rhetoric 1377a33-34.
239 The interpretation of Aristotelian emotions as having an intentional object is a widely accepted view among contemporary philosophers. As Nussbaum has put it, in Aristotle’s account of emotions “emotions are forms of intentional awareness directed at or about an object, in which the object figures as it is seen from the creature’s point of view.” Nussbaum (1994: 80).
Moreover, in Aristotle’s analysis, it is also implicit that the intentional object of anger refers to or is felt towards voluntary actions and autonomous persons. We feel angry because we think that some particular persons slight us. We should also think or know that such a “slighting is a voluntary act.” An involuntarily slighting, on the other hand, does not stir anger. We do not feel anger towards people “who cannot be aware of our anger, and we cease to be angry with people once they are dead.” There are some difficulties in interpreting Aristotle’s position here. On the one hand, these words can be taken as referring to a capability or potentiality with respect to awareness. I do not feel anger towards a stone because I know that it cannot be aware of my anger. It seems that the above quotation clearly endorses this condition or reading. But we can still ask whether the condition of awareness must be a *de facto* awareness on the part of the slighter. More specifically, is it also necessary for the person who slight us to be aware of my anger? Aristotle’s discussion of anger by the slighting example seems to imply that the condition of awareness is a mutual one. Though it is still an open question whether or not such a mutuality condition is also required for all particular anger cases, what is clear in Aristotle’s theory of emotion is that it is not and cannot be required for each particular emotion. To think otherwise would be to contradict with the idea of the differentiae of particular emotions.

240 *Rhetoric* 1380a9.  
By way of contrast between anger and fear, here again, I want now to explain the idea of the differentiae of the particular emotions. Unlike anger, to be afraid of something we need not know or be aware that the action done toward me is a voluntary one. It is sufficient for something’s being harmful in order to make me fear. It is also not necessary for the fearer to be aware of my fear. Since a bear is not and cannot be voluntary for its harming me, and nor can it be aware of that, I do not get angry with a bear, but I do fear it. What distinguishes these two particular emotions is the set of beliefs that each emotion involves. This being the case, it is also fact that the individual experience of each particular emotion and thereby its corresponding belief, may change considerably from person to person. As Aristotle points out,

>a sick man is angered by disregard of his illness, a poor man by disregard of his poverty, a man waging war by disregard of the war he is waging, a lover by disregard of his love, and so in other cases too. Each man is predisposed, by the emotion now controlling him, to his own particular anger.242

In Aristotle’s theory, therefore, beliefs are not only constituent parts of emotions but also differentiating features. Given such features they posses in their nature, emotions play a further role in the cognitive world of individuals. In the first chapter of the Rhetoric Book 2, Aristotle gives another definition of emotion by saying that “emotions are all those

242 *Rhetoric* 1379a19-22, emphasis added.
feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments." To show how, Aristotle provides several examples from daily life experience:

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

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

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

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243 Rhetoric 1378a20-21.
244 Rhetoric 1377b30-1378a6.
245 For a more detailed discussion of how emotions change judgments in Aristotle’s account see Leighton (1982).
246 Martha Nussbaum claims that for Aristotle “emotions are closely bound up with beliefs and judgments and thus are capable of being modified by the modification of beliefs and judgments” (1994: 97).
the emotions involve certain kinds of desires. Taken together, all three
features play a causative role both in the mental states and the actions of
the agents.

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

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

Stated simply and formally, Aristotle’s theory of action has long
been interpreted as follows:

\[
\text{Desire} + \text{Belief} \rightarrow \text{Action}
\]

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

All actions that *are* due to a man himself and
caus’d by himself are due either to habit or to
desire; and of the latter, some are due to rational
desire, the others to irrational. Rational desire is
wishing, and wishing is a desire for good.

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247 *Movement of Animals* 700b11.
...Irrational desire is twofold, viz. anger and appetite.  

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

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

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249 *Rhetoric* 1368b37-1369a4.  
250 There has been some disagreement on the translation of the Greek word boulēsis in the literature. While Ross translates it as “rational wish” Irwin and others translate it as “wish.” Here I prefer to use Irwin’s translation. The same disagreement is the case for the words ‘thumos’ and ‘epithumia.’ Cooper, for example, translates the former as “spirited desire” and the latter as “appetitive desire” (1999: 420-21), while some other scholars translate them as “passion” and “appetite” respectively. For more on Aristotle’s understanding of ‘desire’ see Cooper (1999: 239-244).  
251 *Rhetoric* 1369a5-6.
which requires a wider deliberation, the relevant belief is extrinsic to the individual emotion.

To show this, we should remind that for Aristotle every desire is relative to an end.\textsuperscript{252} There are two kinds of desire, that is, rational desire for the good and irrational desire. This distinction between rational and irrational desires corresponds to the distinction between sensitive and deliberative imagination. Animals having only the capacity of sensation can have irrational desires while, in addition to irrational desires because of their having capacity of reasoning, human beings can have rational desires. Aristotle uses the term ‘emotion’ as a generic term for irrational desires and he sums up his discussion of the causes of actions by saying that actions are caused by “either reasoning or emotion.”\textsuperscript{253}

Moreover, his explanation of irrational desire seems to be in agreement with his definition of emotions which are accompanied by pleasure and pain. As he says, as an irrational desire “appetite is desire for pleasure.”\textsuperscript{254} But among appetitive desires, some are irrational and some others are associated with the rational. The irrational appetitive desires are those originating in the body, such as hunger, thirst, sex, smell, hearing and vision.\textsuperscript{255} They do not arise out of “any opinion held by the mind”\textsuperscript{256} but from the needs of the body.

\textsuperscript{252} \textit{On the Soul} 433a15-20.\textsuperscript{253} \textit{Rhetoric} 1369a17-18.\textsuperscript{254} \textit{Rhetoric} 1370a16-17.\textsuperscript{255} \textit{Rhetoric} 1370a 21-25.\textsuperscript{256} \textit{Rhetoric} 1370a20.
Different from the irrational appetitive desires, however, emotions have a capacity to obey reason. As Aristotle remarks:

*reason or imagination informs us that we have been insulted or slighted*, and anger, reasoning as it were that anything like this must be fought against, boils up straightway; while appetite, if reason or perception merely says that an object is pleasant, springs to the enjoyment of it. Therefore anger obeys reason in a sense, but appetite does not.\(^{257}\)

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

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

Notice that nothing has been specified as to the way you have acted to be rid of the bear. There is certainly a desire here, which can be satisfied in a different way. But the belief or reason that lead you to act in a certain way to be rid of such a dangerous situation may and would somehow require deliberation and choice. So, in this wider sense, an emotion plus some kind of belief and reason might be the cause of an action where the belief is external to the kind of emotion. For example, you might think that the best think to do is to kill the bear, if possible, to

\(^{257}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1149a31-1149b1, emphasis added.
remove yourself from such a dangerous situation, or alternatively, you might think that it is better to run away. Either way, the rationality of your emotion and its corresponding action would depend on your deliberative reasoning. Emotion is still a part of action, it causes action in conjunction with deliberative reasoning. My interpretation is that it is within this second sense that we can understand the rationality of emotions in Aristotle and the moral value assigned to them thereby. As will be clear in the next chapter, this is the way in which a virtuous person typically sees moral matters.

In the history of philosophy, emotions are generally seen as mere bodily reactions that are not under our control and thereby characterized as something that merely happen to us. Unlike Kant who takes affections of the mind as passive, Aristotle thinks that most affections are active and thus include some cognitive elements. His intentionalist account takes emotions “as selective responses to articulated features of our environment.”258 In my attempt at identifying different aspects of Aristotle’s account of emotion, I have tried to demonstrate that there is a logical and conceptual connection between these different aspects such that both cognitive and affective aspects co-exist in emotions. If I am right in this interpretation, it indicates that Aristotle’s account of emotion cannot be interpreted as a pure cognitivism, like the Stoic’s theory of emotion, or strong physicalism. More importantly, Aristotle suggests that each individual emotion can be fully analyzed by looking at, first, the

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

ARISTOTLE’S ARGUMENT FOR EMOTIONS AS MORAL MOTIVES

In the previous chapter I have focused on Aristotle’s theory of emotion by exploring the nature of emotions, their distinguishing features, and the roles they play in human actions in general. Those who read my investigations in the previous chapter might have already thought about the role of emotions in moral reasoning or judgments, yet much more need to be said on these matters. In order to have a better grasp of the conceptual and theoretical connection between Aristotle’s theory of emotion and his moral concepts and principles it is necessary to look at his ethics in the light of the general consequences we arrived at in the previous chapter. By doing so, I hope to have adequately demonstrated how the virtue ethicists’ positive treatment of emotions with respect to moral evaluations works in theory.

The first two sections outline Aristotle’s understanding of good and virtues in general. Section three deals in depth with the foundations and principles of Aristotle’s theory of virtue, by identifying the connection of virtue to moral choice, reason, and practical wisdom. The best way to see the place of emotions in Aristotle’s theory is by applying his notion of
‘mean relative to us.’ I will try to show that, as a state of character, moral virtue is related to both emotions and actions in Aristotle’s account. Determination of the right action and its accompanying right emotion depends on who the moral agent is. That ‘the mean relative to us’ is tantamount to ‘the mean relative to character.’

5. 1. The Good for Man and the Conception of Happiness in Aristotle

The general problem of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is to find a simple answer to the question of “What is the good for man?” To do so, Aristotle seeks a conception of the good that is embodied in human actions, which is substantially practical and concrete. In this regard, unlike Plato, who seeks an abstract or conceptual good, Aristotle suggests that the good for man should be “good achievable by action.” In agreement with his teleology, he argues that morality must deal with certain human actions, not because they are right actions, but because they are actions aimed at the good for man.

Aristotle begins with the general fact that people aim at something good, or at least what they think to be good. He classifies all actions under two kinds. First, actions that have their *ends in themselves* are done for their own sake (intrinsic end); second actions that do not have

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259 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097a22. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1094a1-3 Aristotle gives the teleological definition of the good when he says “Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim.”

260 See Ross (1949: 189).

261 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1114a31-b2.
their end in themselves and are *means to* some further end (instrumental end). An activity is an end in itself if it is desired for its own sake, not for the sake of something else. Pursuing a healthy life, for example, is an end in itself when it is done for its own sake. Catching a bus when going to the hospital, on the other hand, can be taken as a means-activity when it is done for the sake of something else, seeing the doctor, for example.  

Such a classification of actions illustrates a straightforward reading of Aristotle’s theory of action. There are some scholars, however, who claim that a third kind of action is implicit in Aristotle’s theory.  

On this reading, pursuing a healthy life is an end in itself, which almost all human beings seek, but it is also a means to something else. This way of understanding the relationship between end and means not only solves the problem of the plurality of the ultimate ends, but also better captures Aristotle’s suggestion that there is an inclusive end and all the things we do for their own sake are constituents of that inclusive end.  

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262 For a detailed discussion about Aristotle’s conception of end see Urmson (1991: 10-11).
263 Part of the argument is that if Aristotle’s discussion of action was only limited to (1) and (2) then one could claim that Aristotle only speaks of the means-end distinction in a Kantian sense.
264 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1094a4-5.
or the widest end. As far as morality is concerned Aristotle claims that, as an ultimate end, the good for man should be done for its own sake. Given the plurality of the good, he thinks that there must be an ultimate end whose logical justification depends on the infinite regress argument:

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good.

Having demonstrated the logical necessity of an ultimate good, Aristotle suggests that the good for man is happiness (eudaemonia), or as widely translated human flourishing. He argues that happiness is the most complete (final) and self-sufficient end. In the final analysis, since we choose everything for the sake of happiness and for the sake of nothing else, then happiness should be a final end. Since it makes life lacking in nothing it is also self-sufficient.

These elements, that is, completeness, self-sufficiency and inclusiveness or comprehensiveness, are only the general criteria of happiness which do not by themselves imply how happiness can be achieved. Nor do they say something about the causative influence of

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266 Nicomachean Ethics 1094a23.
267 Nicomachean Ethics 1094a18-24.
268 Nicomachean Ethics 1095a14-20. The word eudaemonia has often been translated into English as ‘happiness.’ However, there has been a continuing debate in the literature on which word can best grasp the Greek word eudaemonia. Some scholars offer the word ‘well-being’ (Ross, 1996: 198), some others use ‘success’ (Urmson, 1991:12), ‘the best life’ (Ackrill, 1981: 136), or ‘flourishing’ (Cooper, 1996: 198).
the conduct of life through which we do right things in particular circumstances.\textsuperscript{270} Thus, the question still remains: What does happiness consist of? To answer this question Aristotle suggests that any inquiry as to what is the best life to live must begin with what is familiar to \textit{us}.\textsuperscript{271} Such an inquiry must be consistent with, or at least explain, people’s general beliefs and attitudes about the good for man. With this caveat in mind, he acknowledges that while there is a common agreement among people, either educated or uneducated, on what happiness is to be called, there is no such an agreement “with regard to what happiness is.”\textsuperscript{272} This is because what is to be regarded as happiness depends in most cases on individuals’ perceptions of their own circumstances.

Aristotle implies that people’s understanding of the chief good or happiness is generally determined in terms of the manner of their lives. There are three types of life. The first one is the life of “men of the most vulgar type”, who aim at getting pleasure and avoiding pain. Since this life identifies the good for man exclusively with pleasure and allows no essential role for rational activity in the determination of the good, it is incomplete. For Aristotle, mere hedonism is not the kind of moral life that the good man should pursue. The second one is the political life, the life of man having practical wisdom who aims at honor and excellence through his practical actions. The third one is the contemplative life, the

\textsuperscript{270} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1094a22.  
\textsuperscript{271} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1095b1-2.  
\textsuperscript{272} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1095a17-22.
life of the philosopher who uses practical and theoretical reasons. Of these three lives, it is the last one that has the highest end, which is not necessarily to say that we should take happiness as purely the life of contemplation. The point is that none of these lives alone is sufficient for having a good life. Rather, the good life must be the life consisting of the true combination of them under the guidance of rational principle.

Consistent with the above integrated feature, the holistic character in Aristotle’s account of happiness is worth mentioning. By happiness Aristotle understands life in its entirety, not fragmentary experience or those parts and parcels of some activities that take place in a specific period of life, say, a couple of days. In other words, happiness refers to success and achievement covering one’s whole life. For example, one can be awarded a Nobel Prize but this is not sufficient to attribute happiness or success to oneself because, according to Aristotle, one cannot be called to be happy in virtue of being successful only in one’s job but not in one’s marriage. Following Solon’s advice, which says “call no one happy until her/his dead,” Aristotle thinks that to call a person happy is to give a judgment about their whole life by considering and calculating the positive and negative aspects of their life. In this sense his view of happiness differs from the common-sense understanding of taking happiness as a temporary feeling. This way of characterizing the

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273 Nicomachean Ethics 1095b15-1096a5.
274 Nicomachean Ethics 1100a10-20. See Cooper (1999: 226). Cooper claims that Aristotelian happiness is not identified with happiness of a single virtuous activity but rather with happiness of all specifically human virtues activity exercised throughout an agent’s whole life.
concept of happiness is quite consistent with his moral theory in general and his account of character in particular, because moral character, for Aristotle, requires persistent personality or quality acquired by habit.

As it might be easily seen, Aristotle’s account of happiness depends in most part on common beliefs about what happiness is. Yet he tries to develop a more definite account of happiness by focusing on the human function. Very simply, the main idea behind the functional argument is that if a thing has a function, its good, i.e. its doing well, is to be found in that function. So if there is a good(s) of man, then it must be found in her/his peculiar function and the good man is one who performs this function well.

What, then, is the function of man? One possible reading is that human beings have functions just as bodily parts or tools do. Terms such as ‘flute-player,’ ‘sculptor,’ ‘carpenter,’ and ‘tanner’ are functional referring only to instrumental functions. Is ‘man’ a functional term in this sense? Aristotle speaks of function in the sense of capacity which is peculiar to a human being. Man in general has many functions shared with other animals such as taking nourishment, growing, and perceiving. These functions, therefore, cannot be peculiar to man: What then “remains” as the answer to the question “What is the peculiar function of man?” is simply “an active life of the element that has a rational

\[\text{275 For a fuller discussion of Aristotle's function argument see Nussbaum (1978:100-106).}\]
principle.\textsuperscript{276} The good for man, or happiness, must therefore be good guided by the activities of reason, by which Aristotle means conduct rather than mere (animal) movements or behaviors.

5. 2. The Nature of Virtues in General

Aristotle speaks of two kinds of virtues of the human soul: moral and intellectual virtues.\textsuperscript{277} As we have seen in the previous chapter, these two kinds of virtues are distinguished in accordance with the rational-irrational distinction in the human soul. We have also seen that while intellectual virtues refer to excellences of the rational part of the soul, the moral virtues signify excellences of the irrational appetitive and in general desiring element of the soul involving desires, emotions and feelings which have no reason in themselves but still listen to and obey reason.\textsuperscript{278}

\textsuperscript{276} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1098a4.

\textsuperscript{277} In interpreting Aristotle’s conception of virtue, some scholars like Urmson add ‘bodily excellence’ to the list of Aristotelian virtues (Urmson, 1991: 21). I think that making such an addition is in some sense true but in other sense misleading because by ‘virtue/excellence’ Aristotle means “not that of the body but that of the soul” –happiness is a vital function of the human soul, not the body. That what Urmson calls ‘bodily excellence’ is enumerated by Aristotle among the external goods. Aristotle does not ignore the role of the external goods (for example, money, power in society, good birth, beauty) in happiness for, he says, “the man who is very ugly in appearance or ill-born or solitary and childless is hardly happy” (\textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1099b3-4). Thus he insists on the idea that external goods, although they are not sufficient condition of happiness, are necessary conditions of it for no one can be happy without some wealth, good look, good birth, friends. Like Stoics, most notably Epictetus, Aristotle thinks that external goods are not under our control or in the sphere of rational action and choice; thereby they cannot be topics for ethics. However, Aristotle says, the virtues of human soul fall within the limits of the rational life of man and related to choice and thus are the main topics for ethics.

