

Reason and Emotion  
ESSAYS ON  
ANCIENT MORAL PSYCHOLOGY  
AND ETHICAL THEORY

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## An Aristotelian Theory of the Emotions

I

Aristotle's ethics and political theory are constructed round a closely knit family of psychological concepts: those of happiness (*eudaimonia*), virtue (*aretē*), practical wisdom (*phronēsis*), action (*praxis*), state or habit (*hexis*), desire (*orexis*), pleasure and pain (*hedonē* and *lypē*), choice or decision (*prohairesis*)—and the emotions or passions (the *pathe*). In his ethical treatises Aristotle elaborates theoretical accounts of all the members of this family but two: desire and emotion—and since two of the three types of desire that he recognizes (appetites and spirited desires) are cross-classified by him as emotional states, the emotions are even more isolated in that anomalous position than that may make it sound. The most we get in any of the ethical treatises is an illustrative list, the longest of which (in *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.5) reads as follows: appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, feelings of friendliness, hatred, yearning (that is, for an absent or lost person that one is attached to), eagerness to match another's accomplishments, and pity. 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*.

As is well known, Aristotle does however develop fairly detailed accounts of some eleven or twelve emotions—on a generous count, perhaps fifteen—in an unexpected place, the second book of the *Rhetoric*, his work on the art of public speaking. Can we turn there to find Aristotle's full theory of

This essay is a lightly edited version of my 1992–93 S. V. Keeling Memorial Lecture, delivered at University College, London, in May 1993. The lecture, in turn, was based on my paper "Rhetoric, Dialectic, and the Passions." The first version of that paper was prepared for delivery at an international Symposium on Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* sponsored by the Philosophical Society of Finland, Helsinki, August 1991. Subsequently I read revised versions at departmental colloquia at Dartmouth and Pomona colleges. I would like to thank the organizers of the Helsinki symposium, and especially Juhana Sihvola, for their hospitality, and the other participants, both local and from abroad, for stimulating and helpful discussion of many interesting issues in the *Rhetoric*, including the ones treated in this essay. The essay as published owes a great deal to criticisms and suggestions made in discussion on all three of these occasions, but I am especially grateful to Alexander Nehamas for his detailed and perceptive written comments on the penultimate version. It was while I was a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences that I prepared the Keeling Lecture, and I am grateful to the Center and to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which provided financial support for my fellowship, for their assistance.

the emotions? Regrettably, an adequate answer must take account of a number of complexities—I will be elaborating some of these as I go along, and attempting to assess their significance. But, by way of preliminary orientation, let me give the short answer that I will be attempting to justify in the course of the essay. The discussion of the *Rhetoric*'s specifically limited set of emotions cannot be regarded as based upon or providing us with Aristotle's final, "scientific" theory (as we would be entitled to regard any comparable theory in the ethical works or the *De Anima*). Rather, what we find there is, from the point of view of Aristotle's mature ethical and psychological theory, a preliminary, purely dialectical investigation that clarifies the phenomena in question and prepares the way for a philosophically more ambitious overall theory, but does no more than that. However, as we go through the particular emotions that he discusses, we can see certain patterns emerging that, although not found in his discussion of each emotion, plainly could be made the basis for a comprehensive general theory, and one that is of considerable interest, both philosophically and historically. Having done the work on the selected emotions dealt with in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle had achieved certain systematic insights that he could have used as the basis for a positive philosophical theory of the nature of emotions. But he never got around to doing that; at least as far as we know, he did not.

Before turning to Aristotle's accounts of the emotions in Book 2 of the *Rhetoric*, I need to say something about how the emotions fit into his overall project in that work.

At the beginning of *Rhetoric* Book 1, Aristotle argues that there are precisely three "technical" or artful ways that public speakers have of persuading their audiences. In the body of the work, including his discussion of the emotions, he aims to provide the information aspiring orators need in order to train themselves to wield these three instruments on the basis of real knowledge, and so lay claim to the possession of a true art of oratory. First, Aristotle says, public speakers need to appear to their hearers to be intelligent, good, and well-intentioned persons (that is, ones who have good character). Second, they need to induce in their audiences appropriately directed states of emotion that will influence their audiences' judgment on the matter under discussion in a way favorable to the orators and their cases. Third, they need to present reasons that the audience will find plausible and will cause them to judge as true whatever conclusions the orators are trying to promote (they need to *argue* well). It is mostly in connection with the first and especially the second of these objectives that Aristotle provides information about the emotions in Book 2. The orator needs to know how to represent himself to the audience as being moved by such emotions as will help to establish him as a good person in general, and well-intentioned toward the audience in particular; and he needs to know how to engender in them the emotions that will cause them to judge the matter as he wishes them to.

Throughout the *Rhetoric* Aristotle limits himself, in preparing and

presenting his material on how to wield the three instruments of persuasion, to a dialectical survey of the relevant data from common sense and "reputable opinion" (in Greek, the *endoxa*) that bear on the matters he takes up. He does indeed say that rhetoric is something like an offshoot of both dialectic and ethics (or politics), but it is clear that by referring to ethics as one parent of rhetoric he does not intend to say that rhetoric borrows opinions from an accomplished philosophical theory of ethical matters. He says quite plainly, so far as the premises of an oratorical argument go, that opinions must be drawn from what is reputable and plausible, and not from the results of a special science, not even from the philosophical theory of politics or ethics (1.4.1359b2–18, with 1.2.1358a21–26)—what here he actually calls political or ethical science (*episteme*). If rhetoric did that it would no longer be mere rhetoric, but would turn itself into the science or theory in question, actually establishing its conclusions, rather than merely getting people to believe them on grounds persuasive to them. And it seems that this restriction to *endoxa* applies across the board: in selecting the materials from which to represent his own character in a favorable light and in engendering in the audience helpful emotions, as well, the orator will depend upon a dialectical knowledge of reputable opinions about the emotions, and not a "scientific" knowledge derived from a fully justified philosophical theory of them. Accordingly, when Aristotle in Book 2 offers to the orator information about the emotions that he is to use in engendering or preventing emotions in his hearers, this is an exercise in dialectic. He is collecting and sorting through, for the aspiring orator's benefit, the established and reputable opinions about what the various relevant emotions are, and about various relevant points about them.

