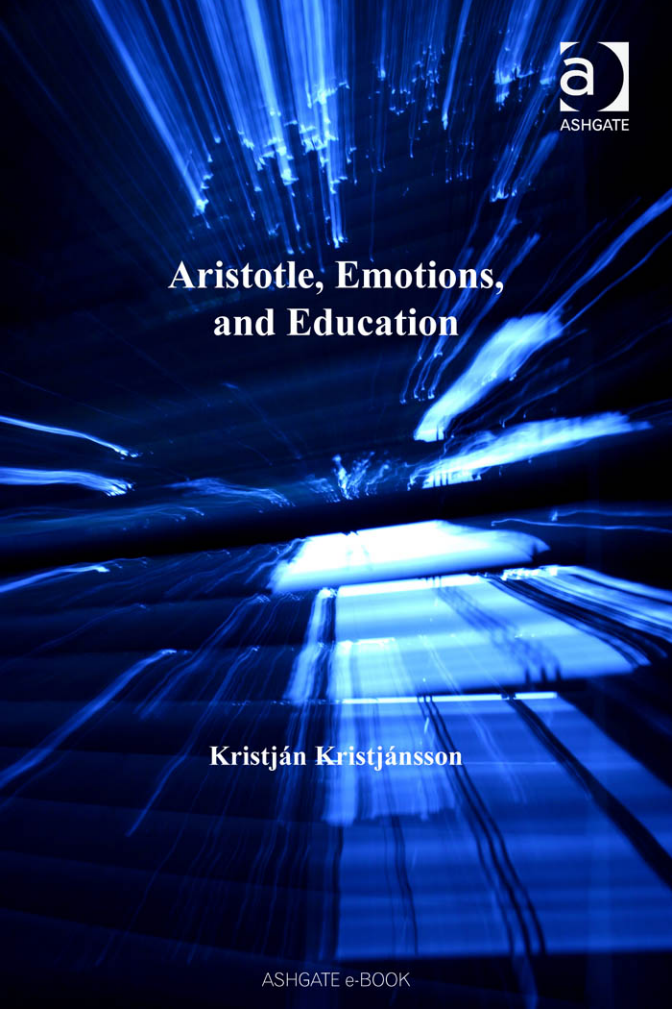
ASHGATE
Aristotle, Emotions, and Education
Kristján Kristjánsson
ASHGATE e-BOOK

ARISTOTLE, EMOTIONS, AND EDUCATION

What can Aristotle teach us that is relevant to contemporary moral and educational concerns? What can we learn from him about the nature of moral development, the justifiability and educability of emotions, the possibility of friendship between parents and their children, or the fundamental aims of teaching? The message of this book is that Aristotle has much to teach us about those issues and many others.

In a formidable display of boundary-breaking scholarship, drawing upon the domains of philosophy, education and psychology, Professor Kristjánsson analyses and dispels myriad misconceptions about Aristotle's views on morality, emotions and education that abound in the current literature – including the claims of the emotional intelligence theorists that they have revitalized Aristotle's message for the present day. The book proceeds by enlightening and astute forays into areas covered by Aristotle's canonical works, while simultaneously gauging their pertinence for recent trends in moral education.

This is an arresting book on how to balance the demands of head and heart: a book that deepens the contemporary discourse on emotion cultivation and virtuous living and one that will excite any student of moral education, whether academic or practitioner.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my friend and benefactor

Professor Terence H. McLaughlin (1949–2006).

Aristotle, Emotions, and Education

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And to my beloved Nora and Hlér, thank you for being there.

For mankind are by no means agreed about the things to be taught […] Neither is it clear whether education is more concerned with intellectual or with moral virtue

(Aristotle, *Politics*, 1337a36–9).

Virtually no prominent [contemporary] philosopher writes much about education

(Martha Nussbaum, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 37, 2006, p. 311).

Chapter 1

Introduction: Fusing Heart and Head

1.1 Aristotelianism and Moral Education

For philosophers of Aristotelian persuasion, the last quarter of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first has been an uplifting time in the area of moral education, with its extensive burgeoning of interest in Aristotelian, or at least quasi-Aristotelian, ideals of character building. As understood here, moral education is a multi-dimensional endeavour which draws on the domains of moral philosophy, psychology and education. Moral philosophy provides the ultimate goals at hand; psychology explains the conditions for those goals to be achieved; education presents the means to achieve them. And in all three domains we have recently witnessed developments and trends with lines of descent that can be traced back to Aristotle.

In *moral philosophy*, critical attention has shifted to forms of virtue-based naturalism, which are now seen as the main rivals of traditional utilitarianism and Kantianism. Like utilitarianism but unlike Kantianism, virtue-based naturalism rests on the assumption that moral properties and relations are natural properties and relations, and that moral philosophy must answer to empirical facts about what makes people thrive. Moral naturalism is a type of foundationalism that considers the ultimate grounds of morality to be rooted in biological and psychological facts about human nature, and the justification of moral claims to be substantive rather than formal. Actions of goodwill are thus good because they actualize substantive value-conferring properties, not – as for Kantians and other formalists – because of the way they are willed: by virtue of some formal qualities of choice. For utilitarian naturalists, those value-conferring properties solely concern happiness (*qua* pleasure and the absence of pain) and its potential maximization. But Aristotelian naturalists designate the generically human virtues of action and reaction – those characteristics human beings need to flourish. In recent years Aristotelian virtue theory has spawned a cottage industry of so-called virtue ethics that shares the same basic teleological orientation as Aristotle's virtue theory, although it tends to deviate considerably from the nuts and bolts of Aristotle's canonical account (see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Section 2.2).

In *psychology*, interest in the emotions as potential ingredients in the good life was launched in the late twentieth century, propelled by the powerful resurgence of an Aristotle-inspired cognitive view of the emotions as potentially infused with reason and amenable to cultivation and coaching. To speak of the deep and pervasive involvement of the emotions in the moral character of our lives – let alone thinking of them as potential moral virtues – would have sounded outlandish prior to this Aristotelian renaissance. It was the essential passivity of emotions that tended to be highlighted. In sharp contrast to the old ideal that reason should rule and passions be

suppressed, most contemporary emotion theories convey the message that emotional disengagement is tantamount to moral impoverishment, and that the human character is essentially 'a disposition to be affected in one set of ways or another' (Roberts 2003: 2). Thus moral education becomes largely a process of sensitization to proper feelings. Indeed, most philosophers who have written about the emotions during the recent proliferation of emotion research have been interested chiefly in their applicability to morality and moral education. Some of the recent academic interest in the educability and salience of the emotions has percolated through to the public, with buzzwords like 'emotional intelligence' suddenly becoming topics of spirited discussion in the workplace and at the dinner table. Although, as I argue in Chapter 6, the assumptions underlying 'emotional intelligence' may differ more from Aristotle's view than some of its exponents seem to realize, there is no doubt that both approaches share the general aim of managing our emotional life with intelligence.

The dissemination of Aristotelian ideas within *education* has also created new waves and ripples. In fact, two of the most prominent recent trends in values education are anchored firmly in Aristotelian assumptions. The first, *character education*, is an influential if as yet philosophically undiscerning and underdeveloped movement, representing back-to-basics morality and pedagogy. It has swept across the educational field, particularly in the USA, but has reverberations in Europe. The proponents of character education emphasize a need for the inculcation of a set of cosmopolitan basic virtues of action and reaction. They believe that those virtues must be transmitted through a plurality of methods, including, especially at the early stages, systematic modelling of worthy mentors and moral exemplars. They also believe that this transmission must occur partly via direct habituation, by which the relevant virtues seep into students' personalities like dye into wool. Values education must necessarily proceed through extrinsically activated osmosis, therefore, but not only through the development of the students' own skills of critical reasoning, as had long been the dominant orthodoxy. That orthodoxy harks back, on the one hand, to the Kohlbergian stress on cognitive skills in moral education and, on the other, to the ultra-liberal conception of such education as a mere exercise in values clarification. According to the character-education camp, this dominant orthodoxy has failed to live up to its promise – has failed to deliver the ultimate prize of moral education, which is to make students good. The phoenixian rise of character education has generally been congenial to Aristotelians. The unfortunate lack of direct rapport between character education and contemporary Aristotle-inspired virtue ethics notwithstanding, devout Aristotelians have reason to take heart in the character-education programme of essentially transcultural values, and in its focus on habituation as a necessary method of socio-moral schooling prior to and coterminous with the honing of children's critical reasoning and reflection.

Another movement in values education which has recently gained considerable prominence, especially in the USA, is that of *social and emotional learning*. Despite some reservations that I air in Chapter 6, it also seems bound to gain favour among Aristotelians. While incorporating some of the basic values of character education, social and emotional learning complements them with insights from the currently lively discursive field of emotional intelligence. In this way it reinforces, at least

obliquely, the Aristotelian point that virtue is about emotion as well as action: that in order to be fully virtuous, a person must not only act, but also react, properly.

Apart from its influence on recent trends in values education, Aristotelianism has been undergoing a revival in more general areas of educational discourse. What has come to the fore there, however, is not a single, all-embracing perspective of 'neo-Aristotelianism', but various distinguishable sub-perspectives. The most commanding of these, and the one I find occasion to scrutinize, considers teaching itself to be a 'practice' in the Aristotelian sense, and schooling to be a specific praxiological enterprise into which students must be initiated.

So much for a quick overview of the 'Aristotelian turn' in moral education. What has primarily fuelled this turn is debatable; I do not aspire here to a sociological or historical analysis of the conditions that have paved the way for a second coming of Aristotle. Earmarking this book as philosophical rather than social-scientific is its focus on the theoretical underpinnings, connections and justifications of the various types of Aristotelianisms germane to moral education. What needs to be engaged is both Aristotle himself and the recycled Aristotle of late. 'Does the latter adequately represent the former?' I ask. And, more importantly, 'Is Aristotelianism in contemporary moral education really up to scratch?' In the following pages of this chapter, I develop the import of those questions in greater detail.

One might reasonably pause at this juncture to ask if the succession of insights provided by the recent Aristotle-fuelled trends in moral philosophy, psychology and education amount to anything more than an amalgam of vaguely connected points. This introductory section is not the place to answer that question conclusively. Here I merely observe that what is distinctive in all these trends is an image of deeply *embodied* and *embedded* moral personhood: an image of the human self as an enmattered essence, which, if it is to realize its full potential, must think its feelings and feel its thoughts; and of a self, richly embedded in a social context, which is necessary for its existence as a unitary being. The title of this introductory chapter is meant to capture this basic underlying image and to highlight the Aristotelian insistence that we must balance and synthesize the demands of heart and head if ours is to be a well-rounded life, a life truly worth living. More needs to be said about this overarching notion of moral personhood, and I hope that the account of Aristotelian moral development in Chapter 2 goes some distance towards illuminating it. However, the most productive way to engage the ramifications for moral education in the Aristotelian notion is arguably through forays into the various areas in which Aristotelianism has, rightly or wrongly, been understood to provide guidance. That will be the aim of subsequent chapters.

There is no dearth of studies on (1) Aristotle on the emotions, (2) Aristotle on education and (3) the educational salience of the emotions. Yet to the best of my knowledge, no study has focused simultaneously on those three themes and their interconnections. To do so, as I have done in this work, one must span various fields of inquiry. Although my orientation is unabashedly philosophical, I have argued elsewhere at some length for the need to cross the barbed wire between moral philosophy and the social sciences (Kristjánsson 2006: Section 1.2). From a coherently naturalistic standpoint, it is futile to pursue moral philosophy at the level of uppercase abstractions, without input from social-science research about

what makes people tick. I do not hesitate to adopt insights from the psychology and education literatures, therefore, and to reap from them whatever advantages or disadvantages I deem salutary for my line of argument. Although it breaks some traditional – and in my view debilitating – disciplinary boundaries, I categorize this book as a study in *educational philosophy*. In order to sustain that categorization, one must be willing to accept a somewhat broad notion of 'educational philosophy'. Admittedly, the philosophy of education is still in the thrall of an identity crisis. Looked upon (or rather looked down upon) by many mainstream philosophers as being too peripheral and 'soft', its own practitioners do not even agree if the preposition 'of' in 'philosophy of education' is closer to that of 'leg of lamb' or to that of 'servant of Lord Snooty' (Carr 2003: 253). In my understanding, the former sense is closer to the mark. Moral education is, for example, a necessary extension of moral philosophy, which is, again, an indelible part of philosophy. There is no master here, no servant. In any event, the categorization of this book or its precise placement on library shelves is a side issue; what matters is the soundness of its conclusions.

1.2 Is Aristotle but a Ventriloquist's Dummy?

The current education literature – especially the moral education literature – is replete with direct and indirect references to Aristotle, made by Aristotelian aficionados and Aristotelian refuseniks alike. Let me identify, from among the common refrains, a number of assumptions about what Aristotle did or did not hold and how these assumptions relate to contemporary moral/educational concerns. Unfortunately, many of the assumptions abroad in the literature are unfounded, placing Aristotle in the role of a ventriloquist's dummy to mouth the author's own point of view. Following are a number of assumptions of that ilk – assumptions that serve as expository foils to my discussion in subsequent chapters.

Assumption A: Aristotle does not really provide a coherent conception of childhood. He offers no systematic theory of moral development, and his idea of moral virtue is based solely on self-control: teaching children to flex their will-power muscles.

Assumption B: Aristotle's view of moral upbringing neglects the role of critical reasoning. Moral education is reduced to mindless habituation, leaving us with two glaring paradoxes: 'extrinsically habituated reason' and 'heteronomously formed autonomy'.

Assumption C: Aristotle, the forefather of the cognitive theories of emotions, advises us, as his modern counterparts do, to rid ourselves of negative emotions. He shares with the cognitive theorists of late the insurmountable problem of the individuation of emotions.

Assumption D: Aristotle claims, mistakenly, that anger can be justified, and even that it should be taught by moral educators as an appropriate emotion. His elaboration of this claim reveals his impoverished notion of emotion regulation.

Assumption E: The contemporary theory of emotional intelligence constitutes the practical application of Aristotle's advice to bring intelligence to our emotions. Just

as Aristotle does, emotional intelligence teaches us how to control our emotions, to enable us to lead healthy and successful lives; but it does so in a more enlightening and serviceable way than Aristotle did.

Assumption F: Teaching children how to imitate positive moral exemplars can counteract the effect of increasingly negative role models. This strategy harks back to Aristotle's emotional virtue of emulation, which basically suggests that children should latch onto positive role models.

Assumption G: True character friendship, as described by Aristotle, cannot be formed between parents and their children, for both structural and moral reasons. And Aristotle himself was the first to draw attention to the moral reasons.

Assumption H: Aristotelian virtue is primarily about self-improvement. There is little room for other-regarding virtues (benevolence does not even count as a virtue) and therefore little to be learned from Aristotle about why we should help people in dire straits.

Assumption I: Agreeableness is not a moral virtue in itself, as Aristotle would hold that it is. Its value – the value of teachers being friendly towards their students, for instance – can be reduced to established moral virtues or explained independently, using non-moral reasons.

Assumption J: Teaching is best understood as *praxis* in the Aristotelian sense, guided by uncodifiable, context-dependent *phronesis*, as explained by the moral particularist *par excellence*, Aristotle.

The aim of the following chapters is to undermine those common assumptions, one by one, and to offer accounts that are more textually faithful to Aristotle and more substantively plausible. But first, an important caveat is in order. I do not pretend to be a classics expert, let alone an Aristotelian scholar, and my goals are not exegetical: I have unearthed no new readings of Greek texts or hit upon novel interpretations that are destined to shake the classics world. I rely upon existing translations and my own natural and unsullied – or so I hope to persuade readers – understanding of them. Whenever interpretative controversies are invoked, I try to locate their practical relevance, as my eventual aim is to say something germane about moral education rather than about Aristotle. Aristotle's position in this book, in other words, is not to be viewed as a relic of ancient philosophy, but as food for current educational thought.

In light of this substantive approach to Aristotle's texts, I try to overlook interpretative issues that I deem to be primarily of academic rather than practical importance. Take the ongoing debate between 'judgementalists' and 'phenomenalists' within the cognitive camp of emotion theories. The judgementalists understand the relevant cognition in emotion to be a belief or a judgement; the phenomenalists understand it to involve a perception-driven recognition. Both factions support their position with textual references to Aristotle (cf. Fortenbaugh 2002: 94–103). For questions concerning the moral coaching of our emotions, this issue is of scant, if any, relevance, and I omit it from consideration here, although it happens to interest me in a different context (see Kristjánsson 2002: 30–36).

For me, the search for the real Aristotle and the sloughing off of the unreal Aristotles is a substantive quest rather than a textual odyssey. I count myself as an Aristotelian, albeit self-styled rather than fundamentalist, and I hope that my

arguments will appeal to readers of broad Aristotelian sympathies. Given the status of contemporary cognitive theories of emotion, the current popularity of virtue theories, and the recent prominence, in educational circles, of character education and social and emotional learning – all with a distinctly Aristotelian flavour – I suspect that the category of people with 'broad Aristotelian sympathies' should reach beyond devout Aristotelians. I even venture to hope that many of my conclusions will appeal to readers with no ready Aristotelian philosophy in their pockets, and even to followers of distinctly different moral outlooks.

Approaching Aristotle as a self-styled Aristotelian moral philosopher, rather than as an Aristotelian exegete, has several self-evident disadvantages. But it may have its advantages, too. Just, as someone once said, it is an exile's prerogative to love an adopted home with an absence of irony that is impossible for a native, so the affection for Aristotle's works among those who are not classics scholars can have a holistic, childlike quality that is far removed from the spirit of textual hair-splitting. For me, Aristotelianism is a condition more than a scholarly position; one acquires the ability to smell out what Aristotle would say on a given issue and then follows one's scent into the thicket of his writings. If it turns out that one's scent is mistaken and Aristotle did not really say anything important on the issue, or, worse yet, was mistaken in his view, then the consolation lies in ascertaining what Aristotle *should* have said.

But this approach invites an immediate challenge: have I not put myself in an unassailable win-win position with regard to Assumptions *A–J*? If they are not properly grounded in Aristotle's works, I can fault them for that; and if they are so grounded, I can fault them for being wrong in any case! Perhaps that is not really a win-win position, for the converse of this approach is that even if the assumptions happen to be grounded in Aristotle's works, they can still be wrong. An *argumentum ad verecundiam* is never sufficient; it will always be incumbent upon me to provide Aristotle-independent reasons for the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the assumptions under discussion. But then, a possible interlocutor might continue, why raise the spectre of Aristotle in the first place as some sort of an argumentative *deus ex machina*? If, in the end, nothing much turns on what he did or did not say about the substantive issues at hand, and the aim is not simply to do Aristotle's bidding, why not simply explore the pros and cons of the issues as they arise and disburden ourselves of the Aristotelian baggage?

There are at least three reasons not to follow the interlocutor's suggestion. One is that Aristotle has important things to say about most issues relevant to moral education. His views on education are usually of modern appositeness and they invariably repay attention. More specifically, there is great philosophical illumination to be gained by studying his views. Naturally they can never provide the last word on any contemporary educational issue, but they can offer a useful first word and sometimes grant us a certain philosophical edge. Giving readers some flavour of the variety and richness of Aristotle's ideas on emotions and education can even constitute a worthwhile goal in its own right – although that is not the key goal of this book.

A second reason for ignoring the interlocutor's suggestion is the fact that Aristotle's views are already so frequently cited and used as critical ammunition

in the current educational literature. Ever since Aristotle's day, his ideas have assumed a life of their own; and they have frequently provided the most convenient peg upon which to hang discussions of topical issues. Giving Aristotle a towering status in the exploration of the issues under discussion in this book, therefore, is not merely an idiosyncrasy. It is not a question of riding my own hobbyhorse; Aristotle is hobbyhorse to almost everyone, whether in a negative or a positive sense, and we have ample experience-based grounds for thinking that it deepens rather than obscures the relevant discourse to invoke his views.

A third reason is that Aristotle is a stickler for systematization and a master of broad-range thinking. By contrast, too much of the current discourse on particular issues in moral education seems to occur in a theoretical vacuum. Absent or in short supply is any clear background conception of the world and our place in it: of the ultimate goals of living and hence of education for the good life. All this is provided in good measure by Aristotle; everything he says falls into place with seamless continuity.

Precisely because of Aristotle's penchant for systematization and order, there is good reason to smell a rat when assumptions are made in his name that seem to defy that order and give rise to glaring anomalies. Consider claims that are encountered and addressed in following chapters. One such example is that Aristotle (who proposed a highly moralistic vision of human well-being) would acquiesce to the modern ideal of emotional intelligence, which basically advances a non-moral vision of well-being through worldly success. Another is that Aristotle (who denied to self-control the role of a real virtue) would concentrate on teaching people to flex their will-power muscle in order to lead a fulfilling life. A third is that Aristotle (the great believer in scientific order and rational explanations) would subscribe to a scientophobic anti-theory, anti-method stance on education. On those issues and many others has much fallacious reasoning been perpetuated in Aristotle's name, as becomes clear in this book. Indeed, there are blissful profusions of confusions on many, if not most, of the specific issues Aristotle explored in relation to moral education. Today's retooled Aristotelianism is not always good Aristotelianism. That need not be a matter for great surprise; even good academics are not immune to the perpetration of pedestrian fallacies when recycling the works of past masters. Think of all the nonsense ascribed to Husserl in the contemporary literature on phenomenology as a methodology (noted, for example, felicitously by Paley 1997) or how postmodernists of various stripes have appropriated the works of Nietzsche and even Wittgenstein for their sinister ends.

When reading the works of some alleged 'neo-Aristotelians', I have repeatedly been reminded of an old Chinese fable about a certain Lord Ye who professed to be so fond of dragons that all the decorations and carvings in his house had to bear the design of that mythical animal. On learning about Lord Ye's obsession, the Dragon in the Heaven descended from on high to pay him a visit. It poked its head in the window and swung its tail into Lord Ye's house. At the sight of the dragon, however, the Lord turned pale and white-lipped and immediately took to his heels. The upshot of the fable was that Lord Ye did not really love dragons; what he did love was something in the shape of a dragon, but not a real one. The same, I suggest

in what follows, may apply to many 'neo-Aristotelians' and their professed love of Aristotle.

I need to acknowledge another possible misgiving about the application of Aristotelian ideas to present moral and educational concerns – the feasibility of conjugating the past in the present. More specifically, the argument would go, are not many of the issues raised by Aristotle relative to specific conditions of ancient Greece – linguistic, psychological and political? And to what extent can Aristotle's message be shorn of those conditions and projected onto modern concerns?

There are three issues to be addressed here: potential linguistic, psychological and political relativity. In an otherwise enlightening and pro-Aristotelian account of emotions in ancient Greece, David Konstan makes heavy weather of the fact that there is not a perfect overlap between Greek and English emotional vocabularies; the Greek term for emotional reactions ('*pathē*') is not even the literal equivalent of the word 'emotions'. Konstan takes an analogy from colour words: 'Blue' does not correspond perfectly to similar colour labels in other languages; a colour shade that an English person perceives as blue might be perceived by a person from another linguistic community as green, thus making literal translations of colour words impossible (Konstan 2006: Ch. 1). If this is the case with emotion words, how can we be sure that an Aristotelian analysis of the nature and moral standing of a given 'Greek' emotion has any bearing for modern speakers of English?

My riposte would be that although it is true that the Greek emotional lexicon does not map neatly onto modern English concepts, this type of linguistic relativity is not injurious to the application of Aristotle's emotion theory to modern concerns. If we know how 'corresponding' colour words in two languages divide the colour spectrum slightly differently, then we can account for that difference (in principle at least) in our translations. Similarly, if (1) Person *A* in ancient Greece believed that Rival *B* had received some favour from Person *C*, which *A* thought *A* deserved more or as much as *B*; (2) *A* is unhappy about this, and would like to remove the favour from *B*; and (3) *A* is angry at *C* for having favoured *B* over *A*, then we can safely say that *A* was being jealous of *B* (see Kristjánsson 2002: Ch. 5). It does not matter that there was no specific word for jealousy in ancient Greek; neither does it matter that some English speakers would describe this as a case of envy rather than jealousy or that the dividing line between 'jealousy' and 'envy' in everyday English is not necessarily the same as the line between '*Eifersucht*' and '*Neid*' in German or '*afbrýðisemi*' and '*öfund*' in Icelandic. As long as we are clear about the cognitive consorts and desires underlying the emotion of jealousy, we can explore its moral salience, educability and so forth. After all, the role of the moral philosopher is not to record and report prevailing linguistic usage, but rather to argue for the way specific terms should most serviceably be used (see Kristjánsson 1996: Ch. 7). In other words – to return to the emotions – if we are clear about the cognitions and desires that we deem important and want to focus upon in the given case, then we can easily abstract away from any linguistic differences and extract the core emotion we seek.

This brings us, however, to a potentially more damaging type of relativity, also suggested by Konstan in the case of Greek emotions. Emotions may not only be named and collocated differentially in different societies, but also experienced differently and in different contexts, depending on the existing social mores. Konstan

claims, for instance, that the social world of the Greeks was unlike our own in key respects. The ancient Greeks, he argues, were preoccupied with concerns about rivalry, social standing and face-saving. The emotions elicited in that context were typically psychological responses to situations that resulted from actions entailing consequences for one's social position rather than for one's personal ideals (Konstan 2006: Ch. 1). Now this is obviously an empirical claim. What I shall say about it at this point is simply that I do not find it plausible. For one thing, it flies in the face of Aristotle's empirical essentialism and cosmopolitanism regarding human nature, crystallized in his much-quoted observation that 'in our travels we can see how every human being is akin […] to a human being' (Aristotle 1985: 208 [1155a20–22]; cf. Nussbaum 1992; 1993). Furthermore, a close study of Greek sources seems to reveal that the ancient Greeks were as capable as we are of experiencing self-focused guilt as distinct from other-focused shame (Williams 1993). Moreover, a certain obsession with one's social standing does not appear to be a condition specific to the ancients. Judging from the media buzz surrounding the recently fashionable concept of 'status anxiety', it seems to be an equally familiar obsession to moderns and, indeed, a universal phenomenon (De Botton 2004). The issue of socio-psychological relativity will not be settled once and for all in the chapters of this book. Suffice to say that for those of us who believe that human beings constitute a distinct natural species living in a relatively homogeneous natural and social environment, there is every reason to be hospitable to the idea of learning about emotions and morality from astute and insightful thinkers, wherever they live and whenever they lived.

None of this is to deny that the political system of ancient Greece differed from ours and that some of Aristotle's ideas were unique to that system. Nor is it to deny that some of Aristotle's observations were empirically unfounded, either universally or contextually (relative to the system in question). There is no reason to kneel to Aristotle and accept all he says as gospel. John Wallach (1992) thinks, however, that the political relativity of Aristotle's claims and his various errors of judgement – some parochial, some more deep-rooted – make it impossible to shear from his system any script from which we moderns might take our cues, without eliminating its coherence and emptying it of its substance. In Wallach's view, such a transcultural undertaking violates Aristotle's own insistence on the unity of form and content. More specifically, it disregards the way in which Aristotle's historical context (such as prevailing conditions of power and literary form) constitutes the meaning and scope of his views – including his prejudices based on race and gender. Aristotle's world was not today's world of democratic citizens, nation states and corporations; any reconstructions of his views for modern consumption are mere interpretative constructs which say more about the interpreter than they say about Aristotle.

If we concentrate on Aristotle's political writings, Wallach may have a point. Even though Wallach's analysis belies the inherent radicalism of some of Aristotle's political ideas – for his time as well as for ours – it is true that many of those ideas transcend their time and place poorly, if at all. It remains to be asked, however, if the same applies to Aristotle's general observations about human emotions, human nature and well-being. If something akin to Aristotle's empirical essentialism of human beings holds true, then applying Aristotle's observations to modern concerns may amount to more than an unreasonable attempt to separate form and content

– regardless of all the specific chinks in the Aristotelian armour (his occasional empirical errors and parochialisms, for instance). The time that has elapsed since those observations were made may, rather than defusing their content, help us to hold it under a clearer light. Recall that the Owl of Minerva typically takes its flight at dusk. Furthermore, we should bear in mind Aristotle's well-known message: the same matter can assume different forms and the same form can accommodate different types of matter. This book is not only about the fusion of heart and head; it is, at a more general level, about the fusion of Aristotelian form with today's moral and educational matter.

1.3 Plan of the Book

I use Assumptions *A–J* as my starting points in Chapters 2–11, respectively. In order to forestall a charge of rhetorical shadowboxing, I should provide some indication of the derivation of these assumptions. I also use this opportunity to summarize the content of each of the subsequent chapters.

I set out in Chapter 2 to explore Aristotelian moral development. It is commonly contended or tacitly assumed that Aristotle does not provide a sustained, comprehensive discussion of the human child. It has even been argued that he seems to have had little interest in the nature of childhood (see Tress 1997, although she disagrees), perhaps even paving the way for what MacIntyre (1999) refers to as the lamentable neglect of childhood in the mainstream Western philosophical tradition (cf. Welchman 2005). According to this assumption, Aristotle offers no systematic, Kohlbergian-type theory of moral development, but simply presents children with a bag of sundry virtues (Kohlberg 1970) and tells them (and adults too) to get a grip on themselves and to put these virtues into practice by flexing their will-power muscles (Cohen 2003). I concentrate on these assumptions by providing an overview of some of Aristotle's basic moral concepts and by resuscitating an Aristotelian theory of moral development. I subsequently try to secure a deeper understanding of some virtues that Aristotle seems to have viewed as unique to childhood, and to develop his notions of self and self-control. What comes to the fore is definitely not the image of a thinker ignoring the salience of childhood.

Chapter 3 situates the Aristotelian theory of moral development within a wider reflection on the role of independent critical reasoning versus dependent extrinsically driven habituation in moral upbringing. Aristotle's theory of moral development – as well as contemporary character-education accounts building on that theory – are commonly said to leave us with what R.S. Peters termed the 'paradox of moral education' (Peters 1981; cf. Frankena 1965: 60; McLaughlin and Halstead 1999: 144). I clarify this notion by identifying two subordinate paradoxes: how habituated reason is psychologically possible and how heteronomously formed autonomy is morally and politically possible and justifiable. I sketch possible Aristotelian solutions to those paradoxes and argue that, for Aristotle, it is essentially an empirical fact, to be further explained by natural scientists, that habituated reason develops within an individual through successful upbringing into critical reason; and that a heteronomously formed self becomes capable of making autonomous decisions. According to the

Aristotelian model, the moral and political justification of heteronomously formed autonomy will, moreover, be provided by the specifically human substantive good of *eudaimonia*.

Chapter 4 takes its cue from the fact that Aristotle is the forefather of the cognitive theories of emotions. Given that cognitive theories make room for the educability and possible eradication of emotions, it is typically assumed that Aristotle, like his modern counterparts, advises us to rid ourselves of negative emotions (Goleman 1995). However, as I interpret Aristotle, he seems to have subscribed to the view that there are no morally expendable emotions – emotions which could ideally, from a moral standpoint, be eradicated from human life. This view, counter-intuitive as it may appear, merits investigation. I argue first that the alleged truism that so-called negative emotions are expendable does not bear scrutiny. I then show that the plausibility of Aristotle's view turns largely on the question of how emotions are to be individuated. After probing that question in relation to contemporary theories of emotion, I explore how our emotions and moral virtues relate to distinct spheres of human experience and how emotion concepts can best carve up the emotional landscape. I argue finally that there are certain normative reasons for specifying emotion concepts such that Aristotle's view holds true.

Chapter 5 addresses the fact that much of the contemporary emotion literature seems to be based on the assumption that anger cannot be justified, or at least that it cannot or should not be taught as a proper emotion (Goleman 1995; Cohen 2003). It tends, then, to be further assumed that Aristotle's insistence upon the teachability of justified anger brings out his impoverished notion of emotion regulation. I argue that there are three distinct subquestions encompassed in the general question of whether or not teachable justified anger exists: (1) the psychological question of whether or not emotions in general, and anger in particular, can be regulated; (2) the moral question of whether or not anger can ever be morally justified; and (3) the educational question of whether or not we have any sound methods at our disposal for teaching justified anger. I then weave Aristotelian responses to those questions together with insights from the current psychological literature on emotion regulation, and conclude that there is no good reason for teachers of moral education to shy away from the teaching of justified anger in the classroom.

Chapter 6 draws on the conclusions of previous chapters to attack head-on the claim of contemporary exponents of 'emotional intelligence' that their theory merely constitutes the practical application of Aristotle's fundamental message of bringing intelligence to our emotions (Goleman 1995). Various marked differences between emotional intelligence and Aristotelian emotional virtue are highlighted and explored in this chapter. I argue that the claims of emotional intelligence lack moral ballast and that when this weakness is added to an existing stack of educational problems attached to the implementation of 'emotional intelligence' programmes, educators had better rethink their reliance on 'emotional intelligence' as a model of emotion cultivation. This conclusion has important implications for practitioners of social and emotional learning who want to incorporate the mantra of 'emotional intelligence' as a key element in an extensive classroom programme of character building. Perhaps they would be better advised to revert to the teachings of Aristotle himself.