\textsuperscript{278} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1102b3o-1103a10. It should be noted that Aristotle uses the term ‘moral’ in the sense of ‘pertaining to character.’
Aristotle numerates five kinds of intellectual virtues: art, knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophical wisdom, comprehension. Briefly, "art is identical with a state of capacity to make, involving a true course of reasoning." Knowledge (scientific) which concerns what is unchanging and cannot be otherwise is a state of capacity to demonstrate connections between necessary and universal things. Comprehension (nous) is a state of virtue in which we acquire knowledge of first principles. Practical wisdom, different from scientific knowledge, concerns things that can be otherwise — the contingent. Philosophical wisdom "must be comprehension combined with knowledge" related to the highest and most valuable objects. Aristotle assigns a more central role to philosophical and practical wisdoms in determining the highest form of life and moral virtues.

Among others, an important feature which both moral and intellectual virtues or excellences share is their means of acquisition or origin:

[Intellectual excellence in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. ... From this it is also plain that none of the moral excellences arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature. ...Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do excellences arise in us; rather we are]

\[^279\] Nicomachean Ethics 1139b11-17.  
\[^280\] Nicomachean Ethics 1140a9-10.  
\[^281\] Nicomachean Ethics 1139b14-35.  
\[^282\] Nicomachean Ethics 1141a8.  
\[^283\] Nicomachean Ethics 1141a18-19.
adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.\footnote{284 Nicomachean Ethics 1103a14-25.}

Aristotle develops a similar argument for the ethical virtues. While he claims that the moral virtues are essentially related to the emergence of ethical character whose acquaintance depends essentially on human nature, he nonetheless argues that we come to the world neither with intellectual virtues nor with moral virtues. Rather, we are born like a blank tablet, without any character at all. This does not mean that by nature human beings are virtuous, or vicious. The intellectual virtues are excellences in reasoning skills that can be acquired through inquiry and study, while the moral virtues are states of character being produced by habits acquired in childhood and strengthened in adult life.\footnote{285 In recent literature commentators try to show that Aristotelian habituation is not to be conceived of as a ‘mindless’ process. See, for example, Richard Sorabji (1980: 201-220), Myles Burnyeat (1980: 69-92), Nancy Sherman (1989: 157-190). John Cooper, however, thinks that this contemporary approach to Aristotle’s conception of habituation is problematic because they do not reflects what Aristotle means by the term ‘habituation’ (1999: 237-52). Nicomachean Ethics 1179b20-26.} Whether we acquire a good or a bad character and thus become a virtuous or vicious person truly depends upon the kind of upbringing we get. That means, for Aristotle, the effect of environment on the character development is much more substantial than the effect of heredity.\footnote{286 Nicomachean Ethics 1179b20-26.} As he puts it in an often-quoted passage, the acquisition of all virtues depends on habit and education:

\[
\text{[T]he things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too}
\]
we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.\footnote{Nicomachean Ethics 1103a 32-1103b2.}

For Aristotle, habituation bringing about moral virtue depends on \textit{both} learning how to act and on doing gradual practice and repetition of what is learned. Taken together, these two kinds of activities should bring about, in effect, actions done with minimum effort.\footnote{A child, for example, first learns his toys to share with her/his friends and with repeated practice sharing her/his toys becomes easier and easier, that is, sharing them without hesitation and pain with her/his friends. For a discussion on this point see Urmson (1991: 27).} The aim of education in general is to foster such kinds of actions.

\[\text{W}e \text{ ought to have been brought up in a particular way from very our youth...so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; for this is the right education.}\footnote{Nicomachean Ethics 1104b11-14.}

In a right education, for Aristotle, one cannot only learn what one ought to do but acquire a habit of taking delight in what one ought to do and pained by things one ought not to do.

In Aristotle’s theory of moral action there is a close relation between actions and states of character: Actions display states of character. It is important to point out that passions or emotions are also included within the scope of this relation and connection. Any action displaying a state of character will also involve the direct or indirect display of some emotions.\footnote{For a detailed discussion of this point see Urmson (1991: 30).} For Aristotle, the states of character, or settled dispositions, are either a moral virtue or defect/excess in relation to the emotions they display. In other words, we can acquire virtuous
character (or vicious or continent or...) in terms of being habituated both in how to act and in how to feel. Thus, in the acquisition of moral virtues not only habituation of action but also habituation of emotions, desires, pleasure and pain accompanying with action play a central role. In this sense, Aristotelian moral virtue, as Joachim puts it, consists of “an established feeling and reacting rightly.” As such it is a settled disposition with regard to feeling and displaying emotion.

Given the centrality of education and practice to virtues, emotions and feelings are also included within the scope of such learning and practice. The traditional interpretation of Aristotle’s moral theory widely ignores the fact that, in his account, moral virtues “are concerned with actions and passions” and therefore habituation bringing about the virtues involves not only learning how to act but also learning how to feel in a practiced situation:

[B]y doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances.

It is for this reason that Aristotle’s description of the right education bringing about good character formation also puts forward the importance of learning how to feel in habituation. But to say that moral virtue is choosing the mean with respect to emotions and actions is not

291 Joachim (1951:72).
to say that all emotions and passions admit a mean.\textsuperscript{293} Emotions such as spite, shamelessness and envy, and actions such as adultery, theft, murder never admit a mean, it is never possible “to be right with regard to them” because they “imply by their names that they are themselves bad.”\textsuperscript{294} Rather, the idea is that moral virtues and vices are distinguished from each other on the ground of emotions they involve.\textsuperscript{295} In discussing particular moral virtues he distinguishes courage and cowardice from each other according to the emotion of fear they display. With respect to determining the role of emotions in morality Aristotle’s point is of crucial value because he seems to claim that emotions in themselves are neither good nor bad, but that the state of character disposed to display emotions appropriately or inappropriately is either good or bad.

When we survey the general characterizations of virtue dispersed throughout Aristotle’s writings, one finds that a moral virtue is a state that makes one a good person. One can also clearly observe that moral virtue concerns “passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate.”\textsuperscript{296} For Aristotle goodness is preserved by the intermediate/mean because doing-well consists of avoiding excess and defect and choosing the intermediate state. That is the differentia of moral virtue. Moral virtue is a settled disposition to choose the mean.

\textsuperscript{293} *Nicomachean Ethics* 1107a9-20.
\textsuperscript{294} *Nicomachean Ethics* 1107a9-14.
\textsuperscript{296} *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b17-18.
So far I have explored the general characters of Aristotle’s conception of virtue. On this conception, virtue is an ‘intermediate’ way of feeling and acting, a state of character acquired in terms of habituation which makes people chose what is “the mean” with respect to emotions and actions. To further my discussion I want now to quote a passage from the *Nicomachean Ethics* wherein the central tenets of Aristotle’s conception of virtue are more fully and systematically articulated:

Excellence then is [1] a state concerned with choice, [2] lying in a mean relative to us, [3] this being determined by reason and [4] in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine it.\(^{297}\)

In the following sections, I will examine these four characteristics in a detailed way.

5. 3. Moral Virtue, State and Choice

In explaining what moral virtue *is* Aristotle offers an argument by elimination. Since the things occurring in the soul are three kinds - passions, faculties, states - moral virtue should be one of these.\(^{298}\) Virtues are not passions because, he says, people are not called good or bad, neither praised nor blamed on the ground of their passions but on the ground of their virtues or vices. People cannot be responsible for their passions because they, for example, feel anger, fear or joy without choice but virtues “are choices or involve choice.”\(^{299}\) It is also claimed

\(^{297}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b36-1107a2.

\(^{298}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b20-21.

\(^{299}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a3-4.
that we are ‘moved’ by our passions but not by virtues and vices.\(^{300}\)

Virtues are not faculties either, because we are not called good or bad, nor praised or blamed for the simple capacity of feeling anger or pity.\(^{301}\)

Moreover, we are endowed by nature with these capacities – our having faculties such as sensation, imagination, thinking that by nature we have. However, it is not nature which makes us good or bad.\(^{302}\) If moral virtue is neither a passion nor a faculty, then, Aristotle says, it must be a state or disposition.\(^{303}\) It is a state or disposition of character concerning the emotions and actions involving choice. That means it is necessary for the moral agent not only to know what to do but also to choose it.

In praising and valuing virtuous people we do not value them simply because they have certain dispositions to produce virtuous actions, but we value the state of character they display in their actions. We are praised or blamed on the ground of what we have voluntarily and intentionally done. For this reason for any inquiry of moral virtue, there should be a plausible account of voluntary action and conditions of responsibility.\(^{304}\) Actions are involuntary when they “take place under compulsion or owing to ignorance.”\(^{305}\) An action is compulsory when the moving principle (cause, or archē) of the action is outside the agent in external circumstances. For example, the agent contributes nothing to the action, when the wind carries her/him somewhere. This, for Aristotle,

\(^{300}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a4-6

\(^{301}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a7-8.

\(^{302}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a7-10.

\(^{303}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a13.

\(^{304}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1109b30-35.

\(^{305}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1109b35-1110a1.
is not really an action at all but simply something that happens to the agent. Conversely, an action is voluntary when the moving principle is within a person and they are aware of the particular circumstances of the action.\(^{306}\) These actions are appropriate objects of praise and blame for they are in the control of our rational agency.

Aristotle does not call all ‘actions owing to ignorance’ involuntary. While ‘ignorance of the particular circumstances of the action and the objects’ is involuntary, ‘ignorance of the universal’ or the moral and legal law is not involuntary, and thereby does not accept excuse. You cannot defend yourself by saying ‘Sorry I have not kept my promise because I did not know the moral rule that one ought to keep her/his own promise.’

There is also subtle distinction between ‘acting by reason of ignorance’ which is an involuntary action and ‘acting in ignorance.’ The man who is drunk or in rage is thought, not to act knowingly, but to act in ignorance.\(^{307}\) Although at the time of action he was not aware of what he was doing, his action is nonetheless blameworthy because the moving principle was his control and he had the power of not getting drunk.\(^{308}\) In this sense, acting in ignorance is a voluntary action and thus is not subject to an excuse.

There is also a ‘mixed’ or intermediate category of actions, which do not simply fall under voluntary or involuntary actions. Think of a captain who throws his ship’s cargo overboard in a storm to save his ship

\(^{306}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1111a22-4.  
\(^{307}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1110b26-27.  
\(^{308}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1113b31-33.
and its crew. Is the captain’s action voluntary? Taken in abstraction, no rational person throws goods away voluntarily. But there is certainly an intentional aspect to the action in question.

Such actions, then, are mixed, but more like voluntary actions; for they are worthy of choice at the time when they are done, and the end of the action is relative to the occasion. Both the terms, then, ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’, must be used with reference to the moment of action. ...Such actions, therefore, voluntary, but in the abstract perhaps involuntary; no one would choose any such act in itself.309

The action is ‘involuntary’ because the captain does not choose it ‘for its own sake.’ That is, he does not want to act in that way. His action is called ‘mixed’ because he acts intentionally but unwillingly. What is ‘mixed’ about the captain’s situation is that the captain wants – on the one hand, to protect the cargo; and on the other to save both his ship and its crew. But there is nothing ‘mixed’ at the moment that he makes his decision. He clearly chooses to throw the cargo overboard and it is up to him whether to do that or not. In this case, blame or praise is related to the captain’s ‘decision’ or ‘choice’, not his wants or desires.

All the distinctions we have discussed thus far indicate that the moral value of an action depends on the decision that is appropriate to both the internal and external conditions one is experiencing. This is why the concept of choice is crucial a part of the account of moral virtue

309 Nicomachean Ethics 1110a11-19.
in Aristotle. As Aristotle says, choice is “most closely bound up with excellence and discriminate characters better than actions do.”

But “What is choice?” Choice cannot be appetite or anger because these are common to both unreasoning animals and man, but choice is not; it involves reason and thought. Choice cannot be a wish because we can wish for what is impossible while we can choose only what is in our power and what we can bring about by our own efforts. Furthermore, wish relates to the end “but choice to what contributes to the end” – what is chosen is a means to an end. For example, as Aristotle says, “we wish to be healthy, but we choose the acts which will make us healthy.” Choice cannot be an opinion either, because it is an indication of character: “by choosing what is good or bad we are men of a certain character.” That is to say, by choosing such-and such activity we choose to either be virtuous or be vicious, or by choosing so-and-so we choose such-and-such character. We choose to get or avoid something good or bad, but we can hardly said to opine to get or avoid any thing. Opinions are appraised as being true or false, while choice is appraised as being good or bad. One makes a good choice when one has chosen the right thing but one’s opinion cannot be true because one’s belief is about the right thing but what one believes is actually the case. Thus, Aristotle says, “choice is praised for being related to the right

310 Nicomachean Ethics 1111b5-6
311 Nicomachean Ethics 1112a15-16.
312 Nicomachean Ethics 1111b26.
313 Nicomachean Ethics 1111b27.
314 Nicomachean Ethics 1112a2-3.
315 Nicomachean Ethics 1112a3-5.
object rather than for being rightly related to it, opinion for being truly related to its object.\textsuperscript{316} After providing his negative account of choice Aristotle gives a definition:

The origin of action –its efficient, not its final cause– is choice, and that of choice is desire and reasoning with a view to an end. This is why choice cannot exist either without thought and intellect or \textit{without a moral state}, for good action and its opposite cannot exist without combination of intellect and character. \textit{Intellect itself, however, moves nothing, but only the intellect which aims at an end and is practical; ...}good action is an end, and desire aims at this. Hence choice is either desiderative thought or intellectual desire, and such an origin of action is a man.\textsuperscript{317}

Like Hume, Aristotle clearly indicates that reason or intellect in itself never motivates us to act. Reasoning in itself cannot be cause of our choice and action but reasoning with a view to some desired end. He calls the reasoning involved in choice deliberation or practical reasoning. Choice, which is the efficient cause of action, is a combination of desire and reasoning with a view to an end.

since moral excellence is a state concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire is right, if the choice is to be good, and the latter must pursue what the former asserts.\textsuperscript{318}

This paragraph clearly indicates that to make a good choice one must have both true belief and right desire. But a good choice results

\textsuperscript{316} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1112a5-7.
\textsuperscript{317} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1139a31-1139b5, emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{318} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} 1139a22-25.
from a good deliberation, which is concerned, not with ends, but with means.

We deliberate not about ends but about what contributes to ends. For a doctor does not deliberate whether he shall heal, nor an orator whether he shall convince, nor a statesman whether he shall produce law and order, nor does any one else deliberate about his end. Having set the end they consider how and by what means it is to be attained. Deliberation consists of making correct judgments about the means to a desired end. Here the relationship of means to end, as Joachim says, is of a different sort: “we must distinguish between ends external to their means and ends whose means are at the same time constituents of the ends.” For example, the end of building a bridge is a completed bridge on the river. The process of building to complete the bridge is external to this end and valuable only for the sake of the result – it is a means to the desired end and as such it constitutes the desired end. Aristotle says

[M]an is moving principle of actions; now deliberation is about the things to be done by the agent himself, and actions are for the sake of things other than themselves. For the end cannot be a subject of deliberation, but only what contributes to the ends; nor indeed can the particular facts be subject of it, as whether this bread or has been baked as it should; for these are matters of perception.

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319 Nicomachean Ethics 1112b12-16.
320 Joachim (1951:188).
321 Nicomachean Ethics 1112b31-1113a2.
Being about actions or means, in Aristotle’s account, consists of the following basic steps. First, we should have an end which is possible for us to achieve because we can only “deliberate about things that are in our power.” Second, we should think of a possible means-actions connection that facilitates us to achieve our end. In such a way deliberation gives the object the possible means to the desired end. What Aristotle means by ‘choice’ is determination of what to do in order to achieve what we desire. The particular acts deliberately chosen as means to the desired end are voluntarily permitted and virtue manifests itself in the performance of such acts. In this sense that we should understand Aristotle’s claim that moral virtue/vice is concerned with choice.

5. 4. Emotions As ‘The Mean’

According to Aristotle, moral virtue is a ‘mean’ between two vices, the excess and the defect. He speaks of two kinds of mean, namely, the intermediate in the object, and the intermediate relatively to us. The former refers to the arithmetical mean, which is a midpoint from each extreme and the same for all men. The second one refers to the situation “which is neither too much nor too little –and this is not one, nor the same for all.” Aristotle illustrates what he means by the intermediate relatively to us with the amount of food consumed by Milo, a

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322 Nicomachean Ethics 1112a31.
323 Nicomachean Ethics 1107a2-3.
324 For an elaborate discussion of the doctrine of the mean see Urmson (1973).
325 Nicomachean Ethics 1106a29-32.
runner, a wrestler and a beginner at athletic exercises. Since they are different individuals having different capabilities and needs they needn’t choose the same amount although each may have chosen the mean amount. Given the above distinction we cannot interpret Aristotle’s theory of mean as a doctrine of moderation. That is, extremes are to be avoided and the middle way is the safest. Aristotle’s theory of mean indeed includes the former and not the later.