Where the instilling of emotions is concerned, it is easy to see, however, that the dialectical appeal to such opinions will be different from what it is in the case of the other two instruments of persuasion. A systematic, dialectical study of the various *endoxa*—the recognized and highly reputed opinions—about what is good and bad for communities, right and wrong, legal and illegal, worthy of praise and the reverse, is obviously a very good way of preparing oneself to construct arguments on these matters before a classical Greek audience, whether in a deliberative, judicial, or ceremonial context. These are precisely the opinions that the audience can be expected to regard highly themselves, and so to be swayed by, if the opinions can be marshaled in such a way as to support logically the point of view for which the orator is speaking, or at any rate to seem to the audience to do so (see 1.356a35–36). Likewise, in attempting to represent himself to the judges as intelligent and perceptive about practical matters, and as a serious person of good general character, he needs to be guided by the recognized and reputed indicators of these characteristics. For, again, it is likely that the audience will be disposed to regard a person as having good character if he displays just those indicators in his speech, and avoids displaying the contrary

ones. Here what matters is to know what one's hearers will think favors a certain conclusion that one desires them to reach.<sup>1</sup>

When one comes to the orator's wielding of the remaining "way of persuasion," by inducing the appropriate emotional state of mind in his audience, the story must necessarily be more complicated. For here it is evidently not enough to know what the audience will think people are like who are prone to become angry or afraid, or to feel pity, or to have vindictive or friendly feelings, and so on. Nor is it enough to know toward what sorts of persons the audience thinks that people typically feel these feelings, or under what circumstances and occasions.<sup>2</sup> (These are the three subtopics into which Aristotle divides his treatments of the emotions in Book 2 [see 2.1.1378a23–28].) The orator's purpose is actually to make his hearers feel in some of these ways, and prevent them from feeling in other ways, toward specific persons on given occasions and circumstances (toward his client in a judicial case, for example), and to use these feelings to direct or influence their judgment. Plainly, whatever the grounds are for proceeding dialectically here, it ought not to be simply because doing so gives one the ability to influence the audience's opinions about who is or isn't in a given state of feeling toward a given other person! If what he needs to do is actually to make them angry, it hardly matters whether they also think they are.

It seems clear that Aristotle's restriction of the orator to dialectical knowledge of the emotions rests upon his general view that qualification for expertise in oratory must rest only upon that kind of knowledge. But from his own philosophical point of view what makes it acceptable to him to restrict the orator in this way is that he himself believes that ethical theory (what he calls here ethical or political science, which does aim at establishing the facts about what the emotions really are, and so on), itself starts from,

<sup>1</sup> Here and throughout this discussion of *endoxa* I restrict my attention to the aims and practices of the individual Aristotelian artistic orator. His function is to do the best the circumstances permit to find things to say that his hearers will take as bases for believing whatever it is he is arguing for; his art does not consist in discovering the truth and attempting to persuade them of that. Two considerations should be borne in mind, however, lest my discussion give the impression that for Aristotle the art of rhetoric is completely value- and truth-neutral. First, as we will see more fully below, Aristotle thinks that the *endoxa* the orator appeals to in marshaling his argument and representing his character bear a strong positive relation to the truth—they somehow reflect, and so indicate, the truth. Second, his remarks at 1.1 (1355a20–24, 29–33) about the usefulness of the art of rhetoric indicate that, at least in judicial and deliberative oratory, where there are speakers on both sides, the joint function of the artistic orators who speak on any question is to help the hearers to reach the best, most truthful decision possible on the matter at hand. By listening to excellently prepared speeches be in to decide correctly; they have before them all the relevant truth-indicators, each as favorably presented as possible.

<sup>2</sup> See 2.1.1378a23–28, where Aristotle gives this threefold division of the material to be treated in preparing the orator for his task—except, of course, that there he says he will investigate how people *are* when they are angry, etc., not how any audience will think they are.



and is responsible to, the very *endoxa* that dialectic and rhetoric are specially directed to acquire effective control over. So, if in learning about the various passions—their surrounding psychology, their objects and occasions—the “artistic” orator turns to the recognized and reputable opinions about these matters, and not somehow directly to the phenomena themselves, he is at least behaving no differently from the way Aristotle’s full-fledged moral and political philosopher behaves, in beginning his own investigations of these matters.<sup>3</sup> If what results is less than what Aristotle thinks a fully independent philosophical theory might ideally be able to achieve, he himself thinks there is good reason to accept the accounts he will provide as approximately true. As we proceed we will see for ourselves that what Aristotle offers his aspiring orators, and us modern readers too, is well grounded in an appropriately thoughtful study of the emotions themselves, and not merely what people say about them.

## II

As I have said, Aristotle distinguishes and devotes at least some direct attention to the defining characteristics of fifteen emotions. He gives separate, formal treatment to twelve, in the following order: feeling angry (*orgē*), feeling mildly (*praotēs*), feeling friendly (*philia*, i.e., to *philein*), feeling hatred (*misos*), feeling afraid (*phobos*), feeling confident in the face of danger (*tharrein*), feeling disgraced (*aischunē*), feeling kindly (*phain echēn*), pity (*eleos*), righteous indignation (*nemesin*), envy (*phthonos*), and feeling eager-ness to match the accomplishments of others (*zēlos*). Actually, it is not perfectly clear whether Aristotle means to say that *praotēs* (feeling mildly) is a state of feeling on its own, or only the absence of angry feelings when they would be expected or justified; his definition of *prānsis*, becoming calm or mild, explicitly makes it simply a settling down and quieting of anger (1380a8).<sup>4</sup> But I take this to be a lapse, and suppose he does mean to treat feeling mildly as a separate emotion. Two further feelings are named more or less incidentally and accompanied briefer, but still not insubstantial treatment: *schadenfreude* (an accompaniment of envy [1386b34–1387a3 and 1388a23–25]), and feeling disdainful, an accompaniment of eagerness

<sup>3</sup> On this see Chapter 12 above, pp. 288–89, and Chapter 18, pp. 398–99.

