

Aristotle's Psychology, Emotion's Rationality, and Cognition of Being: A Critical Note on Ogren's Position

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Abstract

Ogren advances a hermeneutic interpretation of Aristotle that brings to light several important and overlooked points about Aristotle, emotion, and cognition. In my article, I argue that his interpretation is on certain points correct, particularly in stressing that the distinctively human, irrational, emotional and desiring part of the soul is rational to a certain extent, and through its own forms of cognition, revelatory of being. His interpretation errs, however, by construing the fully rational part of the soul in a fundamentally un-Aristotelian way, as merely a faculty informed by the rules of formal logic. After indicating Ogren's interpretation's strong points, then its central errors, I present an alternate exegetically grounded Aristotelian interpretation of these matters. Specifically, I show that Aristotle's division of the parts of the soul is more complicated and ambiguous than Ogren's interpretation. Then, I show that, for Aristotle, the fully rational part of the soul is, contra Ogren, concerned with practical matters and life, and possesses substantive modes of cognition of the world. I finish by exploring one of these, specifically perception of moral qualities, and discuss some recent Aristotle scholarship engaging this issue.

Brian Ogren's 2004 article, "Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and the Cognition of Being: Human Emotions and the Rational-Irrational Dialectic," develops an interesting interpretation of Aristotle's moral theory, dealing specifically with the complicated relationship between rationality and the emotions. Ogren stakes out fertile and fairly under-appreciated intellectual terrain for his interpretation, grounds well-located in relation to several more illustrious neighbors. Among them are Ross's intellectualist interpretation of Aristotle (shored up by Steven Leighton), which Ogren rightly critiques, and Fortenbaugh's now classic work on Aristotle and the emotions. Following out several Heideggerian leads, Ogren steers Aristotle in the direction of a decidedly hermeneutic interpretation, a project of considerable philosophical value and potential.

Working out and presenting his interpretation, however, he sets out a position on the rational and irrational parts of the soul which while quite correct in some parts is at odds with close, careful and connected readings of certain Aristotelian passages Ogren does not seem to have fully taken into account. The consequence is that, rightly rejecting an overly intellectualist interpretation which sets emotion within an irrational part of the soul responsive to but unproductive of cognition and reasoning, he strays to the opposite extreme, investing the only-partly-rational part of the soul, the seat of the emotions and the locus of moral virtues, with what he unduly strips away from the fully rational part of the soul. Another understanding of the relationship between the emotions and rationality is possible, one more faithful to Aristotle's texts, in consonance with and drawing upon significant insights of other recent commentators, and ultimately better suited for Ogren's hermeneutic project, and my aim in this commentary article is to provide what seems to me such an understanding. My hope is also to provoke further dialogue on these issues in the forum *Minerva* supplies.

I. Points of Agreement and Appreciation.

Before entering into criticisms of Ogren's position and exposition of an alternate position, I would like to briefly note where his article seems not only correct but quite insightful, in a few cases unpacking his insights bit further. The first thing to note is that he brings to light a puzzle about emotion in Aristotle's moral and psychological theory, namely that in the two places one would most expect to see full systematic treatments of the emotions, the *De Anima* and the

Nichomachean (and of course the *Eudemean*) *Ethics*, we find nothing of the kind. Instead, the few speculations about emotion in the *De Anima* are carried out from perspective of the “natural philosopher” concerned primarily with the somatic-physical aspects of being rather than in terms of human psychological and moral dimensions of being the “dialectical philosopher” examines (403a27-31). In the *Ethics* (as well as in passages of the *Politics* and *Poetics* bearing on emotion), Aristotle seemingly assumes his audience’s familiarity with and knowledge of his theory of emotion. Several times in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, for instance, he will state that the virtue concerned with anger, i.e. mildness or gentleness (*praotēs*) involves getting several different matters correct in one’s anger, but he nowhere provides even so much as a partial definition of anger.¹ The only extant location of a systematic and thorough Aristotelian treatment of emotions lies in *Rhetoric* bk. II. Ogren persuasively and importantly argues that the *Rhetoric* treatment goes beyond concern with emotions as merely manipulable subjects for the rhetorician.