Chapter 7 focuses on (1) the Aristotelian emotional virtue of emulation, (2) some current character-education-inspired accounts of the use of role models in moral education, and, most importantly, (3) the potential relevance of (1) for (2). It is commonly assumed in the current character-education literature that teaching children how to imitate positive moral exemplars can counteract the effect of increasingly negative role models. This strategy has even been trotted out under the banner of Aristotelianism (Lickona 1991; Rose 2004). I argue that this role-modelling strategy is beset with three unsolved problems: (1) the empirical problem of *why* this method is needed, (2) the methodological problem of *how* students are to be inspired to emulation, and (3) the substantive moral problem of *what* precisely should be taught. Whereas the first of these three problems may be overlooked with impunity, the second and third stand in urgent need of rectification if role modelling is to retain its moral and educational import. After exploring Aristotle's notion of emulation, I suggest that his rich and nuanced notion may hold the key to the solution of both problems. Such Aristotelian solutions are then spelled out and defended.

Can parents and their children be friends? The prevailing philosophical view seems to be that they cannot, at least not in the Aristotelian understanding of true 'character friendship' (Kupfer 1990; Jacquette 2001). Nevertheless, this view will seem counter-intuitive to many people. Chapter 8 critically explores the claims that there are structural and/or moral barriers which exclude true friendship between parents and their children. Kupfer's (1990) multi-faceted arguments for the claims of structural barriers do not succeed, or succeed only on an overly restrictive conception of friendship. Moreover, on the interpretative approach taken to Aristotle's account of friendship in this chapter, his account does not bar parent-child friendships for moral reasons. Rather, Aristotle's insights lend strength to the view that such friendships are possible and, indeed, common.

Chapter 9 takes issue with the assumption that Aristotle does not consider benevolence to be a virtue and that there is little to learn from him about why we should help people in dire straits (for example, Frankena 1965: 198). As an antidote to this assumption, I explore Aristotle's virtue of generosity. Surprisingly, the virtue of generosity – at least generosity in the context of world poverty – is absent from most current curricula in the field of moral education. I begin the discussion by characterizing two types of persons who may seem to be generous but who do not really possess generosity as a stable character trait. I do so by dint of fictional characters from two well-known novels – Nick Hornby's *How to Be Good* and Albert Camus' *The Fall* – showing how the protagonists of both novels ('the do-gooder' and 'the vain') fall short of true generosity. I then consider Aristotle's specification of generosity, and explain how Aristotle's generous person morally surpasses both character types. I finally address didactic issues – how to teach generosity – by highlighting the quasi-Aristotelian method of 'service learning'.

Chapter 10 spells out an Aristotelian virtue of agreeableness and defends it morally along Aristotelian lines, along with compliance with good manners in so far as they involve a display of agreeableness. The current common assumption is that agreeableness is not in itself a moral virtue. Its value – the value of teachers treating their students agreeably, for instance – is either reduced to that of established moral virtues (Buss 1999) or attributed independently to non-moral reasons (Martin 1993).

Both these strategies are explored and rejected. I also suggest and rebut various possible objections to my account. Finally, the chapter concludes with an illustrative practical example of an area in which Aristotelian agreeableness is particularly salient as a moral concern: the school as the site of profound and sensitive teacher-student interactions.

A 'neo-Aristotelianism' that connects educational reasoning and reflection to *phronesis* and education to *praxis* has gained a considerable following in recent educational discourse (Dunne 1993; Carr 1995). In Chapter 11, I identify four cardinal claims of this *phronesis-praxis* perspective:

1. Aristotle's epistemology and methodology imply a stance that is essentially anti-method and anti-theory with regard to practical philosophy.
2. 'Producing', under the rubric of *techné*, as opposed to 'acting' under the rubric of *phronesis*, is an unproblematically codifiable process.
3. *Phronesis* must be given a particularist interpretation.
4. Teaching is best understood as *praxis* in the Aristotelian sense, guided by *phronesis*.

I challenge these claims, arguing that they have insufficient grounding in Aristotle's own writings, and that none of them stands up to scrutiny.

Finally, Chapter 12 assembles and amplifies some of the conclusions from preceding chapters, with special emphasis on the different types of 'fusion' at work in Aristotle's texts. By then, hopefully, as the glimpse of Aristotle's theory of moral development and moral upbringing from Chapter 2 has unfolded through the elaboration of a number of disparate but interlocking themes, readers will have realized the full potential of Aristotelianism for contemporary practices of moral education.

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Chapter 2

Aristotelian Moral Development

2.1 Aristotelian Basics

Assumption A: 'Aristotle does not really provide a coherent conception of childhood. He offers no systematic theory of moral development, and his idea of moral virtue is based solely on self-control: teaching children to flex their will-power muscles.'

Is this assumption true?

This chapter begins with an exploration of some Aristotelian basics, under the supposition that the reader has some familiarity with such basics and requires a review rather than a detailed explanation. The features most salient for our present purposes can await elaboration in subsequent sections.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle proposes a theory of 'happiness' (*eudaimonia*) – perhaps better translated as 'well-being' or 'flourishing' – as the ultimate good and unconditional end (*telos*) of human beings, for the sake of which they do all other things. Equating *eudaimonia* with mere contentment would be fit only for 'grazing animals'. A life devoted to money-making may also be safely ignored; 'wealth is not the good we are seeking', as it is useful merely for some other end (Aristotle 1985: 1–8 [1094a1–1096a10]). According to Aristotle, it is empirically true that the well-being of human beings consists of the realization of intellectual and moral virtues and in the fulfilment of their other specifically human physical and mental capabilities. The virtues are at once conducive to and constitutive of *eudaimonia*; each true virtue represents a stable character state (*hexis*) that is intrinsically related to *eudaimonia*. Importantly for present purposes, Aristotle's *eudaimonia* is a radically moralized notion; it is impossible to achieve *eudaimonia* without being morally good – without actualizing the moral virtues.

Each moral virtue constitutes a specific medial character state, flanked by the extremes of deficiency and excess. There is only one way, the medial way, to be 'correct': to be inclined to act or feel in the right way, towards the right people, at the right time. But there are a number of ways in which to be 'bad' (Aristotle 1985: 44 [1106b29–35]). Nowhere in his corpus does Aristotle produce a definitive list of all the character states that can count as moral virtues. For example, it is often not entirely clear which of the praiseworthy emotional states discussed in his *Rhetoric* should be considered full-blown virtues (some obviously are) and which are merely concomitants of other virtues, in particular those categorised as such in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The list of the Aristotelian moral virtues from that work, shown in Table 2.1, should not, in any case, be taken as exhaustive.

Table 2.1 Aristotelian moral virtues discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

Deficiency	*Mean*	*Excess*
Cowardice	Bravery	Rashness
Insensibility	Temperance	Intemperance
Ungenerosity	Generosity	Wastefulness
Niggardliness	Magnificence	Vulgarity
Pusillanimity	Great-mindedness	Vanity
Under-ambitiousness	Right Ambition	Over-ambitiousness
Inirascibility	Mildness (of temper)	Irascibility
Quarrelsomeness	Friendliness	Obsequiousness
Self-deprecation	Truthfulness (about oneself)	Boastfulness
Boorishness	Wit	Buffoonery

One of the virtues on this list occupies a special position. Great-mindedness (*megalopsychia*) is a higher-order virtue which incorporates the others and makes them greater; great-minded persons thus possess greatness in each virtue, while exhibiting some unique features, such as pridefulness, that cannot be reduced to the other virtues (see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Ch. 3). More specifically, the great-minded person 'thinks himself worthy of great things and is really worthy of them' because he truly exhibits all the moral virtues (Aristotle 1985: 97 [1123b2–5]).

Some aspects of Aristotle's virtue theory, which clearly distinguish it from contemporary virtue ethics, should be noted here – however much exponents of the latter type of ethics want to align themselves with their imperious predecessor. More specifically, two serious objections that tend to be levelled at today's virtue ethics – the self-centredness objection and the action/emotion-guiding objection – leave Aristotle's virtue theory untouched. First, the so-called *self-centredness objection* alleges that virtue ethics make agents themselves the focus of self-concerning sanctimonious attention, hence obscuring and ignoring the essential other-concern of morality. Practitioners of virtue ethics will thus be guilty of a certain kind of moral self-indulgence, constantly asking themselves what they can do to preserve their own virtuousness; caring not so much about others as about themselves caring about others. Second, one of the most significant demands of a moral theory is that it be able to provide us with some kind of a decision procedure, instructing us what to do and how to feel in a proper way in the morally relevant circumstances. However, according to the *action/emotion-guiding objection*, virtue ethics fails precisely in this respect to deliver the goods; it bestows no order of priorities upon the virtues, and therefore offers no help in solving painful moral dilemmas (see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Section 2.2).

In stark contrast to contemporary virtue ethics, there is no hint in Aristotle of the thesis that all the virtues are of equal or incommensurable standing or that their primary benefit lies in making the virtuous agents better persons. Rather, the greatest virtues are necessarily those most useful to others: justice, courage, generosity and great-mindedness, for instance (see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Section 2.2). Moreover, Aristotle goes out of his way to 'try to offer help' in solving moral

quandaries, while admitting that it 'is not easy to define [such] matters exactly' (Aristotle 1985: 36, 241 [1104a10–11, 1164b26–30]). But if we are sometimes faced with painful trade-offs between virtues, where does that leave Aristotle's famous thesis of the unity of the virtues, according to which each virtue implies all the others (one cannot have one without having all)? It is impossible to understand that thesis as implying that, as all their virtues will be in complete mutual harmony, fully virtuous persons will never be caught up in moral dilemmas. (If that were the case, why discuss moral quandaries?) To understand the unity thesis, something must be said first about practical wisdom: *phronesis*.

Aristotle's *phronesis* is an intellectual virtue (virtue of thought) that serves the moral virtues; for, while the moral virtues make 'the goal correct', *phronesis* 'makes what promotes the goal [correct]' (Aristotle 1985: 168 [1144a7–9]). This intellectual virtue helps the moral virtues find their right ends and the suitable means to their ends. More specifically, *phronesis* 'is a state grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about what is good or bad for a human being' (Aristotle 1985: 154 [1140b4–6]). We cannot be 'fully good' without *phronesis*, nor can we possess *phronesis* without virtue of character (Aristotle 1985: 171 [1144b30–32]). Stripped of the virtue of character, *phronesis* degenerates into a mere cunning capacity: what Aristotle calls 'cleverness'. Cleverness involves the capacity to act or react in such a way as to 'promote whatever goal is assumed and to achieve it'. If 'the goal is fine, cleverness is praiseworthy, and if the goal is base, cleverness is unscrupulousness'; hence, both the *phronimoi* (persons exhibiting *phronesis*) and the unscrupulous can be called clever (Aristotle 1985: 154, 168–9 [1140b4–11, 1144a14–1144b1]).

To return to Aristotle's unity-of-the-virtues thesis, what he actually says, in arguing against the separability of the virtues, is that when one has *phronesis*, which is a single state, one has 'all the [moral] virtues as well' (Aristotle 1985: 171 [1145a1–3]). A more charitable interpretation of those words than the exclusion of the possibility of moral dilemmas would be – if put into modern philosophical language – that all the moral virtues (except perhaps the supreme and combining one of great-mindedness) yield *prima facie* injunctions. The person who has acquired *phronesis*, however, has the wisdom to adjudicate the relative weight of those injunctions and to reach a measured verdict. The sense in which the virtues are inseparable, then, is the sense in which *phronesis* correctly oversees all the virtues and judges when and to what extent each virtue applies in each case. If honesty weighs more heavily than friendliness in a given case – say, when a school teacher must tell disruptive students in no uncertain terms that their behaviour cannot be tolerated – it is not because friendliness has been deferred or essentially separated from honesty; it is because friendliness demands no more in the correctly weighed case. Notably, to exhibit *phronesis* does mean that every moral problem is addressed through a long period of reflection and deliberation. Sometimes virtuous agents must act quickly or instinctively; then what matters is to what extent previous decisions, informed by *phronesis*, have become ingrained in their characters and can guide them automatically to the right actions and feelings.

To talk about right actions *and* feelings is crucial here, for a distinctive feature of Aristotle's virtue theory is the assumption that emotional reactions may also constitute virtues. Emotions can, no less than actions, have an 'intermediate and

best condition [...] proper to virtue' – when they are felt 'at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end and in the right way' (Aristotle 1985: 44 [1106b17–35]). If the relevant emotion is 'too intense or slack', we are badly off in relation to it, but if it is intermediate, we are 'well off' (Aristotle 1985: 41 [1105b26–8]). And persons can be fully virtuous only if they are disposed to experience emotions in this medial way on a regular basis.

Strictly speaking, however, specific episodic passions do not constitute virtues, any more than individual actions do. Rather, the virtues are, as we have seen, settled character states: *hexeis*. We are praised or blamed for our virtues and vices, but we 'do not blame the person who is simply angry' (Aristotle 1985: 41 [1105b20–1106a7]). So the issue here is about emotions *qua* general emotional traits that we *have*, not about the *experience* of individual episodic passions. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle introduces a number of virtuous traits of that kind, along with their respective extremes: vices. Most notable there are the desert-based emotions, such as compassion (pain at another's undeserved bad fortune) and righteous indignation (pain at another's undeserved good fortune), which together seem to form an overarching trait of justice as an emotional virtue (see Kristjánsson 2006: Ch. 3, for a detailed analysis).

The precise relationship between virtues of action and emotional virtues is not always entirely clear in Aristotle's texts (cf. Roberts 1989). He often seems to suggest that there is a general emotional trait that corresponds to each moral virtue, yet he is inconsistent on this topic. Some virtues are simply such emotional traits in a mean (such as compassion). Other virtues regulate emotions (such as courage which regulates fear). Others are dispositions towards a lack of specific emotional traits; modesty, for instance is a disposition not to feel vanity. Yet other emotional virtues dispose one to a range of emotions. Justice, for instance, is an overarching emotional virtue, and the virtue of personal safety comprises a proper mixture of fear and confidence. Some virtues seem more action-related than emotion-related. Retributive justice, the sphere of which is crime, is such an example. Others, such as the civil virtues of friendliness, truthfulness and wit in social intercourse, seem to exist without an emotional corollary.

Aristotle could not have implicated emotions in moral virtues if he had not presupposed the view that emotions have a cognitive component that is amenable to rational and moral evaluation – and, if necessary (that is, if it turns out not to be irrationally formed and/or morally unjustified), liable to criticism and change. That very cognitive theory is, after all, the passkey to the fundamental ideal of the fusion of heart and head. The fact that an issue is emotionally loaded, stemming from the 'heart', does not mean that is disrupts the governance of the 'head'; rather, feelings can be properly thoughtful, just as thoughts can be properly felt. Whether they really are or not is a matter for investigation in each particular case; there is no good reason for an out-of-hand rejection of emotions as intruders in the realm of reason.

Cognitive theories are no novelty in the present age, of course; indeed, they constitute a dominant research model of emotions in psychology and *the* predominant one in philosophy since the 1970s. In that well-known cognitive model of late, an emotion comprises four main components: (1) a characteristic *cognition* (belief or recognition) that gives the emotion a direction, its focus on a propositional object;

(2) a characteristic *desire*, the satisfaction or frustration of which gives rise to (3) the emotion's typical *affect* (feeling); and (4) a common *behavioural pattern*. Of those components, the cognitive and the conative are the crucial ones, which set emotions apart, because many emotions differ little, if at all, in their 'feel' and can, in fact, result in a wide range of behavioural responses, or none at all. Furthermore, each emotion has its own intensity variables which determine how deeply and for how long it is normally felt.

Contemporary cognitive theorists are often accused of being overly focused on the cognitive and conative components of emotion and ignoring or underestimating the affective element. If we accept as a defining feature of a cognitive theory that it relegates to a side issue the way emotions *feel*, then Aristotle is not really a 'pure' cognitive theorist (I return to this issue in Chapter 4). He specifies all emotions as being necessarily accompanied by pain (*lupē*) or pleasure (*hēdonē*), which are sensations rather than beliefs or judgements. Martha Nussbaum is mistaken in her insistence that Aristotle views pain and pleasure themselves as intentional states with a cognitive content (Nussbaum 1996: 304). I have found no evidence in Aristotle's corpus to support the interpretation that the pain of envy is not the same as, say, the pain of fear, because both are pains about the meaning of a situation and pain will vary with that meaning.

For Aristotle, the sensations of pleasure or pain provide the 'material conditions' or physiological substrates of emotions, in which the natural scientist would be interested; whereas the relevant cognitions provide the formal conditions or 'formulable essence', which will interest the dialectician (Aristotle 1941b: 537 [403a25–403b7]; cf. Fortenbaugh 2002: 110–13; LaRock 2002). Because the sensations of pain accompanying different painful emotions are phenomenologically indistinguishable, however (and *mutatis mutandis* for the pleasant ones), the cognitive consorts (Aristotle's formal conditions) set them apart. Thus Aristotle specifies the emotions as those things on account of which 'people come to differ in regard to their judgments, and which are accompanied by pain and pleasure' (Aristotle 1991: 121 [1378a20–22]; for an enlightening analysis, see Konstan 2006: Ch. 1). In speaking of pain *and* pleasure, Aristotle may want to emphasize that the two are not mutually exclusive in a single emotion. Anger, for instance, includes both, although the pain is more salient there (cf. Aristotle 1985: 37 [1104b13–16]).

It should now be apparent why Aristotle chooses to discuss the emotional virtues and vices primarily in the context of his treatise on rhetoric (cf. Fortenbaugh 2002: 16–18). The rationalist Plato had rejected emotional appeal as an extra-rational enchantment, hostile to thoughtful judgement. By construing thought or belief as the 'formal cause' – the *logos* – of the emotions, Aristotle shows that an emotional reaction is potentially an intelligent reaction, open to rational persuasion by the rhetorician – or, prior to that, as discussed below, by the moral educator.

2.2 Stages of Moral Development

How do all these 'basics' relate to Aristotle's notion of childhood and moral development? It is true that Aristotle does not produce in any one place a clear-cut,

comprehensive stage-theory of moral development similar to that of, say, Kohlberg. Moreover, whatever explicit mention of such development he does make may seem at first sight to indicate a black-and-white picture in which the animal-like, morally immature (and pretty inconsequential!) child is contrasted with the morally mature adult. Nevertheless, Aristotle does devote considerable space to describing people at different levels of moral excellence, and those levels are the natural place to begin our quest.

I do not consider here the levels beneath the ordinary (natural) moral starting point of a young child: the levels of vice or the even 'more frightening' bestial or diseased states (Aristotle 1985: 185–6, 189 [1148b20–31, 1150a1–8]), which involve moral regress rather than progress. Also outside my current interest lies the level of 'heroic' or 'divine' virtue (Aristotle 1985: 172–3 [1145a19–29]), which Aristotle basically ascribes only to gods and seems to invoke mainly to satisfy his love of symmetry – a level that contrasts naturally with the one of bestiality (the superhuman versus the subhuman).

The progressive levels of moral excellence correspond to different developmental conditions of an agent's soul. Every person's soul has a rational part (reason) and a non-rational part. The non-rational part is again divided into two subparts. One is 'plant-like' and 'shared [with other living things]'; it is naturally unresponsive to reason and need not be further explored here. The other part, comprising our appetites and desires (and emotions in so far as they involve desires as well as beliefs), is potentially responsive to reason and can, to varying degrees, 'share in reason' (Aristotle 1985: 30–32 [1102a15–1103a3]). Notably, the distinction between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul does not correspond to a distinction between cognitions and sensations. If the non-rational part comprised only sensations, it would not be able to learn to share in reason; moreover, as we have already seen, Aristotle specifically ascribes cognitions to emotions (which belong to the non-rational part) as the emotions' 'formal essence'. The degree to which this non-rational part does or does not share in reason determines a person's standing in the order of moral excellence. Exactly how many levels comprise that order for Aristotle is open to debate; the characteristics of these levels are not systematically enumerated in any one place but must be teased out of various passages. Allow me to propose the following classification, which aims at clarification, if necessarily at some cost of simplification.

Level 1 comprises 'the many': young children and, unfortunately, a large number of adults who have failed to move on. Among 'the many', the potentially reason-responsive part of the non-rational soul has failed, as yet, to respond to reason. The many naturally 'obey fear' and 'avoid what is base because of the penalties, not because it is disgraceful'. They 'live by their [non-reason-informed] feelings', pursue simple pleasures, avoid the opposing pains, 'and have not even a notion of what is fine' and hence 'truly pleasant' (Aristotle 1985: 292 [1179b11–17]). Because people at this level are impenetrable to the voice of reason, the only teaching method in moral education from which they can learn is habituation. Some difference must be noted, however, between children at Level 1 and adults who have not moved to a higher level. Whereas the children must be counted as amoral or pre-moral rather

than vicious or immoral, adults who are still at Level 1 are likely to have developed settled states of character, and vicious ones at that.

Level 2 comprises 'the soft'. The non-rational part of the souls of 'the soft' has started to respond to reason and become morally sensitive, but such people lack will-power and resilience and are easily overcome by pain. Even if they have some inkling of the virtuous thing to do in given circumstances, they fail to heed it if doing so is accompanied by any hint of pain. They are best described as self-indulgent (Aristotle 1985: 190–91 [1150a13–1150b7]).

Once agents have progressed to Level 3 – 'the resistant' – they have learnt to 'hold out' against painful appetites, but 'holding out is different from overcoming'. Reason has made them become partly self-controlled, but they possess only a limited degree of control against painful appetites and, so it seems, as yet no control against pleasant appetites, even when they go against morality (Aristotle 1985: 190–91 [1150a13–37]).

At Level 4 are 'the incontinent'. They have managed to overcome the thrust of the painful appetites that prevent many people from aiming at the good. The incontinent also have correct opinions about what is morally right and what they should do. Incontinence may, as Curzer correctly notes, be an under-appreciated state of character, as the incontinent are more morally advanced than most people (Curzer 2002: 161). They are easily overcome by counter-moral pleasant appetites, however, and, owing to a complicated intra-psychic process that Aristotle describes in detail, fail in such circumstances to do what they themselves think they should do. In other words, the incontinent fail in many cases to abide by reason, 'because of too much [enjoyment]' (Aristotle 1985: 173–96 [1145a34–1151b33]). Nevertheless, they do the right thing most of the time; otherwise they would quickly become much worse than incontinent.

Level 5 is that of 'the continent'. They have managed to overcome permanently both painful and pleasant 'base' (counter-moral) appetites and are able to do the right thing. They are fully self-controlled, and the non-rational part of their soul diligently listens to reason (Aristotle 1985: 173–96 [1145a34–1151b33]). Yet they are far from being virtuous; self-control is not the ideal state, because continent persons still have base appetites, want to act badly, but force themselves to act as they should. Full virtue is only achieved when the appetites and emotions have both become reasonable and morally fitting – when they 'share in reason' in the strong sense of 'agreeing with reason' (Aristotle 1985: 32 [1102b25–9]; cf. MacIntyre 1981: 140; Hursthouse 1988: 211). This point bears repeating, and I flesh it out in more detail in the following section.

We now see what a tall order virtue is in the Aristotelian model, how much it takes to reach Level 6 of moral excellence. At that level are the truly virtuous persons who are 'the sort to find nothing pleasant that conflicts with reason' (Aristotle 1985: 196 [1152a1–3]). Their appetites, desires and emotions are so constituted (reason-infused) – or, as Hursthouse puts it, have through a process of moral education become so 'amended, developed, complicated and enriched' (Hursthouse 1988: 214) – as to allow the virtuous to constantly feel and desire in the right (medial) way, according to Aristotle's theory of the mean of action and reaction. Most importantly, the virtuous have developed their own intellectual virtue of practical

wisdom (*phronesis*), explicated in the preceding section, which helps them hit the medial target in each case. According to Aristotle, there are basically three things that make someone good and virtuous: nature, habit and reason. Man and man alone has reason. Therefore, these three things must be in harmony in human individuals for them to be good and virtuous (Aristotle 1941a: 1296 [1332a39–b10]). The process from a person's 'first nature' at Level 1 to his 'second nature' at Level 6 involves a qualitative change of character; yet, it is not a forced process in the sense of going against nature, because children have within them the natural potential of actualizing this second nature.

It seems reasonable to suppose that Aristotle considers these six levels to be diachronic and developmental rather than synchronic – rather than mere rankings of worse to better states of character. Morally virtuous agents must then pass through those levels in a sequential order before they reach the goal of complete human moral excellence, whereas some – perhaps most – people remain at some lower level in the order, if they ever manage to leave behind the animal-like one in the first place. Needless to say, contemporary Aristotelians reject Aristotle's empirical claims about natural slaves and manual labourers being bound to stagnate at the lower levels for reasons of their psychological make-up. This rejection suggests that many more people than Aristotle realized will be potentially 'upwardly mobile'. In any case, the supposition of a diachronic order is shared, at least implicitly, by various interpreters (Burnyeat 1980: 70; Sherman 1989: 161; Curzer 2002: 154). This assumption tallies with Aristotle's general view of human development, according to which the child is regarded as an unfinished substance that is growing to completion as an adult, and whose progression to its complete 'form' of humanity is a progression with distinct but differentially paced phases, each with its own *telos* (see further in Tress 1997). Nevertheless, we are not to understand those levels to constitute strict developmental stages of the Kohlbergian kind. Some children, endowed with a soft nature by birth, may jump more or less straight to Level 2; some could pass over Level 3; Level 6 may only be partially reached by many predominantly good persons, as there are degrees of virtue that fall short of full virtue, and so forth. Importantly, as Curzer (2005) has carefully delineated, Aristotle describes at least seven ways in which even persons of virtue may act wrongly on occasion (succumbing to overwhelming pressures, acting temporarily out of character, having tiny glitches in their virtues, for instance), while still remaining virtuous overall.

A discerning reader might ask why there is necessarily a connection between becoming moral and becoming 'responsive to reason'. Might a person's soul not gradually become responsive to the *wrong kind* of reason, and thus develop from pre-morality to immorality? Aristotle does leave room for such a process; this is, for instance, the sense in which adults at Level 1 are inferior to children at the same level. He talks disdainfully of the 'most vulgar', who have developed 'their conception of the good' as that of mere gratification (Aristotle 1985: 7 [1095b14–21]). Because they differ from children in having a distinct conception on which they work, they must be responsive to some kind of reason, if obviously not the right one. However, in most cases in which Aristotle speaks of responsiveness to reason, he is referring to what we would now prefer to call 'responsiveness to moral considerations'. This implicit reference can be explained by the fact that Aristotle takes for granted

the rationality of a prudential outlook, according to which the reasonableness of morality must ultimately appeal to prudential considerations: namely, to the agent's own interests. To possess *good* prudential reasons is to be moral. Many moderns find this view difficult to swallow. Does not an overriding concern for what is prudential for oneself exclude moral considerations (witness the self-centredness objection lodged at contemporary virtue ethics)? Not at all, in Aristotle's view. For him, it is an empirical fact that the virtues are essential to *our own good*; they help us to fulfil what is central to us. Applying the virtues is therefore necessary to our own interest. But the virtues require precisely that we pursue *the good of others* in the ways required by morality. This is best illustrated in Aristotle's discussion of true self-love as involving love of others; thus true self-love can potentially lead to costly sacrifices, even to death, if one sacrifices one's life for others and thereby 'does something great and fine' for oneself (Aristotle 1985: 252–6 [1168a5–1169b2]; see further in Irwin 1995). Thus, becoming more and more responsive to (the *right kind* of) reason constitutes, in itself, moral progress.

Although I may have shed light on the potential progress of moral excellence according to Aristotle, I have said little about the actual process by and through which it is driven. Aristotle's account of this process is parsimonious, and leaves many questions unanswered. The full brunt of that problem is felt in Chapter 3. Meanwhile, as I continue to traverse extensive territory at a somewhat brisk pace, the key words here may be summed up by borrowing a phrase from an eminent British politician: 'education, education and education'. We progress through the order of moral excellence only if we are educated to do so. Not just any type of education will do, however, for while virtues of thought (of the rational part of the soul) arise and grow primarily through systematic verbal instruction, virtues of character result from habit (*ethos*) – hence the name, 'ethical' (Aristotle 1985: 33 [1103a14–17]). And education through the instillation of habit (in the non-rational part of the soul) is called *habituation*. This process takes time, as those who have just learnt a virtue through habituation 'do not yet know it, though they string the [correct] words together; for it must grow into them' (Aristotle 1985: 180 [1147a20–22]). Incidentally, Aristotle recommends habituation not only as a method of moral education; he also suggests habituation towards cold – to prepare children for possible hardships, for example.

At the beginning of and during much of the habituation process, moral learners are not able to understand through reason why the moral virtues of character are important in the same way they would be able to understand that 2 + 2 = 4. Yet it would be wrong to say that those virtues are imposed on them as alterations of their nature. Learners do not undergo a *metamorphosis* in acquiring their virtues, any more than a house undergoes a *metamorphosis* when we put a roof on it. To return to an earlier point, those virtues 'arise in us neither by nature nor against nature'; we would not acquire them naturally unless someone inculcated them in us. But equally important, we are so constituted by nature as to be 'able to acquire them, and reach our complete perfection through habit' (Aristotle 1985: 33–4 [1103a20–26]). It also matters who habituates us; before the age of seven, this process is best situated in the home so it can be stimulated by the child's inborn natural affection and disposition to obey (Aristotle 1985: 295 [1180b3–7]). Young children, as 'the many' in general,

'live by their feelings' of pleasure and pain, and they yield to compulsion (including fear of penalties for transgressions) rather than argument (Aristotle 1985: 292–3 [1179b11–1180a6]). I have more to say in Chapter 3 about the administering of pleasure and pain during the habituation process.

Aristotle, then, poses the important rhetorical question of what it means to say that to become virtuous we must first do virtuous actions. 'For if we do what is grammatical or musical, we must already be grammarians or musicians.' In the same way, when we do what is just and temperate, must we not necessarily be just and temperate already? Aristotle seems to want to say here that children who act out of habituation alone are not really yet virtuous, for they have learnt only what is virtuous, not why it is virtuous. (This is not an uncontroversial reading of Aristotle, however, as seen in Chapter 3.) Virtuous persons not only perform the right actions, but also perform them for the right reasons and from the right motives: knowing them, taking intrinsic pleasure in them and deciding on them for themselves. At this early stage, however, moral learners do not need to understand the reason, the 'why'; they need only the 'that' – the correct belief. Yet 'no one has even a prospect of becoming good' in the true sense of doing things 'in the way' in which virtuous persons do them, without first being made to go through the correct motions. For, as Euenus says, habit is 'longtime training, my friend, and in the end training is nature for human beings' (Aristotle 1985: 39–40, 6, 198 [1105a18–34, 1095b4–9, 1152a29–34]). Before full virtue, then, we necessarily need habituated virtue (of both action and emotion). However, in order to take the step from habituated virtue to full virtue, we must learn to choose the right actions and emotions from 'a firm and unchanging state' of character (Aristotle 1985: 40 [1105a30–34]) – that is, after having submitted them to the arbitrament of our own *phronesis*. Then and only then can the pumpkin of moral education turn into a coach.

But if this desirable end-state of virtue-grounded *phronesis* presupposes extrinsically motivated habituation, in what sense are we ourselves responsible for it – or, more generally, for being the individuals that we are now? Can we not only be held responsible for what we could have chosen to be otherwise? This common intuition is shared by Aristotle, and he must, therefore, claim that there was some point in the moral-development process when we could have said 'stop' and avoided becoming the individuals that we, as adults, have become. This is, indeed, the tack he takes: it was 'originally open' to the persons who are now virtuous or vicious not to have acquired this character. Hence, they are responsible for it; though once they have acquired it, they can 'no longer get rid of it' – just as 'it was up to us to throw a stone, since the origin was in us, though we can no longer take it back once we have thrown it'. We are, thus, 'ourselves in a way jointly responsible for our states of character' (Aristotle 1985: 68, 70 [1114a11–31, 1114b22–5]).

It is not difficult to understand, on this account, how moral habituation is a necessary but insufficient condition of full-blown virtue. It is more difficult to understand how the vicious can be held responsible for their state of character, given Aristotle's previously cited remark that 'no one has even a prospect of becoming good' without proper habituation. Another observation, that 'it is impossible, or not easy, to alter by argument what has long been absorbed by habit', may seem to leave some room for the reform of people who were poorly raised (as possible in principle

if 'not easy'). But Aristotle seems to close the door to that possibility again when he says that such a person 'would not even listen to an argument turning him away, or comprehend it [if he did listen]; and in that state how could he be persuaded to change?' (Aristotle 1985: 292 [1179b11–31]). So how can Aristotle claim that being poorly raised is not sufficient for vice, any more than being well brought up is sufficient for virtue – a claim that is necessary for his general responsibility-for-character thesis? Brickhouse (1991) suggests that although being deprived of an upbringing conducive to goodness is sufficient to preclude the development of virtue in an individual, it is insufficient to produce vice, because, when agents begin to deliberate, they must choose actions conducive to their ends – and the vicious could have chosen to resist their non-rational desires, and thus become 'resistant' (see Level 3) rather than vicious. Whatever Aristotle's considered opinion on this issue may have been, it is at least clear that, for him, habit dies hard, and it is, therefore, 'very important, indeed all-important' to acquire the correct sort of moral habit right from our youth (Aristotle 1985: 35 [1103b21–5]).