<sup>4</sup> By contrast, in his treatments of the other two “negation” feelings on his list, hatred and confidence, it seems fairly clear that he regards them as positive states of feeling on their own, not merely the absence of the feelings with which they are contrasted—friendly feelings and fear, respectively. But he gives no formal definition of *misos* at all, and the closest he comes to a definition for *tharsos* (1383a17–18) is partial at best, so we are left to draw this inference from his descriptions of the circumstances, etc., for these feelings. One should note, however, that at one place Aristotle equates those experiencing confidence simply with those who are *apathēs* under certain circumstances (1383a28): he means, of course, free of the *pathos* of fear, but this is certainly a careless remark at best if he thinks of confidence as one among the *pathē*, as it seems clear that, officially, he does.

to match others’ accomplishments (1380b22–28). A third, unnamed feeling, which stands to righteous indignation as *schadenfreude* does to envy—it is pleasurable feeling at the punishment or other come-down of those who deserve it—also comes in for brief treatment (1386b25–33 and 1387b14–20).

In studying these chapters it is important to bear in mind that Aristotle means to discuss throughout states of *feeling*—passions or emotions, conditions in which one’s mind or consciousness is affected, moved, or stirred up. This applies equally to *philia* and *charis* (feeling friendly and kindly) despite some awkwardness of expression, as it does to anger, fear, and the other more obvious cases of such feelings. I begin, then, with some remarks on Aristotle’s discussions in 2.4 and 2.7 of these two feelings.

Awkwardly, Aristotle defines *charis* (what I am translating as “kindly feelings”) in 2.7 in terms of action not feeling: it is “helping someone in need, not in return for anything<sup>5</sup> nor for the good of the one helping, but for that of the one helped.” Formally, then, the person who “has *charis*” is the one who acts in this helping way; the definition apparently makes no reference to the emotion that might lead to such action. Or does it? Perhaps one should take Aristotle’s reference to helping actions as indicating, elliptically, the emotion that leads to them (akin to friendly feelings, I suppose: a warm feeling of attachment to someone, with a desire to do that person good for her or his own sake). But of course what Aristotle should primarily be telling aspiring orators about is a feeling that they need either to engender in or remove from their audience’s mind. And in what follows in 2.7 (1385a30–1385b11) he seems to limit himself to discussing the means of showing an audience that someone has shown *them charis* or failed to do so. Nevertheless, the connection to an emotion of the audience’s is perhaps implicit even here, as is suggested at two places (1380a27 and 1380b32), in 2.3, where Aristotle says we don’t (can’t) get angry at people who are apparently mistreating us, if they have treated us excessively kindly in the past. His point is that, just as fear of someone conflicts with and prevents simultaneous anger at them (1380a31–33), so the emotion of kindly feeling (that results from one’s recognizing kind treatment from a person in the past) conflicts with and prevents simultaneous anger against them for a present apparent insult or unjustified belittlement. So his point in talking in 2.7 about who has and who has not behaved kindly to the audience in the past is to provide the orator with a means of engendering, out of naturally arising gratitude, or preventing, feelings of kindness in the audience—for example, toward persons in court or toward the people of other cities whose petitions might be before an assembly or council for decision.

I turn now to 2.4, on friendly feelings and hatred. This chapter is

<sup>5</sup> That is, not so as to get anything in return: acting to return a favor already received is not being ruled out here, as Cope, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, wrongly feared the language might suggest.

anomalous in several ways. In every chapter except this one Aristotle overtly organizes his discussion in accordance with a tripartite pattern for discussing the emotions that he lays down at the end of 2.1 (1378a23–30). After giving his definition of the specific state of feeling, he goes on to discuss (not always in the same order) (a) what personal conditions or circumstances, especially what psychological conditions (what other feelings or beliefs, in general what frames of mind), make people apt to experience the feeling (*pos echomies* or *diakemenoi*), (b) what sorts of people they do or do not feel the feeling toward (*tisn* or *pros tinas*), and (c) what the occasions are of their having, or not having, the feeling for that kind of person (*epi poiois* or *dia poia*). His allegiance to this program is quite striking in each chapter, even where he understandably lumps together the discussion of the second and third points. We get this tripartite structure presented in every chapter, in virtually the same language each time.<sup>6</sup>

This language and this structure for the discussion are totally absent from the chapter on friendly feeling and hatred. It is true that the chapter begins with a promise first to define friendly feelings<sup>7</sup> and then to say who people feel that way (*tinas*) toward and why (*dia ti*). But there is no separate mention anywhere in the chapter of the very important first point, the frames of mind that tend to promote our feeling that way. And the language here (and subsequently in the chapter where he addresses the third point, the occasions of friendly feeling) is not paralleled in any of the other chapters (see *poietika philias*, 1381b35, *poietika echthras*, 1382a1–2). Finally, the whole discussion, although genuinely illuminating and insightful, has fewer signposts and is more of a miscellany than any other discussion in this part of the treatise.

As a consequence, we face special difficulties in interpreting what Aristotle says about these emotions in this chapter. I mentioned just now that he begins by giving a definition of friendly feelings, to *philein*. This is exactly as we should expect: in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (8.5.1157b28–29) he ranks friendly feeling (*philesis*) as an emotion or feeling, in contrast to friendship

<sup>6</sup> See 2.2.1379a9–10, 1379b27–28; 2.3.1380a5–7; 2.5.1382b27–29, 1383a14–15; 2.6.1383b12–13; 2.7.1385a16–17, 30–31; 2.8.1385b11–12, 1386a3–4, 16–17; 2.9.1387a5–8; 2.10.1387b21–24, 1388a23–24; 2.11.1388a29–30, 1388b24–27.

<sup>7</sup> He writes: *thy phlavon xai to phlavon ogoiayuvon. leyoivuev*, 1380b34. I believe the *kai* here is likely to be epexegetic; that is, I think it likely that *philein* has the sense here that Aristotle gives to it at *Nic. Eth.* 2.5.1105b22 and *Topics* 4.5.126a12, where the contexts put it beyond doubt that it means not “friendship” (an established personal relationship, or a settled state of character of some sort) but an occurrent feeling, or type of feeling. In effect, *philia* substitutes in these contexts for *philesis* as the noun for to *philein*. Hence in the first sentence of *Rhetoric* 2.4 Aristotle is not promising to give us two definitions, one of friendship and one of friendly feeling, but only the one definition, of friendly feeling, that he immediately provides. (This is the only formal definition, with the usual *esto*, anywhere in the chapter.) When he adds (1381a1–2) a statement about what makes someone a friend of someone else, this is not a backward way of fulfilling a promise to define friendship, but the needed introduction of the notion of a friend—the sort of person who regularly experiences friendly feeling—on which so much of what follows is going to be based.