Second, he is right to criticize and reject readings of Aristotle regarding the relationship between the parts of the soul as between a fully rational part (which for the purposes of this article, except in a few cases, will be henceforth called RP) which is then listened to or obeyed by an irrational emotional part (which I shall call EP) that “can be said to ‘share in a rational principle’ insofar as it is obedient to reason,” but which “is in itself not a reasoning function and in no way can originate rationality” (2004, p. 7). The problem Ogren raises is how it is

that EP can be entirely irrational, listening to RP only through “a passive acceptance and ordering of something provided by an outside cognitive source,” (p. 8) without this acceptance and ordering becoming “purely subjective and arbitrary”, since EP “share[s] in the principles of rationality through this acceptance and ordering,” (p. 10) requiring that EP have its own “intrinsically cognitive type of discernment” (p. 11). This, in turn, possesses the very important implication that the type of cognition EP possesses will come in many cases precisely through the human emotions. It is precisely here that the hermeneutic direction of Ogren’s interpretation becomes evident. Emotion becomes complex, perceptive, cognitive, and reflexive, allowing distinctively human awareness of self and world, and the EP becomes the human being’s fundamental mode of access to “human existence, or Being in the world, and the human’s awareness thereof.” (p. 12)

II. The Central Problem with Ogren’s Interpretation

Ogren frames one of the central problems motivating his paper in terms of a seeming paradox, which can be framed, rephrasing his expression somewhat into the enthymeme:

- 1) rationality is the only feature unique to humanity,
- 2) but, there exists a uniquely human component within the irrational part of the soul.

The problematic, but unstated, conclusion then would be:

- 3) there is a rational component within the irrational part of the soul.

This then raises the double question: “how can something that is rational be part of something that is a-rational, and how can something that is a-rational consist of something that is rational?” (p. 7). This is a significant problem to raise within Aristotle’s moral theory, but the strategy Ogren adopts only partly succeeds because it fails to draw on resources already in Aristotle’s texts for generating answers. Where it goes wrong, his interpretation amounts to a reverse image of the mistaken Rossian interpretation, getting beyond its failures to do justice to the EP, but ultimately according too much to EP at the RP’s expense.

The failed end-point of Ogren’s interpretation comes in his characterization of the relationship between the two parts of the soul, in which he attributes to Aristotle the position that:

[R]ationality is a complex, uniquely human system that encompasses two separate yet related forms of cognition. One of these is pure, absolute rationality in the sense of the rules of formal logic. The other, which contains the emotional faculty, is fundamentally associated with human existence, or Being in the world, and the human’s awareness thereof. This ‘irrational’ form of rationality does not categorically follow the rules of formal logic, but as an awareness of human ‘Being,’ is fully aware of that uniquely human element of the soul which is rationally commensurate to formal logic. As such, this irrational form of rationality stands apart from that pure element of

rationality which is formal logic while, at the same time, it can be influenced and persuaded by it through the means of “reproof and exhortation” (p. 12)

Now, this is a philosophically interesting, in some respects attractive, and perhaps on its own grounds coherent position to take on rationality, emotion, and the soul. But, as we shall see, it is not and could not be Aristotle’s position. And, given the concepts typically central to accounts indebted to Aristotle, it cannot even properly be called Aristotelian Unless Ogren means to signify something quite different from the usual meaning of the term “formal logic”, the fully rational part of the soul, RP, as Aristotle characterizes it in his works, simply is not reducible to formal logic. That textual problem aside, this reduction of RP results in such an impoverishment that the very notion of RP influencing and persuading EP risks incoherence. The strategy of taking away from RP to give to EP leads ultimately to an impoverished Aristotelian understanding even of EP and its determinate modes of cognition, particularly reflexive ones.

So, we must ask, what is missing from Ogren’s account? What features of Aristotle’s moral theory could Ogren have taken into account more fully? I would like to briefly focus on three: the complexity of Aristotle’s conceptual divisions of the integrated parts of the human soul; the types of rationality belonging to the fully rational part; and finally, *logos*, emotion and perception of moral realities. All of these are components of an alternative, and I would claim more faithfully Aristotelian interpretation which can also acknowledge and

incorporate what is correct in Ogren's interpretation.