2.3 Some Points of Emphasis

As previously shown, it is far from true that childhood carries little weight in Aristotle's writings. It looms large in his discussion of moral education, which in itself focuses on the child as an unfinished substance actualizing proper form (with respect to morality) through an upbringing in the virtues. Aristotle is keenly interested in what fosters or stifles such development. This is not the place to explore Aristotle's notions of the child as an unfinished substance *qua* human animal (with respect to biology), and *qua* responsible citizen (with respect to politics), but there also he gives an account of the child's proper actualization of a human *telos* and ways in which it can be furthered (see Tress 1997, for a detailed discussion). It is true, on the other hand, that Aristotle is relatively reticent about the precise didactics of moral upbringing (this will be borne out in Chapters 3 and 5). But to offset that point, it is well to recall that his *Politics* contains a reference to an Aristotelian work on child rearing: one of many of his works that have been lost (Aristotle 1941a: 1302 [1335b3–5]).

Not only is Aristotle second to none in the stock he places in the moral education of the young; he also introduces at least two moral virtues that seem to be specific to young people: *emulation* and *shame*. Emulation he characterizes as distress at the apparent presence in others of things honoured and possible for a person to acquire, with the distress arising not from the fact that another person has them, but that the emulator does not (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388a30–35]; I discuss this emotional virtue in detail in Chapter 7). Shame is described as distress at the class of evils that bring a person into disrespect (Aristotle 1991: 144 [1383b14–16]; see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Chs 3–4). Obviously, emulation and shame do not constitute virtues *qua* specific episodic occurrences, any more than do other specific emotions or actions. However, when Aristotle describes emulation as 'a good thing and characteristic of good people' (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388a30–38]), and shame as 'suitable for youth', albeit inappropriate for older people (Aristotle 1985: 115 [1128b16–22]), he is clearly

referring to those emotions as general emotional traits that we possess, not as the experience of individual passions. 'Emulousness' and 'shamefulness' may be more appropriate terms to denote the virtuous traits in question. Notably, the word 'shame' can refer to an episodic emotion and to a disposition; the two meanings cohabited in Greek as they do in English (see further in Konstan 2003a; to complicate matters, the Greeks had two terms, which do not fully overlap, to denote kinds of shame: *aiskhunē* and *aidōs*).

People at Level 6, being fully virtuous and having nothing to emulate or, ideally, to be ashamed of, need no further emulous role modelling or shame; yet emulousness and shamefulness can still be true moral virtues *relative to moral learners*. They are obviously not virtues in the same sense as the *phronesis*-guided character states of fully virtuous agents. Perhaps it would be more apt to refer to emulousness and shamefulness as 'semi-virtues': established dispositions to act with a view to what is noble, acquired through moral habituation, but as yet unguided by practical wisdom. Nevertheless, Aristotle himself does not hesitate to call this humbler type of praiseworthy disposition 'virtue', and I think we can safely follow suit (Aristotle 1991: 166 [1389a35]; cf. Fortenbaugh 2002: 49–53; *pace* Welchman 2005: 150).

In addition to the two virtues of the young, which cease to exist as virtues if and when the young have reached the level of full virtue, there are some morally praiseworthy characteristics that virtuous adults should ideally possess but that, according to Aristotle, come more easily to young people for reasons of developmental psychology. The young are typically open-minded and optimistic, therefore, tending to look at the good side rather than the bad side of things, as they have not yet 'seen much wickedness'. They trust others readily 'because of not yet having been much deceived'. They are also more courageous and guileless than the old are, and have more exalted notions, not having yet been 'worn down by life'. Moreover, they are fonder of their friends than older people are and have not come to value them for their usefulness (Aristotle 1991: 165–6 [1389a16–b3]). Those are hardly the views of a thinker uninterested in childhood.

Let us now revert to the issue of why continence is short of full virtue and not the ideal state to which one should aspire in moral education. This is a particularly pertinent issue because a popular philosopher has recently published a book which seems to ascribe the opposite view to Aristotle. Written as a self-help manual, Elliot D. Cohen's (2003) *What Would Aristotle Do? Self Control through the Power of Reason* describes how many personal and relationship problems can be solved the Aristotelian way – or, more specifically, through the application of Cohen's own brand of Aristotle-inspired rational-emotive behaviour therapy. The trick is to learn to 'flex your willpower muscle': a kind of 'internal muscle' you can learn to use to 'overpower self-destructive bodily inclinations': 'As Aristotle long ago realised, self-control and strong character come with practice and the cultivation of good habits.' What Aristotle showed us is how life according to reason provides an effective antidote to mental pathology. Thus, by living according to reason, the continent person controls his emotions and takes charge of his life (Cohen 2003: 19, 28, 47, 50).

Cohen is not alone in wanting to base a moral psychology of self-control on Aristotelian precedents. Daniel Goleman, who defines himself as a present-day

Aristotelian, claims in his bestseller *Emotional Intelligence* that self-discipline is the bedrock of character, citing with approval the conventional wisdom that it requires will to keep emotion under the control of reason (Goleman 1995: 285; I discuss Goleman's account further in Chapter 6). Notice here the abandonment of the core insight of the cognitive theories of emotions, harking back to Aristotle's view that emotions are or should ideally be imbued with reason rather than controlled by reason. Both Cohen and Goleman proclaim Aristotle as their authority and both renounce the reason–passion distinction in principle; yet they clandestinely take advantage of its formulaic convenience. Claims about the benefits of an Aristotelian synthesis of heart and head and the perils of the old-fashioned reason–passion distinction are followed in both books, almost without pause, with tips on how the head can control the heart.

The idea that emotions constitute a troublesome deviation from proper functioning – a deviation that must be subdued or silenced, while reason alone does the talking – is foreign to Aristotle. For him, to bring intelligence to our emotions is to infuse the emotions with intelligence, rather than policing them from above with intelligence. Developing that idea a bit further requires a short review and fleshing out of some points from the previous section. To be sure, Aristotle does cite examples of emotion-regulating virtues which are not themselves the emotions to be regulated – examples such as courage which regulates fear. More commonly, however, the emotional virtues described by Aristotle are in need of no external help; they are reactions which, in their proper form, constitute *in themselves* a mean of feeling. Indeed, Aristotle refuses to understand self-control as a virtue. For him, self-control can be instantiated via two character traits – 'continence' or 'resistance' – but both are inferior to virtue. The continent person 'must have strong and base appetites', whereas the virtuous person has neither. The appetites of virtuous people 'share in reason' (as distinct from being controlled by reason) in such a way that they find 'nothing pleasant that conflicts with reason'; the continent person finds base things pleasant but has overcome the desire for them and is, therefore, not 'led by them'. Continence is, indeed, not a virtue at all, but 'a sort of mixed state', the lesser of two evils: a 'second-best tack'. Self-control *qua* resistance is inferior even to self-control *qua* continence, in Aristotle's view, 'for resistance consists in holding out, and continence in overcoming'. The emotions of neither the resistant nor the continent are in a mean, although their actions are; thus, both persons betray defects of character. Only virtuous persons have their emotions as well as their actions in a mean; they do not need to control them since they constitute, *qua* virtuous agents, manifestations of their own properly felt emotions (Aristotle 1985: 32, 52, 115, 175, 191, 196 [1102b26–34, 1109a31–5, 1128b33–5, 1146a10–13, 1150a32–6, 1152a1–6]; cf. Urmson 1980; Gottlieb 2001).

Admittedly, Aristotle says in a couple of places that 'most people' would be placed between the levels of the incontinent and the continent (Aristotle 1985: 190, 197 [1150a15, 1152a25–6]). If that is so, perhaps the majority of people can aspire to no more than the type of self-control championed by Cohen. However, Aristotle must be referring to adult citizens, and it would be unreasonable and out of line with his description of the level of 'the many' to hold that this level is not the one where most people (if you include such people as children and labourers) are placed.

Moreover, even it were empirically true that, as things stand now, most adults have not reached higher than the level of continence, it would be morally under-ambitious and blatantly un-Aristotelian to posit that level, as Cohen does, as the *ideal* level of moral living. One is left wondering exactly from where Cohen's permutation of ideas is borrowed. A likely culprit is Plato who, in the *Phaedrus*, presents the image of man's tripartite soul, in which reason (man's highest faculty) is the charioteer who tames the fierce, unruly horse of passions. This image was of course later replicated by Freud, for whom the ego represented reason and circumspection, and the id stood for the untamed passions. Rather than paying lip service to Aristotle, Cohen might better have called his book *What Would Plato Do?* What Cohen overlooks is that Aristotle rejects Plato's charioteer-horse metaphor of virtuousness as appetites being 'broken in', like an untrained horse, by reason. Full virtue is not achieved when the non-rational part of the soul *obeys* reason in a joylessly dutiful way, but only when it is *informed* by reason.

Another possible culprit for Cohen's hero is Kant. There used to be a time when Kantian scholars emphasized that the moral worth of an act was compromised by the presence of a co-operating inclination, and that Aristotelian continence was somehow, by Kant's lights, a better state of character than was Aristotelian virtue. This is no longer the standard interpretation of Kant's works, however (see, for example, Korsgaard 1996: 223; Herman 1993: Ch. 1). Nevertheless, there is an idea lurking in Kant's writing that seems to be at the back of Cohen's mind: that morality is somehow contrary to nature – that nature needs to be 'overpowered'. Aristotle maintains, by contrast, that we are adapted by nature to receive the virtues of character. Or Cohen may have been influenced by neither Plato nor Kant, but simply led astray by his own misreading of Aristotle. Revealingly, his main citations from Aristotle about the ideal life as governed by reason alone (Cohen 2003: 16, 27) hail from Aristotle's discussion of theoretical study as the supreme element of happiness (Aristotle 1985: 284–91 [1177a10–1179a32]). Many interpreters find this discussion to be strangely out of sync with the rest of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. That issue is irrelevant here, however. What matters is that in those sections, Aristotle is not concerned with the kind of practical reason or wisdom which guides actions and emotions, but rather with pure theoretical wisdom. Cohen may well agree with Aristotle on the importance of time spent leisurely absorbed in theoretical studies, but he cannot use that point to bolster his case for the need to let practical reason police our emotions and actions.

I conclude this chapter with a brief elaboration of a point briefly raised in Chapter 1, on Aristotle's notion of moral selfhood or personhood. I remarked there that Aristotle's works projected an image of an embodied, embedded self. Aristotle's theory of moral development will now have set that image into sharper relief. A comparison with Kant is again in order here, for Kant famously argued for the need of the legislative will to be disembodied from its material conditions and disembedded with regard to its social environment. This Kantian idea re-echoes, albeit in a somewhat distorted and modified form, in contemporary liberalism. Needless to say, many recent criticisms of Kantianism (and liberalism, in so much as its notion of moral autonomy approximates the Kantian one of legislative will) have focused on the very idea of such a disembodied self: a socially rootless self that exists prior to

all its contingent ends and passes moral judgements in a vacuum. Instead, we have in recent times witnessed a steady return to an Aristotelian sense of self as being derived from social recognition and admiration – as essentially heteronomous in the strict Kantian sense.

To have a sense of selfhood, in Aristotle's view, we need to have grasped the idea of things being valued and chosen by us. But in order to comprehend that notion, we must first have grasped the idea of things being valued and chosen by others – primarily of ourselves as being valued and chosen, or disvalued and rejected, by them. In other words, the idea of our own self as distinct from, but still essentially of the same kind as the self of others must originally derive from the possibility of evaluating our self and its existential connections as equal, superior or inferior to theirs. Such an evaluation is dependent upon external criteria for both its formation and its sustenance. This early learning process then serves as a filter through which various character traits can become constitutive of our agency, as we gradually develop our integrity and self-respect. To put it in terms well known from symbolic interactionism in social psychology, it is only by taking the role of the other (in particular, at the beginning, the role of the parent) that the child's self acquires its reflexive quality and attains self-consciousness. In brief, all morality is necessarily socially embedded and one's moral selfhood socially constructed, as well as essentially comparative in nature (see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Ch. 4). This is no special feature of Greek society or of the ancient Greek sense of self – as noted in my response to Konstan's emotional relativity thesis in Chapter 1 – this is, in the Aristotelian view at least, a feature of human society and the human self as such.

To recap at the close of this chapter, Aristotle does offer a coherent – if perhaps not a sufficiently detailed – conception of childhood. He provides a reasonably systematic theory of moral development, and he considers self-control through the exercise of one's will-power to be a second-best moral option that falls short of real virtue.

Assumption A is wrong.

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Chapter 3

Aristotle and the 'Paradox of Moral Education'

3.1 A Paradoxical Account?

Assumption B: 'Aristotle's view of moral upbringing neglects the role of critical reasoning. Moral education is reduced to mindless habituation, leaving us with two glaring paradoxes: "extrinsically habituated reason" and "heteronomously formed autonomy".'

Is this assumption true?

In order to relate this assumption to contemporary concerns, it is useful to begin with a few words about character education – historically founded as it is on Aristotelian pillars – and objections that have been commonly urged against it. This powerful movement of values education typically rests its case on both social and theoretical considerations. The social considerations allege that we in Western societies live in an age of moral declivity, in which schools and communities have gradually been changing for the worse, and where violent and disrespectful behaviour are steadily on the increase. The theoretical considerations usually centre on Kohlberg's fall from grace over the past two decades. Thus Kohlbergian ideas of moral development, with their heavy formalist/rationalist leanings – where moral maturity was equated with well-honed skills of reasoning about far-fetched dilemmas – are being replaced with an upsurge of contrasting virtue-based and emotion-sensitive approaches. The call for character education, therefore, usually goes hand in hand with such ethical views as contemporary virtue ethics, which place character or personality traits at the centre of morality, and with the highlighting of emotional literacy as an indispensable facet of moral development.

Character education is not without its critics. Its detractors suggest that it is dangerously anti-democratic in its relative neglect of the development of reasoning and critical independence in students, and that it employs an unduly authoritarian and paternalistic stance in its pedagogy (see, for example, McLaughlin and Halstead 1999; for some rejoinders, see Kristjánsson 2006: Ch. 5). Such objections cannot fail to evoke a feeling of *déjà vu*, reminiscent as they are of the period between the early 1950s and the late 1970s, when two opposing movements – behaviourism and the cognitive-developmental approach – dominated the field of moral education, and advocates of the latter accused the former of roughly similar defects of anti-intellectualism. It was during this time that R.S. Peters, eminent philosopher of education, coined the phrase 'the paradox of moral education' to describe the inevitable need for and the apparently inevitable opposition between habituation and intellectual training (Peters 1981: Ch. 3; cf. Curren 2000: 205–12).

The 'paradox of moral education' is still very much alive, and my aim in this chapter is to gauge the pertinence of and to prompt a new examination of the paradox. Let me first note that when set in the context of current debates, this alleged paradox involves two distinct, if interrelated, paradoxes: a psychological one and a moral/political one. The *psychological paradox* is this: how can it be simultaneously true that it is the aim of moral education to develop persons who conduct themselves by their intellects (rationally, intelligently and critically) *and* that this goal can be best achieved by inculcating in them from an early age certain ready-made habits of action and feeling? The underlying concern here is, obviously, how the forming of young students into walking bundles of habit can avoid the stultification of their psychological powers of critical reflection at a later stage. Is habituated reason psychologically possible? The *moral/political paradox*, on the other hand, is this: how can it be simultaneously true that the aim of moral education is to create individuals who, moved by their own conception of the good, cherish and assiduously apply their own unencumbered autonomy *and* that this goal can best be achieved through means that necessarily involve an extrinsic motivation? Is heteronomously formed autonomy morally possible and justifiable? Although the call for individual autonomy remains a common refrain of Enlightenment, and in particular liberal, educational ideals, it might be more apt to formulate this second paradox in terms of authenticity rather than autonomy. Harking back to Rousseau, but particularly prominent in the educational and moral thought of contemporary modernity, is the demand that people's decisions are not only autonomously attained (that is, in the broad liberal sense, self-determined as opposed to being forced upon them by some external restraints) but also that they are authentic in reflecting people's true selves (that is, their deepest commitments and personal identities as distinct from their socially or culturally shaped identities). This stronger demand of authenticity further deepens the moral/political paradox, for a moral pedagogy of habituation seems to rub up against the ideal of learners' identity-conferring authenticity even more violently than it rubs up against their autonomy.

Peters deserves credit for his insistence that these paradoxes – or, as he understood it, 'the paradox of moral education' – are resolvable. After all, his exploration was written in the heyday of Kohlbergianism when there was still exclusive emphasis on reason over habit and form over content in moral coaching. On this fraught matter, Peters made, as always, a judicious, fair-minded case, with his often-cited remark that children 'can and must enter the palace of Reason through the courtyard of Habit and Tradition' (Peters 1981: 52). It must be admitted, however, that Peters presents an elliptical resolution of the paradox; he alludes primarily to Aristotle's account of the harmonious integration of early habituation and subsequent critical reason. Indeed, this is the defence still offered by most contemporary advocates of character education when pressed on the alleged paradoxes: 'The Philosopher' considered them resolvable, so why should we worry about them? In other words, the advocates' proclivity to make *argumentum ad verecundiam* references to Aristotle is considerably stronger than their readiness to explain in detail what bearing Aristotle's treatment of the issue actually has on contemporary debates concerning moral education.

The fundamental question I want to pose here is whether or not Aristotle really solved the paradoxes of moral education. Are they perhaps endemic to his view of moral education – and hence to the regurgitant character-education arguments of late – as suggested by *Assumption B*? Put starkly, the initial problem is that much of what Aristotle says on the topic is no less elliptical than Peters' memorable soundbite about the courtyard and the palace, and, moreover, is open to a number of conflicting interpretations. It is, for example, as Dunne correctly observes, unfortunate how little Aristotle has to say about the nature of his all-important early moral habituation process (Dunne 1999: 58). My starting point in prompting a new look at these paradoxes is to seek guidance in recent Aristotelian scholarship, which can, I believe, provide a window on the relevant moral and educational issues. Much of this scholarship is primarily exegetical, and substantive issues sometimes become obscured under the thicket of exegesis. However, as always in this book, my eventual aim is to say something relevant about moral education rather than about the historical Aristotle. I address the paradoxes of moral education in several stages. In Section 3.2, I explore a number of interpretations of Aristotle's theory of moral development which relate to the psychological paradox. In Section 3.3, I try to resolve that paradox by following Aristotle's lead. In Section 3.4, I address Aristotle's contribution to the resolution of the moral/political paradox. Much of the material from the two preceding sections remains salient there, as a potential resolution of the psychological paradox will go a long way towards solving the moral/political paradox as well. Finally, in Section 3.5, I draw together the lessons of the previous sections to show what we can learn from Aristotle about the paradoxes of moral education.

3.2 Conflicting Interpretations of Aristotle's Account

If we turn our minds back to Aristotle's theory of moral development and moral education, which was reviewed in Chapter 2, it must be conceded that apart from being so meagre didactically that a moral educator without other resources would starve on it, Aristotle's account of habituation bristles with potential problems of interpretation. How can students acquire *phronesis* if they have only ever experienced externally guided habituation? How can they learn that an action or emotion is virtuous simply by being habituated into doing or feeling it? Why does *phronesis* necessarily require an earlier state of non-rational habituated virtue? Moreover, is there not, as Curren suggests, a dilemma lurking in the background? One's capacity to evaluate critically the morality that one is habituated into is either psychologically limited by the beliefs and feelings acquired in that habituation, in which case the moral system as a whole can never be internally criticized; or it is not limited in that way, in which case the very beliefs and feelings that incline one to give the reasons of morality priority can be undermined by critical thinking (Curren 2000: 209–10).

These searching questions have given us a taste of the challenges that Aristotle's account – or, for that matter, the Aristotle-inspired character-education account – faces with regard to the psychological paradox of moral education. We clearly need to pay closer attention to the nuts and bolts of the process of moral habituation if we

are to deflect those challenges, let alone resolve the underlying paradox. And here we are greatly aided by the efforts of a number of Aristotelian scholars.

Moral theorists may have to learn to live with a certain amount of theoretical messiness; practitioners such as moral educators, however, must sort out the mess before they can put theories into practice. Various attempts have been made to sort out some of the mess – or, to put it more fairly, fill some of the lacunae – in Aristotle's account of moral habituation. Two of the issues that have employed Aristotelian scholars in this respect are (1) the extent to which the habituation process taps into learners' reasoning abilities versus the extent to which habituation is a purely mechanical conditioning process and (2) the extent to which learners internalize the habituated virtues primarily through the administration of pain or the administration of pleasure. On both these issues, there is already a staggering disparity of interpretation.

With respect to (1) – reasoning versus mechanical conditioning – Burnyeat argues that for Aristotle there is no point in reasoning with someone who lacks the appropriate starting points (the 'that' of morality). From this it follows that it will be a long time before the individual matures to the point at which moral development is a fully rational process – and indeed, even for morally mature individuals, many of their moral responses will, by necessity, continue to be derived from sources other than reflective reason. However, moral learners would hardly be on the way to the desirable state of understanding the 'why' of morality if they were not in the process of forming reasonable and reflective ideas about the nature of the virtues. So the practice of moral learning must involve some cognitive powers into which moral educators can gradually tap. Burnyeat seems to envisage the habituation period as a combination of two essentially different processes: first, a non-rational process by which conditioning is the only means of education, and, subsequently, a rational process whereby learners continue to be conditioned, but through a conditioning that is accompanied by description and explanation, leading, over time, to the formation of the learners' own *phronesis*. As to (2), then – internalization through pain versus internalization through pleasure – how does Aristotle believe that a child is conditioned? As Burnyeat sees it, one must hook up the child's sense of pleasure, which initially and for a long time afterwards remains its only motive, with just and noble activities. In this way, the child learns to enjoy the activities and desires to repeat them. Burnyeat thus cites passages in which Aristotle seems to give prominence to 'noble joys' (Burnyeat 1980: 73–81).

Curzer locks horns with Burnyeat on both counts. Regarding reasoning versus mechanical conditioning, Curzer claims that Burnyeat gives false colour to Aristotle's texts by invoking a second stage of habituation by which instruction (through description and explanation) accompanies commands and exhortations. By contrast, Aristotle is adamant that no argumentative instruction works with learners until the habituation process has been completed. Instead of smuggling some instruction of that kind into habituation, we should accept the fact that, for Aristotle, habituation is simply a matter of mechanical, mindless inhibition. Regarding pain versus pleasure, Curzer maintains that it is far from being the case that Aristotle wants to guide moral learners by appealing to their pleasures; rather, Aristotle thinks that following their pleasures leads the not-yet-virtuous astray. People do not start to enjoy virtuous

activities until they have become virtuous; it is, therefore, futile to hope to motivate a moral learner by 'noble joys'. As Aristotle says, 'we cannot have the just person's pleasure without being just' (Aristotle 1985: 272 [1173b30]). Learning, for Aristotle, is not amusement; rather, it is accompanied by pain. So moral habituation must be motivated by pain: by punishment and threat of punishment. Indeed, following Curzer's interpretation, 'virtue acquisition hurts' (Curzer 2002: 146–59).

Finally, Sherman's reading of (1) is different from that of either Burnyeat or Curzer, as she argues forcefully against a mechanical interpretation. She claims that, for Aristotle, habituation requires the moral learner to exercise judgement and reason from the beginning. The mechanical interpretation 'ultimately makes mysterious the transition between childhood and moral maturity. It leaves unexplained how the child with merely "habituated" virtue can ever develop the capacities requisite for practical reason' – the very capacities that support full virtue. The critical nature of full virtue must be reflected in the educational process if there ever is to be full virtue. Through habituation, the child is not manipulated (for such manipulations would never lead to full virtue), but rather is gradually brought to more critical discriminations with the guidance of an outside instructor. The rehearsals required for acquiring the virtues 'must involve the employment of critical capacities, such as attending to a goal, recognizing mistakes and learning from them, understanding instructions, following tips and cues' and so forth. Thus, habituation constitutes a 'critical practice': a gradual process of moral sensitization. As for (2), the motivational issue, Sherman sides with Burnyeat: 'On Aristotle's view, practice would be neither necessary nor sufficient for acquiring states and abilities if it did not yield derivative pleasures.' It is the child's sense of pleasure and accomplishment that stimulates further growth. The habituation model Sherman ascribes to Aristotle is thus 'that of a chain of activities which increase in discriminated complexity as well as in derivative pleasures' (Sherman 1989: 153–99). The different interpretations of these three Aristotelian scholars are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Conflicting interpretations of the Aristotelian habituation process

	Non-rational	**First non-rational, then rational**	**Rational**
Pleasant		**Burnyeat**	**Sherman**
Painful	**Curzer**		

3.3 How Can the Psychological Paradox Be Resolved?

Now, given these conflicting interpretations, the obvious (Aristotelian!) question is 'Who is right and who is wrong?' To start with the motivational issue, it is difficult to see a way around the fact that shame and emulation, the two emotions which characterize moral learners, both involve pain: shame pain at the things that seem

likely to bring us into disrespect; emulation pain at the apparent presence among others of things honoured and possible for us to acquire (see the discussion in Section 2.3). Some of Aristotle's more general remarks about motivation, however, indicate a pleasure model: 'If, e.g., we enjoy doing geometry, we become better geometers' (Aristotle 1985: 278 [1175a33–4]). Other passages suggest a mixture of pleasure and pain: 'we need to have had the appropriate upbringing – right from early youth […] to make us find enjoyment or pain in the right things; for this is correct education' (Aristotle 1985: 37 [1104b10–13]). Similarly, in the educational section of *Politics*, Aristotle sometimes stresses that 'learning is no amusement, but is accompanied with pain', sometimes that all education is but 'a rattle or a toy for children of a larger growth' (Aristotle 1941a: 1310, 1313 [1339a25–9, 1340b29–31]). The measured verdict seems to be that all three of Aristotle's interpreters are guilty of an overly radical either/or way of thinking; Aristotle probably saw a place for both pleasure and pain in the habituation process.

As for the nature of the conditioning involved in habituation, Sherman's non-mechanical reading surely hits the mark in the minimal sense in which being trained to avoid certain actions as base and to pursue others as noble must contain an element of heightened discrimination; otherwise, it could not involve an understanding of them *as* base or *as* noble or of other future actions *as* similar to those already avoided or pursued (cf. Dunne 1999: 59). A primary effect of habituation is that we gradually learn to perceive things correctly through more nuanced patterns of seeing; how things 'appear' to us becomes more and more dependent on us as experience gives us an eye (Aristotle 1985: 69, 166 [1114b16–17, 1143b14]; cf. Sherman 1997: 254–62). Furthermore, from a general pedagogical perspective, a child cannot be completely passive during an educational encounter and still learn something significant; to the extent that, in the child's mind, an interaction and alteration is occurring, the child is acting – activating recognitional skills – as well as being acted upon (see Frankena 1965: 55, 57). Notwithstanding the centrality of such training of recognitional capacities during the habituation period, heightened discriminations are not necessarily tantamount to more critical discriminations. Unreflective artisans also 'gain an eye' as their technical, instrumental thinking develops, but they may still direct their actions towards a given end more or less mechanically, without operating according to their own critical conception of what that end should be. Furthermore, in a practical sense, most moral educators will be tempted to give voice to reasons when making exhortations: 'Now you should not do that. You will hurt your sister!' But we are still in the realm of the 'that'; such quasi-explanations do not necessarily move learners to consider 'why' they should not hurt others.

All in all, one must concede to Curzer that there is not a single passage in Aristotle's corpus that would clearly indicate that he considers habituation as a truly *critical* practice. So in a crucial sense, the psychological paradox of the mysterious connection between habituation and *phronesis* still remains. Sherman does well in suggesting how Aristotle could have tried to resolve the paradox, as does Curren when he proposes a solution to his above-mentioned dilemma: the solution of picturing 'training in the habits of virtue as also including a training in the practice of giving adequate reasons for what one does and respecting the adequate reasons that others give'. But, as Curren acknowledges for his own proposal (and the same

would go for Sherman's solution), this is 'not a straightforwardly Aristotelian view to the extent that it rejects the idea that reason emerges later' (Curren 2000: 212).

It is well to note at this juncture that the divergence of opinion dissected here is set against a background of considerable convergence on at least one point. All three interpreters seem to take for granted (although Sherman's later work may suggest otherwise: 1997: Ch. 6) that the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom, *phronesis* – regardless of precisely how and when it develops – signifies the agent's discernment of the courses of action/reaction that best accord with the specifically human *telos* of *eudaimonia*. With the development of *phronesis*, a qualitative transition from the mere 'that' to the 'why' of ethics occurs. In other words, advanced moral learners perfect and perhaps partly revise their perceptions of the 'that' in light of their grasp of the explanatory first principles of ethics, thus reaching the final stage of moral development: a stage necessary for full moral maturity, although admittedly 'the origin' (here allegedly the grasp of the 'that') 'seems to be more than half the whole' (Aristotle 1985: 18 [1098b6–7]).

To obtain a purchase on this consensual view, Irwin's well-known account of Aristotle's 'first principles' provides a case in point. According to Irwin, we cannot understand Aristotle's ethics or politics without recourse to his other non-ethical works – works that articulate the first principles of human nature on which the moral and political conclusions ultimately depend (Irwin 1990: 348–55). The picture that emerges is of Aristotle as a *foundationalist* (more specifically, a moral *naturalist* who bases his normative claims on facts about human nature) and a moral *generalist* for whom certain things are always noble and right. This does not mean that all moral action is unproblematically codifiable in light of an all-embracing ethical theory. Such a theory would be impossible for an imperfect being to fathom. Because of the endless variety of novel circumstances that we may be caught up in, we need perceptual awareness – a dynamic appreciation of the uniqueness of each particular situation – to guide us to the right course of action. Morality is thus contingently, but not necessarily, uncodifiable (Irwin 2000; I develop this view in more detail in Chapter 11).

Reeve goes beyond Irwin's position in emphasizing Aristotle's generalism. He argues, *pace* Irwin, that we grasp first principles in ethics through *nous* rather than through *phronesis*, and that such principles are thus the objects of unconditional scientific knowledge. Reeve even rejects the notion of ethics as a specifically inexact science, as our knowledge of ethical universals 'can be as exact and scientific as our knowledge of physics, biology, or any other science whose first principles are essentially enmattered' (Reeve 1992: 27).

Recently, the received wisdom about Aristotle's foundationalism and generalism has been comprehensively challenged by theorists who understand Aristotle's *phronesis* as being much more open-ended and flexible: as situational appreciation rather than the application and interpretation, the 'fine-graining', of a theory. This challenge has been warmly welcomed and eagerly accommodated by various practitioners, such as educators (moral and otherwise), many of whom refuse to perceive their work as involving the mere application of theory to particular cases, but rather as some sort of intuitive artistry (see, for example, Dunne 1993). I need to devote some space to this challenge here, as it suggests, by implication, a possible

solution to the psychological paradox of moral education. For if there is no essential gap between the 'that' and the 'why' of ethics, between habituated virtue and critical virtue, then the alleged paradox essentially dissolves. Nussbaum (1990) is often taken as an example of a particularist, anti-theorist interpreter of Aristotle; but as she has since written a forceful defence of the need for moral theory (Nussbaum 2000), her current position on this issue is moot. Instead I base my exploration on the writings of McDowell and Vasiliou, adding a few salient points from Hursthouse, who represents a more moderate stance.

Generally speaking, a particularist view of morality considers the structure of moral reality to be best captured by sensitivity to particular situations rather than by any system of moral theory/theories. In contrast to *generalism*, which holds that some properties, wherever and whenever they are instantiated, always count in favour of or against some action/reaction, *particularism* maintains that the very same property may count morally in favour in some circumstances and against in others (Dancy 1993: 60). In other words, although moral properties supervene on non-moral ones, the former are *shapeless* with regard to the latter; there is no one-to-one relationship between a given factual situation and a required moral action/reaction.

McDowell was the forerunner in a series of particularist readings of Aristotle that were launched in the late 1970s and have since generated considerable debate. In a more recent article, McDowell (1996) assembles his various resources. The fundamental point is this: 'If the content of a correct conception of doing well is fixed by proper upbringing, that renders it superfluous to credit that role to an autonomous operation of the practical intellect' (McDowell 1996: 19). According to McDowell's interpretation, someone who has been properly raised in the Aristotelian model has been habituated into seeing the appropriate actions or emotions as worthwhile in the specific way that is expressed by bringing them under the rubric of the concept of the noble. Rather than furnishing us with a universal 'blueprint', from which noble (re)actions can be systematically worked out, in this contrasting picture there is nothing for the *phronimos*'s grasp of the content of the universal to be 'except a capacity to read the details of the situation in the light of a way of valuing actions into which proper upbringing has habituated one'. The content of the universal is not isolable, even in principle, from this learnt capacity. There is no subsequent grounding of the universal from the outside either; the content of a conception of human well-being is 'fixed once and for all' in the minds of people who have been well brought up, without the need for further foundation. If there is any moral development in individuals after their parents send them morally habituated into the world, it consists merely of the training of the imparted conceptual apparatus, as when hunters gradually train their eyes to see the prey better, while the prey remains the same (McDowell 1996: 21–33). In this case, McDowell reads Aristotle almost as if the latter were a late-Wittgensteinian: habituated persons have learnt a language game involving the concept of the noble. What they later add themselves is increased mastery of the game as they engage in the practices of applying the term to particular instances; the concept becomes more discriminating of subtle shades and nuances through sustained use, without the need for any definition or independent grounding (see Hursthouse 2004).