(*philia*), which he says is a settled state involving decision. The definition itself in the *Rhetoric* is very close to the account given in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of goodwill (8.2.1155b31–32), which helps to make the connection that Aristotle promised at the beginning of Book 2 (*Rhet.* 2.1.1378a19–20) yourself in speaking as having the interests of your audience at heart (i.e., as he says, having goodwill for them).<sup>8</sup> The definition of to *philein* runs as follows: “Let us suppose having friendly feelings to be wishing someone what you think are good things, for his sake and not for your own, and being ready, as far as you can, to act accordingly.”<sup>9</sup>

However, he goes on immediately<sup>10</sup> to speak instead of friendship, or rather what it is to be friends with someone—the established relationship in which two persons are disposed to feel friendly toward one another at appropriate times. This shift of focus continues virtually throughout the chapter, to such an extent that people sometimes take the chapter to be about not mere friendly feelings, but friendship itself. But that is a mistake. Aristotle’s introduction into a discussion of friendly feelings of talk about friends and friendship is quite understandable, from two points of view. First of all, one purpose of the discussion is to provide an orator with material from which to represent himself in speaking as moved by genuine concern for his audience’s interests, and he will succeed especially well in this endeavor if he can get them to think of him as actually a friend of theirs—someone who is habitually moved by such feelings in relation to

<sup>8</sup> I take it that Aristotle’s language at 1378a19–20 (*neqi d’ euvolas xai phlavon ev tois neqi ta pithon lexetov*), linking the two terms together in this way, indicates that we are to go to the chapter on friendly feeling to find out how to represent this aspect of our own characters. Alternatively, one might think he is directing us to the entire subsequent discussion—so that, for example, one might pick up pointers from 2.7 on kindly feelings and 2.8 on pity to use in presenting oneself as “well-disposed” to the audience by making oneself appear to feel pity or kindness for them or theirs. In view of the special linkage at 1378a19–20 between *euvola* and *philia*, however, I think this alternative interpretation is not likely to be correct.

<sup>9</sup> The Greek for “wish” here is *boulēsthai*. In Aristotle’s technical philosophy of mind, a “wish” is a rational kind of desire, one deriving from our capacity to reason about what is good or bad for us, whereas what he is talking about here is supposed to be a *pathos*, a nonrational feeling. (*Boulēsis* never appears in any of Aristotle’s lists of *pathē*, in the *Rhetoric* noting, also, that earlier in the *Rhetoric* (1.10.1369a1–4) Aristotle presents his division of desires into rational and nonrational, with “wish” serving as the name for the former kind, yet that it is a *pathos*, something essentially nonrational.) Perhaps we should take his use of the word *wish* in some broader way in 2.4, one that permits it to cover at least some nonrational desires; see 2.11.1389a8 where he seems to use “wishes” to refer in a general way to the desires of young people, which he characterizes before and afterward as appetitive, sharp but not persistent.

<sup>10</sup> I do not believe Kassel is right to put 1381a1–2, *philos* . . . *antiphilomenos* in brackets as a later addition, possibly by Aristotle himself, to the text. The *d’* after *philos* is perfectly in order, as marking the additional remark about friends that this sentence introduces, and the sequence of thought runs a lot better with the sentence than without it.



them. Moreover, knowing who is ordinarily taken to be someone's friend could give an orator excellent means of getting an audience to feel friendly feelings toward himself or those for whom he may be a spokesman: describing someone as their friend is a likely way to induce the audience to respond with friendly feelings. We must, then, guard carefully against the mistake of thinking that Aristotle's advice to the orator is aimed at helping him to make his audience actually become his own or his client's friends, rather than merely to make them have friendly and well-disposed feelings. The latter task is difficult enough: if taken seriously the former would actually be impossible in the time available!

## III

In introducing the topic of the emotions at the beginning of Book 2, Aristotle characterizes emotions generally as follows (1378a20–23): they are things “that change people so as to alter their judgments and are accompanied by *lupē* (conventionally translated “pain”) and *hēdonē* (conventionally translated “pleasure”)—for example anger, pity, fear, and the like, and their opposites.” The association of the emotions with *lupē* and *hēdonē* occurs so standardly in Aristotle<sup>11</sup> that one is apt to accept it here, too, without much thought—as if he meant nothing more than that when we experience these things we always have a mild like or dislike for the way we are then feeling, and/or that we tend to experience some pleasures or pains in consequence of feeling an emotion. I think it will repay us, however, to stop and ask carefully what Aristotle can or does mean by this. To begin with, we should notice that six of the ten emotions for which he gives formal definitions are defined as instances of *lupē* (*lupē tis*): fear, the feeling of being disgraced, pity, righteous indignation, envy, and eagerness to match others’ accomplishments are all defined this way. A seventh (anger) is defined as a certain desire accompanied by *lupē* (*meta lupēs*). So he makes *lupē* a central, essential feature of many of the emotions: it is even the genus of six of them. Curiously, he does not mention either *lupē* or *hēdonē* in his formal definitions of kindly and friendly feelings (which I quoted earlier); one would think the parallel with these other emotions would have led him to define them in terms of *hēdonē*. Nor does he explicitly mention pleasure in his definition of confidence in the face of danger (*to tharrein*)—although when he says that confidence essentially involves “the impression (*phantasia*) of what keeps us safe as being near, of what is fearsome as being non-existent or far off” (1383a17–18),<sup>12</sup> one might think that indicates that

<sup>11</sup> See *Nic. Eth.* 2.5.1105b23; *Eudemian Ethics* 2.2.1220b13–14 (with the potentially significant addition of *aischēria* before *hēdonē*); *Magna Moralia* 1.7.1186a13–14. It appears that in some way Aristotle is following Plato in this: see *Philebus* 47c1–48a2, and what follows there (to 50e4).