III. Aristotle's conceptual divisions of the parts of the human soul.

There are deep ambiguities which must be acknowledged in Aristotle's discussions of the parts of the soul and their rationality. Aristotle expresses several misgivings in *D.A.* 432a22-b7 about schemes for dividing the soul into parts, not least of which is that when adopting a fundamental rational-irrational distinction, locating the sensitive (*aisthētikōn*), imaginative (*phantastikōn*), and desiring parts (*orektikōn*) raises difficulties.² Later in *D.A.* (433a33-b5), he notes, self-referentially as it turns out, that distinguishing and dividing the soul into parts according to their powers produces an exuberant number (*pampolla*) of parts. He names off as examples nutritive, sensitive, intellectual (*noētikōn*), deliberative (*bouleutikōn*), desiring, appetitive (*epithumētikōn*) and irascible (*thumikōn*) parts. Some of these, given explanations elsewhere, overlap with or are parts of each other, something worth keeping in mind in looking to Aristotle's distinctions of parts of the soul. There are three particularly relevant *N.E.* discussions, and three *Politics* discussions.

One *N. E.* bk. I discussion (1097b35-98a5) distinguishes *four* parts of the soul.

Two of these are irrational and not uniquely human:

- a) the part concerned with simply nutrition and growth, shared in common with all living things, even with plants; and
- b) the "perceptive" (*aisthētikē*) part, shared with animals (but only, as we shall

see, “perceptive” in certain modes of perception).

Two of these are rational and specifically human (*to idion*):

c) the part that, so to speak, “is obedient to” or “is persuaded by” reason (*hōs epipeithes logōi*); and

d) the part that possesses reason and which thinks discursively (*dianōoumenon*).

This passage distinguishing two rational parts is suspected as an interpolation by some commentators. However, if this division in the rational part would be rejected on that grounds, Aristotle’s characterization of the rational and specifically human part as a whole, “the part that is concerned with action [*praktikē*], and possesses reason,” would not fit Ogren’s more formal construal of the rational part. And, given all the other occurrences of the motif of a part participating in rationality by “listening”, “being persuaded by”, “being obedient to” RP, there would be little reason not to be able to read such a distinction into the rational part of the soul.

Another, longer *N.E.* discussion Ogren draws on (1102a27-1103a4) postulates first a distinction between the irrational part (*alogon*) and the part possessing reason, but then subdivides both parts, doing so in such a way, however, as to yield a tripartite distinction. In this passage, the irrational part of the soul is divided into:

a) the part concerned with simply nutrition and growth, shared in common with

all living things, even with plants; and

b) the (distinctively human) part which “in a way participates in reason” (1102b14), the “appetitive, and desirous in general” part (*epithumētikon kai holōs orektikon*, 1102b30-1).

Addressing the paradox Ogren raises, Aristotle suggests that “if it is necessary to say that [b] possesses reason, then the rational part of the soul will be twofold” (1103a2-3):

c) the part that possesses reason by participating in it, “like one listening to a father,” and

d) the part that possesses reason most fully (*kuriōs*) and in itself

Here we have clearly what I earlier labeled RP and EP, corresponding to the two parts Ogren discusses.

In another passage from bk. VI (1139a4-16), Aristotle again states that “the soul has two parts, the one possessing reason, and the other irrational,” but divides RP:

Let us suppose that there are two rational parts:
d1) one by which we contemplate [*theōroumen*] the kind of beings whose principles do not admit of being otherwise [*mē endekhontai allōs ekhein*]; and
d2) one by which we contemplate beings which do admit being otherwise

These, he goes on to say, can be called the “scientific” (*epistēmonikon*) and “calculative” or “reasoning” (*logistikon*) parts of the soul. Precisely what the latter consists in, and what it excludes, is not entirely clear when comparing Aristotelian texts, since in this passage, Aristotle identifies “reasoning” (*logizesthai*) and “deliberation” (*bouleuesthai*), the latter of which elsewhere in the two *Ethics*, the *Politics*, and the *Rhetoric* gets applied not only to speculative or theoretical matters, but also and especially to practical matters. In *D.A.*, however, he seems to exclude from the reasoning part, also called “mind” or “intellect” (*nous*), any engagement with practical matters except as objects of contemplation, so that e.g. one can think of something pleasant with the reasoning part, without that part bidding one to pursue it, i.e. without any practical reasoning issuing from the reasoning part.