Although strongly influenced by McDowell's reading, Vasiliou (1996) considers the transition from the 'that' to the 'why' of ethics to be even less significant than McDowell does, and renders Aristotle even more of an anti-generalist and anti-theorist. Vasiliou makes heavy weather of a cryptic, and perhaps incomplete, passage in Aristotle, which reads thus (notably in Irwin's translation): 'For the origin we begin from is the belief that something is true, and if this is apparent enough to us, we will not, at this stage, need the reason why it is true in addition' (Aristotle 1985: 6 [1095b5–8]). Vasiliou claims that Irwin and like-minded theorists have inserted the clause 'at this stage', which has no equivalent in the Greek, to serve their own agenda of implying that, at some later stage, the grounding theory of human well-being will appear to the learner and offer that person a blueprint for ethical behaviour. Far from being the case, Vasiliou argues, exactly the opposite holds: Aristotle is here making the point that the person who has acquired the 'that' of ethics through proper upbringing (habituation) will not, now or ever, need the 'why' in addition. If you have the 'that', you can gradually recognize on your own, case by case, what constitutes 'doing well'. It is precisely because those who possess the 'that' sufficiently can identify particular actions as being just or courageous, for example, that they must already have a grasp of the 'why'. The Aristotelian 'first principles' in ethics are not grounding principles, therefore, but rather are 'viewing particular actions as counting as just, virtuous, etc., here and now'. There is nothing substantial to be added and hence no psychological paradox to worry about, in the sense that I have presented it in this chapter. Like McDowell, Vasiliou leaves some room for post-habituation moral development, but that development is limited to a further categorization of moral concepts along the original lines firmly fixed by the 'that' (Vasiliou 1996: 776–90).

Hursthouse (2004) occupies an intermediary position in the generalism–particularism debate. Although conceding that some of the more radical anti-codifiability claims made by the particularist readers of Aristotle go too far (namely to the extent that those claims ignore Aristotle's willingness to suggest general rules about actions and emotions in his explications of the moral virtues), she claims that anti-codifiability as such is not the issue. The central claim that should plausibly be ascribed to Aristotle (and this constitutes the modified particularist reading to which she subscribes) is that he is not denying just one thesis but rather a conjunction of two: 'i) the *phronimos*'s special knowledge – that which enables him to get practical decisions right – is susceptible of codification in rules apt for serving as major premises in practical syllogisms and ii) these rules could be fully understood by those lacking *phronesis* (and thereby full virtue).' See Table 3.2 for a simplified visual presentation of the spectrum of generalist versus particularist interpretations of Aristotle's ethics as I have delineated them.

Table 3.2 Generalist versus particularist interpretations of Aristotle's ethics

Generalism <– – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –> Particularism

Reeve – Irwin – Hursthouse – McDowell – Vasiliou

My position on this issue is clear: I believe that the particularist interpretations of Aristotle misfire. As these interpretations crop up again at a later stage in this book in the more practical context of the view that teaching is best understood as *praxis* in the Aristotelian sense (Chapter 11), I am shelving most of my anti-particularist ammunition until then. However, I must briefly anticipate three salient points.

First, it is extremely difficult to ignore the fact that in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle proposes a full-fledged *moral theory* about *eudaimonia* as the ultimate good and unconditional end of human beings. That, rather than the notion of the noble or the just, provides the Aristotelian 'first principle' of ethics, and all of Aristotle's scholarly endeavour is precisely aimed at unravelling such first principles (see, for example, Reeve 1992: 29). Moreover, the Aristotelian model of teaching always seems to revolve around a teacher who has a grasp of first principles and delivers them to students, directly through instruction or indirectly through habituation (cf. Spangler 1998: 18–19). How could the *phronimos* be a real *phronimos* without having gained access to such principles and having started to apply them critically and systematically in practice? Second, Aristotle provides us with an array of ethical rules about the proper medial states of actions and emotions, and although he admits that they hold only 'usually' (or 'for the most part') and have to be applied in each case with contextual sensitivity to the relevant circumstances, they are nonetheless general rules of thumb that 'indicate the truth roughly and in outline' (Aristotle 1985: 4 [1094b20]). This much, as least, is acknowledged by Hursthouse (2004), although she refuses to understand those ethical generalizations as truly action-guiding. But, third, that refusal is puzzling, given Aristotle's frequent discussions of practical moral dilemmas and his readiness to guide us there in the right directions, one clear example of which is actually discussed by Hursthouse herself (2004; see Aristotle 1985: 240–42 [1164b21–1165a13]). Generally speaking, the particularist readings of Aristotle must be viewed as yet one more instance of the popular anti-foundationalist tendency in modern moral philosophy: the tendency to tone down any grand doctrines and, more specifically, to justify moral norms from 'within' morality rather than from the 'outside' (for example, with reference to human nature). I believe, however, that Aristotle would consider this tendency philosophically disabling rather than enabling.

There is, nevertheless, one point about which the particularists are surely right and Irwin is surely wrong. Irwin says: 'There is no good reason to think that Aristotle believes that only people with good upbringing ought to be persuaded by his arguments' (Irwin 1990: 601). Here, Irwin's generalism seems to get the better of him. It may be true that, in a possible world, Aristotle might have envisaged people who ought to be persuaded by his arguments, irrespective of their upbringing. However, it is clear that in the actual world Aristotle is describing, and given the *de facto* nature of human beings, people without good upbringings will generally not even comprehend, let alone be persuaded by and willing to accommodate, moral truths. Their capacity for moral understanding has been irrevocably compromised, as the 'why' of moral arguments presupposes acquaintance with the 'that' of moral habituation. This is why Aristotle must not be understood to be attempting the task of many moralists of trying to recommend virtue to those who do not care for it; rather, he is giving a course in ethical thinking to enable those who already want

to be virtuous to understand better what they should do and feel – and why (see, for example, Burnyeat 1980: 81). This point does not impugn my earlier diagnosis (Section 2.2) of Aristotle's view that the moral can be shown, by good arguments, to be reducible to the prudential. Those without good upbringing may listen to such arguments and even pretend to understand them, but they are not able to absorb the central message or to act upon it.

If the particularist attempt to debunk the psychological paradox of moral education fails, what are we then to make of Aristotle's contribution to its resolution according to a generalist interpretation of his writings? Let us return to the three rhetorical questions raised at the beginning of Section 3.2:

(1) How can students acquire *phronesis* if they have only ever experienced externally guided habituation? Well, they have, of course, experienced more than that. They have been brought up in a home where they have experienced mutual 'natural affection' with parents and siblings. They have mingled with the right kind of people, interacted with the right kind of friends, listened to the right kind of music to train their emotions (Aristotle 1941a: 1309–16 [1339a10–1342b33]) and so on. Not all these things can necessarily be described as involving an extrinsic motivation. Moreover, as already noted, habituation – while not essentially a critical practice – does include the training of perceptual capacities that help students to see things aright.

(2) How can students learn that an action or emotion is virtuous simply by being habituated into doing or feeling it? They do not learn about virtue only in that way, for the task of acquiring practical wisdom (*phronesis*) still lies ahead. If the generalists are (at least generally!) right, then the *Nicomachean Ethics* should be understood as laying the theoretical foundations of morality: the systematic moral knowledge of its first principles (the ultimate end of human life; the nature of a good character, and so on). This knowledge, imparted through verbal teaching, constitutes the universal part of *phronesis*. Habituation, which produces sound habits and accurate perceptions, provides the discernment of particulars. *Phronesis* thus constitutes the eventual fusion of the appetitive part of the soul with the deliberative part of the intellect, and these two brands do not braid into a single skein until systematic moral instruction has been added to the habituation process (cf. Curren 2000: 201–4). For the 'Aristotelian particularist', however, question (2) will continue to present an irresolvable enigma: if the skills that comprise the virtues cannot, in principle, be informatively specified, what, then, is moral instruction all about (cf. Hooker 2000)? Bakhurst has recently made a feeble attempt to justify a particularist conception of moral education as 'initiation into a culture of evaluation' (Bakhurst 2005: 274): a conception that seems to beg the all-important question of how students will eventually be able to judge if the culture into which they have been initiated is of true moral worth.

(3) Why does *phronesis* necessarily require an earlier state of non-rational habituated virtue? We know, from experience, that habituation is a precondition for the usefulness of moral instruction. We also know that a successful fusion of habituation and intellectual training leads to the agent's own *phronesis*, just as we know that the novices who are originally pushed into the skating ring eventually learn to skate – and, given the correct training, to skate well. This is the rub of the

matter. How, exactly, this happens is connected with various mental and bodily states and processes, the details of which must be provided by the empirical sciences. As with many other factual questions, such as how ignorance is resolved 'so that the incontinent person recovers his knowledge', we must hear the answer 'from the natural scientists' (Aristotle 1985: 181 [1147b5–9]; cf. Hardie 1980: 110–14). Or, to put the words of the devout empiricist, Aristotle, into modern language: moral philosophy *qua* practical enterprise must, in the end, be answerable to empirical research in moral psychology. We must hear the detailed answer about the resolution of the psychological paradox of moral education from developmental psychologists rather than from moral philosophers.

Instead of supplying practical answers to such questions as how, from a psychological point of view, habituated reason can be made to develop into critical reason, *Nicomachean Ethics* gives us, in broad theoretical outline, the story of the necessary fusion of habituation and verbal instruction. Addressing the relevant practicalities would require a shift from moral philosophy to empirical science. But Aristotle was also an empirical scientist, so why did he not provide us with those details? There are two possible answers to that question. First, it is 'those with experience in each area who judge the products correctly and who comprehend the method or way of completing them, and what fits with what; for if we lack experience, we must be satisfied with noticing that the product is well or badly made' (Aristotle 1985: 297 [1181a20–22]). Perhaps Aristotle did not consider himself to be such an expert on the didactics of moral upbringing to write a manual for it. Another possible explanation lies in the fact that large portions of Aristotle's writings on education have undoubtedly been lost. Answers to questions of moral didactics may have been expected to be forthcoming in the practical treatise that deals with earthbound issues of legislation and schooling: namely *Politics*. Notably, however, *Politics* is a mere fragment, and only the part about the use of music to train moral emotions remains of the section on the education of character. Perhaps Aristotle wrote, or intended to write, there a description of moral didactics.

In summary, Aristotle's view of the psychological paradox of moral education is that it does admit of a resolution – that much we know from experience and can explain in broad theoretical outline – but a precise account of this resolution must await the exploration of empirical scientists. While awaiting such an account, we can rest content with the teachings of folk psychology that provide us, *inter alia*, with the following sound, time-honoured advice about the powers of habituation (to cite Shakespeare's *Hamlet*):

> Assume a virtue if you have it not.
> That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat
> Of habits evil, is angel yet in this,
> That to the use of actions fair and good
> He likewise gives a frock or livery,
> That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight,
> And that shall lend a kind of easiness
> To the next abstinence; the next more easy.

3.4 The Moral/Political Paradox

How can it be simultaneously true that (1) the aim of moral education is to create individuals who, moved by their own conception of the good, cherish and assiduously exercise their own unencumbered autonomy, and (2) that this goal can best be achieved through means that necessarily involve an extrinsic motivation? Is heteronomously formed autonomy morally possible and justifiable? This was the moral/political paradox of moral education presented in Section 3.1. Note that even if we take Aristotle on trust and acknowledge that there is a scientific solution at hand for the psychological paradox, we might still consider something seriously amiss morally and politically with the notion of heterononously guided autonomy. It is at least a common conception in modernity that in order to gain full autonomy, or to 'own' a moral voice that is authentically our own, we must liberate ourselves from the original sources of our core values: the agents (for instance, parents) and institutions (such as schools) that habituated and socialized us. As Curren neatly fleshes out this consideration, he mentions: (1) the fear of *indoctrination*, or the fear that the manipulation inherent in the habituation process prevents the unfettered employment of autonomy; (2) the possibility of *foreclosed options*, or the possibility that in suppressing alternative conceptions of the good, moral habituation restricts future life options; and (3) the threat of *force*, or the threat that habituation necessarily involves force and is, thus, morally and politically suspect (Curren 2000: 206).

Now, it may seem far-fetched to seek a solution to such typically modern concerns from a philosopher who obviously did not possess the concepts of autonomy or authenticity in their modern senses. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to alleviate those very concerns with reference to Aristotle's conception of (political) freedom. Let me briefly note those attempts. A common recourse is to point out that worries about the heteronomous undermining of autonomy typically stem from liberal thinkers steeped in the tradition of 'negative' freedom. Aristotle, by contrast, is said to have held a 'positive' conception of freedom – or, more specifically, a sub-conception of such freedom sometimes dubbed 'communitarian' or 'republican' freedom, according to which real freedom does not involve bare immunity from external restraints, but rather active participation in a communal enterprise (see, for example, MacIntyre 1981: 149; Long 1996: 795; Johnson 2002). This form of positive liberty is sometimes caricatured by its opponents as implying a Rousseauean (or, for that matter, Orwellian) 'forced-to-be-free' scenario, according to which you can be truly free even when are you forced to do things against your will as long as those things are 'in your own best interests'. There are, however, more sympathetic ways in which to understand and express the basic insights of 'communitarian freedom', such as the observation that an agent can hardly be said to enhance his or her freedom by achieving radical independence from others and that, far from diminishing the freedom of children by educating them – to give an example – you enlarge their humanity and increase their freedom. Among those who are fundamentally averse to positive conceptions of freedom, someone might conceive of a way of accommodating Aristotle's notion of freedom within a pure but permissive negative model, according to which the habituation process would, for example, inevitably involve some restriction of freedom. But that restriction would

be eclipsed by the gain in overall negative freedom through the far-outweighing freedoms from the conditions of ignorance and moral immaturity – conditions that may also be considered negative barriers to a person's freedom, provided that another agent can be held responsible for them (for such a permissive negative conception of freedom, see, for example, Kristjánsson 1996).

The problem with both these strategies is twofold. (1) Aristotle did not hold freedom to be the highest political value; he was not a modern liberal. If only for that reason, both the outlined strategies to resolve the moral/political paradox – by claiming that 'forcing' children to become autonomous is sufficiently justified simply because it increases their positive freedom *or* their overall negative freedom – would seem foreign to him. (2) More important, Aristotle did not have at his disposal anything resembling the modern concept of freedom, let alone two distinct conceptions of positive and negative freedom. For him, being free basically meant not being a slave (Long 1996: 788): a restrictive notion of the term 'freedom' that we can find in many ancient and medieval languages. For example, the modern Icelandic word '*frjáls*' ('free') is derived from '*frí-hals*' in Old Norse, which literally means 'having a free neck' – not being chained like a slave (Kristjánsson 1996: 9). All in all, strategies to resolve the moral/psychological paradox through some fiddling with the concept of freedom are, if nothing else, hopelessly un-Aristotelian.

Aristotle was, of course, a tireless advocate of regulated upbringing and compulsory public education (see Curren 2000, for a clear overview). For him, the development of moral and intellectual virtues is not a private affair or achievement but fundamentally a public one. To be and to remain fully virtuous, one needs to live in a society with a correct constitution, under which the legislators should be particularly concerned with the education of the young. No matter how morally alert one's parents and teachers are, 'it is hard for someone to be trained correctly for virtue from his youth if he has not been brought up under correct laws' (Aristotle 1985: 293 [1179b31–5]). Conversely, the 'best laws, though sanctioned by every citizen of the state, will be of no avail unless the young are trained by habit and education in the spirit of the constitution' (Aristotle 1941a: 1251 [1310a12–17]). The core idea of *Politics* is to underline those truths and put them into practice. Aristotle was not as concerned as we are today by the whiff of paternalism; he would have readily admitted that bringing a person up to become a *phronimos* might have to involve some exercise of force – except perhaps in the case of those most gentle and malleable by nature – and he would also have been ready to justify that exercise. Aristotle's justification, and his potential approach to the moral/political paradox of moral education, may be set in sharp relief by comparing it with the corresponding modern discursive tradition.

The modern discourse on this issue in moral and educational circles is predominantly a liberal one, in which the ideals of individual freedom and autonomy stubbornly stay on the top of the agenda. How is heteronomously motivated autonomy morally possible and justified? The tone for the liberal resolution of this paradox was set in a famous article by Dworkin (1972), in which he argues that parental paternalism may be thought of as a wager by the parent on the child's subsequent recognition of the wisdom of the restrictions. The possibility thus lies in the fact that the child will understand the reasons for the use of force at a later stage;

the justification rests on what could be called 'future-oriented' (or 'subsequent', 'anticipated') consent. The underlying assumption is that paternalism of this kind is not the same as indoctrination, for indoctrination would disable children from ever seriously questioning the grounds for parental values, or even entertaining the possibility that other values might be preferable (Peters 1981: 163).

There are various problems attached to the notion of autonomy manifested through subsequent consent – problems of which many liberal thinkers are keenly aware. If a person has a right to non-interference at time *t*, it is puzzling why the mere fact that the person retrospectively (at time t_1) consents to the violation of that right, undermines the right at time *t*. Moreover, consent can be relatively easily manipulated. Many of the techniques that a moral educator will use in the habituation process are not the sort of techniques into whose acceptability learners can gain insight later and consent to through retrospective critical appraisal: techniques such as the educator's facial expressions, gestures and tones of voice (see, for example, Buss 2005: 233). While adhering to the liberal agenda of autonomy as the overriding educational goal, Haley Richmond considers the demand of subsequent consent to be both unfeasible and redundant. What matters, instead, is the character of the learning process with which individual learners are engaged: whether it is harmful or beneficial in promoting or suppressing the development of autonomy. And that can be determined according to established educational criteria prior to any consent given by the learner (Richmond 1998: 243–7).

Although I agree with Richmond about the redundancy of subsequent consent, I do observe an underlying dilemma here: does the justification of paternalism in moral habituation lie in the process or in the outcome? If it lies only in the outcome (successfully accomplished autonomy), then indoctrination and manipulation during the process are not necessarily excluded as educational options. If it lies only in the process (as non-manipulative and non-indoctrinatory), then the outcome may or may not be one of autonomy: people with a good upbringing may decide, without reflection, to vote in political elections just as their parents vote, rather than to exercise their own autonomy. If, as Richmond's proposal seems to imply, the justification lies in both the process and the outcome (the process must be non-manipulative and the outcome must be autonomy), then it becomes unclear why he rejects consent as a criterion of successful upbringing; after all, informed consent is a standard liberal procedure by which agents manifest their autonomy. Richmond seems unable to spring loose from the trap laid by the liberal valorization of autonomy; for Richmond, autonomy is such an overriding moral ideal as to make redundant not only consent, but also *any other ideal* not directly conducive to autonomy. What matters is simply people's unfettered ability to choose; their consent to the methods by which they were made to become such choosers, let alone their happiness as such choosers, is irrelevant.

Compare this to Aristotle, and a number of salient differences appear. I said previously that a solution to the psychological paradox of moral education would also go a long way towards solving the moral/political paradox. As shown in the preceding section, the Aristotelian resolution of the psychological paradox is simply to say that, as a matter of empirical fact that is well established but needs to be explained in detail by natural scientists, habituated virtue becomes, in the end,

critical virtue, however paradoxical that may seem. If he were willing to stomach their conceptual apparatus, Aristotle could say to modern liberals that the *possibility* of heteronomously formed autonomy is a well-established empirical fact – that this is what happens all the time! The question of whether heteronomously formed autonomy is also *morally justifiable* or not complicates matters, however, for two reasons.

The first is that Aristotle would undoubtedly be loath to accept the liberal notion of selfhood underlying the modern ideal of autonomy (not to mention authenticity). Aristotle's notion of selfhood is of a self both derived from and essentially sustained through social recognition and admiration (see Section 2.3). To that extent it is 'heteronomous' in the Kantian sense – and in the liberal sense in as much as it is inspired by the Kantian one – but at the same time it is less alienated from its counterpart social identity than is the liberal self.

The second reason for the Aristotelian unease with the liberal solution to the moral/political problem of moral education lies in the liberal appeal to the independent value of autonomy – an appeal that would ring hollow to Aristotle. As noted earlier, Aristotle did not have a concept of autonomy; the closest we get to it is his notion of *phronesis* as practical (and critical) wisdom. Liberals such as Richmond are at pains to emphasize that appeals to any substantive notion of the human good are fraught with difficulties; there are too many competing conceptions of the good, and within them there are too many ways in which particular goods might be pursued. Rather than impose on our children any particular conception of the good, we should instead direct our efforts at bringing them up to reason well and to choose well (Richmond 1998: 247–9). Autonomy as a formal rather than a substantive notion is an independent goal of moral maturity that requires no further justification. For Aristotle, by contrast, as for the character-educationists of today, we can locate, among the multiplicity of conflicting human values, a set of substantive virtues that are universally honoured in any society, the existence of which is based on our common human nature. Moreover, the value of any virtue, be it of *phronesis* or of autonomy, depends for Aristotle on the extent to which it is constitutive of and/or conducive to *eudaimonia*. It is through this thick notion of the substantive human good that Aristotle ultimately justifies *phronesis* and whatever needs to be imposed upon children to help them develop *phronesis*. No doubt, if he adopted the liberal conceptualization, he would justify the case of heteronomously formed autonomy in exactly the same way.

3.5 To Dwell among the Appearances

In this chapter, I have tried to sketch an Aristotelian solution to the 'paradox' (or, more correctly, the paradoxes) of moral education, so coined by the educational philosopher R.S. Peters. I have derived my answers by distilling Aristotle's own texts and, no less important, the exegeses of various recent Aristotelian scholars. I have focused on Aristotle's naturalism – a naturalism that sees moral objectivity as grounded in common facts about human beings and their *Lebenswelt*: the world as we actually experience it. My analysis has been heavily influenced by Nussbaum's

understanding of Aristotle as an 'empirical essentialist': an empiricist who saw solutions to moral problems as this-worldly and non-transcendental – as applying *to* and *in* this world as opposed to other possible worlds – but yet as non-relative in this world as they refer to our common human nature (Nussbaum 1992; see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Ch. 2).

The Aristotelian answer I have offered is basically this: both the psychological paradox and the moral/political one are resolvable in practice. We know from experience that however theoretically puzzling this may seem, habituated reason develops, if all is well, into critical reason, and heteronomously formed selfhood develops into a self that can make autonomous decisions. How this happens, in Aristotle's view – and this time I cite Peters rather than Aristotle – 'is a matter about which psychologists and practical teachers will have more to say than philosophers' (Peters 1981: 60). The moral and political justification of heteronomously formed autonomy will be found in the specifically human substantive good of *eudaimonia*. If it happens that autonomy can be formed only in this way and that autonomy is conducive to *eudaimonia*, or even constitutive of it, then heteronomously formed autonomy is morally justified. This is, at any rate, how Aristotle morally justifies *phronesis*.

I may not have quelled the unease of those who expect something grander and more other-worldly of moral philosophy than this. Yet the desire for a 'deeper' philosophical resolution of the paradoxes of moral education that Aristotle has to offer suggests less a failure of Aristotle than the success of disclosing the stubborn resistance of many philosophers to naturalism: to dwelling among the appearances and seeking in them a foundation for morality.

For those who do not share this resistance at any rate, *Assumption B* will have been shown to be wrong.

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Chapter 4

Aristotle on the Non-Expendability of Emotions

4.1 Expendability or Non-Expendability?

Assumption C: 'Aristotle, the forefather of the cognitive theories of emotions, advises us, as his modern counterparts do, to rid ourselves of negative emotions. He shares with the cognitive theorists of late the insurmountable problem of the individuation of emotions.'

Is this assumption true?

In order to examine this assumption, we need to consider the questions of how emotions are to be individuated and whether or not some of them are negative beyond redemption and should be discarded. I approach these questions, broadly speaking, in reverse order. Note first, then, that as the role of the emotions in the 'good life' is being reconceptualized in increasingly positive and accommodating ways, it becomes reasonable to ask: Are there any *morally expendable emotions* – emotions which could ideally, from a moral point of view, be eradicated from human life? This may look like a relatively straightforward question; yet it requires, I believe, a somewhat complex exploration that must touch on diverse philosophical and psychological issues surrounding the emotions and the study of emotions.

To begin, some people might consider this question to be a peculiar one, because the academic and popular literature on emotions is replete with accounts of so-called *negative emotions* and how to conquer them. In the absence of elaboration, however, the alleged truism that negative emotions are expendable amounts to little more than a slogan. I argue in Section 4.2 that 'negative emotion' is an unfortunate and completely un-Aristotelian label that has been used to denote radically different kinds of emotions, and thus obscures a number of relevant complexities. Recent years have witnessed the reappraisal of many specific emotions and emotion types traditionally repudiated as being 'negative'. Although these reappraisals are almost as diverse as they are numerous, none entails that *all* emotions are, in the end, morally redeemable. Yet that is what Aristotle seems to have claimed, according to at least one eminent interpreter (Urmson 1980). Although my perspective is not essentially exegetical, let alone panegyrical, with regard to Aristotle, I think it is worthwhile to assume, at least for the sake of argument, that he asserted this claim, and I refer to it in what follows as 'Aristotle's claim'. If he did assert it, there is every reason to take seriously what the forefather of modern emotion studies had to say; even if he did not, the claim is interesting in its own right. The chief aim of this chapter is not to look for a definitive answer to the question of whether or not there are any morally expendable emotions, but rather the more modest one of trying to make sense of

the (admittedly counter-intuitive) claim that there are no such emotions. In Section 4.3, I suggest certain revisions to the specifics of Aristotle's claim that render it less counter-intuitive.

Once the question of the expendability of emotions has been restated in an Aristotelian fashion, a range of important considerations begins to emerge, having to do with the individuation of emotions. Those considerations take us to the heart of the question of what emotions really are. After probing that question in Section 4.4, the chapter concludes, in Section 4.5, with an exploration of how our emotions, as well as the moral virtues (corresponding as they normally do to certain emotional traits), relate to distinct spheres of human experience, and how emotion concepts can best carve up the emotional landscape. I argue that there are certain normative reasons for specifying emotion concepts in such a way that Aristotle's claim about the non-expendability of emotions holds good. What emerges, then, I hope, is at least one important sense in which it could be said that there are no expendable emotions. Into the bargain, *Assumption C* will have been shown to be wrong.

4.2 'Negative' Emotions?

The contemporary popular and academic literature on emotion regulation routinely berates the so-called negative emotions. In some sources, emotion regulation is even called 'negative-mood regulation' and the conceptualization of an emotion as 'positive' is considered sufficient reason for it to require no regulation (no downgrading or elimination). In support of their position, proponents of this view have created a small repertoire of pocketbook arguments such as 'negative emotions are bad for health'. This approach is poorly conceived for a number of reasons. The fundamental problem is that in most of these sources the hostility expressed towards 'negative emotions' is equalled only by the blissful disregard of what the term is actually meant to convey. The plethora of words used as substitutes for 'negative' emotion in the emotion literature – 'malign', 'antisocial', 'hostile', 'antipathetic' and even 'nasty' – betrays an inadequate grasp of underlying conceptual issues.

Senses of 'Negative Emotion'

In order to bring some order into this chaos,I distinguish among four different senses of 'negative emotion', all of which are commonly encountered in the literature; the first two are broadly *psychological* and the last two broadly *moral* (for a more detailed analysis and references to the literature, see Kristjánsson 2006: 23–35).

Negatively evaluating emotion An emotion that evaluates an object or an object's situation as negative can be called a negatively evaluating emotion. This sense of 'negative emotion' is no doubt useful for various theoretical purposes in psychology, where it seems to form the dominant sense of 'negative emotion'. However, it bears scant resemblance to what I take to be the typical layperson's understanding of the term. For instance, compassion, ordinarily praised as positive and virtuous, becomes 'negative', whereas *Schadenfreude* (pleasure at another's undeserved misfortune;

see further in Section 4.3), which is almost universally condemned, becomes 'positive'.

Painful emotion The experiencing of pain seems to be another common reason for psychologists to label an emotion as negative. Yet a moment's reflection shows that a painful emotion need not be negatively evaluating; nor need it be evaluated negatively (witness compassion). Indeed, there seems to be no necessary connection between the evaluative pattern of an emotion and its affective component. Consider emulation, an emotion that has been carefully analysed by Aristotle. Emulation is characterized by a person's pain 'at the apparent presence among others like him by nature, of things honored and possible for a person to acquire, [with the pain arising] not from the fact that another has them but that the emulator does not' (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388a30–35]; I introduced this emotion in Section 2.3 and explore it in greater detail in Chapter 7). This emotion seems to couple a positive evaluation of the object or the object's situation as honourable with negative (here, painful) feelings. The retort might be that an evaluation of 'the object or the object's situation' need not constitute a simple or single evaluation, and that what matters in the present context is the evaluation of the whole state of affairs, including the subject's situation, as being negative overall. Aristotle's point, however, is that 'emulation is a good thing and characteristic of good people', precisely because the subject (the emulator) deems it more important for the object to retain its 'honoured things' than for him or her to acquire similar attainments (in case both aims cannot be achieved), and thus evaluates the situation as overall positive. If not, emulation degenerates into envy, which is 'bad and characteristic of the bad'. So although emulation is painful, the positive evaluation seems more basic to it than the negative one.

Emotion which is generally evaluated negatively In my admittedly unscientific investigations of first-year university students' and laypeople's perceptions of 'negative emotion', the phrase 'emotion which is generally evaluated negatively' probably comes closest to capturing the conception. And that is what people usually mean when references to *Schadenfreude* as a 'negative emotion' or compassion as a 'positive emotion' crop up in everyday conversation.

Morally unjustifiable emotional trait Moral philosophers have long been interested in delineating vicious traits of character – traits that dispose the agent to immoral deeds or emotions; witness the compilation and subsequent vilification of the 'seven deadly sins'. For the purposes of the present chapter, these morally unjustifiable emotional traits constitute the understanding of negativity that matters – as will be further borne out in our exploration into the possible existence of morally expendable emotions.

These four senses all delineate important categories of emotions, none of which is arbitrary or trivial. But we can say everything we need to say about negatively evaluating emotions, painful emotions, negatively evaluated emotions and morally unjustifiable emotional traits, without making any recourse to the fuzzy notion of a 'negative emotion'.

Reappraisals of 'Negative Emotions'

Let us next explore briefly some recent, so-called moral reappraisals of 'negative emotions'. It is a commonplace in the emotion literature that certain emotions that have traditionally been considered as negative are now being defended or even elevated to the status of the morally commendable. Given the conclusion that there is no category of emotions which can helpfully be referred to as 'negative', we need to take this commonplace view with a grain of salt. In my view, different strands of argument are again described here as if they belong to a uniform fabric, when it would clearly be in the service of conceptual clarity to keep them separated as follows:

The instrumental-value argument A number of theorists have argued that certain stigmatized emotions have some redeeming features: that they are not as black as they have been painted, that they do not deserve their unqualified opprobrium, and so on. This instrumental-value argument suggests that although we would be better off generally without those emotions, there are some factual or logical considerations which force us to accept them, however cautiously and conditionally, because of their instrumental value.

The intrinsic-value argument Others argue that some commonly castigated emotions are not only instrumental means for the ongoing good moral life. Given our human nature, these emotions may also have intrinsic value as necessary ways of experiencing, dealing with and resolving the conflicts and ambivalences of daily life as we know it.

The one-term, many-emotions argument Yet others point out that certain emotion terms, such as 'envy' and 'pride', give the erroneous impression that a single emotion is at issue – and a morally flawed one at that. Once we disentangle various uses of the given term in different locutions, however, we realize that it refers to a number of distinguishable emotions – casually left undistinguished in everyday speech – where some are, admittedly, morally reproachable and avoidable, but others are morally defensible and even morally required in certain contexts.

The proper-focus argument It has also been argued that we have been systematically misled to concentrate on the extreme form of certain emotions as if it is their only possible manifestation, allowing us to write them off as morally flawed beyond redemption. The truth is, however, that there are properly focused, intermediate forms of these emotions in which the emotion is both rational (appropriate to its target) and morally proper in the given circumstances. This argument usually draws on Aristotle's notion of a morally justifiable emotion as one experienced in the right way, at the right time and so forth. This argument is sometimes used in conjunction with the one-term, many-emotions argument. Moreover, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between the two arguments in particular writings, as there is admittedly a thin line between claiming, on the one hand, that the term '*x*' refers to distinct emotions and, on the other, that emotion *x* can assume distinct forms with

respect to its focus and fittingness. Nevertheless, this distinction is not a negligible one, as it indicates a significantly different conceptual and moral approach, as we shall see in subsequent sections.