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle does not offer a formal definition of *to tharrein*. He only says that what is to be gathered easily from the definition already provided of fear, of which it is the opposite

pleasure is essential to it. “The pleasant” is counted by him as one sort of apparent good, namely what impresses one as good quite independently of what one *thinks* is good,<sup>13</sup> and safety here would count as such an apparent of good. And in discussing *schadenfreude* and the unnamed accompaniment of righteous indignation (to neither of which does he give a formal definition), he mentions pleasure (*chairein*, *hēdesthai*) in such a way as to suggest that he thinks it is their genus, just as the genus of envy and righteous indignation is said to be *lupē*.<sup>14</sup>

There is, then, ample evidence that Aristotle actually defines those emotions that he thinks involve *lupē* in terms of it, and weaker evidence that he is correspondingly inclined toward defining the emotions that involve pleasure in terms of *hēdonē*.<sup>15</sup> What does he intend here by *lupē* and *hēdonē*? Let us take *lupē* first. Elsewhere Aristotle uses the term (together with its verb) quite variously, to cover both bodily pain and all kinds and degrees of negative mental response and attitude, ranging from mild dislike to deep state of feeling, some real distress, and it has a special application to people when they are grieving.<sup>17</sup> It is in something close to this ordinary usage that Aristotle uses the word in this context in the *Rhetoric*. He speaks of pity, righteous indignation, and envy each as being a pain characterized by turmoil (*lupē tarachōdēs*, 1386b18–19; and see 1386b22–25), although he mentions only pain and not turmoil in their formal definitions (1385b13–16, 1386b10–12, 1387b22–24). And he actually defines both fear and the feeling of being disgraced as “pain and turmoil” (*lupē tis kai tarachē*, 1382a21,

(1383a14–15), and then adds this remark about the impression of what keeps us safe. Perhaps one is licensed to infer from this (mimicking the definition of fear) that confidence actually is *hēdonē* *τῆς ἐκ γενναίου τοῦ σωτηρίου ὡς ἐγγύς ὄντων*, *τῶν δὲ φοβερῶν ὡς ἤ μὴ ὄντων ἢ πόγου ὄντων*. But Aristotle does not explicitly say this.

<sup>13</sup> See *EE* 2.10.1227b3–4, 7.2.1235b25–29.

<sup>14</sup> See *Rhet.* 1386b26–32, 1387a1–3.

<sup>15</sup> I have been led in examining this evidence to suppose that the general association of the *pathē* with *lupē* and *hēdonē* announced at 1378a21–22 anticipates these definitions in terms of these two opposites. This does not preclude, as Aristotle makes explicit in the case of anger (see 1378b1–9), that in an emotion that was based in *lupē* there should be involved (*hēpeshhai*) also some pleasure; but these pleasures will be, as they are for anger, secondary ones, ones that depend upon special further features of the state of mind of the person feeling the emotion. These secondary pleasures are not part of the definition of the emotion. On anger, see further below.

<sup>16</sup> For bodily pain, see for example *De Anima* 2.2.413b23 (the pain of worms), *EE* 3.1.1229a34–41 (the pains that can kill you), and *EE* 7.8.1241b9 (the pains of childbirth); for bodily pain plus physical disgust, *Nic. Eth.* 7.7.1150a9–10 (the pains of touch, and of taste); the dislike of doing sums or writing, *Nic. Eth.* 10.5.1175b17–20, the distress caused a proud man if he is not given some honor or if he is put under the rule of some unworthy person, *EE* 3.5.1232b12.

<sup>17</sup> At *MM* 1.7.1186a16 we find *lupēthēnai* given alongside *orgizēthēnai* and *eleasai* as examples of emotions; there *lupēthēnai* presumably has the sense of “grieving,” rather than generic “distress,” so as to be coordinate with these other two emotions, which are of course quite specific ones.

1383b14) about something.<sup>18</sup> If, as I just did, one translates *lupē* here as "pain," one must understand this as meaning "distress," "feeling upset," something that in these more extreme instances can be accompanied and qualified by psychic turmoil. Aristotle's words for pleasure have a similarly various usage elsewhere, covering everything from some bodily sensations to mental attitudes varying from simple liking and gladness to elation and vivid enjoyment.<sup>19</sup> Given the contrast with feelings of distress about something brought about by the pairing of *hēdonē* and *lupē* in this context, it would seem reasonable, perhaps mandatory, to take *hēdonē* here as connoting some sort of positive mental excitement—the active relishing of something, and not merely being pleased or glad about it, or just liking it in some way or other.

So the terms *lupē* and *hēdonē* in Aristotle's definitions of the emotions, explicit or implied, serve much the same function that is covered in Stoic accounts by such picturesque terms as throbbing (*thōia*), contraction and expansion (*sunolē* and *diachusis*), being uplifted and cast down (*eparxis* and *phōsis*), depression (*tapeinōsis*), and gnawing (*dēxis*). *Lupē* and *hēdonē* indicate, with less descriptive ingenuity than the Stoics' terms do, the character of the emotions as psychic disturbances in which we are set psychically in movement, made to experience some strong affect.

Accordingly, the emotions as Aristotle represents them in *Rhetoric* Book 2 are feelings either of being distressed and upset about something, or of being excited about and relishing something. In both cases they are taken to be intrusive feelings, ones that occupy the mind and direct the attention (so that, as Aristotle says, they can "change people so as to alter their judgments"). Anger, fear, the feeling of being disgraced, pity, righteous indignation, envy, and the eagerness to match other people's accomplishments are feelings of distress at one or another apparent circumstance currently within one's attention that one takes to be a bad thing. Confidence in the face of danger, *schadenfreude*, and the unnamed accompaniment of indignation that gives a person pleasure at the punishment or other come-down of those meriting it, are all instances of relishing what impresses one as being a good thing.

It is worth emphasizing that in his discussion of each of these ten emotions, with the exception of the last two, Aristotle is quite firm and explicit that the emotion arises from one's having the impression or appearance (*phantasia*) that something good or bad has happened, is happening, or is about to happen. Indeed, for seven of them—anger, fear, the feeling of disgrace,

<sup>18</sup> Thus of the emotions based in *lupē* Aristotle omits to associate *tarachē* only with anger and eagerness to match the accomplishments of others (*zēlos*).