The *Politics* provides three other Aristotelian discussions of the parts of the soul in terms of its rationality (1333a17-30, 1334b17-29, 1254b7-24), and these complicate but also enrich the problematic Ogren raises and attempts to resolve. In the first, there is no discussion of irrational parts. Instead, there is the familiar distinction between two rational parts, but with several interesting twists. One part by its very nature (*kath' auto*) possesses reason, while the other part does not by its very nature possess reason but again is capable of “listening to” or “complying with” reason (*logōi . . . hupakouein*). It is interesting to point out, however, that Aristotle introduces yet another distinction within the part that

possesses reason, RP.

And, it is divided [*diēirētai*] into two parts, in accordance with the way we are accustomed to divide them. For reason is on the one hand practical, on the other speculative [*theōrētikos*]. It is clear that this part of the soul must then be divided along the same lines. (1333a24-7)

Accordingly, this would give us:

d1) one by which we contemplate, i.e. engage in speculative reasoning and thinking; and

d2) one by which we engage in practical reasoning, including deliberation and choice (*prohairesis*).

Note that these two parts of RP are not *immediately* identifiable with the two parts of RP distinguished in the *N.E.* passage above.

The later *Politics* passage (1334b17-28), whose context is the education and development of human beings, distinguishes simply between an irrational part of the soul and a part possessing reason, and states that their habitual structures (*tas hexeis*) are desire (*orexis*) for the former, and mind or intellect (*nous*) for the latter (1334b19-20), meaning by this presumably properly structured desires in the EP, and the intellectual virtue or perfection “intellect,” rather than the entirety of the RP, sometimes rendered in translation as “intellect” or “mind” or (e.g. in the *D.A.*, 432b26 and ff. discussion about the motivational power of

intellect and desire). He goes on to lay out one of the “rigid hierarchies” (p. 16) Ogren points out, noting that the irrational, desiring part exists in children before the rational, reasoning (*ho logismos*) part develops, so that attention or training (*epimeleia*) must first be given to the desires, since training of the desires is for the sake of the mind. Put in terms of the parts of the soul, this irrational, desirous part must be the part amenable to reason. Aristotle is very usefully reminding us that its information and ordering by the rational part is not something guaranteed to happen, requiring attention, care, education, and discipline to be devoted to the developing human being, these being devoted by adult beings in whom hopefully the RP and EP have been properly developed.

The third passage is from Aristotle’s infamous discussion of natural slavery. Of particular interest in this passage is that the same opposition between intellect (*nous*) and desire (*orexis*) in the human being is brought up. The terminology immediately shifts, however to “the emotional part”, which ought to be governed by “intellect, and the part possessing reason” (1254b8-9). In describing the intellectual condition of the “natural slave,” Aristotle also provides a characterization applicable to EP, namely “participating in reason [*koinōnōn logou*], so far as to perceive it [*aisthanesthai*], though not to possess it” (1254b22-3). This capacity to “perceive” reason in another is distinctively human, lacking in other animals, which merely follow their emotions (1254b23-4). Later, he notes: “the parts of the soul are present in every person, but they are present in different ways.” What is lacking or deficient in the natural slave is the

deliberative part (1260a11-3), noted above as the “reasoning” or “calculative part”.

It is vital to take cognizance of three things at this point. First, since in the longer *N.E.* passage b) and c) are in fact the same part, EP, this yields a tripartite distinction, the distinction Fortenbaugh regarded as Aristotle’s distinctive contribution to proper understanding of the emotions, and which he explicitly contrasted to a bipartite, rational-irrational psychology of emotion found in some Aristotelian works. The passages cited and discussed above have also provided us with fuller specification of both EP and RP. Second, looking at these passages presenting divisions of the soul, it seems that Aristotle generally carries out divisions motivated by the topic under discussion, generating accounts seemingly at odds with each other in some respects, but reconcilable when they are viewed as partial perspectives integratable into one coherent account. Never, however, are these perspectives actually and explicitly integrated in Aristotle’s extant work, requiring us to engage in interpretation. As to EP specifically, Aristotle regards it as irrational when looked at in one framework, rational looked at in another framework. Key here would be asking whether Aristotle always means the same thing in these passages by the terms “possessing reason” or “rational” (*logos ekhon*) and “irrational” or perhaps more aptly translated “without reason” (*alogon*). Third, we should also be wary of assuming that the four-part distinction is entirely reducible to this tripartite distinction, for the animal-perceptive part of the soul, distinct from the nutritive-growth part of the

soul, is qualitatively different in humans and other animals, as we shall see in section V.