The 'misdescription' argument The most radical reappraisal argument is the 'misdescription' argument, as it claims that some particular emotion term, '*x*', which is generally considered to refer to a specific combination of emotion-forming ingredients (cognition, desire, affect), and a nasty combination at that, can actually be shown by good linguistic, psychological, conceptual or moral arguments to refer to another and more acceptable combination.

What these different arguments have in common is the assumption that we have been too hard on emotions which we have not properly understood and that, for various reasons, they are not really contrary to or eliminable from moral life. To refer collectively to these arguments as recent defences of negative emotions is misleading, however, not only because of the incurable fuzziness of the term 'negative emotion', but also because it involves an avoidable oversimplification – ignoring the fact that these arguments differ essentially in radicality, employ different tactics and draw upon different philosophical persuasions. Although all these arguments aim to dislodge the moral distaste for certain emotions, none entails by itself the claim that there are no morally expendable emotions. In fact, that claim may seem positively counter-intuitive and to have the odds firmly stacked against it, at least until we unravel Aristotle's precise meaning.

4.3 Aristotle's Account Reconstructed

As we now know, Aristotelian virtuousness or excellence of character requires not only the regular choice of the right actions; one must regularly feel the right emotions. Each general emotional trait constitutes a medial state of character flanked by the defects (extremes) of excess and deficiency. In a much-cited article, Urmson summarizes Aristotle's account of excellence of character (in so far as it concerns the emotions) as follows (Urmson 1980: 163):

> (1) For each specific excellence of character that we recognize there will be some specific emotion whose field it is.
>
> (2) In the case of each such emotion it is possible to be disposed to exhibit it to the right amount, which is excellence.
>
> (3) In the case of every such emotion it is possible to be disposed to exhibit it either too much or too little, and each of these dispositions is a defect of character.

(4) 'Too much' includes 'on too many occasions' and similar possibilities as well as 'too violently'; 'too little' includes 'on too few occasions' and similar possibilities as well as 'too weakly'.

Importantly, Urmson believes that Aristotle is prepared to go further and also accept:

(5) There is no emotion that one should never exhibit.

It must be admitted that Aristotle's general doctrine of the golden mean is susceptible to various interpretative problems. Some commentators have even concluded that it is irretrievably dodgy – manifesting how the great systemizer fell afoul of his love of mathematical symmetry – or that it is meant to be taken metaphorically rather than literally. Why, for instance, does Aristotle think that emotional vices show themselves in a person's being wrongly disposed with regard to a specific emotion rather than being disposed to have specific feelings about the wrong objects (see Hursthouse 1980–81)? The general point here is that many writers question whether or not Aristotle can reconcile a qualitative conception of the mean (for example, right time, right object) with a quantitative one (a mean between extremes). Although I do believe that these general problems admit of an Aristotle-friendly solution (see, for example, Curzer 1996), I skip over them here in order to concentrate on the particular difficulties related to the last of Urmson's propositions: (5) There is no emotion that one should never exhibit.

To begin, I would suggest two minor revisions of Urmson's formulation. First, 'exhibit' is perhaps not the most felicitous term to use here. Aristotle's concern is the proper *experience* of emotions; whether or not those emotions should be exhibited or made public is another story that requires further arguments in each given case. There can, for instance, be good reasons for not exhibiting one's properly experienced anger when confronted by a violent, out-of-control person. Urmson evidently does not have public exhibition in mind; indeed he seems to use the terms 'exhibiting' and 'experiencing' (an emotion) interchangeably (Urmson 1980: 163, 166). The second revision relates to a point that is not always clear in Urmson's interpretation: Aristotle's account of emotional virtues is concerned with settled character states (*hexeis*): here, general emotional traits. Let us, therefore, reformulate the proposition that Urmson ascribes to Aristotle: (5a) There are no general emotional traits that one should not have.

As Urmson explains, 'Aristotle appears to hold that every emotion is in itself capable of being legitimate; there is no emotion that one should never experience – it is only a matter of over- and underindulgence in each' (Urmson 1980: 166). Another way to express this claim would be to say that the 'proper-focus argument', introduced in the previous section, applies to *all* emotional traits: that each one admits of a properly focused intermediate form. Urmson then cites, in support of his interpretation, Aristotle's somewhat cryptic remarks about the emotions of spite, shamelessness and envy – not merely their excesses or deficiencies – always being base themselves, as those emotions do not admit of a mean (Aristotle 1985: 44 [1107a9–26]). It may be argued that Urmson reads too much into this passage and that it does not necessarily imply (5)/(5a); but as mentioned previously, the claim

that there are no morally expendable emotions is interesting in its own right, whether Aristotle fully subscribed to it or not. In any case, Urmson interprets those remarks exactly as Hardie, for one, had done earlier: namely that some emotion terms are not used to name ranges of feelings, but constitute determinations within a range, with the implication, as part of the meaning of the term, that they are excessive or defective and therefore wrong (Hardie 1964–65: 190–91). Urmson admits, however, that Aristotle's comments about envy and spite are 'very odd'. Aristotle claims that envy is the excess of the mean of indignation (pain at someone else's undeserved good fortune) and that spite is the deficiency: the envious person exceeds the indignant one 'by feeling pain when anyone does well, while the spiteful is so deficient in feeling pain that he actually enjoys [other people's misfortunes]' (Aristotle 1985: 49 [1108b1–7]; Urmson 1980: 166). One need not reflect long on the contours of the relevant emotional landscape to realize that one cannot speak of envy and spite in this way without straining reality.

Urmson suggests a solution to the problem of Aristotle's 'odd comments' which hinges on Aristotle's contention that shame is not a real virtue. If shame is not a virtue, Urmson points out, then its extremes are presumably not defects of character, although they are blameworthy in some way. And because the 'bogus trilogy' of indignation, envy and spite follows the discussion of shame, that trilogy is presumably not one of virtue and its related character faults either (Urmson 1980: 168). This solution is far-fetched, to say the least. First, although shame is not, in the Aristotelian schema, a virtue of fully virtuous persons, as they have nothing whatever left to cause them shame, it is a virtue of moral learners: 'suitable for youth' (Aristotle 1985: 115 [1128b16–20]; cf. my remarks in Section 2.3). There is nothing odd about seeing shamelessness as the deficiency of that semi-virtue, and I need say no more about it here. Second, and more importantly, indignation (*nemesis*) is clearly a full emotional virtue in the Aristotelian schema. It 'arises from the same moral character' as does compassion: pain at another's undeserved bad fortune (Aristotle 1991: 156 [1386b25–29]). Notice that I translate '*eleos*' here as 'compassion' rather than as 'pity', although pity is the more traditional rendering. Given the element of condescension that the term 'pity' has acquired, it would be more felicitously reserved for another Aristotelian emotional trait, left unnamed by him: pain at another's deserved bad fortune, as being the excess of compassion. Both the emotions of indignation and compassion are 'characteristic of a good character' (Aristotle 1991: 155 [1386b10–14]). Elsewhere, Aristotle goes even further by claiming that there exists a single inclination, namely *nemesis*, which is characterized by 'pain felt at either good or bad fortune if undeserved, or […] joy felt at them if deserved' (Aristotle 1984: 1954 [1233b19–25]). Here Aristotle uses the term *nemesis*, not only for indignation (pain at undeserved good fortune) but in a broader sense, for the general medial temperament of having the proper feelings towards the fortunes of others: namely, for justice as an emotional virtue (see further in Kristjánsson 2006: Ch. 3; cf. Coker 1992; Curzer 1995).

Urmson tries to rescue Aristotle's tantalizing trilogy by exempting it from the general architectonic of moral virtue. But that plan does not really work. A more promising route is to admit that Aristotle commits a number of missteps in the specifics of his account and to try to correct them. Even if his 'bogus trilogy' cannot

be sustained, we may be able to tell an alternate story, on Aristotle's behalf, that springs from the same general concerns but avoids the missteps. For a start, Aristotle does not distinguish clearly enough between envy (*phthonos*) and begrudging spite (*epēreasmos*). Both seem to have to do with pain at the deserved good fortune of another, 'not that a person may get anything for himself but because of those who have it' (Aristotle 1991: 159 [1387b22–24]; cf. 125 [1378b16–17]). Aristotle should have reserved this description for begrudging spite, which would then fit in well as the excess of indignation. In envy, by contrast, we are pained by another person's superiority over us and we desire the envied things for ourselves. Aristotle's description of *phthonos* is exclusively one of invidious or malicious envy. He should have noted that envy can have a sound moral basis – if the envied person has attained his or her superior position through morally improper means, for instance. Justified envy would then constitute a medial state with invidious envy as the excess. Such a conception of *phthonos* – as legitimate when directed at those who do not have title to the goods they possess – was common in Aristotle's day (see Konstan 2006: Ch. 5). Notably, justified envy would not be the same emotion as indignation; for whereas the former is strongly comparative – involving a reference to ourselves – the latter is not because we may be indignant over another's undeserved good fortune without any reference to our own standing (see Kristjánsson 2006: 104–5).

Furthermore, we must be careful not to confuse spite (*epichairekakia*) with begrudging spite (*epēreasmos*). It is *epichairekakia* which concerns Urmson as being the bogus deficiency of indignation. *Epichairekakia* is best understood as pleasure at the undeserved bad fortune of another, and I suggest that it be translated as '*Schadenfreude*' rather than 'spite', which accords better with modern usage and avoids the conflation of spite with begrudging spite (pain at another's deserved good fortune). It is obviously nonsensical to posit *Schadenfreude* as the deficiency of indignation; rather, that deficiency is indifference to distributive injustices, characterized by lack of distress when someone has more than deserved. (In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle makes a more reasonable attempt to identify the deficiency of indignation, which he describes as non-annoyance even by the prosperity of the undeserving; but the excess remains the same: envy. See Aristotle 1984: 1934 [1221a33–b3].) Instead, Aristotle should have made *Schadenfreude* the excess of another emotional virtue that he discusses but leaves unnamed: pleasure at another's deserved bad fortune (Aristotle 1991: 156 [1386b25–29]). We could call it 'satisfied indignation'. These rectifications help make sense of Aristotle's claim about *phthonos* and *epichairekakia* being excesses of general emotional traits, rather than themselves constituting such traits, and thus help undergird the claim that there are no general emotional traits that one should not have.

To recapitulate, I have suggested some morally relevant features or spheres of human life to which certain general emotional traits correspond. The first is pain at the good fortune of another, where the mean is indignation and the excess begrudging spite. The second is pleasure at another's bad fortune, where satisfied indignation is the mean and *Schadenfreude* the excess. The third is pain at another's superior position with respect to oneself, where justified envy is the mean and invidious envy the excess. And so I could continue. I trust that I have been able to make some sense of the claim that there are no general emotional traits corresponding to morally

relevant spheres of human life that do not admit of a mean. However, it would remain true that there are specific emotional traits that do not admit of a mean because they are the excesses or deficiencies of general traits and, of course, specific episodic emotions that do not admit of a mean because they are not traits. In other words, there would be no expendable emotions *qua* general traits, although there would be expendable emotions *qua* extremes of such traits and *qua* individual occurrences.

Although those rectifications may help to make sense of Aristotle's general doctrine by tidying up some of its specifics, a disconcerting worry remains. Is the choice of morally relevant spheres – and hence of general versus specific emotional traits – not merely stipulative and arbitrary, and done for the sole purpose of salvaging Aristotle's doctrine? Why not posit pleasure at another's *undeserved* bad fortune as such a morally relevant sphere, for example, in which case *Schadenfreude* would count as a general emotional trait rather than a specific one – and a base, expendable one at that? This question brings us into confrontation with the proverbial problem of the individuation of emotions, the full brunt of which is felt in discursive territories far afield from those canvassed so far. A quick tour of those territories is now in order.

4.4 Individuating Emotions and Virtues

One feature of a number of recent emotion theories which many people find unsettling is their potential for endless, uncontrollable proliferation of kinds of emotion, or – put in different terms – their lack of rigour in individuating 'real' emotions. For instance, in the cognitive theories of emotion, to which most contemporary philosophers tend to subscribe, it does not matter if we understand the cognitive element of emotion to constitute a judgement, belief or construal; there seems at first glance to be no limit to the kinds of emotions we can posit by combining a judgement, belief or construal with a desire/concern and affect (see, for example, D'Arms and Jacobson 2003: 133). What distinguishes those cognitive elements that can form the basis of an emotion from those that cannot? And how can we clearly distinguish among various emotions? For example, is 'angling indignation' (the indignation of an unlucky angler who sees other, less qualified, anglers catching fish all around him) a 'real' independent emotion?

William James used to delight in the endless plurality of emotions; he believed that there is 'no limit to the number of possible different emotions which may exist' and maintained that 'the emotions of different individuals may vary indefinitely, both as to their constitution and as to objects which call them forth' (James 1981: vol. II, 1069; italics omitted). Most modern theorists would consider James' approach to be too cavalier. If no reasonably fixed singularities can be found in the prodigious plurality of the emotions, it is difficult to imagine not only how their moral and educational salience can be gauged, but also, and more significantly, how they can become objects of scientific inquiry in the first place. One is reminded of Robert Frost's comment – albeit uttered in the context of his repudiation of free verse – about the perils of playing tennis with the net down.

In direct contrast to the 'free-verse' approach in emotion research are the natural-kind theories, according to which each of the 'basic' emotion concepts carves nature at its joints. Today there is a whole gamut of theories of increasing sophistication and diversity spelling out this understanding. According to these theories, certain 'basic' emotions are provided by nature and manifest themselves uniformly across cultures (and homologously in some animals). These emotions constitute natural kinds because each one allegedly has a distinctive pattern of inter-correlated outputs: autonomic nervous system arousal caused by a homeostatic mechanism within the brain, facial movements and behaviour. Which of those outputs is considered of greatest importance, then, usually corresponds conveniently with the research interests of the given theorist. As natural kinds, the emotions in question are believed to form categories with firm boundaries, discovered but not constructed by us. Among the popular refrains of current natural-kind theories is that the 'basic' emotions on which the theories focus are 'modular'. The supposed modularity of emotions means that they are 'informationally encapsulated' – that they are controlled by a kind of information processing that is rapid, strictly feed-forward, largely unconscious, most likely innate (here, prespecified by our genes) and not susceptible to direct modification by any higher cognitive processes (see Griffiths 1997 on modularity; for a trenchant critique, see Roberts 2003: 14–40).

The natural-kind approach does away neatly with the proliferation problem sketched at the beginning of this section. Moreover, the specification of 'general emotional trait' that was troublesome at the end of the previous section will no longer be seen as a potentially arbitrary matter. Whereas the cognitive game can create infinite nuances, natural-kind theories offer hard scientific anchors. But at what cost? Subsuming psychology under biology in this way has the advantage of adhering to a single, straightforward principle. Natural-kind theories of emotions are, however, beset with serious difficulties, a brief sampling of which follows (cf. Barrett 2006a).

The Problem of Non-Correspondence

This problem of non-correspondence is twofold: first, despite years of intensive research, none of the individual biological outputs used to measure emotion has managed to distinguish consistently between supposed instances of the 'basic' emotions; second, strong correlations between the different biologically driven outputs (for example, neural, facial, behavioural) of each emotion have failed to materialize. The search for empirically identifiable extensions of emotion categories has proved to be elusive, to say the least.

The Problem of Basicness

The long tradition in emotion research of trying to identify a group of 'basic' emotions has yielded no unanimous results, probably due in part to the disparate search criteria that relate to such diverse domains as evolutionary history, developmental priority, universality, prevalence, forcefulness, uniqueness and moral significance. And the natural-kind approach has signalled little, if any, improvement in this regard. The

number of 'basic' emotions listed by leading researchers ranges from two to eleven, and a comparison of twelve such lists does not locate a single emotion that figures on all of these lists. Indeed, there may be ample grounds for siding with Solomon's (2002) conclusion that the search for these alleged 'building-block' emotions has distorted rather than furthered our understanding of the emotional landscape.

The Problem of the Irrelevance of Language

If emotions are hardwired into our brains at birth, there is no intrinsic role for language in the emergence of 'basic' emotional responses. Language simply creates semantic typologies that may have little relevance to the functioning of the nervous system. Because the 'basic' emotional appraisals are preconscious, linguistic awareness no longer presents, on this account, a vital step in differentiating emotions. All these contentions, however, have radically counter-intuitive implications. According to a recent *Newsweek* article, for instance, tiny babies are found, prior to the onset of language, to be 'overwhelmed' with complex emotions such as jealousy (Wingert and Brant 2005), a finding that only those in the grip of the most imperious scientism could take seriously. Moreover, the supposedly non-linguistic emotional traits turn out, in most prominent natural-kind theories, to be mysteriously correlated with the nuances of one particular language: English.

The Problem of Involuntariness

If the 'basic' emotions are modular, they are, in a strict sense, involuntary, which means that emotion management is limited to the public display of such emotions rather than a regulation of their experience. To those versed in recent theories of emotional schooling at least, that seems to be an implausible restriction.

If, as I believe, natural-kind theories of emotion are plagued with problems serious enough to warrant their rejection, appraisal theories and other cognitive approaches seem incapable of ridding themselves of the problem of proliferation. These theories tend to be more familiar to philosophers and educationists than are the natural-kind theories, and require less elaboration here. Their fundamental claim is of course that each emotion has corresponding propositional attitudes (articulated or, at least in principle, articulable) that form its cognitive core. It is not difficult to locate the sources of antipathy that this claim evokes among many psychologists and even some philosophers. One common complaint is that cognitive theories over-intellectualize emotions and disregard the essential affective part of our emotional lives. Goldie is, for instance, highly critical of what he calls 'add-on theorists': those who consider the affective element in emotion to be a simple psychological or physiological appendage to essentially feelingless beliefs and desires (Goldie 2000: 40). Another common complaint concerns the existence of recalcitrant emotions: emotions which seem to be experienced in default of or even in open contrast to conscious and articulable cognitions (D'Arms and Jacobson 2003).

Unfortunately, natural-kind and cognitive theories of emotion often seem to run on parallel tracks, with their mutual engagement limited to grudging, sidewise glances. Aristotle is typically presented as the forefather of the latter kind of theory.

Some people even seem to think that cognitivism in the field of emotions is little more than regurgitated Aristotelianism. Yet, as I pointed out in Section 2.1, it may be more reasonable to see Aristotle as occupying a middle position, as he specifies all emotions as being necessarily accompanied by pain or pleasure – which are sensations rather than beliefs or judgements**.** A recent psychological approach to the precise nature of emotions accommodates insights similar to Aristotle's and signals, in my view, an advance over both 'pure' natural-kind and 'pure' cognitive theories (Barrett 2006b; cf. Barrett 2006a). Termed 'the conceptual act model', this approach claims that discrete emotions emerge from a conceptual categorization of 'core affect'. Emotions are described by their eliciting conditions, as in cognitive theories, rather than their patterns of output. Nevertheless, just as our categorizations of colour are based on our sensations of light at particular wavelengths, our categorizations of emotions are set against the background of 'core affect', the stream of alterations in our neuro-physical states. All humans (and other mammals too) are endowed by nature with the ability to have core affective states, and all languages have words to describe simple pleasure and pain. Such states are, however, non-intentional; they are not 'about' anything. But when a state of core affect is categorized by dint of socially learnt, language-dependent knowledge from our conceptual system, an emotion is formed. People differ in their categorization capabilities. Some are high in 'emotional granularity': they categorize and report their emotional experiences in precise, well-differentiated terms. Others are lower in granularity and categorize their experiences in more global terms. Mammals and pre-linguistic children are incapable of any such categorizations. They still feel pain or pleasure – there is no doubt that the affection-deprived children in the *Newsweek* article about 'jealous babies' felt bad – but they do not feel the emotions of jealousy, pride and so forth.

All this sounds agreeably Aristotelian. However, the conceptual act model may create more difficulties than it removes with regard to the proliferation problem. This model is compatible with James' contention that if one should seek to name each emotion 'of which the human heart is the seat, it is plain that the limit to their number would lie in the introspective vocabulary of the seeker, each race of men having found names for some shade of feeling which other races have left undiscriminated' (James 1981: vol. II, 1097). Barrett (2006b) insists that the conceptual act model is, on its own, agnostic as to whether or not emotions exist as real entities, but concedes that it is consistent with a strong (Whorfian) version of linguistic relativity and cultural variation. Different social-learning histories could produce different conceptual systems, which would, in turn, categorize different emotions. Thus, the model in question seems as likely as any 'pure' cognitive approach to take us down the primrose path of cultural anthropology, where the number of possible emotions is considered to be unlimited because emotions are socially constructed and vary incommensurably from culture to culture. Once the relativity card has been played, we may even start to wonder if the Aristotelian emotions discussed in Section 4.3 really do overlap with their English 'counterparts' to a sufficient extent for us to able to tidy up his account of them serviceably – as was attempted in that section – in English rather than in classical Greek. Nevertheless, such misgivings do not sit well with Aristotle's own anti-relativist observations.

This is a good place to pause and take stock. I have been trying to make sense of the Aristotelian claim that there are no emotions (*qua* general traits) which are expendable from a moral point of view. To that end, an excursion was made into the field of recent emotion theories. It seems, however, that this excursion has impaled us on the horns of a dilemma, one which we could characterize as the dilemma of modularity: either our emotions are modular or they are not. If they are modular, we are not morally responsible for their onslaught, and because their experience, as distinct from their display, cannot be eliminated in the first place (at least in the case of emotions that modularity theorists consider 'basic'), it becomes futile in practice to talk about morally expendable emotions. If our emotions are not modular, then their experience presumably rests on conceptualizations of varying kinds and precision. But such conceptualizations will be relative to societal and even individual conceptual systems (as far as 'granularity' is concerned), and it turns out to be at best relative, at worst arbitrary, how the notion of a general emotional trait is specified and if all such traits are to be considered non-expendable. To put the issue in this way is a temptation to write off the aim of the present chapter as stillborn. That may be too premature a reaction, however, as I hope to show in the remainder of the chapter.

4.5 Normative Regimentations

How can one refuse the temptation offered by this above dilemma? It may be helpful to first observe that its second horn is vulnerable to the simple, factual observation that there is considerable agreement in the identity of emotions across cultures otherwise distinct in time and geography. It is for precisely this reason that we can understand and appreciate folk tales, literature and works of art from cultures remote from our own (cf. Roberts 2003: 182–5). Could it not be the case that certain plausible factual claims about human beings and their environment significantly reduce the potential flexibility of conceptualizations of human emotional experiences? In point of fact, the problem of the individuation of emotions looks suspiciously like the problem of the individuation of moral virtues – especially given the Aristotelian background assumption that emotional traits can constitute moral virtues – and accounts of the latter problem may provide us with strong guidance.

One cannot do better than to start with an Aristotelian view of the individuation of moral virtues – a view spelled out in considerable detail in a number of interrelated papers by Nussbaum over a decade ago (see especially Nussbaum 1993). In Aristotle's architectonic, every moral virtue has a specific subject matter (*peri ho*), a sphere of its own. As Nussbaum explains, what Aristotle does in each case is to isolate a distinct sphere of human experience that figures more or less in all human life, wherever it may be lived – a sphere in which every human being must make some choices over others, by virtue of our common nature and the shared conditions of the natural environment that we all inhabit. These are spheres of *universal* experience and choice, which refer to the basic *functions* that provide human beings with material, ethical and rational sustenance. The specification of the moral virtue corresponding to each sphere involves whatever being disposed to act and react well

in that sphere consists in. The reference of the virtue term in each case is fixed by what Nussbaum calls 'the grounding experiences' of the given sphere. We start with a thin specification of each virtue, but then progress historically towards a fuller specification through moral dialectic, which essentially involves a *single* discourse across time and cultures because it is about *the same thing*. What Aristotle offers us is, on Nussbaum's account, objectivist naturalism: a sort of empirical essentialism about human beings.

Moral relativists will want to gainsay any such account, of course. They will argue that no bedrock of shared, non-theory-laden 'grounding experiences' exists, and even if it did, there would be endless ways of interpreting them according to the linguistic and normative conventions of each place and time. Just as different conceptual schemes conceptualize the world differently, there can be no single, non-relative discourse about human experiences, and no arrangement of them in neat, objective categories. Nussbaum spends considerable time, on Aristotle's behalf, trying to slay the relativist dragon. Her response takes its cue from factual observations similar to those articulated about the emotions at the beginning of this section. The Aristotelian will insist upon the vast evidence of attunement, recognition and overlap that actually obtains across cultures in the areas of the grounding experiences. What Aristotle is pointing out in his often-cited remark about the kinship of all human beings is not the universality of uninterpreted human experience, but the universality of shared interpreted experience. We have no access to 'unsullied human nature', no hope of pre-conceptual understanding that brings release from and transcendence of the human condition. But we have hope of access to an understanding of the human condition as one of shared limits and boundaries – and such an understanding has clear implications for the individuation of the moral virtues.

Another account of the individuation of virtues, which also relies on factual insights about a shared human background of moral significance, is proposed by Roberts and Wood (2007). They define a (human) virtue as an acquired base of excellent functioning in some generically human sphere of activity that is both challenging and significant. Some situation types, reactions and activities are generically human, and the familiar virtue categories trace those areas. Virtues fit us for excellent functioning in this world as it is, given human nature. It does not fit us for any possible world, given any possible nature (Roberts and Wood 2007 Ch. 3).

The fundamental message to be derived from such naturalist analyses of the virtues is that normativity does not necessarily imply relativity: the fact that categories are conceptualized from an evaluative point of view rather than referring to natural kinds does not necessarily imply that they are relative, full stop. The discussion on the individuation of the virtues should have conveyed the understanding that the spheres of the general emotional traits – which typically, although not always, correspond to particular virtues (see Section 2.1) – are not necessarily relative or arbitrarily chosen. To be sure, a given culture, say a racist community, might posit a sphere like that of 'dealing with subhuman people', which would then contain a general emotional trait such as sadistic disgust. But it would be open to the Aristotelian objectivist to argue that this is not really a generically human sphere of experience. Nor are such spheres necessarily liable to endless proliferation. Reverting to the example from Section 4.4, angling may be important to particular individuals, but 'angling

indignation' is neither generic nor as important to human life as the more general painful experience of other people's good fortune (cf. Roberts and Wood on 'tree-climbing courage' and 'ice-hockey courage' in 2007: Ch. 3). Many of the examples typically given of the endless multiplicity of emotions are merely examples of 'cognitive sharpenings' (D'Arms and Jacobson 2003: 137) of well-known emotions: namely, their applications in particular contexts. This would, for instance, explain the alleged emotion of 'angling indignation': it is not a specific, 'new' emotion, but merely ordinary indignation set in the context of angling competition. Indignant anglers can probably convey their angling-related emotions most easily to other anglers, but the experience of indignation is sufficiently universal that, with mutual effort, such feelings can be understood by a non-fishing vegetarian violinist.

To retrace the steps, in order to make sense of Aristotle's claim that there are no morally expendable emotions *qua* general emotional traits (but only *qua* specific emotional traits or episodic emotions), it was necessary to come to terms with the individuation of emotions. The excursion into that perilous region of emotion research impaled us on the horns of the dilemma of modularity. I have now suggested how the second horn of that dilemma might be avoided – that the conceptualizations of non-modular emotions would be irretrievably relative to conceptual systems – by positing factual claims about the shared nature of human beings and about generically human spheres of experience.

There is, however, further trouble in store. Even if such non-relative spheres of experience, to which our general emotional traits respond, can be identified in broad outline and even established as not being 'essentially contestable', it seems that both the spheres and the emotional traits remain 'non-essentially contestable'. This is because in contrast to the 'closed' concepts of mathematics and natural kinds, in which strict rules prescribing their relevant necessary and sufficient properties can be given, the relevant concepts here will always be 'open-textured'. Although the point of an open-textured concept can be given with reasonable precision, the incompleteness of the relevant empirical data makes it impossible to provide an exhaustive enumeration of all the material features that the point may assume. No robust rules can determine, once and for all, the boundaries of the concept, however clear its core (see further in Kristjánsson 1996: Ch. 7; on 'open-textured' concepts, see Waismann 1945; on 'essentially contestable' and 'non-essentially contestable' concepts, see Gallie 1955–56). Although this admission is far removed from James' conclusion that 'any classification of the emotions is seen to be as true and as "natural" as any other' (James 1981: vol. II, 1070; italics omitted) – as we have rid ourselves of various unreasonable classifications – considerable indeterminacy still remains. For instance, just as individuals can vary in emotional granularity, cultures can 'hypercognize' or 'hypocognize' emotion types (see Roberts 2003: 12, citing a suggestion made by the anthropologist Robert Levy). And to focus again on Aristotle's view of the non-expendability of emotions, no natural facts about human beings and their generic spheres of experience will, by themselves, suffice to adjudicate if satisfied indignation and *Schadenfreude* constitute two distinct general emotional traits or shades of the same one. In other words, although we may be able to identify pleasure at another's bad fortune as a generic transcultural sphere of human experience, it is impossible to indicate any exclusively factual considerations

that determine if pleasure at another's deserved bad fortune and pleasure at another's undeserved bad fortune constitute two specific emotional traits which can be subsumed under a single general emotional trait or if they represent two distinct general traits.

Some further considerations may be brought to bear on this issue, however. Roberts has argued vehemently for *conceptual analysis* as the indispensable central method for investigating emotions. Although such analysis takes ordinary language as its starting point, it may involve a significant amendment of ordinary language, as demanded by good arguments. All decent conceptual analysis is thus critical analysis: a 'technical upgrade' of ordinary language (Roberts 2003: 4–20, 54; cf. Kristjánsson 1996: Ch. 7). Aristotle's own method of conceptual analysis was similarly critical. Although he also began with common parlance and the existing views of the many and the wise, he aimed at removing conflicts and difficulties in our existing beliefs. And in the derelict battlefields of Aristotle's analyses lie the empty hulks of many discredited concepts that feature in common parlance.

As both Aristotle and Roberts acknowledge in practice, proper conceptual analysis cannot avoid being *normative*. Moulding badly moulded meanings necessarily involves normative regimentation. This does not mean that the conceptual specifications that result from such regimentations are merely stipulative (at least not in a narrow sense of 'stipulative'); they will be supported by non-arbitrarily chosen arguments, derived in various ways from the world in which we live. But the arguments will invoke normative criteria, not merely non-evaluative ones. The specification of a moral concept may even be *doubly* normative, as normative criteria enter into both the methods by which the relevant specification is attained and the point of the duly specified concept. Consider, for example, some recent attempts to specify 'a constraint on social freedom', as an obstacle (to a person's choice in some area) for which another person is morally responsible (Kristjánsson 1996; cf. Miller 1983). These attempts involve not only normative considerations of what a concept of constraint is supposed to do – namely, *inter alia*, to account for the fact that there is a presumption against impairing the choices of others embodied in our language – they also include normative considerations that enter into the very point of the concept: once an obstacle has been specified as falling under the concept, the burden of justification is placed squarely on the shoulders of the person who has imposed the obstacle (or failed to remove it) to give reasons for the imposition (or non-removal) which override the *prima facie* wrongness of creating a constraint.

Now, here are two final suggestions. First, if we accept, at least broadly, Aristotle's characterization of universal human spheres of experience as spheres about which everyone makes some choices – acts or reacts in one way or another – then we have opened the door to normative reasons for holding that in each such sphere, we can make good or bad choices, act or react either properly or improperly (although we may disagree about the details of the appropriate ways of acting or reacting). To look at it from a slightly different direction, it would seem to be morally damaging to the very idea behind the classification of such spheres to posit a sphere in which there is no way to act or react except in a base and morally expendable way. This would mean, for instance, that we have normative reasons for specifying the sphere corresponding to the emotion of satisfied indignation such that pleasure at another's deserved bad

fortune is the proper reaction pertaining to that sphere, whereas *Schadenfreude* (pleasure at another's undeserved bad fortune) is an improper reaction pertaining to that same sphere rather than a reaction to an independent sphere in which there is no possibility of a proper reaction. There would be a proper way to feel in this as in any other general sphere of human experience.