Aristotle was well aware that “it is no easy task to be good.” By comparing achieving the mean in conduct with finding the center of a circle, Aristotle says that not every one finds the center but only one “who knows.” Similarly, a virtuous and good person is one who has knowledge of the good. But one can have knowledge of the good but cannot do the good and virtuous action. It is easy for everyone to be angry or to spend money. It is easy to open one’s purse and give money away but it is difficult to give “the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right aim, and in the right way.” He goes on by saying

[[It is not easy to determine both how and with whom and on what provocation and how long one should be angry; for we too sometimes praise those who fall short and call them good-tempered, but sometimes we praise those who get angry and call them manly. The man, however who deviates little from goodness is not blamed, whether he do so in the direction of the more or of the less, but only the

326 Nicomachean Ethics 1106b1-5.
328 Nicomachean Ethics 1109a24.
329 Nicomachean Ethics 1109a26.
man who deviates more widely; for he does not fail to be noticed. But up to what point and to what extent a man must deviate before he becomes blameworthy it is not easy to determine by reasoning, any more than anything else that is perceived by the senses; such things depend on particular facts, and the decision rests with perception.\textsuperscript{331}

There are two important implications of Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean that justify the theoretical basis of his moral particularism. The first one is that, in the doctrine of the mean, the ‘excess-mean-defect’ schema applies to particular cases, so that what is excessive for one situation might have been too little for other. In this sense, moral virtue is a mean state because of its connection with particularized responses.

The second implication is more important. The doctrine of the mean asserts that moral virtue is manifested in feelings and emotions as well as in actions. While “the vices …fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions” moral virtue both finds and chooses which is intermediate.\textsuperscript{332} The distinguishing character of moral virtue “is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions.”\textsuperscript{333} Emotions such as fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt in excessive density. However, “to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way is what is

\textsuperscript{331} Nicomachean Ethics 1109b14-23.  
\textsuperscript{332} Nicomachean Ethics 1107a3-5.  
\textsuperscript{333} Nicomachean Ethics 1109a22-23.
intermediate and best and this is characteristic of excellence. This passage is uniquely important in that it makes explicit an essential connection between virtues and emotions. The determination of moral goodness and rightness is not independent from feelings and emotions and not limited only to the actions of the moral agent.

5.5 The Connotation of ‘Us’

Although Aristotle explicitly defines moral virtue as “a mean relative to us”, he says almost nothing about what he means by the ‘us’. But the question as to whether his theory includes a moral relativism, objectivism, universalism or particularism depends to a large extent on the connotation of ‘us.’ Here are some interpretations or strategies to explain what is meant by ‘us’ in the phrase ‘a mean relative to us.’

The first one, which is called circumstance relativism, refers to the situations in which virtuous actions take place. In particular, the interpretation is that virtuous action, passion and choice are sensitive to their circumstances and ‘mean’ is the product of this sensitivity. As J. O. Urmson argues, “by saying that the mean is relative to us Aristotle is making it clear that … the mean is determined by, is relative to, all the circumstances in which the choice of actions has to be made.”

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334 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b21-23, emphasis added.
335 See Leighton (1988). He tries to explain the essential connection between virtues and emotions in terms of examination of Aristotle’s conception of courage and its accompanying feelings, namely, fear and confidence.
336 Stephen Leighton introduces an elaborated discussion of Aristotle’s understanding of ‘mean relative to us’ in his articles “The Mean Relative to Us” (1995) and “Relativising Moral Excellence In Aristotle” (1992). My summary of Aristotle’s understanding of ‘mean relative to us’ is largely drawn from our discussions on these two articles.
337 Urmson (1991: 35), emphasis is added.
suggests that the Aristotelian ‘mean’ amounts to ‘mean relative to the circumstances of the morally virtuous action.’ For example, when one has been insulted, that whether her/his anger is proportionate, and whether her/his choice and thus whether it is appropriate depends on who makes the insult, whether s/he makes it intentionally, and in what situation the insult was presented. Strictly speaking, on this externalist reading, moral virtue is not relative to the agent, their character, or more specifically who the agent is, but to the circumstances in which the agent’s actions, emotions and choice occur. Thus, within the limits of the circumstance relativism, a person’s character and character development do not play an important role in determination of the mean revealing moral virtue, although the circumstances may have had a great influence on the agent’s character.

The second one, so-called individual/character relativism, characterizes ‘a mean relative to us’ as a mean relative to “each one us,” that is, relative to who we are. This strategy has been articulated by J. A. Stewart who suggests that Aristotle’s discussion on the distinction between ‘mean intermediate in the object’ or the arithmetical mean and ‘mean relative to us’ represents an individual/character relativism. He claims that the former must be distinguished from the latter, that is, “the relative mean, or ‘mean for me’, which is not the half of the thing and the same for all men, but that amount which is neither too much nor too little for me – that amount which exactly suits me in my particular
circumstances. Like the circumstance relativism, the individual relativism speaks of circumstances but its emphasis is on the agent’s own particular circumstances, rather than all the circumstances bringing about moral action. This internalist reading states that our emotional responses, choices and actions are morally appropriate, not because the circumstances are so different from one another, but because individual agents are so different. Different from the circumstance relativity the emphasis of this strategy is on who the individual agent is—the character of the individual is of primary importance in the determination of the mean, or moral goodness. Thanks to its strong emphasis on the role of character it is called character relativism. But here the question is the same ‘Who is the ‘me’?’ If moral virtue is a ‘mean for me’ it will also be ‘relative for you’, and then it will also be ‘a mean for each one of us.’ With respect to the determination of moral good this brings about relativism. This is opposite to Aristotle’s understanding of a single objective account of the human good, or eudemonia – for every human being eudemonia objectively refers to the same thing, that is, “living and faring well.”

The third one, which is species relativism, interprets “relative to us” as relative to ‘humanness’ – moral virtue is relative to the species. In order to defend “the singleness and the objectivity of human good” in Aristotle’s morality against any version of relativism, Nussbaum argues that the kind of virtue ethics developed by Alasdair MacIntyre, Bernald Williams and Philippa Foot’s marks “a turn toward relativism,” which

338 J.A. Stewart (1892: 191), emphasis added.
holds that “the only appropriate criteria of ethical goodness are local ones, internal to the traditions and practices of each society or group that asks itself questions about the good.”

Against the relativist position of these philosophers, Nussbaum interprets ‘a mean relative to us’ as ‘a mean relative to humanness.’ She thinks that Aristotle’s account is supposed to be objective in the sense that it is justifiable with reference to reasons that do not derive merely from local tradition and practices, but rather features of humanness that lie beneath all local traditions and are there to be seen whether or not they are in fact recognized in local traditions.

The argument behind Nussbaum’s interpretation is based on the obvious fact that Aristotle “was not only the defender of an ethical theory based on the virtues, but also the defender of a single objective account of the human good, or human flourishing.” In one reading, Nussbaum’s interpretation seems to be right because Aristotle claims that “excellence of a thing is relative to its proper function,” which refers to human nature and rationality. However, such a function itself is not a virtue, but a quality or power which is surely relevant to the determination of virtues. Aristotle’s morality does not require every one to posses all virtues. Some people are expected to posses certain virtues, while others are not. Against this objection Nussbaum would rejoin that the notion of generality should not be confused with the notion of universality for a universal feature, principle or rule which is applicable to

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340 Ibid.
341 Ibid.
342 Nicomachean Ethics 1139a18.
all relevant situations may not and need not be general. This being correct, it is not clear however whether we should take the idea of a single human good as a proof for objectivism. It is still an open question as to what kind of things or goods must be counted as essential for such a flourishing. The most plausible way of defending an objectivist position in Aristotle’s theory, as well as in any form of virtue ethics, as I have argued, arises from the self-justifying character of virtues.

It is my contention that, taken as a general and complete theory of moral virtue, none of the above interpretations alone can truly represent Aristotle’s position. We have seen that Aristotle arrives at his conception of man as essentially a rational being by asking what the natural good for man is. His conception of virtue is based on a very special conception of man as a rational being and he thereby defines virtue as a rational activity in accordance with a rational principle. But moral particularism is also a salient feature of Aristotle’s ethics.

Having distinguished practical wisdom from systematic scientific understanding, Aristotle argues that the former cannot be subsumed under a system of universal principles. Particulars can only be grasped through experience, though some general rules are helpful to some extent in the operation of practical reason. In other words, while rules and principles have an important place in the understanding of human action, when the knowledge of a general rule about a particular case and
the intuitions of a *pronimos* come into conflict, it is always better to go with the latter.\(^{343}\)

Applying this idea to the conception of virtue means that the knowledge of particulars is more valuable and epistemologically trustworthy than statements about universals. It is not easy to determine by reason or a general account whether or not one’s action is blameworthy or not “for the decision depends on the particular facts and on perception.”\(^{344}\) To illustrate why a firm and inflexible general principle is not applicable to the discernment of moral matters, Aristotle suggests that the virtuous person acts like a real architect who follows the Lesbian Rule, which is not fixed, “but adapts itself to the shape of the stone.”\(^{345}\) Since ethical knowledge does not aim at theoretical but practical knowledge, the kind of account needed for it must be in conformity with its subject matter.

Matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, any more than matters of health. The general account being of this nature, the account of particular cases is yet more lacking in exactness; for they do not fall under any art or set of precepts, but the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion, as happens also in the art of medicine or of navigation.\(^{346}\)

Aristotle holds that action is necessarily concerned with particulars. While action does have its ‘regular’ aspects, and in some

\(^{343}\) *Politics* 1286a21-22).

\(^{344}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1126b2-4.s

\(^{345}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1137b32 (Translated by Irwin).

\(^{346}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104a4-9.
areas of action the degree of regularity is quite high, a general account
does not fit into the nature of moral questions. Cogent moral principles
are themselves constructed only out of relevant and accurate situational
perception of particulars. My own interpretation is that Aristotle’s position
with respect to the conception of mean relative to us can best be
interpreted as universalism in particularism. By now we can maintain our
discussion by showing some other roles that reason play both in moral
judgment and actions in Aristotle’s ethics.

5.6 Reason and Moral Virtue: The Problem of Akrasia

Different from his conception of psychology presented in the *On
the Soul*, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle proceeds to subdivide the
rational part of the human soul, namely, the scientific (theoretical) and
the calculative (practical) parts. While the aim or function of these two
kinds of reasoning is the same, that is, seeking truth, each part deals
with a different object. Theoretical reasoning concerns us with what is
universal and necessary that could not be otherwise, whereas practical
reasoning concerns us with what is particular and contingent that could
be otherwise.

For Aristotle both theoretical and practical reasoning are
syllogistic. In each case, we have a universal (major) premise and a
particular (minor) premise from which a conclusion necessarily follows.

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347 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139b11.

348 For a detailed discussion on Aristotle’s understanding of syllogism see M. F.
Burnyeat (1996). He notes that on Aristotle’s account a syllogism “is at least the
following: a valid deductive argument in which the premises (note the plural) provide a
logically sufficient justification for a conclusion distinct from them” (1996: 95).
Yet there is an important difference between theoretical reasoning and practical reasoning in terms of their conclusion.

But how is it that thought is sometimes followed by action, sometimes not; sometimes by movement, sometimes not? What happens seems to parallel to the case of thinking and inferring about the immovable objects. There the end is the truth seen (for, when one thinks the two proposition, one thinks and puts together the conclusion) but here the two propositions result in a conclusion which is an action.\footnote{Movement of Animals 701a7-12.}

In the case of the theoretical reasoning one \textit{affirms} the conclusion but in the case of the practical reasoning one \textit{does} the conclusion. Aristotle calls syllogism introduced in the latter case practical syllogism, the conclusion of which is action. His example of the practical syllogism

Whenever one thinks that every man ought to walk, and that one is a man oneself, straightaway one walks; or that, in this case, no man should walk, one is man: straightaway one remains at rest. And one so acts in the two cases provided that there is nothing to compel or to prevent. Again, I ought to create a good, a house is good: straightaway he makes a house. I need a covering, a coat is a covering: I need a coat. What I need I ought to make, I need a coat: I make a coat. And the conclusion ‘I must make a coat’ is an action. And the action goes back to a starting point. If there is to be a coat, there must be first be this, and if this then this –and straightaway he does this. Now that the action is the conclusion is clear.\footnote{Movement of Animals 701a12-22.}

What is important in practical syllogism is that it results in action. Practical reasoning gives us reasons for choosing and acting, not for believing. The idea implicit here is that there is a necessary connection
between judgment and action, and what differentiates theoretical reasoning from the practical is the existence of desire in the later.

What affirmation and negation are in thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in desire; so that since moral excellence is a state concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and desire right, if the choice is good, and the latter must pursue just what the former asserts. …[O]f the part which is practical and intellectual the good state is *truth in agreement with right desire*.  

Given the causal roles of thought and desire in human actions, what needs to be sought in any practical inquiry is not simply truth or falsity, but truth in agreement with right desire. That means, practical knowledge consists of something more than mere belief of what is true, and that one cannot have practical knowledge without at the same time having a certain kind of desire. The main idea behind Aristotle’s discussion is that practical reasoning is reasoning that is involved in choice, which is a combination of both reason and desire. It is in the realm of practical reason that actions are said to be chosen. Reasoning in itself never motivates us to act but reasoning-cum-desire motivates us to act. So, they are inseparable aspects of choice.

In showing the substantial role of practical wisdom in moral virtues, Aristotle makes a contrast between Thales and Socrates. The moral person like Thales has wisdom because such a person knows “things that are remarkable, admirable, difficult and divine, but useless”

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351 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139a21-31, emphasis added.
because the goods that such a person seeks is not human. The moral person like Socrates, on the other hand, has practical wisdom for she/he can see what is good for herself/himself and what is good for the human being in general. Aristotle’s attempt at combining particularism and universalism takes place in practical wisdom. From this, it follows that the man of practical wisdom has the knowledge of action, not in a universal sense, but in a particular sense. It is through the knowledge of a genuine particular case the man of practical wisdom practically experiences.

Practical wisdom is good deliberation about things towards the good life or happiness. From this vantage point of view, Aristotle clearly refuses Socrates’s claim that all moral virtues are forms of reason or forms of knowledge. Moral virtue without practical wisdom is “natural excellence”, a disposition which children and animals share in common, and needs training, habituation and reason to become virtue. For this reason, Socrates was wrong in thinking that all virtues or excellences are forms of practical wisdom. Virtues involve reason, yet one cannot be good without practical wisdom, or practically wise without moral excellence. People who do just actions are not necessarily just. They, as has already explained, may act unwillingly or because of ignorance. In order to be a just person, for Aristotle, one must have certain kind of character which is disposed to choose and do just acts. Moral virtue or

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352 Nicomachean Ethics 1141b3-7.
353 Nicomachean Ethics 1140b8-10.
354 Nicomachean Ethics 1144b1-18.
355 Nicomachean Ethics 1144b19-20.
356 Nicomachean Ethics 1144b29.
357 Nicomachean Ethics 1144b30-32.
virtue of character is what makes us aim at the right end and practical wisdom is what leads us to do the right things to achieve the right end.\(^{358}\)

Practical wisdom without moral virtue would only be “cleverness” which has no role in the determination of the right end.\(^{359}\)

Due to conceptual and moral considerations similar those to above, we can appreciate that the states of character lie at the center of Aristotle’s moral theory. At the beginning of Book VII Aristotle introduces three main pairs of states of character which are relevant to human flourishing: (a) virtue/excellence and vice; (b) continence and incontinence; (c) superhuman excellence and brutishness. Since the superhuman excellence and brutishness refer to the excellences of superhuman or “godlike man” or the vices of the subhuman or the “brutish type” of man, and since all those are “rarely found among man,”\(^{360}\) Aristotle puts aside giving detailed discussion to them and focuses on the other two pairs. Since we have already discussed the various aspects of Aristotle’s account of virtues in the former sections, I want now to deal with his ideas on the problem of continence - incontinence, the problem which is widely known as akrasia or the weakness of will.

Although Aristotle places the virtue and vice pair at the center of his moral thought because of their importance to happiness, he recognizes the substantial role of the continence/incontinence pair in

\(^{358}\) Nicomachean Ethics 1144a7-11.

\(^{359}\) Nicomachean Ethics 1144a25.

\(^{360}\) Nicomachean Ethics 1145a25-30
human flourishing. It is Aristotle who takes the problem of continence and incontinence seriously and provides a sophisticated solution to it. Believing that men always desire above all for their own well-being, Socrates claims that men do not make intentional mistakes bringing about destruction of their own well-being. One who acts against her/his own interest must be acting in ignorance and must act contrary to her/his own intention which is to promote her/his own flourishing. So, Aristotle says, Socrates concludes that “there is no such thing as incontinence.”

Aristotle was well aware that without a satisfactory solution to the problem of akrasia, his theory would be incomplete. Like Socrates he acknowledges that men desire happiness above all other things, yet there are many particular cases of incontinence showing that men act against their best interest. For Aristotle, Socrates’s rejection of incontinence sets the problem as “How can one act against what reason dictates?” and “How can one act against his view of what he takes as good?” Aristotle begins his discussion by distinguishing “having knowledge but not using it” from “both having knowledge and using it.”

Suppose that Sam is a diabetic and has a strong liking for eating chocolate cake. Suppose also that there is a piece of chocolate cake in front of him. He has strong desire to eat it but he knows that everyone

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362 For a detailed discussion of Aristotle’s picture of akrasia see Donald Davidson, ‘How is Weakness of the Will Possible’ (1980: 21-42). Davidson has criticized Aristotle’s understanding of akasia as ‘battle between reason and passion’ in which ‘passion’ is nonrational. See also Robinson (1977).
363 Nicomachean Ethics 1146b32-33.
who is diabetic should avoid eating anything sweet. So the practical syllogism Sam confronts with is something like the following:

1. Everyone who is diabetic should avoid eating anything sweet
2. I am a person who is diabetic
3. This chocolate cake is sweet
4. So, I ought not to eat it

Since Sam is a continent man who is able to control his excessive desires he decides not to eat the cake. The case of Sam is an example of continence for he has the knowledge and uses it properly. But let us suppose that John also successfully completes the above syllogism. But since he is a weak willed man he acts against the conclusion of it, that is, he eats the cake. So both Sam and John know the particular fact stated in (3) and both combine it with the universal premise (1) which forbids eating sweet things. Nevertheless, they act differently.