IV. Types of Cognition of the Rational Part

What types of cognition does RP engage in? The “absolute rationality in the sense of the rules of formal logic” (p. 12) Ogren attributes to the fully rational part could be an object of some of the forms of cognition Aristotle attributes to it, an object most likely only partly grasped and utilized, since regarding any concretely existing human RP as “absolute rationality” seems rather suspect from an Aristotelian perspective. Rationality is, as just pointed out above, something that requires development in human beings. Setting considerations about development of rationality and the imperfections of actual human beings aside, however, a more serious problem arises for Ogren’s distinction of “two separate yet related forms of cognition” (p. 12), particularly in the context of *N.E.* bk VI.

The problem is really fourfold, i.e. there are four connected features of RP which according to Ogren’s position it cannot have, but which can be derived from Aristotle’s texts. First, as noted just earlier, RP includes both speculative and practical rationality, actualized through developed habits. Second, for Aristotle even speculative rationality and its associated “mind” or “thinking”, which may be conceptually extricable from desire and emotion, is not merely a matter of formal logic, but substantively engages the world it aims to know. Third, in

actual intellectual practice desires and pleasures do become involved in even the use of RP's speculative sub-part. Fourth, RP's intellectual habit and virtue of *phronēsis*, "prudence" or "practical wisdom," involves a very important type of perception, a range of cognition Ogren wishes to attribute to EP. In the interests of brevity, only the first and fourth points will be amplified here.

In Aristotle's account, RP, the fully rational part of the soul, very clearly includes not only practical *reasoning*, but practical *reason*, or as he also puts it practical *thought* or *intellect* (*dianoia praktikē*, and *to praktikon dianoētikon*), which he distinguishes from the speculative intellect. Both of these are intellectual parts of the soul, and each part has its own specific engagement with truth and falsity, and its own habitually structured ways of attaining truth, i.e. the intellectual virtues (1139b12-4). For the theoretical intellect, truth and falsity are fairly straightforward, but what must be stressed is that the three virtues of even this sub-part of the soul, its determinate forms of cognition, are in no way reducible to the rules of formal logic. Simply to take one example, *epistemē*, systematically and logically ordered knowledge, often translated as "science", will of course involve the rules of formal logic, but what makes any given *epistemē* such is that it deals with a determinate type of beings (beings whose first principles cannot be otherwise), and that it can be taught and learnt, i.e. systematically arranged and presented. It is, therefore a substantive, rather than merely formal type of cognition belonging to RP.

The relationship of the practical intellect to truth is more complicated, and involves explicit reference to desire and action, what Ogren would recognize as dimensions of “Being in the world and the human’s awareness thereof” (p. 12). The work of the practical intellect is to attain “truth situated in correspondence [*homologōs ekhousa*] to right desire” (1139a30-2). Prudence or practical wisdom, “a true [i.e. truth-attaining or generating] rational [*meta logou*] habitual structure dealing practically with human goods” (1140b20-2), is a central virtue of the practical intellect it not only involves substantive cognitive engagement with being through perception, inference, evaluation, and action, but also, as Aristotle says, is a particularly reflexive type of cognition. “Practical wisdom seems to be especially something concerning oneself, and the individual” (*malist’ . . . peri auton kai hena*, 1141b30-1). In addition to practical wisdom, and setting aside art or skill (*tekhnē*), Aristotle distinguishes several other forms of practical cognition belonging to RP in bk. VI: understanding or good judgement (*sunesis*), good apprehension of the equitable (*gnōmē*), and cleverness (*deinotēs*).