Those were the possible considerations of an emotion theorist *qua* moral philosopher and dialectician. Furthermore, although Aristotle is careful not to confuse such considerations with those of an emotion theorist *qua* natural scientist, his interest in the physiology of emotional response should not be minimized. As we have seen, having an emotion is never merely having certain thoughts – although thoughts do provide the formal causes of the emotion – but also feeling certain sensations of pain or pleasure, which provide the material causes of the emotion. According to Aristotle, those causes are related primarily to changes in body temperature. For instance, fear involves a drop in temperature. Cowards – those who are deficient in courage – are thus constantly 'chilled' (Aristotle 1991: 167 [1389b29–32]); they suffer from a bodily disturbance (*tarachē*) as well as a moral failing. Indeed, there is every reason to think that Aristotle considers the moral mean of action and reaction to have a psycho-physiological corollary in bodily homeostasis. In Aristotle's teleological system, the parts of the soul are arranged such that they can adjust successfully to the various social situations in which individuals find themselves (*inter alia*, by adopting medial states of character). Similarly, the body is arranged in such a way that it can achieve success in adjusting to its environment. Therefore the task of modifying emotions to bring them into harmony with the mean in each case and for each individual is simultaneously a task of modifying individual physiology (for a fuller account, see Terzis 1995; cf. Fortenbaugh 2002: 22, 26, 112–13). Given this assumption, it seems reasonable to suppose that each specific emotional trait is part of a general emotional trait that admits of a physiological medial state: a homeostasis. Specific anomalous emotional traits are not simply to be disposed of – any more than one's hand is considered to be expendable, and cut off if it feels too cold. Rather the hand is brought into line by adjusting the 'body temperature'.

Let me propose these two sets of considerations as keys to the puzzle posed by the Aristotelian claim that there are no expendable emotions. Those considerations make the idea of the moral non-expendability of all general emotional traits at least fully understandable – and the normative ones also, I take it, morally persuasive. An elaboration of the latter claim, however, would require more work than I proposed to undertake in this chapter.

To recap, then, Aristotle does not tell us to rid ourselves of 'negative emotions'. Not only does he not invoke that fuzzy notion, but he seems to claim that no general emotional state is morally expendable. And although he may share the problem of the individuation of emotions with today's theorists, at least to a certain extent, he indicates reasonable ways of solving it.

Assumption C is wrong.

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Chapter 5

Teaching Justified Anger the Aristotelian Way

5.1 Three Questions about Anger

Assumption D: 'Aristotle claims, mistakenly, that anger can be justified, and even that it should be taught by moral educators as an appropriate emotion. His elaboration of this claim reveals his impoverished notion of emotion regulation.'

Is this assumption true?

In order to examine the validity of *Assumption D*, we must address a key question: is there such a thing as justified anger and can it be taught at school? This question may seem, at first blush, to be a straightforward one; yet on closer inspection it encompasses three distinct questions, drawing on diverse academic domains. First is the *psychological* question: are the emotions in general, and anger in particular, regulatable; and if so, how? Second is the *moral* question: can anger ever be morally justified, or should all anger be ideally eliminated from human life? Third is the *educational* question: do we have any sound methods at our disposal for teaching justified anger in the classroom, or is this an area into which the school cannot and should not venture?

A long-running body of literature addresses the first two questions, with the psychological one harking back to Aristotle's general treatment of the emotions in his corpus. The moral question calls attention to one of the prominent historic controversies in ethics: the controversy about the moral status of anger (potentially proper reaction or deadly sin?) in which Aristotle and Seneca are typically presented as the chief exponents of opposite points of view. Much less has been written about the educational question on the teaching of justified anger. Although educationists (most notably Rousseau in his *Émile*) have addressed the issue of anger, their perspective has typically been moral rather than purely educational. Based on my experience in talking to teachers of moral education – even those generally sympathetic to a cognitive view of the emotions as essentially manageable and to a positive Aristotelian conception of justified anger – the idea of teaching 'proper anger' at school has met with a mixture of incredulity and hostility. Such responses need not betray a teacher's inconsistency. For one thing, granting that emotions such as anger can be regulated need not be tantamount to accepting that they can be taught, at least not at school; emotions may be amenable only to some sort of self-regulation to which formal teaching cannot contribute. In addition, proper anger is, even in Aristotle's golden-mean view, a reaction for which an excess is worse than a deficiency (see further in Section 5.4). To be on the safe side, it might be argued that schools should limit their anger instruction to training students to be less prone to

the onslaught of anger, rather than attempting to teach them, perhaps with pernicious consequences, to hit the alleged mean of proper anger. In other words, to agree that anger can, in principle, be psychologically *regulatable* and morally *justifiable* does not imply that it is, in practice, *teachable*.

As important as it is to separate and identify these strands underlying our original question about the possibility of teaching justified anger, it is no less important to try to rebraid them into a single skein. The fact that psychological, moral and educational concerns are typically addressed in distinct literatures, with little constructive interaction, is a harmfully cramping feature of the academic discourse on anger. This chapter aims first at separation and then at integration. In Section 5.2, I review Aristotle's conceptual specification of anger, on which much of the current literature draws. Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 address psychological, moral and educational issues, respectively. In Section 5.5, which explores the educational issues at stake, I try to combine insights from the distinct literatures to answer positively and, I would hope, productively the question of whether or not properly justified anger can be taught.

5.2 The Conceptual Issue

> Let anger be [defined as] desire, accompanied by [mental and physical] distress, for conspicuous retaliation because of a conspicuous slight that was directed, without justification, against oneself or those near to one (Aristotle 1991: 124 [1378a30–34]).

As explained in Section 2.1, according to the recently reigning cognitive model, an emotion comprises four main components: *cognition*, *desire*, *affect* (feeling) and *behavioural pattern*. In line with this contemporary model, rooted historically in Aristotle's own exploration of emotions, his notion of anger (*orgē*) could be usefully specified as follows.

Cognition

The central and characteristic belief underlying anger is that someone has slighted us. The slight may have taken the form of contempt, spite or direct insult; in any case, all forms of slight indicate our lack of worth. Forgetfulness, for instance, can be seen as 'a sign of belittlement; for forgetfulness occurs through lack of concern, and lack of concern is belittlement'. So even such an indirect slight as forgetting our names can produce anger. Or we may feel slighted because we believe that someone is rejoicing in our misfortunes, that someone did not return a favour, that someone lacked concern for our suffering or that someone was listening to bad things about us and focusing on our bad side; for such people 'are similar to belittlers or enemies'. In fact, we need not necessarily be the object of the perceived slight; the slight could be directed at our parents, children or spouse: someone that it would be shameful for us not to defend.

Anger is always directed at the individual who is seen as being responsible, through action or negligence, 'for those things that are the causes of anger'. Aristotle would not have interpreted as anger an infant's fury at not being fed when hungry or

my rage at accidentally bumping into a tree. In the case of the hungry baby (frustration of immediate needs), the cognitive ability to distinguish between responsible and non-responsible agents is missing; in the case of the tree, my reaction is not directed at another person – it is mere affect without the relevant cognitive accompaniment.

It should be noted that the perceived slight required for anger must be 'wanton'; we must not consider it to be a response to something done by us to the instigator (unless, I presume, the instigator's response is completely out of proportion to our earlier deed). Nor may the belittling offence be viewed as having been committed primarily for the belittler's own benefit, as distinct from the aim of slighting us (Aristotle 1991: 124–30 [1378a30–1380a4]). Konstan (2003b) takes this last point to mean that if someone blocked our desires out of pure self-interest, it would not evoke anger. What must be borne in mind, however, is that if we could construe such behaviour as betraying lack of concern for us as persons, it might anger us, not *qua* harm inflicted on us for the sake of another's personal advantage, but *qua* belittlement (see above). Contra Ben-Ze'ev, the perceived slight need not be understood as being *undeserved* (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 380) – although it must be considered *morally unjustified*. Violation of procedural rights can thus cause anger (for instance, the violation of our right to get a pass mark in an exam in which we have actually answered a sufficient number of exam questions correctly), even though we may acknowledge that we would not have deserved the outcome to which we are entitled (say, serendipitously passing an exam that we were too lazy to study for).

Desire

In his initial definition of anger (see quote, beginning of this section), Aristotle focuses on the angry person's desire 'for conspicuous retaliation'. That desire obviously follows on the heels of the perceived slight and is personal – directed at an individual – in the same way that the belief in 'the conspicuous slight' is personal. Not mentioned there, but salient, is the angry person's desire, prior to the offence, of not being slighted. In the absence of such an antecedent desire, the emotion of anger could not ensue. The conative component of anger thus incorporates both a characteristic antecedent and a characteristic consequent desire.

Affect

The typical feeling accompanying anger is, according to Aristotle, pain or distress (*lupē*), spurred by the frustrated antecedent desire just mentioned; 'for the person who is distressed desires something' (Aristotle 1991: 127 [1379a10–12]). The pain is both mental (having as a precondition the relevant cognitive and conative consorts) and physical: 'the boiling of the blood or warm substance surrounding the heart' (Aristotle 1941b: 537 [403a30–b1]). Yet anger can be and typically is accompanied by a kind of pleasure (*hēdonē*): the pleasure derived from dwelling on the possibility of future retaliation. Daydreaming of this sort, Aristotle approvingly cites the *Iliad* as saying, 'grows in the breast of men' and is 'much sweeter than honey in the throat'. Angry persons must not merely daydream in order to experience pleasure, however; they must truly believe that retaliation is feasible for them to attain (Aristotle 1991:

125 [1378b1–9]). This element of pleasure in anger notwithstanding, the emotion is categorized by Aristotle as being characteristically painful overall.

Behaviour Pattern

Aristotle tends to be silent about the typical behaviour pattern accompanying anger, and probably rightly so. It is often claimed that aggressive behaviour, or at least a predisposition to aggression, is essential to anger (see, for example, Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 384). An opposite view, which seems to tally more with Aristotle's treatment (or, rather, lack of treatment) of angry behaviour, is that because angry behaviour may vary almost indefinitely as a function of the person and the situation, it is impossible to describe a 'typical' angry response. To quote a well-known modern authority on the psychology of anger, 'nearly any response, and even no response, can count as a manifestation of anger. The possibilities include a pun or witticism, the withdrawal of affection […], sulking, and so on. Being unusually kind to or solicitous of an instigator is not even uncommon during anger.' Indeed, direct aggression, physical and non-physical, occurs in only approximately 10 per cent of angry episodes (Averill 1983: 1147–8).

Intensity Variables

Variables which affect the depth and duration of an emotion are normally thought to be *strength*, *reality*, *relevance* and *closeness* (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 398). The more serious the slight, and the more real or conspicuous, then the more passionate our anger. We are also more easily moved to anger if the slight concerns things of great relevance to us, like 'those taking pride in philosophy if someone speaks against philosophy'. Closeness is important: for a given offence, we become angrier at our friends than at acquaintances or strangers, for we think it is more important that our friends should treat us well. The audience, the third party witnessing the relevant slight, is also crucial. Aristotle maintains that we become particularly angry, therefore, at those who belittle us in the presence of our rivals, people we admire or people by whom we would like to be admired. On the other hand there may be a soothing effect on the intensity and duration of anger if the person has done us a great kindness in the past or if the relevant instigators admit and repent or humble themselves before us (Aristotle 1991: 128–31 [1378a30–1380a36]).

Finally, it is important to distinguish anger from the emotions it merely resembles. Enmity or *hatred* is one such emotion. Whereas anger is excited by specific offences, acts or omissions committed by an individual, hatred involves a global negative attitude towards the individual as a whole or to what we take to be the individual's general character. Hatred may even arise without regard to any individual, but be directed against classes of people; thus we can hate all thieves, for instance, or all informers (Aristotle 1991: 137–8 [1382a1–18]; cf. Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 379–81). It might be hypothesized that anger is related to hatred, in that we tend to become angry at people we hate. Evidence from psychology does not confirm that hypothesis, however; the object of anger is more often a loved one or someone well known and

liked (see Averill 1983: 1148), perhaps owing to the intensity variable of 'closeness' mentioned previously.

It is probably wise – although Aristotle does not deem it necessary to do so – to distinguish anger also from mere *annoyance*, which is a painful emotion aroused by an offence or a threat. With annoyance, however, the issue of responsibility, moral unjustifiability and desired retaliation is less central than it is in anger; and annoyance, one could argue, is a more rational response to trivial offences than is anger (see Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 393).

This review of the emotion of anger and its contours has been little more than a summary and systematization of Aristotle's account, slightly touched up here and there by modern psychology. In fact, it is fair to say that modern conceptual accounts of anger bear a striking resemblance to Aristotle's and that our understanding of the emotion is not notably more advanced than it was in his time (see, for example, Kemp and Strongman 1995) – apart, perhaps, from Aristotle's diagnosis of the physical pain in anger as blood boiling around the heart! When modern psychologists have tried to explain anger in non-normative terms, as a response to physiological frustration or whatever, they have fallen seriously afoul of public usage and opinion, which clearly considers the core of the emotion to be a normative belief, a value judgement about a perceived misdeed: 'Anger, for the person in the street, is an accusation' (Averill 1983: 1149). Konstan (2003b) considers Aristotle's notion of anger to be foreign to modern concerns in so much as it presupposes a radically hierarchical social world and acute sensitivity to status-dependent honour. As I suggested in Section 1.2, modern society may, however, be more similar to Greek society in those respects than Konstan assumes.

The claim that the modern understanding of anger is not much more advanced than it was in Aristotle's time does not imply that it is primitive and inchoate. Rather, it indicates the extent to which Aristotle had already covered the agenda for a conceptual analysis of anger. Aristotle did not conduct any empirical research into the commonality of anger; however, we now know from psychological studies that people report that they feel anger at a frequency ranging from several times a day to several times a week (Averill 1983: 1146). If only because of its considerable frequency and its strong moral connotations, various pressing questions need to be addressed about our control over this emotion: about how it can and should be regulated.

5.3 The Psychological Issue

The concept of emotion regulation is widely discussed in the current psychological literature. One need not probe for long, however, in order to realize that there are two distinct concepts at work in that literature – concepts to which the same term, 'emotion regulation', refers. One concept concerns regulation of the emotions; another concerns regulation by the emotions of other psychological processes. In other words, emotions can be both *regulated* and *regulating*. It is only the first of those two concepts – the regulation of emotions – that I explore here. That concept originated in developmental psychology, but has now conquered

almost the entire field of child and adult psychology, cutting across a number of traditional sub-disciplinary boundaries. In this sense, emotion regulation (sometimes called 'emotional management') denotes all processes and methods employed by individuals to influence the emotions they experience, when they experience them and how these emotions are experienced and expressed (Gross 1998).

Although psychologists have identified and recorded more than 200 emotion-regulating strategies, a more broad-brushed categorization will do for our purposes. I distinguish below between *three* main types of strategies, each focusing on one of the components of emotion listed in the previous section: cognition, desire, affect and behaviour. If we combine desire and affect into one (the conative component), we end up with three main emotion-regulating strategies: the cognitive, the conative and the behavioural. I discuss these in reverse order, in what is by and large an ascending order of cognitive complexity.

Behavioural strategies constitute ways to regulate emotions by changing behaviour. We can further divide them into (1) situation selection and modification, (2) attentional deployment and (3) bootstrapping. Not included in this category is what psychologists call 'response modulation': the various means we use to control how we act or do not act upon our emotions (see Gross 1998: 281). An angry person may, for instance, apply a relaxation technique in an attempt to avoid performing the action spurred on by the emotion (which might be, say, hitting the instigator of the anger on the head). If this technique is directed merely at the possible response, however, and not at the underlying emotion, I do not believe that it is helpfully referred to as 'emotion regulation'.

In (1), *situation selection and modification*, persons systematically avoid or approach certain situations either to prevent the arousal of a certain emotion or to generate alternative emotions – or they try to modify such situations beforehand. For example, a child who is frequently bullied on the way to school and arrives in the classroom full of anger may choose a different route in order to avoid the bullies. Or the child may ask for the company of an older sibling in hopes of deterring the bullies. In either case, the occasion provoking the anger is prevented. Psychologists tend to view such strategies sceptically, labelling them 'escape devices' rather than modifiers. What is selected or modified here is only the persons' encounter with reality, not their emotional character nor the nature of the reality that they face (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 229; cf. Gross 1998: 282–3). Although the efficacy of this strategy is limited, its usefulness should not be underestimated, especially for young people whose means of effecting real changes in their environment at home or at school are often limited.

In (2), *attentional deployment*, either mental or physical 'behaviour' is used to divert attention away from the relevant emotion through distraction or through concentration on an alternative source of emotion. Many young people use music as a way to 'forget', to evoke pleasant emotions or to lessen the severity of painful emotions, such as anger. Older people are more likely to tend to chores or to engage in spiritual activities for the same purpose (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 238; Gross 1998: 284). Attentional deployment shares the same weakness as (1), however, in that the root or the cause of the problematic emotion is not engaged head-on.

In (3), *bootstrapping*, we force ourselves, or are forced by others, to 'act out' an emotion, *x*, that is not really ours at the time (or, if we are already experiencing *x*, act it out to an extent that does not correspond with our present state of arousal). The idea is that by engaging in actions typically associated with *x* (or with the desired intensity level of *x*), we will internalize *x* – that is, start to feel *x* to the correct level. Conversely, an emotion may be defused through bootstrapping by inhibiting the behavioural responses that normally accompany it (see de Sousa 1987: 11). That earnest pretence can sometimes be the royal road to sincere beliefs is a truth commonly experienced by actors. A quick-tempered actor who is asked to play the role of a phlegmatic character may find that a predisposition to bouts of anger is considerably subdued offstage, through a rubbing-off effect.

Conative strategies of emotion regulation are more profound than behavioural strategies, and at the same time more difficult to implement, because they involve a modification of desires and attitudes. They may even require a serious overhaul of our self-assessment and our whole evaluative structure: of what we take to be our deepest engagements (cf. Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 234–5). A student who becomes angry when advances towards the leading school gang meet with a rebuff may learn to revise those desires, therefore attaching less weight to being a gang member and consequently de-escalating the earlier anger.

Finally, *cognitive strategies* involve a reframing or change in the cognitions that underlie our emotions. Those strategies can assume the form of cognitive manipulations whereby anger is eliminated by deliberately deceiving oneself about the relevant truth of the matter: by managing to convince oneself without good reason, for instance, that someone who levelled a bad insult did not really intend to do so. Flight attendants apparently learn an array of such techniques to avert anger towards obnoxious passengers, by construing them as victims of suffering and hence as deserving of compassion rather than anger. Such arbitrary or illusory techniques can be more constructively replaced with cognitive reinterpretations which are neither arbitrary nor illusory, but involve conscientious probing of the grounds of emotion-conferring cognitions in order to change them if they turn out to be unfounded (see Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 229–33). Thus the 'unbearable' pupil, who constantly makes a teacher angry, may be less likely to induce anger once the teacher has learned that the student's parents have just divorced or that the student has a history of having been sexually abused. The teacher would then no longer interpret the student's behaviour as simply 'unbearable'.

I have illustrated this overview of strategies of emotion regulation with examples of anger, which is, after all, the topic of this chapter. Anger is not merely one emotion among many discussed in the emotion-regulation literature, however. Anger was typically used as an example in medieval Christian sources of the need to uproot vicious dispositions in ourselves through an exercise of our free will. Nowadays, psychologists claim that they spend more time helping clients manage their anger than they spend in dealing with any other emotion; and in the psychology literature, anger forms part of the fear-anger-depression triad that has been called somewhat flippantly the 'FAD' of emotion theorists (see Averill 1983; Kemp and Strongman 1995). When one browses through the most recent sources on emotion regulation, anger still turns out to be the dominant example.

Before concluding this section, let us return to Aristotle. As the forefather of the cognitive theories of emotion, he is also the author of the idea of emotion regulation. Yet two common aspects of the current literature on emotion regulation are strikingly at odds with Aristotle's account. I take exception to them here not primarily because they are un-Aristotelian, but because they rub up against the cognitive view and obscure our understanding of the nature of emotion regulation. One of these errors is to consider only negative emotions as standing in need of regulation. I discussed the shortcomings of that assumption in Section 4.2: the very term 'negative emotion' is confusing because it blends the different ways in which an emotion can be negatively evaluated, negatively evaluating and negatively felt. Even in the case of an emotion such as anger, in which three meanings of 'negative' happen to coincide (the emotion is generally painful, evaluates a state of affairs negatively and is typically frowned upon morally), there is good reason to believe that proper emotion regulation may, in certain cases – and perhaps more often than we think – require us to step up the emotion rather than tone it down. Admittedly, all the examples of anger regulation that I have provided referred to toning down, but I explore and bolster the case for the former kind of regulation in the following section. Conversely, even in the case of a thoroughly 'positive' emotion such as joy (triply positive: positively experienced, positively evaluating and positively evaluated), there are surely contexts in which the emotion is rationally and morally out of place and should ideally be 'turned off'. Another error is to understand emotion regulation in terms of an external policing of the 'unruly horse of the emotions' by the 'charioteer of reason'. In Section 2.3, I rejected that view as totally un-Aristotelian and misguided.

From the general Aristotelian model, we may infer that in order to regulate anger we need to release ourselves both from the ill-considered, flat-out rejection of 'negative emotions' and from the unrewarding 'charioteer-horse' metaphor. What we should be aiming at in anger regulation is, according to Aristotle, neither the eradication of anger nor its control through calculated self-discipline, but rather learning to experience that emotion – like any other emotion which admits of a mean – as part of our true selves in an uninhibited, rational and morally fitting way.

5.4 The Moral Issue

But does anger really admit of a mean, then? That question, which I have yet to address, takes us right to the centre of the moral issue concerning anger. Recall from Chapter 4 that within the Aristotelian schema, there are specific emotional traits that have no morally proper medial form because they are themselves the extreme of a mean. How do we know that anger is not one of them?

For one thing, Aristotle himself uses anger as an example of an emotional disposition that can have an 'intermediate and best condition [...] proper to virtue' – that can be felt 'at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end and in the right way' (Aristotle 1985: 44 [1106b17–35]). If our angry feeling is 'too intense or slack, we are badly off in relation to anger, but if it is intermediate, we are well off' (Aristotle 1985: 41 [1105b26–8]). Aristotle calls the mean concerned with anger 'mildness'. He devotes more analysis to the excess

of proper anger – irascibility or quickness of temper – than its deficiency, because the excess (1) is 'more opposed [than the deficiency] to mildness', (2) is 'more widespread', (3) 'comes more naturally to human beings', and (4) characterizes people who are 'harder to live with'; finally, (5) the mild person will 'err more in the direction of deficiency'. Irascible people may fall into different categories – 'choleric', 'bitter' or 'irritable' – which Aristotle lists and explains. It should be noted, however, that just because people experience extreme anger from time to time, they do not necessarily fall into one of those categories; an intermediate disposition appears to be consistent with experiences of more than moderate anger if and when the occasion calls for them. Thus, 'a medial state' is, contra Cohen (2003: 21), not necessarily the same as 'a moderate state'.

Aristotle devotes less space to the other extreme – that of deficiency – and how to combat its influence, simply noting that the 'inirascible' person seems to be 'foolish'. 'Since he is not angered, he does not seem to be the sort to defend himself; and such willingness to accept insults to oneself and to overlook insults to one's family and friends is slavish' (Aristotle 1985: 105–7 [1125b26–1126b10]). Like the pusillanimous, who are lacking in Aristotle's overarching virtue of great-mindedness (*megalopsychia*), inirascible persons do not have a rich enough view of themselves to notice that their character has been slurred or their worth called into question, like that of a 'dishonored vagrant' (Aristotle 1991: 126 [1378b30–32]). In a sense, inirascibility is worse than pusillanimity, for the pusillanimous may simply not know himself – 'for if he did, he would aim at the things he is worthy of, since they are goods' – and therefore seems 'hesitant rather than foolish' (Aristotle 1985: 103 [1125a20–24]), whereas the inirascible (given that he is not also pusillanimous), who knows his own worth but still accepts slights, seems, as already mentioned, to be 'slavish' ('unmanly') and 'foolish'.

The basic fault with inirascibility, in the Aristotelian model, is that it is indicative of, and helps to foster, diminished self-respect. It is a *character weakness*, in that it renders people overly passive, even subhuman. It is *culpable* to the extent that inirascible persons, by habitually failing to stand up for themselves – and win redress – have allowed this fault to take root in their character. It is a *moral vice* both with regard to the agents themselves, *qua* character flaw, and to others. For failing to say boo to a goose gives the immoral 'geese' free rein, thus perpetuating their harm to society. All these points have been addressed by various writers (see, for example, Novitz 1998; Haydon 1999); I have advanced similar arguments to justify pridefulness and jealousy (Kristjánsson 2002) and shall not repeat them here. Moreover, public opinion seems to be in full accord with the Aristotelian conception. Contrary to the implicit assumption in much of the psychological literature that anger has largely negative consequences for the individual and for society, the person on the street sees anger in a more positive light, as a potentially functional reaction that helps others realize their faults, that readjusts and strengthens relationships and that fosters respect for the angry person and provides a basis for a reconciliation on new terms (Averill 1983: 1150–52; Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 386).

Seneca, of course, would have none of this. In his famous diatribe against anger, the late-Stoic philosopher argued that anger is neither rational nor morally fitting in any possible circumstances, and suggested various ways in which children should be

brought up so as to nip in the bud the creation of an angry disposition (Seneca 1995). Rousseau, in Books I and II of *Émile*, combined Seneca's insights with his assumption of man's natural goodness and provided extensive advice on how proper education can extirpate the roots of anger (Rousseau 1979; cf. Dent 2000). Contributing to the historical desuetude of the idea of anger as a possible manifestation of a moral virtue in late Greek and medieval philosophy were both ideological and religious factors. Negative attitudes towards anger helped to create a more stable political and legal system and to reinforce male domination – as bouts of anger were typically associated with women (Harris 2002). Moreover, Jesus' teachings in *Matthew* 5.21–2 seemed to condemn all anger out of hand, although cases where Jesus himself became angry (for instance, at the stubborn hearts of his murderous critics, in *Mark* 3.5) may indicate that what Jesus disapproved of was unjustified anger rather than anger *per se*. Nevertheless, the Church proscribed anger as a deadly sin, and its domineering voice swamped, for a long time, any attempts to reinstate anger as a potential virtue. A more clear-cut religious stance on anger than that of the Gospels is provided by Maimonides, who combines a secular Aristotelian outlook on anger with an unremitting rabbinism, holding that, from a religious point of view, a total lack of anger – total inirascibility – is virtuous. When those two outlooks conflict, Maimonides tells us, the religious one must invariably take precedence because it is based on a divine command (see Frank 1990).

It may be possible to spot a certain convergence between Aristotle and his detractors, in that both positions emphasize the pernicious consequences of extreme, spontaneous fits of anger. Yet that convergence must be set against a backdrop of undeniable divergence: Aristotle unflinchingly presents and condones something that he terms proper anger; Seneca, Rousseau and the Church do not. The trouble with the anti-Aristotelian views on anger from a modern perspective, however, is that they all take certain theoretical assumptions for granted – assumptions that have since fallen into disrepute. Seneca presupposes the Stoic position that all emotions are irrational by nature (*qua* false judgements about the goodness or badness of states of affairs), a position which flies in the face of the current cognitive view of emotions. Rousseau's moral primitivism concerning children's natural goodness is hardly in accordance with contemporary theories about moral development, and pure divine-command views of morality fail to muster much contemporary support, even among religious thinkers. It seems difficult to resist the conclusion that from a modern moral perspective, at least the naturalist perspective of contemporary virtue ethics or, for that matter, of utilitarianism, Aristotelian anger can be a reasonable and laudable emotion to feel.

Not everyone would agree with that conclusion, however. Stocker and Hegeman have recently argued, for instance – by dint of insights from modern psychoanalytic theory – that Aristotle's account of anger reveals a narcissistic passion bedevilled by illusions of self-sufficiency. The narcissism is allegedly caused by the emptiness or hollowness in the angry person's self – by a feeling, when slighted, of not being deemed lovable or adequate – and by a constant craving to be the centre of attention, like a narcissistic infant. The illusions of self-sufficiency rest upon the excessive demand on close friends that the angry person's needs be met, in a kind of mystical union of care and co-ordination, thus betraying a deep lack of understanding for

our essential dependence upon and vulnerability to others (Stocker and Hegeman 1996: Ch. 10). Leighton (2002) correctly urges against Stocker and Hegeman's interpretation that the charge of narcissism can hold only in cases of unjustified demands for 'centre stage', but that those would be cases of unjustified anger in any case, and not condoned by Aristotle. Moreover, it is far from true that the Aristotelian moral framework assumes invulnerability or independence from others; in fact, the opposite holds. According to Aristotle, other-dependency and vulnerability, especially with regard to family and friends, are integral to rather than in conflict with a human being's self-sufficient life (cf. Aristotle 1985: 14–15 [1097b7–15]). Indeed, Aristotle's notion of the moral agent's self, as (originally) constituted by and (permanently) dependent upon the recognition of others, provides – as far as I can see – one more compelling reason for siding with Aristotle in the moral debate on anger.

5.5 The Educational Issue

Accepting that such a thing as justified anger exists is not tantamount to claiming that, for every agent and every conceivable situation, it is possible to specify in advance whether or not anger would ideally be called for. Here, as often, the devil is in the detail (cf. Aristotle 1985: 52 [1109b11–21]). Nevertheless, it seems possible to spell out paradigmatic cases of such anger against which the more controversial ones can then be juxtaposed. In a school setting, consider the proper reaction of a group of students smarting under the injustice of an authoritarian school regime that imposes its doctrinaire teachings with unremitting severity. At a more personal level, consider students who have good reason to believe that they are being systematically discriminated against by a teacher who holds a grudge against them or their families. In those cases, collective and individual anger seems to be the morally fitting reaction.

The moral salience of such paradigmatic scenarios notwithstanding, we are still stuck with our original question: is the morally fitting reaction *teachable*? I am not thinking here of teaching by precedent; it is almost a truism in the contemporary discourse on moral education that teachers 'teach' virtues and vices through their own example, whether or not they plan to do so. What I have in mind is more direct and systematic teaching as part of the content of moral-education classes which, depending on the country, may go by names such as 'life skills', 'character education' or 'personal, social and health education'. I mentioned at the beginning some possible misgivings concerning such formal teaching of justified anger in schools. The first and most specific problem is that anger is an important element in much of the almost 'casual' violence that frequently breaks out in the classroom and the playground (see Haydon 1999: 59). Given that an excess of anger is more dangerous than its deficiency, one might wonder if any guidance concerning anger other than simply helping students to suppress it does not run the risk of letting students lose control of their anger. In other words, is the notion of justified anger not too sensitive and potentially destructive even to broach in class?

There are at least two Aristotelian responses to this misgiving. First, the way the alleged problem is formulated seems to presuppose the 'charioteer-horse' metaphor of anger regulation: that teaching anything about the untamed horse of anger might simply make the young charioteers lose control over it. However, as noted previously, that is an utterly un-Aristotelian metaphor. In the Aristotelian model, both virtuous and vicious people have a capacity for anger, and the difference between the two does not lie in the virtuous being able to inhibit or control their anger better; the difference lies in the virtuous being disposed to feel anger at the right times, towards the right people, in the right proportion – and so forth. The capacity for anger is basically the same; the way the capacity is activated makes the difference, just as playing the same harp 'makes both good and bad harpists' (Aristotle 1985: 34 [1103b7–10]). There is, therefore, no substitute for anger education – such as simply leaving well enough alone and hoping that the wild horse does not gallop away – for each student will acquire a certain disposition to anger, in any case, and we had better ensure that it is the proper one if we are concerned for the student's well-being. Second, the perils of emotional extremes may be less, rather than more, acute in the young than in the old. The old, who have been deceived and humbled by life, tend to interpret everything in the worst light, but the young are more guileless and more ready to listen to reasonable explanation, which may steer their emotions towards the mean (Aristotle 1991: 163–4 [1389a1–b10]). To take but one example, a student will normally be ready to accept, without bitterness or suspicion, a reasonable explanation from a teacher to the effect that non-discriminatory behaviour by a teacher in the classroom (the alleged opposite of what was the cause of the student's anger in my paradigmatic case) does not entail identical treatment, but rather equal effort to satisfy the needs of each student.

A second and more general misgiving concerns the very nature of anger regulation *qua* emotion regulation. Much of the current psychological literature on emotion regulation, particularly the numerous self-help books available, seems to take for granted that successful regulation of that kind requires self-therapy: a systematic re-evaluation and re-education of one's own emotional make-up. But surely only mature adults are capable of such a self-regulatory effort; the school is not its proper place. Once again, Aristotle is helpful in warding off this misgiving, for the focus of his account of emotion regulation is not on the reconstitution of adult emotions but on the sentimental habituation of the young. Aristotle would be confounded by the idea that a child's disposition to justified anger is somehow not teachable and that such an education must await further maturity. His claim is, rather, that if something is teachable at all, it is the affective life of the child, and that persons who have not been taught to feel proper emotions in youth will not only be unable to re-educate those emotions later in life; they will not even be able to fathom the need for any such re-education (Aristotle 1985: 292 [1179b11–19]; for a detailed account, see Steutel and Spiecker 2004).

Some initial advice about anger education can be derived from Aristotle's general remarks concerning emotion education. The first thing to learn is to 'steer clear of the more contrary extreme' by dragging ourselves off in the opposite direction 'as they do in straightening bent wood'. Since in anger the extreme of irascibility is in general more dangerous than that of inirascibility, this would normally mean

teaching children to hit the golden mean of mildness by aiming at reactions closer to the latter extreme. Yet 'different people have different natural tendencies', and in the case of children prone to moral deficiencies of anger, the 'bent wood' method would mean that we should teach them to aim at reactions closer to the excess than the deficiency (Aristotle 1985: 51–2 [1109a20–b21]). Indeed, individual differences are crucial; for in Aristotle's account, the golden mean (here the medial emotional state of character) 'is not the same for everyone' and 'in the object', but rather 'relative to us'. For instance, what is moderation in eating for me is not the same for Milo, the athlete (Aristotle 1985: 42–3 [1106a26–b7]). We could well imagine that the proper medial state of anger in children living in a war-torn country would be considerably closer to the 'intense' than the 'slack', compared with children living in a peaceful English village.