How does John act against his right calculation? How does Aristotle explain the akratic person’s failure to use his knowledge on the basis of his account of practical syllogism? Aristotle’s position on the problem of akrasia is complex and hard to conceive and there are substantial disagreements among commentators as to whether he really rejects Socrates’s position altogether or he does somewhat endorse it. On the one hand, Aristotle seems to be arguing that there is a special kind of ignorance in the akratic cases like John’s. That means, the reason why he ate the chocolate cake is because he failed to grasp the particular premise (3) in its connections with one or more of his higher ends. For Aristotle, to know fully (non-deficiently) a “particular” premise is
not only to be aware of the fact which the premise expresses but to appreciate its practical import as well. The practical import of the particular premise, which is not limited by the universal premise with which it is conjoined, is related to the ultimate goal, the good or eudemonia. If Sam avoids eating sweets, because he is diabetic, then the fact that the thing before him is sweet has a practical import vis-à-vis his health. And if ill health stands in the way of happiness, then the fact in question is practically important vis-à-vis his happiness. The akratic person like John, on the other hand, fails to grasp the “particular” (minor) premise in its connections with eudemonia. If this is the correct interpretation, Aristotle’s position suggests that all cases of akratic action involve an epistemic deficiency in the relationship to a relevant “particular” premise. On this reading, the way Aristotle sees the problem of akrasia is very consonant with the idea stated by Socrates. Interestingly enough, Aristotle’s discussion of the problem in Chapter 3 in Book VII of his *Nicomachean Ethics* ends with the suggestion that, given the discussion that has been provided, “the position that Socrates sought to establish actually seems to result.”

On the second reading, which more likely describes the position Aristotle holds, akrasia is a real possibility and thus the idea defended by Socrates “contradicts the plain phenomena.” Indeed, there are several passages in Aristotle’s works that suggest that it is perfectly possible for

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364 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1147b14-15.
365 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1145b27.
one to take an undesirable course of action despite the presence of her/his full knowledge that the action is not the best thing to do. The idea here is that to act incontinently “is to act thorough appetite contrary to what the man thinks best.”\textsuperscript{366} An incontinent person therefore is one whose mind is so blocked by strong emotions or desires that he cannot attend to the knowledge he has and cannot use it.

The general conclusion that follows from all these recognitions is that the practical reasoning, not the theoretical one, is exclusively relevant to the determination of the mean in moral conduct, and thus has an important role in the conception of moral virtue. More specifically, the problem of akrasia suggests that though a person can construct the mean-end relationship very logically, she/he nonetheless fails to achieve the correct conclusion due to the lack of the appropriate emotion(s). This does not mean that all continent actions are virtuous, but rather that all virtuous acts are continent.

From what we have already seen in this chapter it is clear in Aristotle’s ethics that the virtuous person’s motive is crucial in the determination of the moral value of the action she/he conducts. For Aristotle, all action somehow displays some emotion.\textsuperscript{367} It is a character of the good person not only to act appropriately, but also to feel or to be affected appropriately. It is therefore the case that for each specific excellence of character there should be some specific emotion belonging

\textsuperscript{366} Nicomachean Ethics 1147b14.
\textsuperscript{367} For a more detailed discussion of the relation of emotions to virtues see Alan Brinton (1988).
to its field. In the case of each emotion it is likely to be disposed to exhibit it too much or too little, and each of these dispositions is a defect of character. As we have seen, Aristotle defines moral virtue as a mean both in feeling and action. Accordingly, courage is a virtue because the courageous person feels neither too little nor too much fear. Her/his fear is appropriate to the dangerousness of her/his situation. Since such a person feels the right amount of fear, she/he acts in the right way, neither plunging rashly into danger nor fleeing from it in terror. The centrality of emotion in the determination of virtue is so clear in Aristotle’s ethics that even actions that arise from emotion alone are also considered virtuous. As he says

> Emotion is also counted as bravery; for those who act from emotion also seem to be brave...because brave people are also full of emotion... Now brave people act because of what is fine, and their emotion cooperates with them.\(^{368}\)

In the next chapter we shall investigate whether or not such a connection and cooperation is morally essential, required or permissible in Kant’s ethics as well.

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\(^{368}\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1116b25 (Irvin’s translation: 76-77).
CHAPTER VI

KANT, EMOTIONS AND VIRTUE ETHICS: A REVISITING

The revival of virtue ethics in the last two decades has created a new interest not only in Aristotle’s moral theory but also in other traditional theories, most notably the Kantian ethics. Such an interest in turn has also created different interpretations of Kant’s ethics, both from the Kantian and virtue ethicist perspectives, some of which are quite sympathetic. A number of virtue ethicists and/or Kant scholars argued that Kant’s ethics can be seen as a close friend of virtue ethics.\(^{369}\) With a general aim of examining these questions and interpretations, in this chapter, I will first explore the key concepts and ideas of Kant’s moral theory, i.e. the good will, moral law, duty, maxim, and categorical imperative without providing any argument for or against it. Second, by explaining Kant’s classification of virtues in general and the distinction between duties of right and duties of virtues, I wish to underlie some bedrock principles of his conception of virtue. Third, in order to examine whether the virtue ethicist’s interpretation of Kant’s ethics is mistaken or not, I will identify five possible interpretations of Kant’s conception of “from duty.” Fourth, by introducing Kant’s concept of respect as a moral

\(^{369}\) See, for example, Marcia Baron (1997: 5).
feeling, which has a special status in his ethics, I will try to show how the virtue ethicists’ treatment of emotions as a motivating factor is fundamentally different than that of Kant’s. In particular I will argue that emotions do not play a constitutive or causative role with their distinguishing features in Kant’s account.

6.1 Key Concepts of Kant’s Ethics

Refusing all attempts to base morality on individual feelings, desires, ambitions, impulses or emotions, which he calls ‘inclination,’ Kant argues that morality must be based solely on reason and reason alone. He further argues for the independence of morality from particular societies or individual circumstances. He believes that ‘moral particularism’ is inconsistent with the idea of moral autonomy, a function of individual reason that can find out what is right or what is wrong for itself.

Given the distinction between material and formal rational knowledge, Kant maintains that ethics as a theory of morals consists of two main parts, that is, “practical anthropology” or psychology and “metaphysics of morals.” The metaphysics of morals searches for “the idea and principles of a possible pure will and not the actions and conditions of human volition as such, which for the most part are drawn from psychology.” The moral laws and concepts with which the metaphysics of morals is concerned are not empirical laws derived from

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370 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 388.
psychology or observation of human behaviors, but pure practical laws established by reason.

Kant claims that our having the capacity of reasoning and our existence in general have a different and far nobler purpose, that is, to produce a good will in itself without regarding to anything else, not one that is good merely as a means. The good will is “the condition of all others, even of the desire for happiness.”372 Thus, for Kant, in the estimation of the total worth of our actions a good will always takes first place, whose supremacy over the other values is stated as follows:

Nothing in the world –indeed nothing even beyond the world –can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a GOOD WILL.373

Kant is saying here that only a good will is always “unconditionally” and “absolutely” good. It is the good in all respects and all possible worlds. He does not argue that there is only one good and that it is a good will. He acknowledges that there exist some other goods as well, and classifies them under three headings, namely, ‘the gifts of nature,’ ‘the gifts of fortune’ and ‘qualities of temperament.’ The gifts of nature include “intelligence, wit, judgment, and other talents of mind.”374 The gifts of fortune include “power, riches, honor, even heath, general well-being and the contentment with one’s condition which is called happiness,” while the qualities of temperament include “moderation in

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372 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 396.
373 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 393.
374 Ibid.
emotions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation.” All these goods, however, are only conditionally good and morally worthless or irrelevant because their value depends on their connection to an unconditioned and absolute good. If they are properly (in a right way) connected to a good will, then they are good. If the will accompanying with them is bad will, then “they can become extremely bad and harmful.” Consequently, for Kant, a good will is only good which has intrinsic unconditional worth and constitutes the ground on which all other goods have worth.

To come closely to grip with Kant’s moral theory it is worth noting that there is a strong and elegant conceptual connection among the key concepts he construes, which is hard to expose in most cases. The connection of a good will with the idea of duty, for example, is tied by the concept of moral worth, which belongs to particular actions rather than an enduring will or character. An action has a genuine moral worth, Kant says, if it is done from duty. A good will is one that acts from duty. In this respect, the distinction between a duty and from duty is substantial. A duty is an action that one is obliged to do. Kant uses the concept of from duty, on the other hand, to refer to the motive of the act or reason(s) why someone does something. In this respect, many commentators interpret Kant’s ethics as an ethics of motive. According to Korsgaard, for example, “what Kant is doing is a motivational analysis of the notion of

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375 Ibid.
376 Ibid.
duty or rightness. In this regard Kant distinguishes three kinds of motivation explaining why one could do right action: ‘action from indirect inclination,’ ‘action from direct inclination’ and ‘action from duty.’

Actions done from an indirect inclination, or actions for a selfish purpose, have no moral worth. Actions done from direct inclination such as a natural inclination to be sympathetic to help others, though ‘dutiful’ and ‘amiable,’ has no moral worth. Duty cannot be derived from the particular constitution of human nature or from certain inclinations which might not be hold for the will of every rational being. Only an action from duty has "moral content" and "moral worth." This is the first proposition of the metaphysics of morals.

As it might be clearly seen, Kant’s understanding of value is very different than that of Aristotle’s. For Kant, an action is right and has a moral worth, not because of what it aims at, but because of the fact that the action itself is right. In other words, the reason why someone performs a moral action and the reason that makes the action right are identical. Kantian duty is not a matter of having certain purposes and producing some consequences. When we withdraw all material purposes from the will, only the formal principle of the will, or law is left. Kant asks, “But what kind of law can that be, the conception of which must determine the will without reference to expected result?” In reply he

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379 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 399.
380 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 402.
argues that since the will is independent of all inclinations, except universal conformity to law, nothing remains to serve as a principle of the will. The law determining a good will should be universal. A good will is the will of one who acts from duty by attending to the universality of the law on which it acts. A good-willed person therefore is one who does the right action because it is a law for everyone to perform such an action. That is, one who has a good will ought never to act in such a way that s/he could not also will that her/his maxim should be a universal law.\textsuperscript{381} This leads Kant to formulate the second proposition of metaphysics of morals: An action done from duty does not have its moral worth in the purpose it aims to achieve but in the ‘maxim’ through which it is determined.\textsuperscript{382}

We have seen that as a law for all rational beings, duty is a practical principle of action. Kant identifies two kinds of practical principles, namely, \textit{objective practical principles of action} and \textit{subjective principles of action}. The latter is called ‘maxim,’ the subjective principle of will applying only to the subject (mine, or, her, or, his). Maxim then is a general rule or policy on which a rational agent acts in a given situation or has a tendency to act in relevantly similar situation. The objective principle, on the other hand is the practical law, valid for every rational person.\textsuperscript{383}

\textsuperscript{381} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals} 399-400.  
\textsuperscript{383} \textit{Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals} 400.
Kant distinguishes a maxim from an objective principle on the ground of reason’s relation to the faculty of desire. He claims that an objective principle is a practical law on which any rational being would act if reason had full control over the faculty of desire or passions.\textsuperscript{384} A maxim based on sensuous inclination is empirical or a posteriori because of its dependence on the agent’s experience of desire, while a maxim based on pure practical reason is a priori because of its independence of experience or desire. Empirical maxims are material maxims referring to the desired ends, while a priori maxims are formal maxims not referring to the desired end which the actions attempts to realize. Kant claims that the unconditional moral worth of action lies in the formal principle of will not in the material principle.\textsuperscript{385} A man who is acting from duty is one who is acting, not on a material maxim, but on a formal maxim, or an objective practical principle of action. As a command of reason, whose formula is called imperative, this objective principle poses certain constraints on the will. An imperative is an ought-judgment expressing the relation of an objective law of reason to a (human) will. The relation in question is the relation of necessitation or constraint expressing rational necessity, that is, an imperative “forces” or “obliges” or “necessitates” a (human) will be either “good to do or to refrain from doing something.”\textsuperscript{386}

\textsuperscript{384} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{385} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{386} Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 413.
Kant points out that the different kinds of necessitation or constraint are expressed in different kinds of imperatives. There are two kinds of imperative, namely, the hypothetical imperative and categorical imperative. Hypothetical imperatives, for Kant, “present the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to achieving something else which one desires (or which one may possibly desire).”\(^{387}\) They mostly have a form conditionally expressing the means-end relation. That is, an action expressed in hypothetical imperative is commanded only as a means to an end in view: If you want achieve end X, you ought to do action Y.

Categorical imperatives do not bid us the means to an end and are not restricted by any condition and not arrived at by analyzing a previously given act of the will. Therefore they are the absolute and unconditional necessity of doing certain actions. A categorical imperative says ‘Every rational agent ought to will such and such.’\(^{388}\) While hypothetical imperatives concern “the material of the action and its intended result” and are thus determined heteronymous, the categorical imperatives concern “the form and principle from which it originates.”\(^{389}\) Kant calls the categorical imperatives “laws of morality.” They are moral imperatives belonging to free conduct. “The categorical imperative, which declares the action to be itself objectively necessary without making any reference to any end in view (i.e., without any other purpose), holds as

\(^{387}\) *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 414.

\(^{388}\) For further discussion of categorical imperative see Paton (1967).

\(^{389}\) *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 416.
an apodictical practical principle.” As such it must be independent from any objective aims, inclinations and dispositions and be both a priori and pure, and thus imperative of morality.

In Kant’s moral theory, there is an explicit distinction between maxims and imperatives. Maxims are subjective practical principles which cannot be laws while imperatives are rules characterized by an ‘ought.’ Not the material but the form of maxims makes maxims practical universal laws. The independency of inclination in acting in a certain way is the distinguishing feature of Kant’s categorical imperative. He says that “in willing from duty the renunciation of all interest is the specific mark of the categorical imperative, distinguishing it from the hypothetical.” This is one of the main reasons why he claims that duty “can be expressed only in categorical imperatives and not at all in hypothetical ones.” A man who acts from duty is acting on formal, and not on material maxim; that is, he is acting independently of all his desires and inclinations.

Kant’s conception of categorical imperative plays a key role with respect to conceptual distinction between principles of the will and practical laws. Only the categorical imperative embodies a practical law, other imperatives though, can be called principles of the will, but do not constitute a law. Kant exposes the categorical imperative on the basis of

390 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 415.
391 Critique of Practical Reason 20.
392 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 431-432.
393 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 425.
three main arguments, each represented by different formulas. Although there are some writers who discuss whether these formulas are equivalent or not, in the *Foundations* Kant clearly indicates that they are “formulas of the very same law, and each of them unites the others in itself.”

I simply state these three formulas and five different versions of them. First, *the Formula of the Universal Law*:

(I) Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

This is the most abstract and general principle of the categorical imperative that calls for us to obey practical principles that apply necessarily to all rational principles. It says that a maxim violates a universal law if it cannot be willed as universal law. Kant also formulates (I) in a different way, which he sometime calls *the Formula of the Law of Nature*:

(Ia) Act as though the maxim of your action were by your will to become a universal law of nature.

Having said that the above formulas are equivalent to each other, Kant states the second formula, *the Formula of Humanity as End in Itself*, as follows:

(II) Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.

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394 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 436.
395 The formulas are quoted from Beck’s translation of the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, while the numbering of these formulas is from Paton’s *Categorical Imperative*, (1967: 129).
396 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 421.
397 Ibid.
The main purpose behind this formula is to provide a rational ground for categorical imperatives, whose value must be whole and unconditional in every rational being. *The Formula of the Realm of Ends*, on the other hand is stated as follows:

(III) Act according to the maxim of a member of a merely potential realm of ends who gives universal law, remains in full force because it commands categorically.  

Kant also formulates III as *The Formula of Autonomy*, which states that every rational will is in fact the legislator of an entire system of laws and that the duties prescribed by those laws are binding us independently of any contingent fact: 

(IIla) Never choose except in such a way that the maxims of choice are comprehended as universal law in the same volition. 

The first two formulas, (I) and (Ia), for Kant, are the most “rigorous” versions of the categorical imperative, while others are useful for the acceptance of the moral law. Yet each formula manifests the different aspect or dimension of Kant’s moral theory, and three essential characteristics of the categorical imperative as well. The universality requirement introduced in (I) gives us the *form* of the moral law; the humanity as an end in itself gives us the *material* of the moral law; and

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398 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 429.
399 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 439.
400 For a detailed discussion on the conceptual connection between these three formulas of the Categorical Imperative, see Allan W. Wood (2005).
401 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 440.
the autonomous legislation in a realm of ends expresses a complete
determination of maxims and a totality of ends.

6.2 The Doctrine of Virtue

My exposition of Kant’s ethics in the above section is constructed on the bases of the metaphysical foundations of ethics, without mentioning how such a foundation is related to the material or actual world, as well as to the different sections of ethics. As is well known, the most important problem of Kant’s philosophy is about the relationship between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds, more specifically, the relationship between the concepts and perceptions, between the formal and the material, the a priori and a posteriori.

Such a problem is more prevalent in his ethics. Since the categorical imperative does not command any particular or substantiv[e principle of action it needs some complementation in order to avoid being empty. Kant was well aware that the success of his theory depends on a satisfactory account of the relationship between the formal principles and the objects of practical cognitions. According to Wolff, Kant chooses two strategies towards this purpose. On the one hand, “he offers a theory of obligatory ends designed to complement the Categorical Imperative,” on the other, he “tries to derive a theory of obligatory ends (“Man as an end in himself”) directly from the purely formal moral law.”^402 To do so, Kant wants to follow his famous principle, which is valid for all kinds of

knowledge: “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.” The question whether Kant succeeded in achieving his aim has been much discussed in the literature. Leaving aside similar problems, my purpose in this section will be to look at his conception of virtues and the significance of moral value assigned to the duties of virtues.