In order to assess Ogren’s claims for EP and RP, it is particularly important to look at several things Aristotle says about practical wisdom. First, because it involves deliberation and action, practical wisdom requires apprehension or knowledge of both general principles and of particulars (*ta kath’ hekasta*, 1141b15-22), which is why it can and must be acquired and exercised through experience (1142a12-17). Second, the scope of practical wisdom is very broad,

including but not confined to political science and household management. It is intimately bound up with the moral virtues (or their lacks or opposites) that structure EP and its ways of cognition (1144a11-36), in such a way that moral virtues and practical wisdom require each other in order to develop out of the human being's natural capacities. As Aristotle puts it, "Virtue is a habitual structure that is not only according to right reason [*kata logon*] but also cooperating with [*meta*] right reason. And practical wisdom is right reason regarding these matters." (1144b26-8). Third, practical wisdom involves perception, specifically of the particulars action, deliberation, and choice is concerned with. This type of perception is not bodily-sense-perception, but rather something more like the mode of cognition by which we apprehend basic geometric figures, like it only to a degree, however, since the perception germane to practical wisdom is of a different kind (*allo eidos*, 1142a24-31).

V. Perception of the Distinctively Human Moral World

The mode of perception practical wisdom permits is one important type of cognition Ogren takes from RP to assign to EP. Here is where again what is correct and insightful must be carefully distinguished from what is clearly mistaken in Ogren's account. He is entirely correct to note the interworking, even one might say, intertwining, of RP and EP. And, his interpretation rightly accords to emotion cognitive roles in grasping reality overlooked by overly intellectualist interpretations of Aristotle. Through adopting a hermeneutic perspective he also ties these to distinctively human ways of participating in

being, including the reflexivity of human being. He very helpfully stresses that desire, pleasure, and emotions are integral to the full scope of human rationality. Lastly, these positive traits of his interpretation accord to the *Rhetoric* and its key themes a more important and philosophically rigorous place in the Aristotelian corpus than many commentators do. As noted earlier, where his interpretation goes wrong is in assigning so much of this simply to EP at the expense of RP. The main reasons his interpretation develops in that direction are, I would hazard to guess, are three: 1) failure to see that Aristotle's texts accord RP several substantive forms of cognition, human ways of apprehending concrete being; 2) inadequately taking into account the central importance of proper structuring, formation, evaluation, and training of EP's (and RP's) desires, emotions, pleasures and pains, particularly through habituation determined by RP but consolidated in and in part by EP; 3) an allied failure to notice that the concrete being(s) grasped through uniquely human cognition is grasped through moral evaluation involving *logos* as both "reason" and "language,"³ so that our determinate way of "Being in the world" is as moral beings.

As just noted, practical wisdom involves perception. An important passage in the *Politics* supplies some needed amplification:

The human being alone among animals possesses language [*logon*. . . *ekhei*]. Voice [*phōnē*] is a signaling of the painful and the pleasurable, and so this is something the other

animals can do (for their nature has progressed so far as to have perception of the painful and the pleasurable and to signal these to each other), but language is for indicating the useful [*to sumpheron*] and the harmful [*to blaberon*], as well as the just and the unjust. For this is unique to humans in relation to the other animals, that they alone have perception of the good [*agathou*] and the bad [*kakou*], and the just and the unjust, and of all other such things, and the sharing [*koinōnia*] in these produces the household and the city. (1253a10-18)

The “and of all other such things” admits of considerable extension. To provide one example, two of the three modes of goods and evils the three types of rhetoric deals in already form part of the listing; to them can be added epideictic rhetoric’s the “beautiful” or “fine” (*to kalon*) and the “ugly” or “shameful”. What is particularly striking about this dense passage is that Aristotle ties together human language, reason (the undertone of logos as “reason” should not be expunged from this text), perception, moral qualities, community, and the uniquely human. At the same time, he does not exclude animals from perception, even perception of certain moral qualities, i.e. pain and pleasure. Here, we should hearken back to the four-part division of the human soul, and the disappearance of the irrational perceptive part in the other divisions. What I suggest is that the irrational perceptive part is the specifically animal part, which we do possess, along with (and integrated with, as are all the parts of the soul) a uniquely human perceptive part amenable to, and thereby participating to some extent in reason. Our way of grasping the world and the different kinds of beings, including ourselves, is innumerable richer than mere animal life since we grasp these through moral evaluations, but this is precisely because our EP is

informed by an RP that, admittedly in most if not all actual human beings in need of development and liable to some misperceptions, is vastly wider in scope than the rules of formal logic.