If we turn to more specific didactic issues, interestingly enough most of Aristotle's advice about the methods of sentimental education falls within the rubric of what I called behavioural strategies of emotion regulation. Aristotle recommends *situation selection and modification* in letting children play the right kinds of games and listen to the right kinds of stories, while avoiding the company of unfit persons (slaves) and refraining from hearing anything shameful and unseemly (Aristotle 1941a: 1304–5 [1336a28–b10]). He suggests music as a means of *attentional deployment* to promote cheerfulness (Aristotle 1941a: 1310 [1339b11–22]), and his famous portrayal of habituation as being on a par with learning a craft or an art (learning to be just by learning to do just acts, in the same way as one learns to be a good harpist by learning to play the harp) constitutes a classic description of what psychologists call *bootstrapping*. States of character, including emotional dispositions, arise from the repetition of the corresponding activities. Once the appropriate actions have been chosen for the young and they have performed them, the associated emotions will follow (Aristotle 1985: 34–40 [1103b6–1105a33]).

Sherman is disappointed that Aristotle, the precursor of the cognitive theories of emotions, highlights behavioural strategies of emotion regulation so emphatically at the expense of more cognitively complex strategies of rational persuasion and discourse (Sherman 1997: 83–9). She may be guilty herself, however, of underestimating the efficacy and cognitive impact of the behavioural strategies, especially with regard to the youngest age group. Asking an overly docile and phlegmatic child to act out the role of properly angry person in a game, for instance, may work wonders in classroom practice; it may help the child to work up steam and to channel its own anger more productively in the future. That is a cognitively salient outcome, although it is achieved through a strategy which is not in itself cognitively complex. Indeed, current psychological research on early-childhood emotion regulation indicates that such behavioural strategies may help children considerably in developing their own methods of self-soothing and self-regulation (see Cole, Martin and Dennis 2004). Moreover, we should not forget the cognitive impact of listening to and performing music as a method of emotion regulation – a method which at first glance may seem to be one of attentional deployment. But, as Aristotle notes, music also engages children's cognitive resources, in that those who listen to and perform it typically come to have the corresponding emotions. In other words, music produces a certain (cognitive) quality in the character and the soul. It is

worth noting that the very terms Aristotle uses to describe the extremes of a justified emotion, as too 'slack' or too 'intense', already suggest an analogy to the tuning of a musical instrument. And there is music for anger education, just as there is music for education in courage or temperance (Aristotle 1941a: 1311–12 [1340a19–41]). Here, as it so often is, Aristotle's thought can be easily applied to classroom practice.

The powers of behavioural strategies notwithstanding, the eventual aim of sentimental habituation is, like all habituation, to help students gradually actualize their own practical wisdom (*phronesis*), in order to re-evaluate and (possibly) to revise the dispositions with which they were originally inculcated. For a person is not truly mild simply by virtue of having been induced to feel proper anger through bootstrapping, but only by virtue of feeling it for the right reasons and in the same the way as the virtuous person would (cf. Aristotle 1985: 40 [1105b6–9]). Sherman may be right, in that Aristotle remains relatively quiet on the conative and cognitive strategies of emotion regulation, preoccupied as he is with early habituation as a necessary (if insufficient) condition of emotional virtue. Nevertheless, there is never any doubt in the relevant Aristotelian passages that the ultimate goal is to bring emotions within one's own agency. Aristotle's point here is simply, as Sherman herself partly acknowledges, that this cannot be done in the context of childhood education by over-intellectualizing – by tearing the cognitive part of character regulation away from its affective and social fabric (Sherman 1997: 86).

Recall from Chapter 3 that Aristotle's most practical work, the *Politics*, is only a fragment, and that only one part – about the use of music to train proper emotions – remains of the section on the education of character (Aristotle 1941a: 1308–16 [1339a11–1342b33]). Perhaps Aristotle wrote or intended to write a fuller description of the didactics of emotion education. Despite the paucity of actual examples or strategies, Aristotle's account of the emotions contains glimpses of conative and cognitive strategies of emotion regulation – glimpses that can be enhanced and built upon by a committed teacher. As I argue in Chapter 7, the emulation of worthy role models, as described by Aristotle, is, for instance, an essentially reason-based emotional enterprise with conative and cognitive elements built into it. Moreover, the great weight Aristotle attaches to children's access to appropriate stories, tales and tragedies is clearly to be understood as a way to engage their cognitive capacities and to help them adopt shared emotions. It must not be forgotten either that music was primarily associated with narrative and lyric in ancient times. Aristotle's stress on the emotional implications of music was focused not only on music as melody, therefore, but on music as the telling of a story (Sherman 1997: 91). Children may have begun by delighting in the non-cognitive sensual pleasures of music, but they would soon transfer this delight to the noble characters and actions that were depicted in the lyrics. And finally, if all went well, they would transfer this delight to actual noble characters and actual nobility (Fortenbaugh 2002: 48).

Aristotle's corpus thus provides a rich resource of practical advice about sentimental education in general and anger education in particular. Even greater illumination can be gained by weaving his advice together with current psychological research on emotion regulation, along the lines towards which my observations have gestured. All in all, I see no good reason for teachers of moral education to shy away from teaching justified anger, via various means and methods, in the classroom. To

return to the assumption with which this chapter began, Aristotle does claim that anger can be justified and taught as an appropriate emotion. However, this claim is reasonable, not mistaken. Moreover, his elaboration of this claim brings out a rich rather than an impoverished notion of emotion regulation.

Assumption D is wrong.

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Chapter 6

Emotional Intelligence versus Aristotle

6.1 Chip off the Old Block?

Assumption E: 'The contemporary theory of emotional intelligence constitutes the practical application of Aristotle's advice to bring intelligence to our emotions. Just as Aristotle does, emotional intelligence teaches us how to control our emotions, to enable us to lead healthy and successful lives; but it does so in a more enlightening and serviceable way than Aristotle did.'

Is this assumption true?

The theory of emotional intelligence (*EI*) has enjoyed popular success of late. Its guru, Daniel Goleman, is at pains to stress that in championing the importance of *EI* for a successful life, he is simply assuming Aristotle's 'challenge' to 'manage our emotional life with intelligence' (1995: xv). To be more precise, Goleman seems to think of *EI* as the mere practical application of Aristotle's theory about emotional virtue: a chip off the old block. The aim of this chapter, however, is to point out some significant, but commonly overlooked, differences between the tenets of *EI* – as expounded by Goleman and some of his fellow *EI* enthusiasts – and Aristotle's notion of emotional virtue. Contrary to first appearances, I do not think that Aristotelians should approve of Goleman's tenets wholesale. Indeed, the frequent allusions made by *EI* theorists to the debt they owe to Aristotle may impair rather than enhance their polemical credibility.

To be sure, there is obvious overlap between Aristotle's claims and some of the more general claims made by *EI* theorists about the moral and educational salience of the emotions. Nevertheless I argue that Aristotelians will have serious reservations about the form and content of many specific *EI* claims, especially as they relate or fail to relate to moral issues. That conclusion has important educational repercussions, for a current influential movement in values education – social and emotional learning (*SEL*) – takes its cue about the significance of emotional literacy and the moral implications of our emotional make-up from Goleman's writings. Perhaps the proponents of *SEL* may then be considered from an Aristotelian perspective to have committed a misstep in choosing *EI* as the theoretical foundation of their project of implicating emotions in values education, rather than relying on the teachings of Aristotle himself. Of course, as I mentioned previously, the important thing is not what 'The Philosopher' said about emotions and about the good life, but what is plausible and persuasive from a moral and educational point of view. However, since Goleman thinks of *EI* as an attempt to expand upon and operationalize Aristotle's message about emotional management, it is particularly fitting to adopt an Aristotelian lens in exploring the credentials of *EI*.

In Section 6.2, I begin by reviewing some of the basic tenets of *EI* and briefly introducing a number of misgivings that have been entertained about them in psychological circles. Subsequently, in Section 6.3, I turn to moral concerns, by comparing Aristotle's notion of emotional virtue to Goleman's account of *EI* and its alleged moral ramifications. This leads, in Section 6.4, to an exploration of how the psychological and moral weaknesses of *EI* are reflected in the educational goals of *SEL*. The chapter closes, in Section 6.5, with a few remarks about the potential perils of *EI* for the schooling of the emotions and why Aristotelianism may be the preferable option.

6.2 The Claims of Emotional Intelligence and Some Common Objections

Goleman maintains that academic intelligence as measured by IQ tests and carefully nourished in the typical school curricula offers virtually no preparation for the turmoil or the opportunities presented by life's vicissitudes. There are 'other characteristics' such as 'being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope', that separate the sheep from the goats in our life journeys (Goleman 1995: 34, 36). Goleman refers to those characteristics collectively as *EI*, and claims that highlighting and cultivating them in the home, the school and the workplace can serve as an effective antidote to the historic overemphasis on purely cognitive skills.

Goleman's work, especially his early bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), tends to be the most cited *EI* source in the *SEL* literature (see, for example, Elias et al. 1997: 2). Yet Goleman claims no originality for his central thesis; most of his book summarizes and neatly popularizes the current state of play without advancing it further. Rather, he acknowledges his indebtedness to Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences (especially Gardner's specifications of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences) and to the psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer, who coined the term 'emotional intelligence' in 1990. In that original exploration of *EI*, its characteristics were divided into five main domains: (1) knowing/recognizing one's emotions (self-awareness); (2) managing emotions (self-soothing and the shaking off of negative emotions); (3) motivating oneself (emotional self-control); (4) recognizing emotions in others (empathy); and (5) handling relationships (leadership skills and social competence – the ability to manage emotions in others). A more recent analysis of *EI* from its founding fathers defines it as the capacity to process emotional information accurately and efficiently, which includes the ability to perceive, assimilate, understand and manage emotions (see Goleman 1995: 43; cf. Salovey and Sluyter 1997; Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 2000).

Few psychological constructs have touched such a chord with the general public and with academics in many disparate areas as has *EI*. It has been touted as a panacea for modern business, nursing, medicine and not least, of course, education (see various references in Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 4). There are countless

studies of *EI* at hand: handbooks, guidelines and self-help manuals, as well as extensive web-based material. Although *EI* may sail on the crest of a popular wave, there are circles in which it has met with a more guarded and sceptical reception, in particular within the confines of mainstream academic psychology. For the sake of simplicity, I divide those reservations into three types: *physiological*, *conceptual* and *psychometric*.

As for the *physiological* reservations, Goleman makes heavy weather of the connection between *EI* and certain brain structures, apparently providing the *EI* thesis with a solid physiological foundation. Although this linkage may work in extreme cases of emotional dysfunction, there is no evidence to date to substantiate the claim that individual differences within the normal range correspond in any systematic way to variations in brain function. To map, individuate and predict emotions, a cognitive model seems to work better than a physiological one, at least given the current state of knowledge about the brain and its functioning (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 545–6).

From a *conceptual* point of view, for *EI* to serve any useful scientific function it must be amenable to a clear specification which distinguishes it from other related constructs. As to whether or not *EI* passes that test, however, psychology's jury is still out. It is commonly lamented that the concept of *EI* lacks a clear, coherent reference to an identifiable psychological state or process. Either *EI* tends to be defined negatively, as all those positive mental qualities that IQ tests fail to measure, or it is made to describe a pot-pourri of such qualities about which there is already, individually, abundant literature at hand. Is *EI* simply, at best, an old wine that has been cleverly marketed in a new bottle or, at worst, a mere shibboleth, 'a chimera, a fantastical creature made up by sticking together the parts of several real entities' (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 12, 527)? What is hinted at here is the problem of conceptual redundancy. If *EI* is nothing more than a catchphrase for anything that involves positive motivation, emotion or good character, then *EI* refers to nothing new or useful, as the field of differential psychology is already replete with established constructs and measurements that zoom in on those specific characteristics (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 515; Mayer and Cobb 2000: 170, 174). According to this objection, then, the concept of *EI* is bloated beyond good measure and, therefore, expendable.

Even if it were possible to identify some core concept of *EI* which did not overlap with existing constructs, there are still *psychometric* reservations: how to make the concept empirically testable. The reliability and validity of the current crop of *EI* measurements are not altogether promising. The most commonly used instrument to measure *EI* (in order to uncover a person's 'EQ') is still Reuven Bar-On's 'Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)', a self-report instrument which asks us to review our own emotional traits and abilities. The problem with this instrument is twofold. The general issue, endemic to all such self-report instruments, is that people may misjudge their personal characteristics, whether deliberately or self-deceptively. (I have received a high score on such an *EI* instrument myself; yet realized, in hindsight, that many of my self-ascriptions were less than realistic!) The more specific problem is that EQ-i tells us little more than can be gauged from well-known personality tests (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 15, 23, 41, 515,

525). That mysterious component, *EI*, seems to be too elusive to be operationalized as an independent construct. Or at least that is the complaint of many psychologists, especially those who are most concerned about the media hype surrounding *EI* and some of the more grandiose claims made in its name.

It may be difficult to look for something singular in the prodigious plurality of sundry characteristics for which *EI* has become an umbrella term. More relevant to my present concerns than the psychological reservations, however, are the potential moral and educational doubts that may be raised about the *EI* project. Does *EI* have sufficient moral depth to pass as a topic of moral education, and is a capacity for *EI* something that can and should be facilitated in school settings? It is to those searching questions that I turn in the remainder of the chapter.

6.3 Emotional Intelligence versus Emotional Virtue

There are certain factors which lend credibility to Goleman's earmarking of his *EI* project as being inspired by Aristotle. Goleman upholds a cognitive view of emotions: out goes – allegedly at least – the proverbial reason–passion dichotomy; in comes the willingness to harmonize head and heart in a life in which appropriate emotions play a fundamental role in the psychological make-up of mature, well-adjusted and satisfied persons. And as we well know, this cognitive view harks back to Aristotle's treatment in his corpus of the emotions as potentially virtuous character traits. Goleman, just like Aristotle, is keenly interested in questions of emotion regulation or management – and he makes various remarks about their educational import.

In the most general sense, then, Aristotelianism powers the *EI* engine. I have my doubts, however, if the *EI* of contemporary discourse possesses the same moral ballast – and can be assigned the same educational significance – as Aristotle's emotional virtue. Does the former provide, rather, a lean and impoverished counterpart of the latter? Those doubts require further elaboration. I first summarize in Table 6.1 what I take to be some of the fundamental differences between *EI* and Aristotelian emotional virtue, and then expand upon each difference. Although this list is by no means exhaustive, the items on it are not arbitrarily chosen; I have tried to single out those differences that I consider most germane to the task of comparing the merits of *EI* and Aristotelian emotional virtue with respect to the schooling of the emotions. For readers who have persevered with me so far in this book, the contents of the list will not come as much of a surprise; most of its items simply extend the implications of my discussion in previous chapters.

Table 6.1 Comparisons between emotional intelligence and Aristotelian emotional virtue

	Emotional intelligence	*Aristotelian emotional virtue*
General psychological domain	Character	Specific character states (*hexeis*)
General aim	Success	*Eudaimonia*
Characteristic mode of thought	Cleverness	*Phronesis*
Criterion of actualization	Psychological and subjective	Moral and objective
Emotional scope	Positively evaluating emotions	Positively and negatively evaluating emotions
Focus of 'self-science'	Self-awareness and self-control	Self-respect
Perspective on conflicts	Conflict resolution	Truth seeking
Desired emotional end-state	Emotional tranquillity	Emotional vigour

General Psychological Domain

'There is an old-fashioned word for the body of skills that emotional intelligence represents: *character*' (Goleman 1995: 285). This is a clear example of the sweeping claims that Goleman tends to make – claims which seem to inflate the *EI* concept beyond good reason and, at the same time, make it susceptible to a charge of redundancy. Character is, after all, a well-researched area in personality and differential psychology. The domain of the Aristotelian emotions is more narrowly focused. Aristotle is, needless to say, deeply interested in character as such, but when he speaks of emotions as one facet of human character, he specifies them as particular character states, with each one characterized by distinct beliefs and satisfied or frustrated desires. Righteous indignation, as we have seen, is defined by Aristotle as the emotion of 'being pained at undeserved good fortune', as a combination of the *belief* that someone else has enjoyed unworthy success and the *desire* that people reap as they have sown – a desire which in this case has been frustrated (Aristotle 1991: 155–7 [1386b9–1387b21]). Apart from escaping from the charge of psychological redundancy, Aristotle's emotional virtues (and vices) have been specified well enough to serve as objects of possible moral assessment and educational intervention. They are less likely to slip like sand through our fingers than is the less tangible *EI*.

General Aim

What is the nature of the good life, the actualization of which EQ (the outcome of *EI* tests*)* is supposed to be 'as powerful, at times more powerful, than IQ' in predicting? Goleman is somewhat vague in his landmark work on the nature of such a life, although he uses such terms as 'success', 'prosperity', 'prestige' and 'happiness' to describe it (Goleman 1995: 34, 36). In later works, the emphasis is firmly on success as measured in monetary terms. Business partners with *EI* skills are thus said to add between 78 per cent and a staggering 390 per cent incremental profit to their companies; whereas people with strengths in (IQ-measurable) analytic reasoning abilities add a mere 50 per cent more profit (2002: 251). Lubricating this slide from success *qua* happiness to success *qua* profit has been Goleman's gradual shift of focus from individual *EI* to the collective *EI* of business organizations. A careful reading of Goleman's earlier work reveals, however, that the most common examples taken there of the 'life success' to which *EI* allegedly contributes more than any other factor are job success (as measured by income or job satisfaction) and subjective, self-reported contentment (see numerous examples in Goleman 1995).

For Aristotle, the general aim of emotional virtue, like any other virtue, lies in its connection to the fundamental good of human life: *eudaimonia*. As shown in Section 2.1, he emphatically rejects both mere contentment and the life of money-making as ingredients in the material definition of *eudaimonia*. Aristotle's *eudaimonia* is an essentially moralized notion; it is impossible to achieve *eudaimonia* without being (morally) good. Although moral goodness is not sufficient for *eudaimonia* because various 'great misfortunes' may oppress and spoil our blessedness, morally good persons can never become wholly miserable as long as they accept such calamities with equanimity and good temper (Aristotle 1985: 23–6 [1100a1–1100b35]). Goleman's 'life success' is not moralized in the same way; if there is a connection between moral goodness and success, that connection is a purely contingent one, with moral goodness being seen as a fortunate by-product of the same characteristics that guarantee success.

By the term 'moral' I am referring here and elsewhere to normative considerations about the enhancement of one's own good or well-being *and* those of other people, and to recommendations about how that good can be promoted in the right and fitting – as distinct from the merely 'clever' – manner. This is a relatively broad conception of 'moral', which would include both typical consequentialist accounts of morality, such as Aristotelianism and utilitarianism, which define the right in terms of the good; and deontological accounts, such as Kantianism, which define the good in terms of the right. Both types of accounts preserve the crucial distinctions between other-regarding and mere self-regarding concerns and between the moral and the 'clever'. Importantly, there is no clear hint in Goleman's work of the thesis that bringing intelligence to our emotions necessarily involves, as it does for Aristotle, bringing moral precepts to bear on our emotions: making them morally fitting in the above sense of 'moral'. The general aim of *EI* thus seems to be non-moral – although obviously not immoral – rather than moral.

Ruut Veenhoven has suggested a useful taxonomy for classifying theories of well-being (or qualities of life) according to two distinguishing criteria: 'life chances'

versus 'life results' and 'outer qualities' versus 'inner qualities'. In this taxonomy, Aristotle's theory of the human good as *eudaimonia* would rank as a paradigmatic life-chances and inner-qualities view: a view focusing on the perfection of certain capabilities with which nature has endowed us as human beings. The theory of *EI* may at first glance seem to fit into the same category, and that is how Veenhoven classifies it. As she acknowledges, however, tests for *EI* are primarily matters of subjective self-reporting – and that, in a sense, relegates *EI* to a life-results and inner-qualities view: a view focusing on subjective well-being: 'appreciation of life' (Veenhoven 2000: 6, 12, 28; I revisit the issue of testing under Criterion of Actualization in this section). It is worth noting that *EI* fits snugly here into the grid of contemporary liberalism, which makes do with an ultra-thin conception of the common moral good – basically reduced to a few procedural rights. After those have been satisfied, everybody can simply choose his or her 'own thing' as the substance of well-being.

Characteristic Mode of Thought

In Aristotle's philosophical system, each type of human activity is guided by a characteristic mode of thought. For example, *poiesis* (making, production) is guided by *techné* (technical thinking), and *praxis* (moral practice) is guided by *phronesis* (practical wisdom). As may be recalled from Section 2.1, *phronesis* is distinguished from mere cleverness in that we cannot have *phronesis* without being good. Because the focus of cleverness is efficiency and productivity, the unscrupulous can be counted as clever, as long as they are capable of finding the most convenient means to their unscrupulous ends. Given that Goleman does not make moral goodness a necessary feature of *EI*, but emphasizes efficiency and worldly success, the thought that guides *EI* seems to be better described as cleverness rather than *phronesis*.

Criterion of Actualization

How do we know if we or someone else has achieved *EI*? How do we know to what extent we have mastered specific *EI* skills? As previously noted, the most commonly utilized instrument for determining the answers is the self-report measure, EQ-i, which is aimed at recording our satisfaction with various emotional factors. Methodological problems plaguing such self-report instruments have already been mentioned. A more substantive point of concern is this: in general, in the EQ-i and similar instruments, subjective satisfaction is seen as a measure of true emotional quality. The idea seems to be that greater emotional competence leads to greater satisfaction (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 223) and that, conversely, 'feeling good lubricates mental efficiency' (Goleman 2002: 14). At the centre of gravity in these measurements is thus a feel-good factor, eerily reminiscent of the humanistic affective-education programmes of the 1950s and 1960s: what feels good for you is right for you. Recently, objective performance-based and ability-based instruments of *EI* (MEIS and MSCEIT) have been introduced, with the intent of superseding the self-report subjective measures. Unfortunately, they are saddled with problems of low construct

validity and poor predictive validity (see Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 226–9).

In Aristotle, by contrast, the criterion of when an emotional virtue has been instantiated has little to do with a subjective, psychological state. The criterion is a moral and objective one: whether or not the emotion is rationally formed and whether or not it hits the golden mean between the moral extremes of excess and deficiency. As a matter of fact, a subjective feeling of pleasure normally completes virtuousness 'like the bloom on youths' (Aristotle 1985: 276 [1174b32–5]). But pleasure as such cannot serve as a criterion of moral and emotional accomplishment, for bad people also experience pleasure through immoral emotions – *Schadenfreude* over the undeserved bad fortune of others, for instance. The criterion of emotional virtue is not enjoyment *per se*, but enjoyment of the things that we ought to enjoy.

Emotional Scope

In the emotion literature, emotions are commonly labelled negative and positive – a fuzzy and misleading distinction, as I have stressed repeatedly in previous chapters. One of the chief characteristics (and, I dare say, virtues) of the Aristotelian notion of emotional virtue is that it straddles any ready-made distinction between 'negative' and 'positive' emotions; it would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that it takes no notice of such a distinction. Aristotle's theory of the golden mean of feeling applies no less to negatively evaluating and painful emotions than to positively evaluating and pleasant ones. His most famous example in that regard is, of course, justified anger, which was explored in the preceding chapter. Our aim should not invariably be to cool anger or to extinguish it, but rather to experience it in the right proportion, at the right time. Increased moral understanding may even make us angrier than before, because it renders us more sensitive to how we or someone close to our hearts has been insulted (Aristotle 1985: 105–7 [1125b26–1126b10]).

Promisingly (from an Aristotelian perspective), Goleman starts his original work on *EI* with a direct citation from Aristotle on anger: that becoming angry is easy, whereas being angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, is not (Goleman 1995: ix). This creates the impression that Goleman acquiesces to Aristotle's assumption that the scope of emotional virtue (or 'intelligence') encompasses negatively evaluating and painful as well as positively evaluating and pleasant emotions. His subsequent analysis does little, however, to reinforce this impression, but a great deal to undermine it. Considerable space is devoted to 'negative' feelings: how bad all 'toxic' and 'perturbing' emotions are for health (Goleman 1995: 168–77). Anger, for example, damages the heart (Goleman 1995: 170), whereas 'positive' feelings have medical benefits (Goleman 1995: 177). A section on anger discusses the need to 'defuse', 'deflate', 'de-escalate' and 'cool' anger (Goleman 1995: 62–3); there is no mention of the need to heighten one's sense of anger when appropriate. Goleman does refer in two places to more 'thoughtful' angers: once when he mentions 'cool-headed' anger as a response to unfairness or injustice, and another time when he says that trying to completely suppress anger can actually result in magnifying the body's agitations and raising blood pressure (Goleman 1995: 59, 171). In those two cases, however, anger is evidently justified,

in virtue of its being a cool, rational (as opposed to an emotional) response, and in virtue of its suppression being worse for health than its unsuppressed experience. Nowhere is there a clear seconding of Aristotle's point that a painful, negatively evaluating emotion such as anger can, *qua* emotion, be the emotionally 'intelligent' reaction to certain states of affairs.

Subsequent writings by Goleman contain even fewer condoning allusions to negatively evaluating or painful emotions. We are now told in no uncertain terms that 'negative' emotions 'powerfully disrupt work' and make people 'less emotionally intelligent' (2002: 13), and we are reminded of the Buddhist message that 'afflictive' emotions, as opposed to 'nourishing' ones, 'tend to make one ill' (1997: 34). One can hardly avoid interpreting this to mean that ideally in *EI*, pleasant and positively evaluating emotions will prevail and painful and negatively evaluating ones will fall by the wayside or be elevated to the realm of cool reason where they are less disruptive. In sharp contrast, even though Aristotle acknowledges that when faced with two evils, it is better to err in the direction of inirascibility than irascibility, the claim that painful, negatively evaluating or 'afflictive' emotions had better be done away with will, from an Aristotelian perspective, render any idea of emotional appropriateness stillborn.

Focus of 'Self-Science'

Goleman says that the study of *EI* gives rise to an educational science of the self. What type of 'self-science' does he envisage? It seems to consist of two main components: *self-awareness* and *self-control*. *Self-aware* persons learn to recognize their own feelings and build a vocabulary for those feelings; they identify the links among their own thoughts, feelings and reactions, and by realizing what is behind a feeling, they learn to handle painful emotions (Goleman 1995: 268). Some of Goleman's remarks, especially in later works (for example, Goleman 1997), gesture towards an equation of self-awareness with mindfulness: a Buddhist-inspired concept which is the flavour of the month in some intellectual circles. The core element of mindfulness is non-judgemental self-observation; I patiently observe and accept what is happening within me – all my sensations, including my emotions – without acknowledging it as part of my true self (see, for example, Salzberg and Kabat-Zinn 1997). A second component of Goleman's self-science, which follows naturally on the heels of the first, is *self-control*. Self-controlled persons learn self-regulatory strategies to ameliorate disruptive emotions: to defer gratification and to channel their urges constructively. Goleman claims that such self-discipline is the bedrock of character, as philosophers since Aristotle have observed, and cites with approval Lickona's remark that it takes will to keep emotion under the control of reason (Goleman 1995: 285).

What Goleman fails to realize is that, through his account of self-control, he quietly ignores his own Aristotle-derived rhetoric about the necessity to synthesize head and heart. Here, suddenly, the head is supposed to rule the heart: a vestigal remnant of that very reason–passion dichotomy which the *EI* theory was meant to transcend. The ideal state is now construed as one in which affect-free 'pure' reason dictates, while irrational feeling obeys: a far cry from Aristotle's conception (or, for

that matter, current cognitive theories of the emotions) in which emotion itself is seen as being permeated by reason.

If we choose to talk about an emotional self-science in Aristotle, that 'science' would be one of *self-respect* rather than self-control. What matters for Aristotle is not to be psychologically aware of one's emotions in order to control their onslaught, but to be morally aware of them and to manage them from within, such that they help us to construct and maintain our self-respect. The reason why inirascibility is an emotional vice, for example, is that it characterizes persons who are not the sort to defend themselves, but slavishly accept insults to their friends and family (Aristotle 1985: 105–6 [1126a4–8]; see my discussion in Chapter 5). It is by refusing to pocket insults and by protesting wrongs that are visited upon us that we demonstrate self-respecting concerns – which is why it is only the worthless, the completely 'un-self-respectful', who are not driven to appropriate anger when wronged. Self-respect is, in the Aristotelian view, an inner reason-driven mechanism which ideally infuses the emotions with vigour, without the need for external control by a higher-level enforcement agency within the self (namely, self-control by emotion-purified reason). Aristotelian moral agents are at one with themselves; their selves are not bifurcated.

Perspective on Conflicts

Goleman places great stock in the conflict resolution aspect of *EI*. The emotionally intelligent person – that is, the person who has mastered the kind of self-science described above – will have learned the arts of co-operation and negotiating compromise. Emotions may conflict with one another and emotions may conflict with non-emotional principles; the healthy way to deal with such conflicts is to resolve them with compromise. 'Were he alive today,' Goleman muses, 'Aristotle, so concerned with emotional skillfulness, might well approve' (Goleman 1995: 268–9).

Well, might he indeed? Aristotle is truly concerned with removing conflicts and difficulties in our intuitions and beliefs. His method seeks coherence, mutual adjustments and the removal of anomalies. It does not seek conflict resolution and temporizing compromises *per se*, however; it seeks conflict resolution through recognition of the relevant truth of the matter (I return to this issue in Chapter 11; for an account of Aristotle's emphasis on truth and causal knowledge when teaching students, see Spangler 1998: Ch. 1). It is inaccurate, therefore, to say that Aristotle favoured compromise over conflicts, and considered it to be part of emotional skilfulness; he favoured compromise over conflicts when a compromise could be negotiated based on correspondence with truth. If not, the conflict would have to remain.

This aberration from Aristotle's view aside, one may well ask if compromise and a therapeutic emphasis on emotional wholeness always constitute the 'healthy way', as Goleman calls it (Goleman 1995: 269), of dealing with conflict. Modern democracy thrives on conflict as its very lifeblood. The Millian argument for the need to have one's deepest convictions constantly challenged in order for them to retain their heart-felt vitality, urgency and immediacy is a point well known and well

taken. And would not a life without emotional conflicts be sterile and unrewarding? Notably, some developmental psychologists assume that children's realization of the possibility of emotional ambivalence – the acknowledgement that a single situation or episode can elicit contrasting, irreconcilable emotions – marks an important progressive step in emotional development which is normally not reached until about the age of ten (see Harris 1989: 109–25). The existence and realization of 'mixed emotions' is not seen, then, as a psychological and educational problem to be negotiated or overcome, but rather as an avenue for emotional learning and growth. In a persuasive essay, David Carr expresses his disillusionment with *EI*, precisely for its stress on 'complete emotional harmony, integration or other resolution of unease and conflict'. Whereas the goal of *EI*-inspired therapy in dealing with a person such as Hamlet, would be, as Carr points out, to resolve the problems of mixed emotions and indecision and to unburden him of his vengeful motives, the goal of some – perhaps more appealing – ethical codes would be to leave those psychological conflicts be and to stiffen his motives (2002: 18, 20).

Consider a pupil whose loving devotion to a teacher is jeopardized by her jealousy, engendered by the belief that the teacher discriminates against her in favour of another pupil. It is my understanding that the Aristotelian response to such a conflict would be to discover if the belief in question is warranted and to arrange one's emotions accordingly, rather than encouraging the pupil to resolve the emotional conflict simply for the sake of compromise.

Desired Emotional End-State

Despite his flirtations with Buddhist notions of emotional equanimity and self-awareness, 'that is less prone to being swayed by emotionality' (Goleman 1997: 40), it would be wrong to equate Goleman's concept of *EI* with a Buddhist call for the annihilation of all emotions, painful as well as pleasant, or with their exaltation to an unpassionate state of universal benevolence. Nevertheless, there is a pattern in Goleman's emphasis on emotional self-control and the resolution of emotional conflicts, which I have traced above. It indicates that his ideal emotional end-state is one of *tranquillity*: harmony and wholeness. Now, Aristotle does encourage us to find, for each emotion, the golden mean between two extreme emotional dispositions. Yet that golden mean is not necessarily one of tranquillity or the Stoic shrug; his proposed end-state is better described as one of emotional vigour, in which creativity, originality and assertiveness have crucial roles to play, unencumbered by the self-imposed policing of 'pure' reason. Most importantly, the emotional end-state proffered in Aristotle's writings is driven, first and foremost, by moral considerations rather than therapeutic or health-related matters. The upshot of all this, I submit, is that Aristotle's concept of emotional virtue is superior to Goleman's concept of *EI* from a moral perspective.