<sup>19</sup> For bodily pleasures, i.e., pleasurable sensations, see *Nic. Eth.* 2.3.1104b5–6, 7.13.1153a33–34, and *EE* 1.4.1215b5; the pleasure of eating sweets in the theater, indulged especially when the play is bad, *Nic. Eth.* 10.5.1175b10–16; the refined pleasure in well-turned *hōmē* becoming jokes taken and given by the tactful person, *Nic. Eth.* 4.8.1128a25–28; the wondrous pleasures philosophy is said to give, *Nic. Eth.* 10.7.1177a25.

pity, envy, righteous indignation, and the eagerness to match another's accomplishments—he includes this impression in the formal definition; and for confidence it is included in the nearest thing to a definition that he provides (1383a17–18, discussed earlier). Similarly, one finds references to such appearances also in his account of feeling mildly (1380a10 and 35), as one would expect if that is the emotion opposed to anger. The omission in the case of *schadenfreude* and the unnamed accompaniment of righteous indignation should not cause surprise, given the extreme brevity of his treatment of them; but we are entitled to infer a role for such impressions in the generation of these emotions from their relationship to envy and indignation, respectively (as we also can for disdain from its relationship to "eagerness"): all these latter emotions are said to depend upon one's impressions of things. It seems likely that Aristotle is using *phantasia* here once in *De Anima* 3.3 (428b2–4), according to which he draws attention to, or strike one, in some way (say, as being insulting or belittling) even if one knows there is no good reason for one to take it so. If so, Aristotle is alert to the crucial fact about the emotions, that one can experience them simply on the basis of how, despite what one knows or believes to be the case, things strike one—how things look to one when, for one reason or another, one is disposed to feel the emotion. It is not merely when you know Being unable to control an emotion is, partly, taking as a ground of it something that you know was not one at all.

Thus it is fairly clear that, for a majority of the emotions he deals with, Aristotle regards them as involving essentially a feeling of distress or pleasure caused by the way things currently in his or her attention strike the person in question. About hatred, and, as we have seen, friendly and kindly feelings, whether one of distress or of relishment. But on Aristotle's emerging general view one would expect friendly and kindly feelings, at least, to be cases of pleasurable excitement, just as confidence, *schadenfreude*, and the unnamed accompaniment of indignation are. Nor with hatred and friendly and kindly feelings does he make a point of including in his account a reference to emotions he makes no allusion at all in the definition itself to the emotion's objects and occasions.<sup>20</sup> For it is because he does that in the other cases that he finds the opportunity to insert the reference to such appearances.

On Aristotle's view, what, however, is the nature of the affect involved in hatred? Here I confess myself puzzled. He does not say anything to link hatred positively to either pleasure or distress, and it does not seem plausible

<sup>20</sup> At 1381b12 one reads that "we hate people if we merely think (*hupolambanomēn*)" they are thoroughly wicked. This might be taken to assign a role in hatred for full belief where in the other emotions an impression is said to be sufficient. But that would probably be to place too much weight on a somewhat incidental remark.



to identify it as essentially a feeling of pleasurable excitement of any kind (however much, like anger, it might involve pleasurable thoughts about what you will do to the one you feel that way toward if you get the chance). On the other hand, Aristotle denies that it involves being distressed at all (2.4.1382a13). So it is quite unclear how he envisages hatred as based in the one or the other sort of feeling, as his general conception of the emotions seems to require. He is led to say that it does not involve a feeling of distress as a consequence of his correct, and very interesting, observation (1382a8–12) that anger makes you want to subject the person you are angry at to pain (physical or mental), in return for the distress he or she has caused you in belittling or insulting you and so making you angry, whereas hatred makes you want the person hated to be badly off, even to cease existing (1382a15). He seems to think that because in hatred there is no special desire to inflict pain (to affect how the hated one feels), but only to ruin him (to affect how he is), hatred ought not to involve any underlying feeling of distress either. That does not, however, seem a good reason: Aristotle recognizes that the feelings of disgrace and eagerness to match others' accomplishments both involve a distressed state of mind, but neither aims at causing distress in another; nor, it seems, does either of these feelings (seem to Aristotle to) derive in any way from imagining distress as felt by another person, as perhaps pity does. And, of course, there is no danger of falling to keep anger and hatred distinct if both are based in feelings of distress; the same is true of envy and pity, for example, on Aristotle's account, and they are nonetheless kept perfectly distinct by other features of the two definitions. But perhaps in saying that hatred does not involve a distressed state of mind, as anger does, Aristotle is thinking of the impersonality of hatred: you can hate whole classes of people, not merely individuals, as he points out (1382a4–7), and you need not have been personally affected in any way by a person you nonetheless hate (1382a2–3). It might seem to Aristotle that distress must have some local or immediate external cause of a kind that would therefore be lacking in hatred. Hatred is, in any event, an especially complex emotion: it seems much more a settled state, although subject to increased or lessened intensity, than many of the other emotions are, and it seems that unlike many of them there is no plausible ground for thinking that other animals experience it. In fact, one might make the case that hatred rests upon a fully reasoned judgment, and not the mere appearance or impression, that the hated person is bad and detestable—so that it could seem to be an emotion of the reason itself, and not of the other parts of the soul as Aristotle conceives them.<sup>21</sup> So it may be to Aristotle's credit

<sup>21</sup> To make this case one would want to take seriously Aristotle's reference (see 1), 20) to belief in (not an appearance of) the wickedness of the hated person. Even if hatred is an "emotional" state of reason, however, that would provide no good grounds on which to deny that it involves distress or pleasure: on Aristotle's understanding of these latter phenomena, they can be experienced in the thinking of reasoned thoughts, as readily as in nonrational sorts of activity.

that he shows himself not comfortable imposing upon hatred his general account, according to which each emotion involves essentially either pleasurable excitement or a distressed state of mind.<sup>22</sup> Still, one remains puzzled.