Those who argue that Kant takes virtues seriously and recognizes them as an ethical category suggests a new look at his ethical books, especially the *Doctrine of Virtue* and as well as the *Metaphysics of Morals*. In the latter book, Kant divides the system of the doctrine of duties into the system of the doctrine of Right and the system of the doctrine of virtue. For Kant the distinction between the two systems is as follows:

The doctrine of Right dealt only with the *formal* condition of outer freedom (the consistency of outer freedom with itself if its maxim were made universal law), that is, Right. But ethics goes beyond this and provides a *matter* (an object of free choice), an end of pure reason that it presents as an end which is also objectively necessary, that is, an end which, as far as men are concerned, it is a duty to have.

On the basis of the formal/material conditions of free choice, the *Doctrine of Virtue* therefore concerns matters of choice. Such a distinction is also parallel to Kant’s juridical-ethical distinction. A duty of virtue is necessarily subject only to inner (ethical) legislation while a duty

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403 Critique of Pure Reason B75, A51.
404 The Metaphysics of Morals 380.
405 Since Kant’s concept of moral worth in the *Doctrine of Virtue* is the same as in the *Foundations of Metaphysics of Morals*, Hill argues, Kant’s division of Right and virtue does not make any difference in his understanding of moral worth. (1992: 164)
of right to external (juridical) legislation. Duties of right can only be external duties, which some other person or persons might force the agent to fulfill, but ethical duties cannot in principle be forced by anybody else. ⁴⁰⁶ Keeping a promise made in contract, for example, is a juridical duty because of external lawgiving but keeping a promise because of inner lawgiving is an ethical duty.

The theoretical differentia between duties of virtue (ethical virtues) and duties of right (juridical duties) arises from different principles. Duties of virtue are deduced from the supreme principle of the doctrine of virtue: “Act in accordance with a maxim of ends that it can be a universal law for everyone to have.” ⁴⁰⁷ Duties of right, on the other hand, are derived from the universal law of Right: “so act externally that the free use of your choice can coexist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law.” ⁴⁰⁸ That means, Kant argues, the former however categorically imperative is synthetic, because it “goes beyond the concept of outer freedom and connects with it, in accordance with universal laws, an end that it makes a duty.” ⁴⁰⁹ The latter is analytic because it is no more than a formal statement of the concept of outer freedom. The principle of right commands only the external performance of specific actions, whereas the principle of virtue commands internal attitudes, notably adoption of moral ends.

⁴⁰⁶ For a detailed discussion of Kant’s juridical-ethical distinction see Nell (1975: 44).
⁴⁰⁷ The Metaphysics of Morals 395.
⁴⁰⁸ The Metaphysics of Morals 231.
⁴⁰⁹ The Metaphysics of Morals 396.
Closely associated with the above distinction, Kant also points out that whereas duties of right are about how to do certain acts, duties of virtue are duties to pursue certain ends. According to Kant, there are two kinds of “ends that are duties,” namely, ‘one’s own perfection’ and ‘happiness of others.’ He suggests that “one’s own perfection” consists only in cultivating one’s capacities (the highest of which is understanding) and includes the cultivation of one’s will in order to satisfy all the requirements of duty. From this general explanation he derives two specific duties: man should raise herself/himself from animality to humanity and cultivate her/his will “up to the purest virtuous disposition, “inner morally practical perfection,” in which the law itself becomes incentive to her/his action. The happiness of others as an end is the source of the duties to others while one’s own perfection is the source of duties to oneself. Notice that duties of virtue can be either duties to oneself or duties to others but all duties of right are duties to others.

In explaining the notion of ‘duties to oneself’ Kant makes a further distinction as to perfect and imperfect duties. “Perfect duties to oneself” include, first, man’s duty to himself merely as an animal being (self-preservation, the preservation of species, the preservation of his capacity of enjoy life), second, as a moral being, and third, as his own innate judge. Similar to Aristotle’s distinction between intellectual and moral virtues Kant suggests that in order to be able to be a truly moral person

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410 The Metaphysics of Morals 385.
411 The Metaphysics of Morals 387.
412 The Metaphysics of Morals 420.
people should develop their natural and moral perfections. But unlike Aristotle, he argues that habituation is not a proper activity to foster moral capacity because “to form a habit is to establish a lasting inclination apart from any maxim... it is a mechanism of sense rather than a principle of thought.”

‘Duties of virtue to others’ merely as men include duties of respect and duties of love. Duties of respect are to be “understood as the maxim of limiting our self-esteem by the dignity of humanity in another person, and so as respect in practical sense,” involving a limitation on our permissible ends. Duties of love, by contrast, must be “thought as the maxim of benevolence (practical love), which results in beneficence,” involving pleasure in the perfection of others. Duties of respect are narrow and perfect whilst duties of love are wide and imperfect.

But the questions of on what basis duties of virtue are classified as ‘wide’ or ‘narrow’ and how the presence of perfect duties within the province of the doctrine of virtue can be accounted for, are among the most important problems discussed by commentators of Kant’s ethics. These questions are important because the moral worth of an action in Kant’s theory depends on whether it is perfect or imperfect, and a narrow or wide duty. As Kant remarks

413 The Metaphysics of Morals 479.
414 The Metaphysics of Morals 449.
415 Ibid. See also The Metaphysics of Morals 473. Here Kant also speaks of virtues of social intercourse and claims that “It is a duty to oneself as well as to others not to isolate oneself (separalistam agere) but to use one’s moral perfections social intercourse.”
Imperfect duties are ...only duties of virtue. Fulfillment of them is *merit* (*meritum* = +a); but failure to fulfill them is not in itself *culpability* (*demeritum* = -a) but rather mere *deficiency in moral worth* (=0).\(^{416}\)

Kant’s general distinction is that wide duties are imperfect duties as opposed to perfect duties which are narrow, strict or rigorous.\(^{417}\) As he says;

> The wider the duty...the more imperfect is a man’s obligation to action; as he, nevertheless, brings closer to *narrow* duty (duties of Right) the maxim of complying with wide duty (in his disposition), so much the more perfect is his virtuous action.\(^{418}\)

More precisely, the consequence of such a distinction in terms of actions, as Paton explains, is this:

> In the case of perfect duties we are obliged to perform a definite *act* –for example, to pay precisely the £59s. 6d. which we owe. In the case of imperfect duties we are bound to act only on a *maxim*: although we ought to act on the maxim of benevolence, it is left to our discretion to decide whom we ought to help, and to what extent we ought to help.\(^{419}\)

The straightforward identification of the perfect-imperfect distinction with the narrow-wide distinction may lead us to equate a duty of right with a perfect duty, and a duty of virtue with imperfect duty. Such equation, however, seems contradictory to the architectonic division of the *Doctrine of Virtue* because, in that book, Kant divides the elements of the doctrine of virtue into two parts, namely, “duties to oneself” and

\(^{416}\) *The Metaphysics of Morals* 390.  
\(^{418}\) *The Metaphysics of Morals* 390.  
\(^{419}\) Paton (1967: 148)
“duties of other” and subdivides the two parts in terms of perfect and imperfect duties. This division clearly implies the inclusion of perfect duties within duties of virtue. Kant also uses this distinction in the *Groundwork*. In short, despite certain textual evidence with respect to the equation of perfect duties with narrow ones and imperfect duties with wide duties, the sets of both kinds do not overlap.

Onora Nell suggests that the inclusion of perfect duties within the category of duties of virtue does not imply an inconsistency in Kant’s account. She suggests that part of the supposed inconsistency is due to a failure to see that Kant uses narrow/wide distinction in two senses. First, Nell says, in Kant’s account, duties can be either *duties of narrow obligation* or *duties of wide obligation*. While the former kinds refer to certain *acts* or omissions which are obligatory, the latter kinds refer to certain *ends* which are obligatory. Second, Nell says, Kant uses the concept of duty in the sense of either in a *narrow requirement* or *wide requirement*. A duty of narrow requirement applies to duties which are fulfilled by specific acts or omissions, whereas a duty of wide requirement applies to duties which are fulfilled by choosing or implementing certain policies with regard to certain ends. More explicitly, there are perfect duties to oneself which are *narrow in obligation*, but some of which are narrow in requirement while others wide in

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420 He says that a perfect duty is “a duty which permits no exception in the interest of inclination” but imperfect duties, by implication, admit of exception in favor of inclination” (*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 422).
422 Ibid.
requirement. For example, self-preservation entails a narrow obligation because it is a perfect duty to one-self. As it necessitates to adopting certain acts it is also narrow in requirement. The cultivation of moral capacity also entails a narrow obligation because it is a perfect duty to oneself. Since it calls for adopting and implementing certain policies or ends it is narrow in requirement. Given the two senses of wide/narrow distinction between duties of virtue in mind Nell concludes her interpretation as follows:

That they are narrow in one sense Kant indicates by calling all these duties “limiting” or “negative” and even “narrow,” contrasting this with ethical duties of commission which are “widening” or “positive” as well as “wide.” But both sorts of duty are always classified as duties of virtue; they are both duties wide obligation since they all fall under one or another obligatory end and can only be shown to be duties by applying the first principle of the doctrine of virtue. … “Ethical duties of omission” though narrow in requirement meet sufficient conditions for being duties of virtue: they can be derived only by applying the Formula of Universal Law to maxims of ends, i.e., from the first principle of doctrine of virtue.423

To support Nell’s interpretation I want to quote the following passage where, in discussing perfect duties to oneself, Kant makes an objective division of duties in terms of a distinction between formal and material elements of duty. He says,

The first of these [formal] are limiting (negative) duties; the second [material], widening (positive duties to oneself). Negative duties forbid man to act contrary to the end of his nature and so have to do merely with his moral self-preservation; positive

423 Nell (1975: 53).
duties, which command him to make a certain object of choice his end, concern his perfecting of himself. Both of them belong to virtue, either as duties of omission (sustine et abstine) or as duties of commission (viribus concessis utere), but both belong to it as duties of virtue.\textsuperscript{424}

This paragraph clearly states that in the general architectonic of doctrine of virtue Kant leaves room for perfect duties within the province of duties of virtue. While duties of virtue concern ends, they do so in two distinct ways. The notion of formal duty involves the notion of perfect duty, whereas the notion of material duty involves that of imperfect duty. The formal duties are ones that limit permissible ends. The material duties, however, expand the range of permissible ends. Kant claims that formal duties of virtue belong to the “moral health of man,” preserving one’s ability to reason practically and asserting one’s equality with others while material ones belong to “his moral prosperity,” promoting one’s development as a natural and moral rational being. Both of them are duties that belong to “his cultivation.”\textsuperscript{425}

Having identifies Kant’s taxonomy of duties I want now to explore some other striking features of his conception of virtue. To do this, it is helpful to focus on Kant’s rejection of three principles of ancient conception of virtue, which he formulates in the following way:

1) There is only one virtue and one vice.
2) Virtue is the observance of the middle way between opposing vices.

\textsuperscript{424} The Metaphysics of Morals 419.\textsuperscript{425} Ibid.
3) Virtue (like prudence) must be learned from experience. 

As to the first objection, Kant’s argument is that since each concept can provide only one moral proof through rational knowledge, grounding different virtue from a single concept such as an ultimate end is that either one is offering an invalid proof or is confusing the source two or more different duties. Though he does not mention any name towards which his argument is targeted, the person Kant has in mind is most probably Plato, who attempts at deducing all virtue from the concept of good.

Second, Kant also argues that Aristotle’s attempt at locating virtue “in the mean between two vices is false.” His argument for this goes as follows:

Let good management, for instance, consist in the mean between two vices, prodigality and avarice: as a virtue, it cannot be represented as arising either from a gradual diminution of prodigality (by saving) or from increase of spending on the miser’s part—as if these two vices, moving in opposite directions, met in good management.

According to Kant, “the distinction between virtue and vice cannot be sought in the degree to which one follows certain maxims” but in the specific quality of maxims (their relation to the law). But Kant’s criticism of Aristotle’s understanding of virtue is inaccurate for the simple

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426 The Metaphysics of Morals 405.
427 The Metaphysics of Morals 404.
428 Ibid.
429 Ibid.
reason that Aristotle does not mean arithmetic mean when he claims virtue as a mean.

As for the third objection, Kant points out that virtue is a moral strength of the will and man is under obligation to acquire the capacity to overcome her/his inclination. The way for man to acquire this capacity is “to enhance the moral incentive (the thought of moral law), both by contemplating the dignity of the pure rational law in us (contemplatione) and by practicing virtue (exercitio).”\(^{430}\) Like Aristotle, he accepts the importance of both contemplation and practice in the acquisition of virtue. He nonetheless argues that founding morality on empirical ground makes it contingent and impure. More specifically, Kant argues that “man’s moral capacity must be estimated by the law, which commands categorically,” not “with the capacity to fulfill the law that is ascribed to man.”\(^{431}\) This suggests that the estimation of man’s moral capacity (strength of will) must be given by the categorical law in accordance with our rational knowledge of what men ought to be, in keeping with the Idea of humanity. In this sense, it is truly independent from the empirical knowledge.

To conclude this section, let me re-enumerate some general characteristics of duties of virtue in Kant’s moral theory. First, we have seen that duties of virtue are duties to adopt certain ends but duties of right are those which require us to perform or omit certain actions.

\(^{430}\) The Metaphysics of Morals 397.
\(^{431}\) The Metaphysics of Morals 404.
Second, since duties of virtue can be of wide obligation they allow persons “latitude (latitudo) for free choice” in fulfilling their duties. Duties of right, however, do not allow such latitude.\textsuperscript{432} Third, Kant’s commitment that the cultivation of moral character is a perfect duty to oneself appears to be clear evidence against the view that he does not recognize the importance of character and emotions. This is a major question of this chapter, which I will come back in section 6.4 and in the Conclusion part.

To see the deep-ground of the issue more clearly, I want to maintain my investigation by examining Kant’s conception of duty around the problem of overdetermination.

6.3 The Problem of Overdetermination

So far my exposition of the key concepts and ideas of Kant’s moral theory has been quite simplistic and non-controversial. However, in addition to certain external critiques and objections to his theory, which are widely discussed and debated in the literature, there are a number of issues arising from recent interpretations that are central to the main arguments of my work. Among others, the most important one is the so-called problem of overdetermination, which is also a central issue in the problems of causation. Suppose that two factors, each one is sufficient for an effect, occur and the effect follows. The problem of overdetermination arises when we want to know “Which factor is actually

\textsuperscript{432} For a more detailed discussion on the problem of latitude in Kant’s imperfect duties see Baron (1995: 88-115), Sherman (1997: 331-361), and Hill (1992: 160-170).
responsible?” As to the concept of duty Kant was well aware of this epistemic dimension of the problem when he states:

> it is easily decided whether an action in accord with duty is done from duty or for some selfish purpose. It is far more difficult to note this difference when the action is in accord with duty and, in addition, the subject has a direct inclination to do it.  

This practical difficulty indeed might be the case in evaluating someone’s action whether it is done from duty or from a direct inclination. But the problem I want to elaborate here is not a matter of epistemic or practical issue as such, but rather, whether Kant’s conception of moral duty allows an overdetermination in principle. In order to depict different aspects of the concept of moral duty I will try to reply to this question by providing five possible interpretations of Kant’s account of moral worth. The first model is widely known as the traditional interpretation, which can be stated as follows:

(I) Acting from duty requires the absence of inclination

On this reading, an action has a moral worth *if and only if* it is done from duty. Many commentators argue that Kant’s philanthropist example clearly suggests this reading. In this example, Kant first talks about the person who “is so sympathetically constituted that without any motive of vanity or selfishness” he finds “an inner satisfaction in spreading joy and rejoice in the contentment of others” and says that the

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433 *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 397, emphasis added.
action of that person “has no true moral worth.” Though such a person’s action is honorable, praiseworthy and encouraging, it has no esteem due to its maxim’s lack of moral content. When “the mind of that friend to mankind was clouded by a sorrow of his own which extinguished all sympathy with the lot of others,” Kant asks us to imagine, the former motives are no longer available to that person. The point Kant highlights by the philanthropist example arises when we are asked to further think of that person “to tear himself, unsolicited by inclination, out of his dead insensibility and to do this action only from duty and without any inclination – then for the first time his action has genuine moral worth.” Given the textual evidence provided here, as well as some others, many people argue that the true or sole moral motive of action in Kant’s account of acting from duty necessitates the absence of inclination. Schiller, for example, states this view in his widely quoted poetry, written as a dialogue between the two speakers:

Gladly I serve my friends, but alas I do it with pleasure.
Hence I am plagued with doubt that I am not a virtuous person.
To this the answer is given
Sure, your only resource is try to despise them entirely,

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434 Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 398.
435 Ibid.
436 In the Critique of Practical Reason Kant says: “What is essential in the moral worth of actions is that the moral law should directly determine the will. If the determination of the will occurs in accordance with the moral law but only by means of a feeling of any kind whatsoever, which must be presupposed in order that the law may become a determining ground of the will, and if the action thus occurs not for the sake of the law, it has legality but not morality.” (Critique of Practical Reason 71).
And then with aversion to do what your duty enjoins you.\footnote{437}

Schiller here is saying that, in Kant’s morality, one cannot act towards her/his friends out of duty without despising her/him that the act has a moral worth. This might be considered a severe interpretation of Kant’s concept of duty, despite the existence of several examples and explicit demonstrations. Indeed, the most important evidence against (I) is that it conflicts with Kant’s view that the notion of duty is ascribed only to rational human beings, not to the Holly Will which is incapable of acting from duty due to lack of inclinations. As we shall see in the next section, Kant’s argument with respect to the positive and negative effects of the moral law upon moral agents seems to suggest that the absence of inclination reading of his conception of duty is not true.