Now, what has been often lost in Aristotle interpretation is something Ogren rightly calls our attention to, namely that EP's relation to RP, analogized to listening to a father or a friend, requires that EP itself possess a degree of rationality, that it, so to speak, brings something to the table, rather than just accepting scraps thrown to it by RP. Emotions are a vital part of how this productive cognitive relation to the world, to self, and to others takes place, and this can be understood via Heideggerian attunement or mood informed by understanding, fallenness or falling prey, and articulation (Heidegger, 1996), or through Aristotelian categories, or as I take Ogren to be doing, through judicious combination of both, a project also carried out explicitly in Gadamer (1995). In recent years, a small but very promising literature specifically on the role of emotion in moral, and specifically human cognition has developed, and I would like to end my remarks by briefly noting several of the works following out these lines (although, to my knowledge, none of these authors seem to have discerned the importance of the just cited *Politics* passage).

Nancy Sherman's *The Fabric of Character* has been of particular importance, for in it she notes that Aristotelian ethics requires attention to what she calls the "ethical salience" (1989, p. 28-44) of particulars in determinate, often

ambiguous situations. This is a matter of perception, precisely the kind of perception we have been discussing here, perception that involves both RP and EP. For, on the one hand, “even if without the emotion we could somehow see ethical salience, the way we see would still be defective and imperfect... The point is that without emotions, we do not fully register the facts or record them with the sort of resonance and importance that only emotional involvement can sustain” (p. 47). On the other, mere emotional response is not enough, since “[p]erception informed by ethical considerations is the product of experience and habituation” (p. 31). Gisela Striker likewise notes: “if emotional dispositions are what underlies virtue of character, the influence of emotions on judgement cannot be regarded as merely distorting, a distraction, as it were from rational thought... If morally good people can be expected to have certain characteristic emotional responses, then the influence of emotion may sometimes be what is needed to see things in the right way” (1996, p. 297).

Martha Nussbaum, in the essay Ogren cites, does not use precisely the language of “perception of ethical salience” or “cognition of value”, but does make an important point about the type of perception implicit in emotions, which “involve the ascription of significant worth to items in the world outside of the agent, items that he or she does not fully control” (1996, p. 312). Barbara Koziak’s *Retrieving Political Emotion*, Kostas Kalimtzis’s *Aristotle on Political Enmity and Disease*, and Marlene Sokolon’s *Political Emotions* each likewise engage this aspect of Aristotle’s treatment of emotion. The work that frames this

aspect most not only within Aristotelian ethico-political, psychological, or rhetorical contexts, but within an explicitly metaphysical one, is Deborah Achtenberg's *Cognition of Value in Aristotle's Ethics*, in which she argues, among many other valuable points, one on which it is fitting to end:

For Aristotle, value is not a special moral object beyond those we can experience or know to which our special moral faculty must be responsive if we are to have virtue and act appropriately. For him, awareness of value is simply a cognitive matter. Value is cognized by our two faculties for nondiscursive awareness, intellectual insight (*nous*), and practical insight (*phronēsis*), or, as Aristotle often says more simply, value is perceived. It is cognized by emotion as well, since emotion for Aristotle is not brute but is of itself a type of perception of value, specifically, perception of the value of certain particulars. (2002, p. 44)

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NOTES

1. Aristotle does do this in *De Anima* and several times in the *Topics*, each time, providing a definition to illustrate the act or scope of defining.
2. All translations from Aristotle are, unless otherwise noted, the author’s, who has consulted and where appropriate drawn in part from those of Ross, Rackham, Freese, Cooper, Kennedy, Hett, Sinclair and Saunders. Aristotle’s passages are referred to by their Bekker page and line numbers, which are typically integrated within the texts of more scholarly English translations. All Greek passages are cited from the Loeb Classical Library Edition texts.
3. Bernard Yack cuts the difference and translates *logos* in this passage as “reasoned speech,” providing some good justification for this choice (1993, p. 65). To my ear, that rendering sounds too restrictedly intellectualist. The human capacities for perception of and referring to moral qualities does not imply that we are always reasoning about, or even behaving rationally in relation to them.

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