#### IV

I come now to some special features of Aristotle's treatment of anger. Aristotle defines anger as "a desire (*orexis*), accompanied by distress, for what appears to one to be punishment for what appears to one to be belittlement by people for whom it was not proper to belittle oneself or someone close to one."<sup>23</sup> Of the several definitions, or partial definitions, of anger that one finds elsewhere in his works, this is closest to that which, with slight variations, occurs several times in the *Topics*<sup>24</sup>—as suits the dialectical character

<sup>22</sup> In any event, the opinion that hatred does not involve a distressed state of mind appears a well-entrenched one with Aristotle. He repeats it, again by contrast with anger, in a very different context in *Politics* 5.10.1312b33–34 (anger and hatred are, together with contempt, the leading causes of the overthrow of tyrannies). His description of hatred there makes one almost think he is talking about no emotion or passion at all, but a fully reasoned, dispassionate rejection and dislike. (I have benefited from discussion with Myles Burnyeat about the issues raised in this paragraph.)

<sup>23</sup> 2.4.1378a31–33. I translate the text of Kassel taking *tôn* ... *mē prosēkontōn*, as he suggests (following the construction at 1379b12), to refer to the perpetrators of the insult. It is odd that Aristotle only specifies within this appended explanatory phrase that the insult of the insult are the person himself or someone close to him, but there seems no reasonable alternative to so taking the text, as transmitted.

It is surely evident that the two occurrences of forms of *phanesthai* here are to be taken as references to how the angry person takes things (how they strike him, how they appear to him to be), if only because of the parallel here to the similar, and unmistakable, references to such appearances that occur regularly also in the case of other emotions analyzed in this part of the *Rhet.* (fear, 1382a21, etc.; confidence, 1383a17; *aischunē*, 1384a23, etc.; pity, 1385b13, etc.; righteous indignation, 1387a9; envy, 1387b11; *zēlos*, 1388a30, and see also 1380a10, on *oligōrias* and *phantomē oligōria* in the texts of the *Topics* cited in note 24 of this essay. The oddity of anger by "conspicuous" or the like (one finds this both in Robert's Oxford translation and in Dufour's in the Budé) seems to go back to Cope-Sandys (ad loc.). I doubt if it would even have occurred to anyone to take the Greek so, if it were not for the (odd-looking) first occurrence of *phantomēnas* here with *timōrias*: it certainly does seem attractive to suppose that occurrence involves a desire for conspicuous punishment for the insult, and that rendering seems more appropriate to the facts about anger than "apparent" or "what one takes to be." But it does not do well for the belittlement itself: anger does not require a conspicuous lack of regard, just one that one notices or takes to be there. One may suspect the text, as Spengel, followed by W. D. Ross in the OCT, did in overboldly bracketing *phantomēnas*; but in any event there seems no doubt at all that, if Aristotle did write it, he meant by it not "conspicuous" but "apparent," "what impresses one as being."

<sup>24</sup> See *Top.* 4.6.127b30–31, καὶ ἡ λύπη καὶ ἡ ὑπόληψις τοῦ ἀνυπολόγου ἐν τῷ τῷ ἔστιν, 6.13.151a15–16, καὶ μετ' ὑπόληψιν τοῦ ἀνυπολόγου, 8.1.156a32–33, ἡ ὀργὴ ὁμοίως ἐστὶν τιμωρίας διὰ τὴν ἀνυπολόγητον ἀνυπολόγητον. It is worth noting that in the first two of these definitions, but not the third, the angry person's view that he has been belittled is cast in terms



of the definitions in the *Rhetoric*. Interestingly, anger is the only emotion he examines in these chapters that he defines formally as an instance of desire, that is *orexis* (which is Aristotle's usual word for desire in general)—although it is worth noting that, in contrasting hatred and anger, he says that hatred is a desire (*ephestis*) for what is bad (for the person hated) (1382a8). That friendly feeling is also an instance of desire is perhaps implicit in his definition of it as “wishing someone what you think are good things . . .” (1380b35–1381a1), since “wishing” is regularly treated by Aristotle as one of the three basic forms of desire. Presumably kindly feeling, too, involves a similar wish.<sup>25</sup> Both before beginning his detailed survey (at 2.1.1378a4) and immediately afterward (at 2.12.1388b33), Aristotle does indeed mention appetitive desire (*epithumia*) as itself being one of the emotions, but he does not devote a chapter or part of a chapter to it.<sup>26</sup> Appetite comes in for prominent and highly interesting discussion at two places in the treatment of other emotions, anger (1379a10–22)—we will have a look at this passage shortly—and kindly feelings (1385a22–30), but it is not subjected there or anywhere in this part of the work to analysis as an emotion all on its own. So anger really does stand out from the other emotions as Aristotle treats them here: only it is defined in part as an *orexis* (desire) for anything.

From what we have already seen, it is clear enough what makes anger not only a desire but an emotion, according to Aristotle. Because it is accompanied by *lupe*, anger is a distressful, agitated desire for revenge; the angry person is upset about having been treated with apparent disregard and belittlement. In other words, it is not a cool and “rational” desire, a desire judiciously considered, to inflict pain or other punishment. In *Rhetoric* 1.10.1369a1–4, Aristotle uses “anger” (*orge*) itself as the name of one of the three types of desire that he there distinguishes (the other two being wish and appetite). That would imply that the type of desire to which anger belongs, according to the *Rhetoric* definition, was by its nature agitated

of belief, as opinion rationally arrived at (*hupolepsis*), rather than merely an impression or appearance. The *Rhetoric* seems more self-consciously decisive in favor of the latter type of definition, not only in the case of anger but in that of other emotions as well.

<sup>25</sup> But, as we have seen, Aristotle's formal definition of friendly feeling speaks rather of what the person with this feeling is moved to do (to help someone in need) than the feeling itself and its characteristics. I have already mentioned (n. 9) the difficulties Aristotle causes himself by defining friendly feeling, supposedly an emotion and so something nonrational, as based in a “wish.”