For this reason, as well as for some others, many commentators argue that (I) is not only an extreme interpretation, but also inaccurate. Baron, for example, says: “I take it to be settled that Kant does not hold that absence of an inclination to x is a necessary condition for x’s having a moral worth.”\footnote{438} In the same vein, drawing certain evidence from the \textit{Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals}, Henson also claims that “the battle-citation model of moral worth” better accounts for Kant’s conception of from duty. According to this model,

(II) The moral motive and inclination are in conflict, but the former overcomes the latter.

\footnote{437 Quoted in Paton, \textit{The Categorical Imperative}, (1967: 48).  
438 Baron (1995: 151).}
This statement of Kant’s conception of acting from duty indicates the presence of a conflict between duty and inclinations. In this sense, an action has a moral worth when the sense of duty overcomes the conflicting powerful inclinations and becomes the sole sufficient reason to prompt to the act in question. Accordingly, Henson’s battle-citation model requires not the absence of cooperating inclinations, but rather the presence of *contrary* inclinations in action that is morally worthy.\(^{439}\) Indeed, there are many examples in Kant’s works fitting into this reading, the suicide example is one of them:

> if an unfortunate man, strong in soul, is indignant rather than despondent or dejected over his fate and wishes for death, and yet preserves his life without loving it and from neither inclination nor fear but from duty –then his maxim has a moral merit.\(^{440}\)

In this example Kant draws a picture of a person who struggles between a strict duty not to commit suicide and a strong inclination (desire, want) to avoid a life promising more pain than pleasure. If the person overcomes the contrary inclinations, which directed to end up living such a life, for the sake of duty, here again, Kant says, such a person does what is morally worthy (unconditional and intrinsically valuable). The action in question is now done from duty and thereby has a moral content.

But the critic might argue that the concept of moral duty is not for a Holly Will who never experiences inclination, but it is not for an evil will

\(^{439}\) Henson (1978:48).
\(^{440}\) *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 397-8.
either. The concept of duty does not necessarily call for some kind of conflicting desires or a split-mind. If so, we should accept a more moderate conception of duty that truly fits into the conditions of rational human beings, which is known as the fitness-report model. In this model

(III) Acting from duty does allow the co-existence of
the moral motive and inclination.

Notice that (III) only states that an action has a moral worth if it is done from duty. In other words, it is a conditional statement, not a bi-conditional one. Understood in this way, the idea here is that such a conception not only better states Kant’s position with respect to concept of acting from duty but also that it is more realistic or humanly conceived. According to this model, therefore, acting from duty requires neither (I) nor (II). Rather, a dutiful action would have a moral worth “provided that respect for duty was present and would have sufficed by itself, even though other motives were also present and might themselves have sufficed.”

441 It is this model that exemplifies a clear case of overdetermination. Henson thinks that “the fitness-report model” can be drawn from the Metaphysics of Morals.442 Using the concept of motive in the active sense, rather than a passive one, Henson points out that, in the case of overdetermination, the motive of duty and that of inclination might be present and are sufficient to cause the action. Suppose that

441 Henson (1979: 48). Henson reserves the term ‘overdetermination’ for “cases in which one has two or more logically independent motives for Φ-ing, and Φ-s, and would have Φ-ed from any one of those motives even in the absence of the others” (1979: 42).
442 Henson (1979: 42ff).
Kant went to the lecture hall to give a lecture with the possible motives stated below:

i) he enjoyed lecturing;

ii) he did not want people to think him irresponsible;

iii) he was benevolently concerned for his students and felt that they needed to hear his lectures;

iv) he recognized lecturing as a (moral) duty.  

Henson suggests that the fitness-report model holds that to attribute moral worth to actions is to command the agent for being alive for the motive of duty, the condition (iv), albeit there are other motives to move. For Henson, as long as the motive of action by itself is sufficient by itself to produce a dutiful action, it does not matter whether there are cooperating non-moral motives (inclinations) present. The presence of cooperating inclinations does not create any inconsistency in Kant’s account of moral worth, nor does it make an act morally unworthy.

But how can we save the reading III and the above interpretation against some clear textual evidence found in Kant’s works? In the Chapter II of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, entitled “The Incentives of Pure Practical Reason”, by claiming that the only moral incentive of the human will is the moral law, Kant maintains that

Any further motives which would make it possible for us to dispense with that of moral law must not be sought, for they would only produce hypocrisy without any substance. Even to let other motives

443 Henson (1979: 42-43).
(such as those toward certain advantage) cooperate with the moral law is risky.\textsuperscript{444}

One way of interpreting Kant’s views here is to take the above remarks as referring to the pure, practical origin of the moral will, rather than the application of this will to the practice. In other words, while Kant does deny the cooperation of the a priori origin of moral reason with the empirical reason or motive in the foundation of moral reason \textit{per se}, he might nonetheless accept that such a cooperation somehow might be possible in practice. I think this is the only plausible way we can reconcile the above quotation with III as well as some other readings.

Having accepted that Kant allows the overdetermination of right action, Barbara Herman argues that the problem of overdetermination is a more complex phenomenon than Henson and the others assume. This is because, she says, “interaction of motives tending toward the same action can be complex and highly structured.”\textsuperscript{445} In this sense, Herman argues, Henson’s account does not explain “the conditions” of cooperation between moral and non-moral motives. Hence, once the conditions of cooperation and the relationship in question are taken as a complex phenomenon it will be seen that there are at least two possible readings of (III), depending on the role that each motive plays in bringing about moral action. On one reading, the concept of acting from duty may require the following principle:

\textsuperscript{444} 	extit{Critique of Pure Reason} 72.
\textsuperscript{445} Herman (1981: 382).
(IV) Acting form duty does allow (III), yet the agent must make a lexical order where the two motives are sufficient for the action in accord with duty.

Herman thinks that in Kant’s account “overdetermined actions can have moral worth so long as the moral motive has priority over the satisfaction of inclination.” That is to say that an act has a moral worth if, and only if, the motive of duty is primary or lexically prior to the inclination. In order to be primary, a motive by itself must be able to produce action. In other words, duty operates as a primary motive if it is the main impetus to action, the thing that moves one to act; while it operates as a secondary motive if it provides “limiting conditions” on primary or initiating motives. For example, if one has a strong desire of wish to tell a lie but tells the truth because s/he recognizes that telling the truth is morally required, one acts from duty as a primary motive.

In agreement with Herman, Baron maintains that in any case of overdetermined action, in Kant’s view of moral worth, an action has a moral worth where duty operates as a primary motive while “inclination governed by duty as a secondary motive.” Herman’s and Baron’s conclusion clearly states that both moral and non-moral motives are causally effective in the determination of moral worth of an action but the

446 Ibid.
moral motive, or duty (respect for the moral law) is prior to non-moral motives, or inclinations, in such determination.\textsuperscript{448}

On another reading, the relationship between moral and non-moral motives can be taken as ‘hybrid actions.’ Accordingly, on an extremely floppy interpretation, Kant’s concept of acting from duty might be something as follows:

(V) Acting from duty does allow the kinds of joint motivation actions.

Similar to overdetermined actions, hybrid actions also include more than one motive, the moral motive and any kind of inclination, but they are not by themselves sufficient.\textsuperscript{449} It has been almost unanimously accepted however that hybrid actions have no moral worth in Kant’s theory because the motive of duty is not by itself sufficient to produce the action in question. If the motive of duty prompts an action in terms of cooperating inclinations, then the action is legal but lacks moral worth. This does not amount to saying that a dutiful act from inclination is not morally defective. Rather, it simply means that the act in question has no

\textsuperscript{448} It is important to keep in mind that the alleged primacy here is to be taken as actual rather than hypothetical, otherwise the moral value of primacy might fundamentally change. In a hypothetical evaluation of the action in question the agent might ask herself/himself whether the subjective value of the moral motive for the action is higher than the inclination. She/he might ask, for example, “would I do the same action if my inclination were in conflict with my moral motivation, other thing being equal?” The question I want to raise here is that there are some cases in which the moral value of an action for the agent might be more substantive, even if the inclination were causally more effective. Some people who are highly moral and always takes moral consideration seriously, for example, might act from a non-moral motive. They nonetheless give greater subjective value to the moral motive even if they fail to follow it.

\textsuperscript{449} For this distinction, see Baron (1995: 151).
moral worth. In other words, while such action accords with duty it is not done from duty.

Those who claim that Kant's ethics is consonant with the central tenets of virtue ethics think that (III) or (IV) better represents Kant's position with respect to duty and emotions. Both interpretations allow the existence of inclination for the concept of moral duty or the existence of these non-moral motives does not destroy the moral worth of the action. But none of the above five formulations or readings suggests that some kind of emotion or motive is needed or must accompany with the practical reason for the concept of duty in Kant's ethics. From the above survey, the most salient distinction between the Aristotelian version of virtue ethics and Kant's ethics has now become clearer. In Aristotle's ethics, emotions are necessary components of virtues and intrinsic to moral actions, without which no virtue action is possible. In Kant's ethics, by contrast, they are contingent and non-intrinsic, if not damaging to the moral worth of actions.

But, the proponent of the virtue ethicists' interpretation of Kant's ethics argues that this is not the only way we can contrast both theories in terms of the place of emotions in moral actions. Kant's proclaimed idea of the purity of moral motive might be correct, but his attitude toward emotions cannot be charged on the basis of the above evidence, the proponent maintains, because there is some positive evidence arising from the analysis of his treatment of moral feeling, respect for moral law. It has often been pointed out that Kant excludes all feelings and
emotions from the concept of duty except the feeling of respect. To complete my investigation and to see whether this privileged status of feeling of respect undermines my claim that the role of emotions are radically different in Aristotle’s and Kant’s ethics, I now want pass to Kant’s views on emotions.

6.4 Kant’s Account of Emotion

Before considering whether or not Kant assigns a constitutive role to emotions in his moral theory, as some virtue ethicists claim, we should make some conceptual distinctions and clarifications with respect to key concepts such as inclination, affect and passion that Kant uses. Kant calls inclination “habitual sensuous appetite,”\(^{450}\) the generic name of emotions, passions and desires, etc. All inclinations are oriented towards “self-regard” which is the combination of benevolence toward one’s “self-love” and “self-satisfaction.”\(^{451}\) He makes a clear-cut distinction between affects and passions: “Affects belong to *feeling* insofar as, preceding reflection, it makes this impossible or more difficult. Hence an affect is called *precipitate* or *rash (animus praeceps).*”\(^{452}\) A passion, on the other hand, “is sensible *desire* that has become a lasting inclination.”\(^{453}\) Kant speaks of two kinds of passions. First, there are the innate or natural passions of inclination such as the *inclinations to freedom* and *to sex*. Second, there are the acquired or cultural passions or inclinations such

\(^{450}\) *Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View* 251.
\(^{451}\) *Critique of Practical Reason* 73.
\(^{452}\) *The Metaphysics of Morals* 407.
\(^{453}\) *The Metaphysics of Morals* 407-408.
as “the manias for honor, for power, and for possession.” The inclination to freedom is the most ardent of all inclinations, which is found only in rational human beings. The acquired inclination is an inclination which has to do merely with our possession of the means for satisfying all inclinations that are concerned directly with ends.

In the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View Kant provides a rich metaphoric explanation and several examples to distinguish affects and passions:

An affect works like water breaking through a dam: a passion, like a stream that burrows ever deeper in its bed. An affect works on our health like an apoplectic fit: a passion, like consumption or emaciation. An affect should be regarded as a drunken fit—we sleep it off, though we have a headache afterwards; but passion, as a sickness that comes swallowing poison, or deformity, which requires a spiritual doctor within or without—though this doctor, for the most part, does not how to prescribe medicine that would effect a radical cure; he must, almost always, use a mere palliative. ...Affects are honest and open: passions, on the contrary, cunning and hidden. ...We should think of an affect as a drunken fit that we sleep off: of a passion, as a madness that broods over an idea which settles in ever more deeply. 455

Affects are therefore short-lived and concealed feeling which are felt at a particular moment, in a particular way. Passions, on the other hand, last longer, and entail some kind of means-end reasoning. Any influence of emotions on reason in degree or density makes a conceptual distinction in Kant’s conceptualization:

454 Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 268.
455 Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 252-253.
Inclination that the subject’s reason can subdue only with difficulty or not at all is passion. On the other hand a feeling of pleasure or displeasure in his present state that does not let him rise to reflection (to rational consideration of whether he should give himself up to it or refuse it) is an affect.\textsuperscript{456}

Kant further maintains that, in case of affect, “we are taken unawares by feeling, so that the mind’s self-control (\textit{animus sui comos}) is suspended.”\textsuperscript{457} In this sense, “an affect is rash” making “reflection impossible” and “thoughtless.” \textsuperscript{458} But passion “takes its time and reflects...in order to reach its end.”\textsuperscript{459} So, though “passions do the greatest damage to freedom... they need not be thoughtless, like affects, and consequently stormy and transitory, but tend to get themselves rooted and can co-exist even with subtle reasoning.”\textsuperscript{460} Accordingly, as being “only appetites directed by men to men,” and the outbreak of which can be attributed to man,\textsuperscript{461} passions possess the reason-dependent character as well. As Kant says:

\begin{quote}
Passions always presupposes a maxim, on the part of the subject, of acting in accordance with an end prescribed to him by the inclination. So it is always connected with his reason, and we can no more attribute passion to mere animals than to pure rational beings.\textsuperscript{462}
\end{quote}

Because of the insistence on the rationality of passions, commentators like Maria Borges argue that “there is not a unique model

\textsuperscript{456} Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 251.
\textsuperscript{457} Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 252-253.
\textsuperscript{458} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{459} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{460} Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 265-266.
\textsuperscript{461} Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 269.
\textsuperscript{462} Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 266.
for emotions in Kant.” In her very Aristotelian reading of emotions, Borges claims that since “Kant’s account of emotion includes both physiological aspects and cognitive contents” his views cannot be explained by a single model, that is, the pain model of Sabini and Silver and the sympathy or cognitive model of Baron. Given the kind of rationality we have identified above, Borges maintains that Sabini and Silver’s interpretation that Kant’s views of emotions characterize a model in which emotions are precognitive, passive, lack of rationality is incorrect. Baron’s interpretation that Kant takes the agent as passive with respect to feelings is also incorrect. On Kant’s account, Borges claims, while we are said to be passive with respect to affect, we are able to cultivate our sympathy in order to help the accomplishment of moral actions.

Perhaps it is due to his insistence on the a priori and metaphysical origins of human reason and morality, that Kant’s remarks on character formation and cultivation of some attitudes have been ignored. In explicating how affects can be brought under control, for example, Kant speaks of a natural factor, namely, “apathy” which counterbalances the influence of affects. The notion of ‘moral apathy,’ in Kantian terminology, refers to situations in which “feelings arising from sensible inclinations lose their influence on moral feeling only because respect for law is more

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463 Maria Borges (2004: 140n).
According to Kant, ‘moral apathy’ is not a lack of feeling, but, rather, “the absence of affects.” This is valid for the concept of happiness and even for that of virtue as well. As several commentators have correctly pointed out, Kant’s insistence on ‘apathy’ does not refer to an account of virtue presupposing the absence of inclinations or emotions. The point is that, although apathy is a natural factor in order to control influences of affects preventing reason, it is not such a factor on the level of passions, the influence of which are counterbalanced or controlled only by reason.

But we should not overstate the significance of the above explanations with respect to the rationality and place of emotions in Kant’s ethics. As Nancy Sherman has nicely explored, there are many ways in which emotions can support the motives of duty in Kant’s account, but only conditionally, instrumentality or aesthetically. According to Sherman, Kant’s views regarding the cultivation and appropriate expression of emotions is “an eliminative-instrumentalist claim.” Such a morality is only a stage in the total moral progress of the agent: “a morality of an inferior sort, a children’s morality.” On this view, emotions “serve as a temporary substitute for reason” in the development of moral strength of will.

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465 The Metaphysics of Morals 408.
469 Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 75.
There are some other ways of explaining the role of emotions in Kant’s ethics. For example, on the perceptual sense, as Sherman says, “emotions serve as perceptual modes of response. They are modes of discerning and attending to what is morality salient.”\textsuperscript{470} In support of her interpretation Sherman quotes the following passage from the *Doctrine of Virtue* where Kant says:

> It is therefore an *indirect duty* to cultivate the compassionate natural (aesthetic [ästhetisch]) feelings in us, and to make use of them as so many means to sympathy based on moral principles and the feeling appropriate to them. It is therefore a duty not to avoid the places where the poor who lack the most basic necessities are to be found but rather to seek them out, and not to shun sick-rooms or debtors’ prisons and so forth in order to avoid sharing painful feelings one may not be able to resist.\textsuperscript{471}

Remember that, in Kant’s taxonomy of virtues, man’s duty to himself is narrow and perfect “in terms of its quality; but it is wide and imperfect in terms of its degree.”\textsuperscript{472} That means, the cultivation of our moral feeling in itself is a perfect or direct and narrow duty, while to increase our sympathy and fellow feelings towards other people is indirect and wide not only because it one’s duty “to reach it” but also because it includes a sensible feeling. This is why cultivation of emotions is of secondary importance for Kant, while it is the essential part of

\textsuperscript{470} Sherman (1997: 158).
\textsuperscript{471} The Metaphysics of Morals 457.
\textsuperscript{472} The Metaphysics of Morals 446..
morality for Aristotle. In Kant’s ethics, emotions are relevant to moral actions in virtue of their capacity to make virtue more attractive to the agent and to make contribution to the fulfillment of duty in a more effective way. As long as they stay within the boundaries of reason, Kant clearly speaks of the cultivation of some other emotions such as compassion or friendship. As it has been clear in our discussion of Kant’s concept of duty, in all these contributions and connection, the point is that emotions can support acting from duty as long as they are constrained by the motive of duty. That is, the sense of duty has always a regulative function on emotions. But in Aristotle’s ethics, as we have seen, emotions are the constituent part of virtues.

It should be clear from the above explanations why Aristotelian reading of Kant’s view of emotions, like that of Borges’s, does not undermine my argument that Aristotle and Kant propose a different position with respect to the roles of emotions in moral actions. Yet some further comments are also in order. First of all, the kind of rationality either philosopher identifies in emotions is very different. The alleged rationality Kant assigns to passions is built-in the object of emotions itself, what he calls technical rationality. But in Aristotle, the rationality of emotions comes about in the connection between the object of emotion and reason, more precisely, from emotions’ obedience to

473 See Weber (2003: 197). He claims that both Kant and Aristotle have emphasized that we can in some ways cultivate our emotions. McCarty claims that in Kant’s account we have an obligation to cultivate our capacity for moral feeling. (1993: 421)
474 See Oakley (1990: 442-444). According to Oakley, in Kant’s ethics emotions cannot be taken as moral motives because they are unreliable and lacking in any cognitive dimension.
reason. As to the moral implication of these differences, it is important to observe that, in Kant’s account, there is nothing in the rationality of emotions that supports to the obtainment of moral action.

Despite certain reservations and some other possible ways of interpretation, I believe that Kant’s literal views with respect to emotions would represent his position more accurately: “A mind that is subject to affects and passions is always ill, because both of them exclude the sovereignty of reason.” For Kant, the moral of the story is that “no matter how vehement they may be as sensuous motives”, passions “are still sheer weakness with regard to what reason prescribes to man.” But more importantly, Kant does not only overlook the importance of affect in moral considerations, he also assigns the most destructive consequence to that emotional phenomenon, the psychic part of the phenomena that virtue ethics takes seriously.

Kant’s moral philosophy can be interpreted in different ways, often quite contradictory, unless we do not pay special attention to the conceptual connection he draws between noumenal and phenomenal worlds. We can have two Kants if we look at The Metaphysics of Morals and Critique of Practical Reason by ignoring the Anthropology, and the vise versa. But for Kant, human beings are “dual citizens”: they are the members not only of the sensible world but also of the intelligible

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475 Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 251. Kant also says that “affects are, generally, pathological occurrences (symptoms).” (Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 255).
476 Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View 271-271.
The importance of the metaphysical distinction of the sensible-intelligible world regarding Kant’s account of emotions is that he places all emotions in the phenomenal world. Emotions are “pathological” because they are caused by objects of senses – they are heteronomously determined. Inclusion of emotions in the phenomenal world leads us to conclude that Kant excludes emotions from the realm of morality because the realm of morality and freedom is the noumenal or intelligible world. Placing emotions in the realm of heteronomy creates a grave difficulty for Kant in explaining how pure reason can move the will to action.

But the most important difficulty for Kant’s philosophy arises from the problem of how a causal interaction between causal and non-causal realms in the same subject (metaphysical self) takes place. On the one hand, as Kant says, “the detachment of his causality (his will) from all natural laws of the world of sense in one and the same subject is contradiction.” But to explain how such interaction is possible and to give scientific knowledge of it, on the other hand, Kant says, is beyond the limits of human reason. Yet, despite such limitation, Kant seems to say that, though we cannot explain the interaction in question, we can still draw or observe the causal role of the intelligible world into the sensible world. Keeping these methodological or conceptual difficulties in mind, I want now to consider whether Kant treats the feeling of respect in

\[477\] Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 454-55.
\[478\] For a more detailed discussion of Kant’s exclusion of emotions from the domain of morality see Hinman (1983: 253-4).
\[479\] Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals 459.
a similar way that the virtues ethicists typically assign to feelings in moral reasoning.

6. 5 Respect as a Moral Incentive

Kant argues that the moral law determining the will functions as an “incentive,” which is “a subjective determining ground of a will whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform to the objective law.” As such the incentive must be a kind of motivation from which human beings can act. But what is it that serves as an incentive for the moral law? For Kant this is respect for the law:

Thus respect for the law is not the incentive to morality; it is morality itself, regarded subjectively as an incentive inasmuch as pure practical reason, by rejecting all the rival claims of self-love, gives authority and absolute sovereignty of the law.

Needless to say, if there is a possibility of explaining the role of emotions in Kant’s ethics the only way we can do so would be in terms of psychic feelings. For the rationalist like Kant there is no theoretical or philosophical problem in claming that respect for the law is “produced solely by reason.” The moral law is the form of the agent’s will insofar as the agent is rational. This form of will is grasped both cognitively as a principle and as a felt representation of the same form of will as an incentive of pure reason.

480 _Critique of Practical Reason_ 72.
481 For a detailed discussion on Kant’s understanding of ‘incentive’ see Andrews Reath (1989).
482 _Critique of Practical Reason_ 76.
483 Ibid.
But, the question Kant wants to reply is not that ‘How can respect for a law be a moral incentive?’ Kant thinks that such a question is epistemically in the same boat with the question ‘How is free will possible?’ which he regards as “insoluble problem for the human reason.”

Rather, in order to explore the effects of moral consciousness on the human faculty of desire, he tries to demonstrate what the moral law affects in the mind, to have a practical effect, so far as it is an incentive. In reply, he speaks of two kinds of practical effect of the moral law as an incentive. The first effect is negative, which Kant explains it as follows:

"[A]s a free will, and thus not only without co-operating with sensuous impulses but even rejecting all of them and checking all inclinations so far as they could antagonistic to the law, it is determined by the law."

The negative effect therefore is itself a feeling. By impeding all inclinations (desires, emotions, etc), the moral law produces “a feeling which can be called pain.” Kant identifies this feeling of pain with the negative effect of the moral law in the mind and calls it “humiliation (intellectual contempt).” When the moral law determines the will, it limits all inclinations. Like all other inclinations humiliation is pathological, empirical and is of causally determined origin. This is the “affective aspect” of the moral law as an incentive – i.e., a feeling or emotion that is

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484 Critique of Practical Reason 72.
485 Ibid.
486 Ibid.
487 Critique of Practical Reason 73.
488 Critique of Practical Reason 75.
experienced when the moral law checks the inclinations and limits their influence on the will.

The second effect is *positive* what Kant calls ‘moral feeling’ in general and ‘respect’ in particular.\(^{489}\) In the *Foundations of Metaphysics of Morals* there is also some textual evidence showing that moral feeling or respect is “the subjective effect which the law has upon the will to which reason alone gives objective grounds.”\(^{490}\) Respect for the law is the sole and undoubted moral incentive of the human will,\(^{491}\) which can be known “completely a priori.”\(^{492}\) It is not of empirical origin, on the contrary, it is “a feeling produced by an intellectual cause.”\(^{493}\) Kant’s aim in presenting his account of respect for the law is to show that the will is directly responsive to practical reason and thus autonomous.

It is worth pointing out that respect for the law must be distinguished from the feeling of respect. While the former is the cause of the moral action as an incentive of pure practical reason, the latter is an effect of the moral law. The state of feeling therefore, Kant says, “is either *sensibly dependent* or *moral*. The former is that feeling which precedes the representation of the law; the latter, that which can only follow upon it.”\(^ {494}\) Respect or moral feeling does not, or cannot, exist

\(^{489}\) Carla Bagnoli claims that in Kant’s account respect is a feeling that is generated by agent’s reflection on the nature of her own agency, her rational agency (2003). For a more detailed discussion of Kant’s conception of respect see also Reath (1989) and McCarty (1993).
\(^{490}\) *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* 460.
\(^{491}\) *Critique of Practical Reason* 79.
\(^{492}\) *Critique of Practical Reason* 73.
\(^{493}\) Ibid., emphasis added.
\(^{494}\) *The Metaphysics of Morals* 399.
prior to, or independently of our recognition of moral law. It is rather the
effect of the recognition of the moral law as it operates as an incentive in
us. As Kant says: “moral law commands and inspires” respect by
precluding all inclinations from having a direct influence on the will.495
The feeling of respect, which arises from the consciousness of the moral
law’s precluding all inclinations, is then not an “antecedent feeling
tending to morality.” If it were so, then it would be sensuous. But “the
incentive of moral disposition” must be independent from all sensuous
conditions.496 Therefore, for Kant, as lacking all empirical content,
respect must be intellectual feeling, the cause of which “lies in the pure
practical reason.”497 Because of its origin, Kant says, it is not
“pathologically effected; rather, it is practically effected.”498 As such, “it
increases the weight of the moral law by removing, in the judgment of
reason, the counterweight to the moral law which bears on a will affected
by the sensibility.”499

The most important consequence of the above discussion is that
even if we accept the concept of respect as a primary moral feeling or
only the feeling, such a feeling is far from playing the same role that the
virtue ethicists assign to emotions.500 This is because, first, in Kant’s
account, moral feeling is not cause, but effect. It is the positive effect of

495 Critique of Practical Reason 80.
496 Critique of Practical Reason 75.
497 Ibid.
498 Ibid.
499 Critique of Practical Reason 76.
500 For a similar argument with respect to substantial difference between virtue ethics
and Kant’s ethics in this regard see S. Yazıcı (2004), ‘Erdem Ahlakı: Son Dönem
Tartışmalara İlişkin Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme,’ Felsefe Tartışmalari, 30: 7-26.
the moral law that occurs in consequence of one’s subjective consciousness of moral law. But, in virtue ethics, emotions and feelings play actual causative roles. Second, in Kant’s account, moral feelings or emotions do not have any empirical content; but, in virtue ethics, they have. Third, for the virtue ethicists, emotions have distinguishing features and values accompanying each virtue. As we have seen in Aristotle’s theory each virtue accompanies with its own distinguishing or unique feeling, and the emotional content of virtues are thought to be qualified as distinguishing in the definitions of particular virtues.

In Kant’s moral theory, moral feeling, notably feeling of respect, is cognitively the same for all moral agents while its negative effect is different, which is empirical and thereby has no moral worth. This is another argument for my claim that moral feeling in Kant’s account does not create a distinguishing feature. The only place where affectivity occurs in Kant’s morality then is in the negative effect of the law. In other words, affectivity does not occur in the positive effect of the law, but in its negative effect. I believe that this conclusion makes a substantial difference between Kant’s moral theory and Aristotle’s virtue ethics in terms of the place of emotions for virtues.

In our examination of the place of emotions within the two systems of human duties in Kant’s ethics, that is, the system of right and the system of virtue, we see that emotions and feelings are considered as morally irrelevant within the former system, if not destructive, in the determination of the formal principle of moral action. We have also seen
that even the most celebrated emotion, that is, feeling of respect, is also causally impotent in bringing about moral action. Because, feeling of respect is an effect, not a cause in Kant’s conception of moral action. Moreover, though Kant recognizes emotions as morally relevant in the determination of duties of virtue, the kind of roles he assigns to them are merely aesthetic, instrumental, or nonmental and regulative, all of which are secondary to pure practical reason.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In order to encapsulate the consequences we have arrived at thus far, let me restate my overarching aim in this dissertation. Having thought that the status of virtue ethics as an independent ethical theory depends on its distinguishing features among other theories, I aimed to show whether there is substantial difference between virtue ethics and Kantian ethics in terms of a causal or constitutive role assigned to emotions. Since cases or models wherein a motive is causally active but morally irrelevant or non-permissible, or morally valuable but causally inactive do not consistently and adequately prove this task, I have pursued my examination by showing whether these two ethical theories recognize some kind of force or motive in moral actions that is both causally active and morally valuable.

To explain several reasons that generated a new interest in virtue ethics, we have seen that there is a strong objection against the rule-based character of modern moral theories. Though much needed to be said in favor of this objection, the argument behind it is clear enough, at least intuitively: when we say that an action is morally right if it accords
with the moral law, and think of this sufficient in moral consideration, we feel that there is something missing here. In many cases, we value moral actions because they are done out of certain character. We often think that the reliability of character is more important than the rightness of an action.

The reason for this is not only epistemic and pragmatic. It is evident that character traits are more easily observable and recordable than intentional acts. One might claim that an ethical theory must be able to be sensitive to actions done in the actual world and should account for behavioral or observable aspects of moral action, not something taken in abstraction or isolation. There are also normative reasons in valuing character. That is, for an action being done from a good character is a good thing in itself. If one asks for further argument here other than some intuitive or a priory reason, I would say that the same is also needed for the self-justifying ground of the Kantian good will.

It is worth mentioning that what differentiates virtue ethics from the other ethical theories is not simply the fact that it recognizes or focus on virtues as essential ingredients of moral world. We have suggested that an ethical theory may give an equal weight to virtues and some other moral notions, and that an ethical theory takes virtues as an important part of the moral domain. None of these facts alone make such a theory virtue ethics. It is therefore important to distinguish the character-based feature of virtue ethics and its being focused on virtues. Virtue ethics holds that character predisposes moral agents to specific emotions.
We have mentioned on several occasions that Kant recognizes the importance of character in morality when he says: "Morality refers to character." But we must be careful to understand what is meant by character in Kant. It is the same Kant who also says in following this quotation that "if one desires to form a good character, he must begin by banishing the passions." In addition to this negative treatment, we can fully appreciate what is meant by character in Kant from the following quotation:

Character means that the person derives his rules of conduct from himself and from the dignity of humanity. Character is the common ruling principle in man in the use of his talents and attributes. Thus it is the nature of his will, and is good or bad. A man who acts without settled principles, with no uniformity, has no character. A man may have a good heart and yet no character, because he is dependent upon impulses and does not act according to maxims. Firmness and unity of principle are essential to character.

This passage is also clear enough to show the essential difference between the virtue ethics and Kant’s ethics with respect to the role of character. While a virtuous person in Aristotle’s ethics does not apply to a firm and inflexible general principle in the discernment of moral matters, in Kant’s ethics, the more firm and inflexible the agent, the more morally praiseworthy her/his actions. In a nutshell, the distinction between the two ethical theories is a distinction between the Lesbian Rule and the Categorical Imperative.

Stated differently, the reason why one theory takes character as something good in itself and the other as instrumentally good is this: Virtue ethics is an internalist theory in the sense that motivation is internal to moral duty, whereas Kant’s rationalist ethics is externalist. For virtue ethics, a reason becomes a moral reason to do something for an agent when her/his recognition of that reason motives her/him to do action. In Kant’s ethics, while one’s subjective recognition of moral law is necessary, such a recognition itself is not a moral reason but the moral law itself.

In addition to these general distinctions between virtue ethics and Kant’s ethics, the following conclusions are worth mentioning. From our discussion in Chapter III, we have learned that both physicalist and cognitivist accounts are insufficient because they fail to capture the interdependency of the affective and cognitive sides of emotions. Given our purpose of understanding of emotions in morality, I suggested that we should take full advantage of different accounts and views. The most important thing we have learned from the cognitivist theories is that the relationship between emotions and reason is reciprocal. This does not suggest that any ethical theory should cohere with the explanation of a plausible emotion theory because ethical theories are mostly normative in their nature. Rather, it makes it theoretically clear that emotions and reason are not necessarily incompatible; on the contrary, they can sit perfectly together. We have seen that virtue ethics is such a theory.
In Chapter V, we have seen that virtuous actions are emotional responses with their distinguishing cognitive or psychic feelings. In Aristotle’s theory each virtue accompanies with its own distinguishing or unique feeling and the emotional contents of virtues are thought to be qualified as distinguishing in the definitions of particular virtues. The virtuous person’s motive is crucial in the determination of the moral value of the action she/he conducts. For Aristotle, all action somehow displays some emotion. It is a character of the good person not only to act appropriately, but also to feel or to be affected appropriately. It is therefore the case that for each specific excellence of character there should be some specific emotion belonging to its field.

In our examination of the place of emotions within the two systems of human duties in Kant’s ethics, that is, the system of right and the system of virtue, we see that emotions and feelings are considered as morally irrelevant within the former system, if not destructive, in the determination of the formal principle of moral action. Kant’s argument for the purity of moral motivation does not allow an integration of one’s feelings and emotions into harmonies in relation to the requirement of duty.

We have also seen that even the most celebrated emotion, that is, feeling of respect, is also causally impotent in bringing about moral action. This is because, rooted in the noumenal world, a feeling of respect is an effect, not a cause in Kant’s conception of moral action. Moreover, though Kant recognizes emotions as morally relevant in the
determination of duties of virtue, the kind of roles he assigns to them are merely aesthetic, instrumental, or ornamental and regulative, all of which are secondary to pure practical reason. But, in virtue ethics, emotions and feelings play actual causative roles. They can both influence and be influenced from reason in the determination of virtuous actions; they are therefore both causally active and morally valuable in moral actions.

The conclusions we have drawn thus far might not be sufficient to call virtue ethics a rival and independent ethical theory but they do make substantial differences between virtue ethics and the Kantian ethics. Unlike several suggestions and attempts at combining these two ethical theories, my interpretation is that Kantian ethics cannot and is not a good candidate as a theory that understands and places emphasis on emotions and inner aspects of character in the way virtue ethics does.
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Erdem ahlakının uzun bir tarihsel geçmiş olmasına karşın, diğer ahlak kuramları arasındaki konumu üzerine son yıllarda önemli tartışmalara ve çalışmalara tanık oluyoruz. Çağdaş ahlak kuramlarının eksikliklerini vurgulayan bazı ahlak kuramları erdem ahlakının yalnızca bu eleştirileri gidermede yararlanacak ve başvurulacak bir kuram olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Erdem ahlakına daha sıcak bakan yorumcular ise onun diğer ahlak kuramlarına göre bazı avantajları olduğunu kabul ederken bu avantajların onu bağımsız bir kuram yapmadığını iddia ederler. Örneğin Martha Nussbaum, erdem ahlakının açık bir kategorik hata olduğunu dile getirir. Bu nedenle

Öğretirken ve yazarken “erdem ahlakı” kategorisinden uzak durmamızı. Eğer bazı kategorilerden söz edeceksek, Yeni-Humeculardan, Yeni-Aristoculardan, Yeni-yararcılar ve Kantçı karşısında konuşalım. Sonra, daha önemli, her bir düşününürün erdem, us, arzu ve duyu üstüne dikkate değer görüşlerini betimleyen ciddi
çalışmaları sürdürelim ve bizim kendimizin ne söylemek istediğimize karar verelim.504

Nussbaum’a göre erdem ahlakçılığı tarafından ön sürulen tüm temel iddialar zaten deontolojik ve yararçı ahlak kuramlarına tarafından idle getirilmekte ve karşılanmaktadır.