<sup>26</sup> In taking up anger and appetite as causes of potentially condemnable actions at 1.10.1369b14–16, he refers the reader forward to his discussion of the emotions in Book 2 to find out about anger, but goes on right there to speak about appetite (at the end of 1.11) and in 1.11). The omission of a discussion in Book 2 of appetite therefore seems to have been well planned. The fact that in Book 1.10–11 he explains what *epithumia* is, by way of telling us what pleasure is and what gives pleasure to different people, may explain why he omits to discuss *epithumia* as a *pathos* in 2.2–11; in effect, he had already said in 1.10–11 what the thought needed to be said about it, and saw no need to go further. However, he nowhere else or openly implies this explanation, so I put it forward only as a conjecture.

and distressful. In other writings, however, Aristotle regularly distinguishes between anger and “spirited” desire (*thumos*), using the latter as the name for his second type of desire and treating anger as a special case of it, the case where the desire is extremely agitated and distressed.<sup>27</sup> It is perhaps understandable that in such a dialectical discussion as that provided by the *Rhetoric* such refinements are neglected. But when they are taken into account, anger on Aristotle's view turns out to be (a) an especially agitated and distressful instance of “spirited” desire, (b) aroused by and directed specifically at what strikes the angry person to have been inappropriate and unjustified belittlement of himself or someone close to him, (c) aiming at inflicting a compensating pain on the belittler—as a means of demonstrating that he is not an inferior and trivial person, but a person whose power to inflict pain in return shows that he must be respected and paid heed to. Thus, in his account of anger, Aristotle combines three distinct elements that are indeed found elsewhere in his discussion but are nowhere else so clearly integrated: the angry person is in an agitated state of mind, caused by the way certain events or circumstances have struck him (whether or not he also believes that that is how they are), which is also a desire to respond in a well-motivated way to those events or circumstances as they appear to him.

As I mentioned above, anger has a special relationship, according to Aristotle, to the other type of nonrational desires, the appetites. The passage where he brings this out is worth quoting in full (1379a10–22):

As for our own frame of mind: we become angry when we are distressed. For a person who is feeling distressed is bent on something. So if anyone blocks him directly or indirectly in whatever it may be, for example a thirsty man in his drink, or if anyone acts contrary to him or does not act to support him, or makes trouble for him when he is in this state of mind, he becomes angry at them all. Hence people who are ill, or poor, or in love, or thirsty—in general, experiencing some appetitive desire and not getting what they want—are prone to anger and easily stirred up, especially against those who belittle their present condition. Thus a sick man is made angry when belittled in regard to his illness, a poor man in regard to his poverty, a man fighting a war in regard to the war, a man in love in regard to his love, and so with the others. Each of these people is carried along to his own anger by the emotion he is already feeling.<sup>28</sup>

The upset feeling that belongs to anger in all these cases is an offshoot of the upset feeling the person has been experiencing in having some aroused, but unsatisfied, appetite. It is as if a preexistent energy, the appetite, gets

<sup>27</sup> On *thumos* see, for example, *De an.* 2.3.414b2 and *MM* 1.12.1187b37, for *orge* as a special case of *thumos*-desire, see *De an.* 1.1.403a30 and *Top.* 8.1.156a32, with *Top.* 4.5. 126b8–10 and 2.7.113b1.

<sup>28</sup> I translate the text of Kassell, omitting the bracketed words in 1379a13 but disregarding the brackets in 1379a15–18.

redirected when blocked or obstructed, and becomes or gives rise to this new feeling of distress, the anger.

It is only in connection with anger, and only in this passage, that Aristotle devotes full attention to the ways in which different emotions interact so as to cause or prepare the ground for one another. As I have mentioned in passing, he does allude two or three times elsewhere to the opposite effect, the prevention of one emotion by the presence of another: for example, he says that people do not have friendly feelings for those of whom they are afraid (1381b33), that fear for oneself prevents feeling pity for another (1385b32-34), and that people feel disgraced when something apparently dishonorable about themselves comes to light before persons whom they esteem or admire (1384a26-29). But it is only here that he points toward any general theory of the underlying psychology of the emotions through which one might attempt to explain such phenomena as these, and work out other interactions among the different emotional states.

In other respects, too, the discussion of the emotions in the *Rhetoric* offers a less than fully comprehensive theory. Aristotle limits himself to just fifteen states of mind, ones selected so as to cover the range of emotions that the orator needs to know about in order to compose his public addresses with full effectiveness—whether by representing himself as motivated by them, or by finding means to arouse them in his audience and direct them suitably for the purposes of his discourse. So Aristotle neglects, as not relevant for this purpose, a number of emotions that a more general, independently conceived treatment of the emotions would presumably give prominence to. Thus grief, pride (of family, ownership, accomplishment), (erotic) love, joy, and yearning for an absent or lost loved one (Greek *pothos*) hardly come in for mention in the *Rhetoric* and are nowhere accorded independent treatment.<sup>29</sup> The same is true even of regret, which one would think would be of special importance for an ancient orator to know about, especially in judicial contexts. Furthermore, as we saw especially clearly in the case of anger, Aristotle seems to recognize three central elements as constituting the emotions—they are agitated, *affected* states of mind, arising from the ways events or conditions *strike* the one affected, which are at the same time *desires* for a specific range of reactive behaviors or other changes in the situation as it appears to her or him to be. However, he does not draw special attention to this common structure, and he does not accord equal attention to each of the three elements in the case of every emotion he discusses. Thus he may seem to neglect unduly the element of desire in his accounts of fear, confidence, pity, and the feeling of disgrace, and the second element, that of being struck by an impression that things are a certain way, is barely indicated in his accounts of friendly and kindly feelings and hatred. Similarly, we have seen that he denies that hatred involves feelings of distress, and that seems to imply that the first element, an affected state of mind, is

absent from this emotion; and the corresponding pleasurable affect is no part of his definition of friendly and kindly feelings. So one cannot say more than that there seems to underlie Aristotle's discussions of the emotions in the *Rhetoric* Book 2 an emerging general theory along these lines. Having done the dialectical work of assembling the data about these fifteen emotions in the *Rhetoric*, he might have gone on to address similarly the remaining major emotions, and advanced to the construction of a general, independent theory that would surely have held great interest. I hope I have been able to show that, nonetheless, his accounts of the emotions in the *Rhetoric* are richly suggestive, and rewarding from the point of view of the history of philosophy and of philosophy of mind and moral psychology too.

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<sup>29</sup> The last two emotions are among the ones Aristotle lists in *Nic. Eth.* 2.5.1105b21-23.