Buna karşın, erdem ahlakı savunucularının çoğununa göre erdem ahlakı Kantçı ve yararçı ahlak kuramlarına alternatif, özverk ve bağımsız bir kuramdır. Bu felsefecilere göre, erdem ahlakının en önemli ayırtıcı özelliği ahlaki değerlendirmede, Kantçı ve yararçı kuramların aksine, ahlaki iyi ve ahlaki değerin bileşeni olarak duygularla olumlu bir rol yüklemesidir. Erdem Ahlakının bu özelliğine çağdaş literatürde sıklıkla değinilse de çok az çalışma duyguların erdem ahlakındaki rolünün ayrıntılı bir çözümlemesini sunar.


504 Nussbaum (1999: 201)

Baron gibi yorumculara göre, Kantçı ahlakın erdem ahlakı ile karşıtlık içerisinde olduğunu ilişkin yanlış yanı Kant’ın bazı eserlerini dikkate almamaktan kaynaklanmaktadır. Kuşkusuz bu yorumcuların iddialarında önemli doğruluk payı vardır. Gerçekten de Kant’ın bazı çalışmalarına bakıldığında, Kant’ın ahlak kuramında ‘karakter’ kavramını ihmal ettigini söleyenleri şaşırtacak bazı bölümler söz konusudur. *Education* adlı eserinde Kant, karakterin bir ahlak sorunu olduğunu açıkça ortaya koyar. Ahlaki kapasitenin geliştirilmesinin kişinin kendine karşı yetkin ödevi olduğunu ve belli bir yapışım gerektirdiğini de işaret eder.

Dahası bazı yorumcular Kant’ın sadece eylemlerin insan yaşamındaki yerini tanıdığını değil, aynı zamanda onun ahlaki akıl
yürütmede duygulara olumlu bir rol yüklediğini iddia etmişlerdir. Örneğin Louden'a göre

Duygular ve duyguların erdemden eylemede rolü üstüne Kant’ın duruşu bir erdem ahlakçının görüşüyle tutarsız değildir. Kant’ın duruşu dikkat çekecek biçimde Aristoteles’in görüşüne yakındır. Asıl fark Kant’ın ahlaki telkin gibi görünen duygusal coşkunun yaratdığı kendini-aldatma tehlikelerinden Aristoteles’ten daha çok farkında olmasıdır.\(^{505}\)

Aristoteles ve Kant’ın ahlak kuramlarının iyi bir karşılaştırması erdem ahlakının temel iddialarının deontolojik ve yararçı kuramlardan ayrı olup olmadığını veya bu iddiaların bu kuramlar içersinde bir yeri olup olmadığını karşılaştırmak için gerçekten önemlidirler. Benim bu tezde izlediğim strateji şudur: Eğer Kant’ın ahlak kuramı yapılandırıldığım duyg testinden geçiyorrsa erdem ahlakı ve Kentci ahlak arasında önemli bir fark yoktur. Bun test duyguların ahlaki değerleriyle birlikte ahlaki eylemlerde nedensel rollerini belirlemeyi hedefleyen bir testtir. Testin ana sorusu şudur: Erdem ahlakı ve Kantci ahlak duyguları hem nedensel olarak etkin hem de ahlaki olarak değerli bir çeşit neden veya itici güç olarak tanırlar mı?

İtiraf etmek gerekir ki, duyguların ahlaktaki yerini belirlemek oldukça zor bir iştır. Çünkü duyguların doğası ve duygular sorunu her biri mantıklı argümanlar içeren çeşitli çatıştıkları yaratır. Gerçekten de felsefe tarihinde duygulara karşı genel tutum ve yaklaşım ussal/usal olmayan, iradi/iradi olmayan, öznel/nesnel, etken/edilgen, zihinsel/fiziksel gibi ikilemler biçiminde ortaya çıkar. Bu çatışıklarda üstü kapalı ortaya konan

\(^{505}\) Louden (1986: 488-489).
epistemik ve ontolojik temellendirmeler yüzünden duygular ve ahlak arasındaki ilişki üstüne ahlak felsefeci tarzı yorumlar geliştirilen fikirler, benim sorunu anladığım şekliyle, şu şekilde sınıflandırılabilir.

1. **Olumsuz Görüş:** Bu görüş duyguların akıl dışlığı, güvenilmezliği ve değişebilirliği yüzünden duyguları ahlaki akıl yürütmeye zarar verici, bozucu ve engelleyici olarak alır. Bu şekilde duygular ahlak tarafından gerekli kilinan yansız veya evrensel bakış açısıyla uyuşmaz. Bu görüş, duyguların bilgilendirici olduğunu, yani, eyleyenlerin, tutum, inanç ve yarglarını anlatmadığı kabul etmesine rağmen onların tamamen öznel olduğunu savunur. Bu kategoriye ait olan tipik felsefe okulu duyguların belirgin bir şekilde bizim kontrolümden ötesindeki nesnelere ve olaylara göndermede bulunduklarını söyleyen Stoacılardır.

2. **Araçsal Görüş:** Bir çok felsefeci duyguları yeşesak bir doğaya veya özelliğe sahip olarak düşünmenin hatalı olduğunu iddia eder. Tam tersine, bazı duygular rasyonel, etkin ve iradiyen diğerleri irrasyonel, edilgen ve iradi değildir. Bazıları arzu olanların genel drown'unu, yani, eyleyenlerin, tutum, inanç ve yargının anlatmadığı kabul etmesine rağmen onların tamamen öznel olduğunu savunur. Bu kategoriye ait olan tipik felsefe okulu duyguların belirgin bir şekilde bizim kontrolümden ötesindeki nesnelere ve olaylara göndermede bulunduklarını söyleyen Stoacılardır.
getirilmesinde duyguların katkısı özen olmasa da koşullu ve sadece araçsal olarak değerlidir.


Göstermeye çalışacağım gibi, Aristoteles'in duygulara ilişkin görüşü ahlakçı gruba girerken Kant’ın duygusal görüşü olumsuz ve araçsal görüş arasında gidip gelir. Kant’ın ünlü ‘saygı duygusu’nun bile ahlakçı görüşün altında sınıflandırılması gerektiğini iddia ediyorum. İddiamı desteklemek için Kant ahlakında önemli bir yer tutan ‘ödevden dolayı’ kavramının beş olması yorumunu ortaya koyuyorum. Tüm bu yorumlar incelendiğinde, Kant ahlakını erdem ahlakıyla bağlaştırmada ciddi kavramsal ve mantıksal zorluklar olduğunu savunuyoruz. Bir erdem kuramı ahlaki dünyanın parçası olarak duyguları içerebilir veya içermeyebilir. Ancak bir erdem ahlaki, Aristotelesç’in veya çağdaş anlamda, duyguları ahlakin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak görüyor. Erdem ahlaki hem ahlaki hem de psikolojik bir kuramdır ancak Kant’ın erdem
anlayışı onun ahlakının biçimsel ve metafiziksel ilkeleri tarafından sınırlandırılmıştır.


Beşinci Bölüm bir önceki bölümde varılan sonuçlar ışığında Aristoteles’in ahlak kuramını yeniden ele alır. Bunu yaparken erdem ahlakçılarının ahlaki değerlendirmede duyguları olumlu ele alışlarının kuramı nasıl çalıştığını göstermeyi amaç edindim. Aristoteles’in iyi ve erdem anlayışını genel olarak özetledikten sonra onun erdem kuramının temellerini ve ilkelerini, erdemin ahlaki seçimle ilişkisini akıl ve pratik akıl arasındaki ilişkisini derinlemesine tartıştım. Aristoteles’in ahlak kuramında duyguların yerini en iyi şekilde anlamasının yolu onun ‘bize göre orta’ kavramıdır. ‘Bize göre orta’nın ahlaki eyleyen tarafından hissedilen uygun duyguların varlığını kapsadığını göstermeye çalıştım.

Aristoteles’in erdem ahlakında duyguların ahlaki eylemin oluşturucu parçası olduğunu en iyi onun ‘orta’ kuramına bakarak anlarız. Bu kurama göre erdem duygular ve eylemler açısından ortadır. Erdemler eylemlerin yanı sıra duygularda bildirilir. Ahraki erdemin ayırıcı özelliği duygularda ve eylemlerde orta olanı hedeflemesidir. Korku, güven, kızgınlık, acıma gibi duygular aşırı bir yoğunlukta hissedilebilir fakat,
Aristoteles'e göre, “onları doğru zamanda, doğru nesnelere göndermeyle, doğru insanlara karşı, doğru amaçla, ve doğru yoldan hissetmek ortadır ve en iyisidir ve bu erdemin özellikidir.” Buna göre, erdemlerle duygular arasında içsel ve özel bir ilişki vardır. Ahlaki iyinin ve doğrunun belirlenmesi duygulardan bağımsız ve sadece ahlaki eyleyenin eylemleriyle sınırlı değildir.


Altıncı Bölüm son yıllarda felsefi gelişmeler çerçevesinde Kant’ın ahlak kuramını öncelikle iyi niyet, ahlak yasası, ödev, maksim, kesin buyruk gibi onun ahlak kuramının anahtar kavram ve fikirlerini açıklar. Daha sonra Kant’ın genel olarak erdemler sınıflamasını ve onun hak ödevleri ve erdem ödevleri arasında çizmiş olduğu ayırımı açıkladım. Bu ayrırm onun erdem anlayışının bazı esas ilkelerinin altını çizmede önemlidir. Üçüncü olarak, Kant’ın ahlak kuramının erdem ahlakçı yorumlarının geçerliliğini test etmek için Kant’ın ‘ödevden dolaylı’ kavramının beş olası yorumunu ortaya koyдум. Dördüncü olarak, Kant’ın ahlak kuramında özel bir yeri olan ‘bir ahlaki duyu olarak saygı’ kavramını tanıtarak erdem ahlakçılarının duyguları ele alışlarının Kant’ındenden nasıl farklı olduğunu gösterdim. Kant’ın ahlak kuramında duyguların ayırıcı özellikleriyile birlikte oluşturuğu (constitutive) veya nedensel bir rolü olmadığını ve bir özgül (intrinsic) ahlaki değere sahip olmadıklarını kanıtlamaya çalıştım. Tüm bunları yaparken öncelikle Kant’ın ödevden dolayı eylemek kavramının beş yorumuna odaklandım.

Kant’ın ödevden dolayı eylemek kavramının birinci yorumu şu şekilde formüle edilebilir.
(I) Ödevden dolayı eylemde bulunmak, eğilimin yokluğunu gerektirir.

Bu yoruma göre bir eylem ancak ve ancak ödevden dolayı yapılmışsa ahlaki bir değere sahiptir. Kant’ın kuramında eylemin doğru ve tek motifi ödevdir ve bu da duyular, arzular, duyumlar ve tüm diğer eğilimlerin yokluğunu gerektirir.

İkinci yorum,

(II) Ahlaki motiv ve eğilim çatıştığı içindeildir, ancak birincisi ikincisine galip gelir.

Bu yoruma göre ödev duygusu tüm çatışan güçlü eğilimlerin üstesinden gelir ve eylemi harekete geçiriren tek yeterli neden olursa eylem ahlaki bir değere sahiptir. Bu yorumda ödevden dolayı davranmak eğilimlerin yokluğunu gerektirmek, fakat zıt eğilimlerin varlığını gerektirir. (I) ve (II)ye karşı yönltilen en önemli eleştiri şudur: Kant’ın kuramında ödev kavramı ne hiçbir eğilim deneyimlemeyen Kütsal İrade, ne de tamamen kötü irade içindir. Ödev kavramı bazı çatışan arzu ve duyuların varlığını veya bölünmüş bir zihin gerektirmez. Bu karşı çıkış kabul edenler üçüncü bir yorum ortaya koyarlar

(III) Ödevden dolayı davranmak, ahlaki motiv ve eğilimin birlikte varoluşuna izin verir.

Bu yorum ne (I) ne de (II)’yi gerektirir. Bu yorumda, diğer motivler varken ve kendi başlarına yeterli olabileceklereken ödev sağı varsa ve bu sağı kendi başına yeterli olabilecekte eylem bir ahlaki değere sahiptir. Bu
yorum önemlidir çünkü Kant'ın ahlaki eylemlerin değerlendirmesinde ‘overdetermination’a izin verdiği gösterir.

Overdetermination sorunu karmaşık bir sorundur çünkü aynı eyleme yönelen farklı nedensel motivlerin varlığı söz konusudur ve bu motivler arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiler karmaşıktır. Farklı motivlerin birlikte iş görmesinin ve bunların kendi aralarındaki ilişkinin yapısının karmaşıklığı göz önüne alındığında (III)’ün iki ayrı yorumu daha ortaya konabilir. Yorumlardan birisi şu şekilde formüle edilebilir.

(IV) Ödevden dolayı davranış (III)’e izin verir, ancak iki motivin ödeme uygun eylem için yeterli olduğunda eyleyen bunlara arasında bir önceliklilik sıralaması yapar.

Bu yorumu göre bir eylem ancak ve ancaködev motivi eğilime öncel olduğunda bir ahlaki değere sahiptir. Diğer yorumsa şu şekilde verilebilir.

(V) Ödevden dolayı davranış işbirlikti motivasyonlara dayanan eylemlere izin verir.

Bu okumada ahlaki ve ahlaki olmayan motivler arasındaki ilişki ‘melez’ (hybrid) eylemler ilişkisine benzer. Overdetermination sorununda olduğu gibi bu tür eylemlerde de birden fazla motiv vardır, ahlaki motiv (ödev) ve eğilim (duyu, arzu vb.). Ancak bu motivler tek başlarına eyleme neden olmaya yeterli değildir. Birçok yorumcu tarafından açıkça ortaya konduğu gibi, Kant’ın ahlak kuramında ‘melez’ eylemlerin hiçbir moral değeri olamaz, çünkü ödev motivi bu tür bir yorumda eyleme tek başına neden olmaya yeterli değildir. Fakat Kant bu tür eylemleri tamamen
dışlamaz. Eğer ödev motivi birlikte iş gördüğü eğilimlerle bir eyleme neden olursa bu eylem yasaldır ama ahlaki değerlandır yok. Diğer bir değişle, bu tür eylemler ödev uygundurlar ama ödevden dolayı değildirler.

Kant’ın ahlak kuramının erdem ahlakının temel eğilimleriyle bağıdaşacağını savunanlar (III) ve (IV)’ün Kant’ın ödev ve duygudan duruşunu en iyi yansıttığını düşünürler. İki yorum da ahlaki ödev duygusu kavramı için eğilime izin verir veya ahlaki olmayan motivlerin varlığının eylemin ahlaki değerine zarar vermeyeceğini savunurlar. Ancak burada şuna dikkat etmemiz gerekir. Yukarıda verilen beş formülün veya yorumun hiç birisi Kant’ın ahlak kuramında duyguların veya motivlerin ödev kavramı için pratik akıl ile birlikte gitmeleri veya gitmemeleri gerektiğini ilişkin değildir. Bu yorumlar sadece ahlaki olmayan motivlere ahlaki eylemlerde izin verilebilir olup olmadığını söylerler.


Kant’ın ahlak kuramına erdem ahlakı yorumuyla yaklaştanlar Kant ve Aristoteles’in duyguların ahlaktaki yeri açısından karşilaştırmalarının yukarıdaki açıklamalarla sınırlı olmadığını savunurlar. Onlara göre
Kant'ın genel olarak duygulara olumsuz yaklaşımı ve ahlaki motivin arılığı konusundaki ısrarı açıklar. Ancak Kant, 'ahlak yasası için saygı' duygusunu ahlak kuramının merkezine koymuştur.

Kant'ın ödev kavramından ' saygı' duygusundan başka tüm duyguları dışladığı sıklıkla yapılan bir yorumdur. Bu saygı duygusunun Kant'ın ahlak kuramındaki özel statüsünün Aristoteles ve Kant ahlakında duyguların rolü kökten farklıdır iddialarını çürüttü çürütmeyeceği görmek için Kant'ın saygı açıklamasını inceledim.

yasası bizde bir dürüt olarak çalıştığı sürecde bizim ahlak yasasını tanımoduzun etkisidir.

Kant’in saygı kavramının tartışmasının en önemli sonucu şudur: Kant ahlakında saygı duygusunu öncelikli duyguy veya tek duyguy olarak kabul etsek bile bu çesit bir duygus erdem ahlakçıların duygulara yüklediği rolü oynamaz. Çünkü Kant’ın ahlak kuramında ahlaki duyguy neden değil, ancak etkidir. Bu yüzden de Kant ahlakında saygı duygusu ahlaki olarak değerli eylemlerin ortaya çıkarmasında nedensel olarak etkisizdir. Ancak, erdem ahlakında, özellikle de Aristotelesçi erdem ahlakında ahlaki olarak değer sahip eylemlerin ortaya çıkarmasında duygular etkin nedensel rol oynarlar.
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