It might be asked, however, if I have been barking up the wrong tree by complaining about the lack of engagement with moral issues in *EI*. Was the *EI* theory ever meant to convey a moral message? Is Goleman's bestseller not a product of the 'positive psychology' self-help industry rather than a moral treatise? The answer is twofold. First, when *EI* is presented as a core element in an extensive programme of

values education, such as *SEL*, the lack of moral concern does matter (more on that in the next section). Second, it is far from being the case that Goleman did not intend *EI* to carry a moral message; exactly the opposite holds. Beyond the possibility of psychological and social competence brought about through *EI* training, Goleman tells us, there looms 'a pressing moral imperative'. In addition to its therapeutic benefits, therefore, *EI* also develops the emotional muscle that moral conduct requires, for there is 'growing evidence that fundamental ethical stances in life stem from underlying emotional capacities' (Goleman 1995: xii, 285).

For Goleman, the key to the link between *EI* and morality lies in the emotion of *empathy*. *EI* skills, in particular self-awareness, breed empathy – and empathy leads to caring, altruism and compassion. Goleman understands empathy to be the ability to perceive the subjective experience of another person – to be able to view things from someone else's perspective and to imagine how that person feels (Goleman 1995: xii, 96–9, 104–6, 285). What Goleman fails to notice, however, is that empathy is not an emotion (it does not comprise a distinctive combination of cognitions and desires); nor is it necessarily moral. Rather, empathy involves a capacity for various emotions, sparked off by the perception of someone else's situation (for example, suffering) as that person perceives it. In that sense empathy may be a precondition for moral concern (such as compassion), but it is surely not by itself a moral concern. The obvious reason is that this same capacity – the capacity to discern or even to identify with another's suffering – is also a necessary condition for taking pleasure in, rather than bemoaning, that suffering through pure malice or *Schadenfreude*, for example (see Kristjánsson 2006: 89–91, 120–26).

Even if it is true that *EI* training necessarily leads to empathy, this truth does not impugn my earlier diagnosis of the lack of moral depth in *EI*; for the sobering fact remains that Goleman's conception of *EI* fails to make any *substantive moral demands* on the content of intelligent emotions. Recall Salovey's five chief domains of *EI*. Clever but unscrupulous drug barons, for instance, may (1) know/recognize their emotions perfectly well (be aware of an overarching desire to sell drugs and make money); (2) manage their emotions (be self-soothing when a drug deal fails to materialize, and shake off afflictive emotions such as any burdening sympathy or regret); (3) be self-motivating (to achieve immoral goals); (4) recognize emotions in others (and thus be able to manipulate them more efficiently); and (5) handle relationships (have qualities of leadership and social competence in running a drug ring). According to the standard criteria of *EI*, then, there is nothing preventing an unscrupulous Machiavellian personality from being deemed emotionally intelligent.

6.4 Educational Implications

There is growing concern among educators, most vocal in the USA, that children's emotional literacy should be promoted in schools. Social and emotional learning is then seen as a missing piece, 'that part of the mission of the school that, while always close to the thoughts of many teachers, somehow eluded them' (Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 442). *SEL* has become an umbrella term for an array of

programmes that are meant to supply this missing piece. It includes, according to a widely read manual, 'self-awareness, control of impulsivity, working cooperatively, and caring about oneself and others'. This manual also notes that character education and *SEL* share many overlapping goals – citing, in turn, Lickona and Goleman as authorities (Elias et al. 1997: 2). A foremost *SEL* theorist, Cohen (1999), lists five key dimensions of *SEL*: co-operation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control.

A close look at the tenets of the *SEL* movement reveals that it combines insights from character education (*CE*) and *EI* (cf. Mayer and Cobb 2000: 167). In fact, a simple equation to describe the content of *SEL* would be:

SEL = CE + EI

A critique of the character-education part of *SEL* is outside the purview of this discussion. I simply repeat my observation from Section 1.1 that the rise of character education has generally been congenial to Aristotelians. The important question here is what, if anything, *EI* contributes to *SEL* as a programme of moral education. The light which Goleman claims that *EI* sheds on moral education can be spelled out as follows: school success and life adjustment is not predicted by a child's fund of facts or a precocious ability to read, as much as by emotional and social competencies. Attending to those competencies through life-skills, *SEL* or other emotional-education programmes, will result in a caring school community where students feel understood, respected and cared about, and this spirit of empathy and care will gradually spread to the wider community, to the benefit of the family and society. Goleman looks forward to a day when primary education will routinely include all those elements, and offers generous anecdotal evidence about the success of current programmes (Goleman 1995: xiv, 193, 262, 280). There are two ways to achieve the benefits of *EI* in school settings: by adding *EI* programmes to the existing curriculum as a new subject or by integrating emotional learning fully into every class and subject taught. The proponents of *SEL* generally seem to favour the second option, although they are not against special *SEL* 'add-on' classes as well (Elias et al. 1997; Cohen 1999).

Once the goal of emotional education has been described in this way, however, there are a variety of doubts that may be raised about its attainability. At we see presently, most of these doubts are descendants of more general reservations that I have already mentioned about the psychological viability of *EI*; adding them to the paucity of educational research on the benefits of existing *SEL* programmes greatly ramifies the difficulties.

Let me adumbrate some of the relevant doubts, in no particular order (cf. Mayer and Cobb 2000; Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts 2002: 78–89, 444–65): (1) *SEL* programmes are based on popularizations of a young science that still lacks convincing evidence for its central claim: that there exists a thing which can be identified and serviceably referred to as *EI*. Given the preliminary nature of the relevant scientific research, the *SEL* literature is long on oracular pronouncements, short on conceptual rigour. (2) Few *SEL* programmes have been systematically assessed, and those which have been often seem to have little direct *EI* content – perhaps partly because many of them were not originally designed as emotional-education programmes but as general social-skills or drug-abuse-prevention programmes. Despite the sparsity

of empirical evidence, extravagant claims tend to be made about the effectiveness of these programmes, by generalizing from a small sample to a population (and not necessarily the same population) or by relying on a narrow diet of anecdotal material. (3) Another worrisome problem is the lack of standard experimental designs in existing studies; students have rarely been randomly assigned to experimental and control groups to assure the initial equivalence of those groups. (4) Studies of *SEL* programmes seldom take notice of the Hawthorne Effect, which has often turned out to be responsible for differences between experimental and control groups when similar programmes have been assessed in the past. (5) Because the learning of emotional literacy is obviously a long-term process, one might well ask if it is still too early to evaluate the efficiency of emotional-learning programmes that have been running for only a few years. The real impact on students' emotional competencies may not reveal itself until long after the study has been completed. (6) Apart from their emotional benefits, *SEL* programmes are also supposed to improve children's academic achievements, with EQ being, according to Goleman, a better predictor of school success than IQ. Unfortunately, these claims still remain largely unsubstantiated by empirical evidence.

All these psychological and educational problems aside, my greater concern remains for the moral ramifications of *SEL* programmes, in so far as they include training in *EI*. The crux of my worry, as revealed in the previous section, is the amoral nature of the emotional competencies that such training is supposed to advance. Against that, it could be argued that *EI* forms only part of *SEL* programmes: the part having to do with emotional health and general social competencies. But these programmes also appropriate a generous helping of moral virtues from character education, and those virtues will exclude the possibility of *SEL* tending to the upbringing of, say, clever drug barons. This may well be the case, but the fact is that the current character-education literature tends to be more enlightening and informative on the virtues of action than on the virtues of reaction. Therefore, I see a great need to complement character education with an account of emotional virtue. Yet I do think – and that has been the fundamental drift of my argument in the present chapter – that the advocates of *SEL* would do better to look to Aristotle than to Goleman for such an account.

6.5 Untapped Source

In summary, then: from a *psychological* point of view, doubts still remain as to the usefulness of *EI* as a scientific construct. The claim that having a positive character is a good predictor of well-being is general enough to border on the platitudinous; recall the Latin proverb, *qui nimium probat nihil probat* (he who proves too much proves nothing). Problems accrue, however, in trying to uphold a more narrowly constructed operationalized claim about the intelligence of human emotions as an empirically testable predictor of life success. From a *moral* perspective, *EI* lacks moral depth and does not exclude the possibility that a calculated Machiavellian personality can be deemed emotionally intelligent. From an *educational* perspective, the paucity of solid empirical research on the efficiency of *SEL* programmes adds

further doubts to the psychological and moral ones about the viability of *EI* training in the classroom.

Those conclusions are not meant as a damning indictment of *EI*. The popularization (especially by Goleman) of the notion of emotional literacy has helped to arouse renewed public interest in the moral and educational significance of emotions, after a long period of relative dormancy. The *Zeitgeist* value of such popularizations should not be underestimated. Yet perhaps the only enduring value of Goleman's work on *EI* lies in alerting readers to the richness and subtleties of Aristotle's account of emotional virtue. It is, I hope, more than chance that one of the most commonly cited passages from Goleman's original book is the quotation from Aristotle on morally appropriate anger with which Goleman begins his Introduction.

What is clear, at any rate, at the end of this chapter, is that Goleman's *EI* fits Aristotle's emotional virtue only tangentially, and sometimes not at all. The first part of *Assumption E*, which claims that the former is a mere practical application of the latter, does not bear scrutiny. Aristotle's notion of well-being is, for instance, radically different from Goleman's 'life success'. Moreover, there is little evidence to indicate that Goleman's notion of emotional management is more enlightened and serviceable than is Aristotle's. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, Aristotle's corpus provides a rich source of practical advice about what nowadays would be called 'emotion regulation' or 'emotional management'. One of the advantages for educators is that Aristotle concentrates much more than Goleman does on the emotional cultivation of the young – the actual engagement with children's emotional capacities from an early age. Given the moral and educational salience of this material, which seems easily resuscitatable and applicable in the classroom, it is a pity that Goleman ultimately fails to build on the foundation laid by his original quotation from Aristotle and that Aristotelian emotional virtue remains, for those who look no further than Goleman's work, a largely untapped source.

Assumption E is wrong.

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Chapter 7

Emulation: An Aristotelian Virtue for the Young

7.1 The Method of Role Modelling

Assumption F: 'Teaching children how to imitate positive moral exemplars can counteract the effect of increasingly negative role models. This strategy harks back to Aristotle's emotional virtue of emulation, which basically suggests that children should latch onto positive role models.'

Is this assumption true?

The last two decades have witnessed a burgeoning literature on role modelling – the emulation of role models or 'moral exemplars' – as a didactic strategy in moral education. Much of this literature is generated from the character-education movement. In addition to books and articles which endorse the strategy of role modelling (for example, Lickona 1991), the movement has produced abundant web-based material on the same topic (for example, Rose 2004) – the natural starting point for today's teachers looking for supportive material on moral education. A *Google* search in July 2006 with the search string '"role models" AND moral AND education' located 1,200,000 web pages. I browsed through the first hundred in the search engine's order of relevance, and most of them discussed role modelling in the context of character education. Some websites even offer a repertoire of teaching materials (books, pamphlets, videos) on role models that could and should be emulated: models ranging from Socrates, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa to Barbara Bush, Tiger Woods and Brad Pitt. Compare all this to the generally negative view of role modelling which prevailed in educational circles during most of the twentieth century: as symptomatic of an emotionally (as opposed to rationally) driven, extrinsically (as opposed to intrinsically) motivated and heteronomously (as opposed to autonomously) formed morality – a view inspired by Rousseau and Kant. The difference is glaring.

In the character-education literature on role models, three notions tend to be melded: the teacher as an inevitable role model *qua* teacher; moral mentoring by which young people are inducted into adulthood with the help of a voluntarily accepted, older and more experienced guide; and the systematic use of moral exemplars (through stories, biographies, videos and other teaching material) in moral education classes – exemplars that are meant to inspire students to emulation. I am eliminating moral mentoring (in this sense) from consideration here and am also shelving the much-discussed issue of the teacher as a moral educator. Suffice to say, there is a reasonably wide consensus both outside and inside character-education circles that the professional role of the teacher cannot be clearly disentangled from the moral

qualities of the person who occupies the role: that at every working moment the teacher is indirectly, through conduct and attitude, conveying a moral message. Thus a good teacher is also a certain kind of person (see, for example, Carr 1991: 258–9), a point that is raised again in Chapter 10. For the moment, however, in line with *Assumption F*, I am concentrating on the more direct didactic use of role models in moral education and how they are supposed to evoke emulation.

The character-education movement is laudable in many respects, in particular for its cosmopolitan view of moral virtue and its methodological pluralism (Kristjánsson 2006: Ch. 5). Although the intentions of its proponents are commendable, there is no denying the fact that their writings are somewhat lacking in philosophical depth and rigour. And despite routine appeals to the originator of a character-based take on morality – namely Aristotle – these writings are disturbingly short of critical engagement with past and present philosophers. For instance, Lickona's discussion of role modelling feeds on a narrow diet of practical examples; there is little in the way of a general rationale for this method or an explanation of what it really involves (Lickona 1991: 308–11).

In this chapter, I argue first, in Section 7.2, that the strategy of role modelling, as explicated by the character-education movement, is beset with three unsolved problems: an empirical problem of *why* this method is needed; a methodological problem of *how* students are to be inspired to emulation; and a substantive moral problem of *what* precisely should be taught in role-model education. Although the first of these three problems could perhaps be overlooked with impunity, the second and third problems stand in urgent need of rectification if role modelling is to retain its moral and educational import. To ameliorate them, a close look in Section 7.3 at Aristotle's rich and nuanced notion of emulation as an emotional virtue may help. After a brief tour of the history of emulation, I argue in Section 7.4 that current accounts of role modelling cannot be accepted wholesale, but must be recast and reconceived in order to accommodate certain plausible Aristotelian considerations. As demonstrated in Section 7.5, such considerations may complicate the use of role models in moral education, while simultaneously making it more morally and more educationally salient.

7.2 Problems of Role Modelling in Character Education

In this section, I examine the three problems that seem to be inherent in character-education accounts of the use of role models as a didactic strategy in moral education: *the empirical problem, the methodological problem* and *the substantive moral problem.*

The Empirical Problem

The character-education literature found on the Internet, as well as Lickona's (1991) ground-breaking book, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, seem to be based on the assumption that young people are in urgent need of role models at their impressionable age, and that the moral

quality of such models has deteriorated of late. Instead of looking to their parents and grandparents, talismanic leaders from history and literature and renowned paragons of moral virtue as their guiding lights, it is argued, the attention of today's youth is held in a firm grip by the mass media, which depict a society in moral decline. Thus, drug-snorting pop idols and rumbustious sport stars have allegedly taken over as the leading role models of our age – a view shared by many people outside character education (for vivid examples, see, for example, Bucher 1997: 619).

As a matter of fact, this picture seems to fly in the face of the empirical evidence (cf. Walker et al. 1995). Bucher's (1997) extensive survey of role models of young people aged 10 to 18 in Austria and Germany, for instance, found parents and other relatives to be the most commonly mentioned models; religious figures scored even higher than music stars or athletes. In Bucher's discussion of his findings and of the general importance of role models, there is, unfortunately, some slippage between the notions of 'having a personal role model', 'identifying with a role model' and 'letting a role model influence your moral identity'. Arguably, it would be reasonable to suppose that young persons could have role models without being able to identify with them; young persons might even deliberately choose role models with whom they could not presently identify but would like to be able to identify with after making certain efforts at self-change ('I cannot fathom the depth of Mother Teresa's compassion, but she is my role model: the person with whom I would like to identify'). Furthermore, there is a great difference between identifying with a person and letting that person influence one's moral identity; the identification process may, for instance, be transient and not penetrate the depths of one's moral selfhood. These conceptual infelicities do not detract from the merits of Bucher's empirical findings, however, as the questions he posed in his survey were those simple, open-ended ones: 'What persons are your personal models? Why?' (1997: 621). His findings have been replicated in other countries, most notably in a recent survey of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 from an area of Los Angeles that is seen by some people as a sink of iniquity (Yancey, Siegel and McDaniel 2002). Nearly 75 per cent of these adolescents chose a model of their own gender and ethnic group, and parents were the most common role models mentioned.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned the shortcomings of self-report instruments; and we might suspect that some of the respondents in these adolescent studies were less than forthright in their answers: a girl might deceptively or self-deceptively have presented her mother as her role model, for instance, when her role model was actually a scantly clad Britney Spears. But such suspicions are merely conjectural. An equally good argument could be made for the opposite interpretation: that it would be considered cool for an adolescent to present Britney Spears as her role model when it was in fact, more mundanely, her mother. Let us remain agnostic on the credibility of these findings, although there is no particular reason to doubt them. Perhaps that is also beside the point, for even if the bad role models excoriated in the character-education literature are not the typical objects of emulation we are often given to believe, that would not undermine the need to inspire students to emulate *more* good role models. However significant this empirical problem may seem from the perspective of sociology or psychology, it is thus innocuous from an educational

perspective. Character educationists may be right about the general need for more role modelling, even if they are wrong about why the need is so urgent today.

The Methodological Problem

What does it mean, in an educational context, to expose students to inspiring and effective role models? One typical web source tells us that role-model education 'is not concerned with the imparting of knowledge', but rather with exposing students to individuals embodying certain positive lifestyles and attitudes. Education becomes 'experiential'; when children are faced with worthy role models in the classroom, they will 'latch on to them as their ideals' (Rose 2004). The same or similar terms recur in web page after web page: 'latching on to', 'assimilating', 'rubbing off on' and so forth. The idea seems to be that a model is presented for emulation, somehow students are lured into finding it attractive, and lo and behold, they latch onto it and emulate it. But one can hardly avoid understanding this to be a description of emulation as mere *imitation*, which brings us to the crunch of the methodological problem: if character educationists do not aim higher than replacing copycat vice with copycat virtue, they are presenting an unsophisticated, undemanding and uncritical – almost infantilizing – model of emulation, essentially devoid of cognitive content.

As a refreshing antidote to the copycat notion of role-model education, Nietzsche's essay on Schopenhauer as educator springs to mind (see Conant's analysis, 2001). Nietzsche emphatically explains how the true role of a moral exemplar is to waken yourself to your 'higher self' – the higher ideals to which you can aspire, the possibilities that lie dormant within yourself – and that you cannot take someone as your exemplar simply by undertaking to imitate him. Such an undertaking would, in Nietzsche's view, amount to an ethically impotent form of admiration: a strategy for evading a morally motivated, inwardly felt demand for self-transformation. Rather, the exemplar should help you to arrive at an articulate conception of what you value and want to strive towards and help you find realistic means ('fulfillable duties') to that end: 'No one can construct for you the bridge upon which precisely you must cross the stream of life, no one but you yourself alone' (translations and interpretations of Nietzsche's words in Conant 2001). How can the notion of emulation in role-model education be refined so as to take account of those truths? I return to that question at a later juncture.

The Substantive Moral Problem

When browsing through the character-education material on role modelling, one often notices that the discussion centres on the emulation or imitation of *persons* rather than of *qualities* displayed by persons. This is more than a linguistic aberration or simplification. What seems to be meant, at least by some of the authors (for example, Rose 2004), is that one could justifiably hold up persons for emulation without being able to explain what it is about them that makes them worthy of such emulation (without being able to specify the quality that we want students to acquire), except by pointing to the person and saying, 'It is the quality that this person/hero/leader has'. Students should simply stare at the relevant role model until

the unique 'shape' of this quality jumps out at them, and there would be little more to say. The problem with this view is that if role-model education is not concerned with the 'imparting of knowledge and information' (Rose 2004), but merely with learning experientially to imitate a charismatic leader, we risk ending up with blind hero-worship: unenlightened conformity. For how can we learn to discern the imperfections that afflict even the greatest of heroes if we are to conform to them as persons, rather than following, knowledgeably, informatively and critically, the particular virtues that they display?

The crucial moral question is what precisely students are supposed to learn to emulate in role-model education: a *person* or an *ideal* embodied in a person? This question inevitably brings us back to that much-discussed *Euthyphro* one: do the gods love piety because it is pious, or it is pious because they love it? Socrates' answer was, of course, that the gods are subordinated to an objective value that they recognize as lovable – that it is something in the intrinsic nature of piety that makes it worthy of love. The same should hold in role-model education if students are to avoid uncritical conformity: they must learn to value the ideals embodied in role models because those values are essentially valuable, not merely because the values are enacted by the role models. The problem is that this is not explicitly stated in many of the contemporary sources on role-model education and that some of them even imply exactly the opposite.

7.3 Aristotelian Role Modelling

Can an Aristotelian account of role modelling solve the methodological and substantive problems which afflict the character-education account? In order to answer that question, it is salutary to set out with a look at Aristotle's notion of emulation and a quick tour of the neighbouring conceptual terrain. Recall that I started my quest with an Internet search for the use of role models in moral education. Given the current predilection for Aristotelian virtue theory in educational and philosophical circles, and, more specifically, the frequent allusions to Aristotle in the character-education literature, one might have expected to find a number of explorations of the connection between Aristotelian emulation and the viability of role-model education. Unfortunately, a quick glance at the web pages yielded by my *Google* search did not identify any such explorations. Perhaps it was naïve to look for penetrating conceptual analyses on the Internet. It also became apparent, however, that the notion of emulation itself has not exactly riveted the attention of contemporary philosophers. *The Philosopher's Index* 1940–2005 has only 17 abstract entries with the term 'emulation'. Of those abstracts all but a handful are old and/or focus on emulation in a sense that is outside the purview of our present concerns. Juxtapose this with the proliferation of recent studies of some of Aristotle's other emotional virtues, such as compassion or righteous indignation, and the difference is clear.

Emulation (*zēlos*) is one of the various emotions, painful and pleasant, listed and discussed by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. Emulation ranks amongst the painful

ones. It is worth reproducing Aristotle's specification of it in full. This emotion is characterized by:

> a kind of distress at the apparent presence among others like him by nature, of things honoured and possible for a person to acquire, [with the distress arising] not from the fact that another has them but that the emulator does not (thus emulation is a good thing and characteristic of good people, while envy is bad and characteristic of the bad; for the former [person], through emulation, is making an effort to attain good things for himself, while the latter, through envy, tries to prevent his neighbour from having them) – [if this definition is posited] then necessarily those are emulous who think themselves deserving of goods they do not have (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388a29–38]).

What is initially most striking here is the sharp conceptual and moral contrast drawn between emulation and envy (*phthonos*). Despite Aristotle's clear distinction, it is commonplace in contemporary discussions of envy to see emulation referred to as a kind of envy – 'friendly', 'emulative' or 'admiring envy' – in circumstances in which *A* would like to attain the same goods as *B* without wishing that *B* be deprived of his, and where *A* views *B*'s respective superiority with friendly, admiring eyes. This usage may be partly condoned by the fact, which I noted in Chapter 4, that Aristotle proposed too narrow a definition of envy. He equated all envy with what we might helpfully term 'invidious' or 'malicious envy' – envy in which *A* wants to deprive *B* of the envied good *without any moral reasons* – an emotion that is truly 'bad and characteristic of the bad'. Aristotle mistakenly overlooked other possible types of envy, such as 'angry envy' or 'indignant envy', in which *A* does wish for the same thing as in invidious envy but with (at least *prima facie*) morally good reasons.

Whereas it is conceptually advisable to widen Aristotle's conception of envy, the description of emulation as a kind of envy is not a felicitous one. The specification of emulation violates what seems to be a necessary conceptual condition of envy (albeit one unnoticed by Aristotle) – required in order to serviceably distinguish envy from other related concepts such as begrudging spite: pain at another's deserved good fortune. This is the condition in which the envier, *A*, wishes to eliminate the relative advantage that the envied person, *B*, has over *A*, by taking the envied thing away from *B* and transferring it to *A*. Through emulation, by contrast, we simply express, with admiration, the desirability of being like *B* in some respect, or having the same thing as *B*, without wanting to take anything away from *B* (see further in Kristjánsson, 2002: Section 5.1; cf. Farrell 1989: 253, 263). Another way to describe the distinction between emulation and envy would be to say that the pain experienced by *A* in the two emotions is focused differently. In emulation the focus is on *A*'s own unfavourable position; whereas the pain in envy is focused on *B*'s favourable position (see Ben-Ze'ev 2003). According to that description, begrudging spite would be akin to envy, but the difference would still lie in *A*'s wish for the 'favour' in question to fall to *A* instead of *B*: a wish that is a necessary feature of envy but is irrelevant or missing in begrudging spite (and of course necessarily missing in emulation).

Let us next ask in what sense emulation might be thought of as a moral virtue (*qua* 'good thing and characteristic of good people'). Holding in view Aristotle's specification of emulation, according to which those who 'think themselves deserving

of goods they do not have' are emulous, we might be tempted to infer that emulation is one of the specific emotional virtues subordinate to justice: namely, pain at one's own undeserved bad fortune. There are, however, two distinct, if interconnected, reasons why we must resist the equating of emulation with such self-reactive desert-based distress: first a moral and second a logical one. The first reason is that it seems morally wrong to say that emulous persons have suffered undeserved bad fortune; they do not as yet have a moral claim on anyone else, either to feel for them or to do something for them. Their only 'claim' is on themselves to improve, so that they may in the end deserve the goods they desire – in which case they will eventually be entitled to self-reactive pain at undeserved bad fortune, as well as to the compassion of others, if they do not receive the goods they deserve. The second and more fundamental reason is that, logically speaking, one's deserts cannot be future-oriented. We may deserve something on the grounds of our past or present accomplishments, but if we conceive of deserts as a tailored fit between (1) certain states of affairs and (2) specific (desert-relevant) qualities and actions of individuals, such a conception is logically out of place until the relevant qualities or actions have been instantiated (Kristjánsson 2006: Ch. 2). When Aristotle, the logician *par excellence*, says that the emulous think that they are deserving of goods they do not have, he must mean that the emulous think of themselves as the *kind of people* who would be able to actualize the relevant qualities or actions and, *as a consequence*, come to deserve the fitting goods. This would also help explain Aristotle's claim that the emulous person 'is *making an effort* to attain good things for himself' (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388a35–6]; emphasis added).

Emulation cannot be considered a virtue *qua* pure emotion: 'distress at the apparent presence among others […] of things honoured and possible for a person to acquire' (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388a30–33]). Emulation can only, like many of Aristotle's moral virtues, be considered virtuous *qua* amalgam of reaction and action. The relevant emotional 'distress' is one necessary element, but another and equally important element is the ambition – the zeal – in this case the striving to equal or excel over another person and thereby deserve the goods which the other person presently enjoys. The lazy stick-in-the-mud cannot be emulous in this sense; nor can the one who merely admires another – no matter how fervent the admiration – without making an effort to acquire the admired qualities (cf. Ben-Ze'ev 2003, on the difference between emulation and admiration). Thus to fully understand the virtue of emulation, we need to consider the two Aristotelian moral virtues concerned with ambition – with the striving for things that can be honoured: the virtue concerned with great honours, which is Aristotle's crowning virtue of great-mindedness (Aristotle 1985: 97–104 [1123a34–1125a35]), and the virtue concerned with small honours, left unnamed by Aristotle (Aristotle 1985: 104–5 [1125a36–1125b26]). A necessary condition of both these virtues is correct self-understanding, thinking of oneself as worthy of the honours of which one is truly worthy; and moral excellence, desiring morally commendable goods, as deserved honour is in the end only 'awarded to good people' (Aristotle 1985: 99 [1123b26–36]; see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Section 3.2).

From these considerations we can divine that as a virtue, emulation requires all four of the following components: (1) the emotion of distress at the relative absence

amongst ourselves of desired, honoured goods which someone else possesses; (2) the zeal to make efforts to acquire (deservingly) similar goods without taking them away from the emulated other; (3) true self-understanding and rational self-persuasion, which directs us towards goods that are attainable for us and, thus, towards future honours of which we can realistically become worthy; and (4) a striving for goods that are 'appropriate attributes of the good' (Aristotle 1991: 161 [1388b4–8]) – that is, goods that are morally worthy or, at least, not morally unworthy. This last component accounts for Aristotle's claim that contempt (*kataphronesis*) is 'the opposite of emulation', for those in a proper situation to emulate or be emulated become contemptuous of others who have the (morally) bad attributes that are the 'opposites of the emulated good ones' (Aristotle 1991: 162 [1388b22–7]). All in all, emulation turns out to be a complicated emotional virtue, the actualization of which requires considerable intellectual acumen and moral discernment: the ability to feel, see and judge things correctly.

Before leaving the topic of Aristotelian emulation as a virtue, two caveats are in order. First, the notion of emulation as a virtue does depart somewhat from the sense of 'emulation' familiar to users of contemporary English. It may seem odd to speak of virtuous persons as being 'very emulative' as we would speak of them as being 'very brave' or 'very compassionate'. However, here we must consider Aristotle's specification of a moral virtue. For him, any firm character trait of action or reaction (or the combination of both) that (1) contributes to *eudaimonia* in some relevant sphere of human activity, and (2) admits of the extremes of excess and deficiency, can potentially constitute a moral virtue. It will be readily seen from the description of the components of emulation how emulation as a character trait can satisfy those two criteria. The relevant sphere is our perceived inferiority compared to someone else, and if the pain accompanying the emotion is 'intermediate' (but neither too 'intense' nor 'slack'), driving us to take the morally right steps to alleviate it, then we can be said to possess the virtue of emulation (cf. Aristotle 1985: 41 [1105b20–28]). As noted previously, 'emulousness' may be a more felicitous term in English for the emotion of *zēlos* in its dispositional sense (as a potential virtue), whereas 'emulation' remains apt for the emotion in its episodic sense (cf. the difference between 'pride' and 'pridefulness', see Kristjánsson 2002: Chs 3–4). The corresponding extremes (vices), on the other hand, would be excessive eagerness to emulate others, perhaps resulting from an inferiority complex (*qua* excess), and too little will to improve (*qua* deficiency). Second, strictly speaking, emulation is not, according to Aristotle's description, a virtue of the fully virtuous, who have nothing morally worthy left to strive for. Rather it is a virtue of those on the way to virtue. Much like shame, emulation is thus a virtue characteristic of the young (recall Section 2.3). However, that makes emulation obviously more, rather than less, salient from the perspective of moral education.

Before considering how Aristotle's account of emulation might solve the methodological and moral problems inherent in the character-education accounts of role modelling, a brief historical detour is in order. It is worth noting that emulation has not enjoyed the same historical popularity as some of the other moral virtues championed by Aristotle. Although it has not suffered the fate of his overarching virtue of great-mindedness – the fate of being almost unanimously airbrushed away

as morally improper – emulation has rarely been given pride of place in moral and educational thought from the late Hellenistic age, through medieval times, to modernity. When mentioned at all, it has usually been cited in the context of Christian education, about the need to learn to emulate the persona of Jesus Christ or some saintly figures. References to ancient uses of the term have focused more frequently on Plato's dire warnings about the perils of children emulating bad role models, especially dubious characters from classical literature, than on Aristotle's positive portrayal of emulation as a potential moral virtue.

There is an important exception to this general rule of historical indifference, however. During the French Revolution, there developed a positive view of emulation as the quintessential quality of the new free citizen. Emulation was seen as a principal motive of human action in a society no longer based on legal and social inequalities. This sentiment, considered intrinsic to civic virtue, would have to be inculcated in the young generation. Yet care had to be taken, Chevalier de Jancourt noted in his essay on emulation in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, that this prospectively 'noble and generous passion' be reined in, so that the desire for honours, beneficial as it is in moderation when guided by justice and wisdom, did not spiral out of control. The pedagogical view of emulation was thus of a slippery virtue, hovering on the brink of vice, which needed to be carefully administered and monitored by the teacher (see further in Auricchio 2003; Kaplan 2003). In late eighteenth-century art education, attention also turned to emulation in a more restrictive sense, as mere *imitation* of the works of past masters, which was considered important for the student's own artistic development. This narrow sense of emulation as a didactic strategy ('copycat education'), which also harks back to Hellenistic usage, was to crop up later in educational thought and partly overshadow Aristotle's wider sense of emulation as a complex emotionally driven moral virtue.

Not every key figure in the new French citizenry was utterly convinced about the benefits of the fancy idea of mutual elite emulation among equals. Rousseau's view of the matter was ambivalent, to say the least. Although he encouraged emulation as a political ideal for grown-ups, he discouraged its pedagogical uses, as that of any other ideal which fostered competition and *amour-propre* among children, for reasons well known from his *Émile*: such ideals inevitably breed dissensions and hatred (against those with whom we compare ourselves); they habituate children to look for extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivations for improvement (basing their values on the judgements of others); and they prevent the development of an autonomous moral identity (Rousseau 1979, esp. Book IV). Yet Rousseau himself invokes the method of emulation at a late stage in the schooling of Émile, when Émile is being wooed by the Savoyard vicar into a state of trust and receptivity to the latter's message on religion (see McEwan 2005).

Whatever we may think of Rousseau's prevarications, his misgivings help us to remain conscious of the fact that the ideal of emulation takes for granted an assertive, prideful moral outlook in which people are not shy to comport themselves with dignity, take pride in their achievements and honours, and expect recognition of those achievements from their peers; and where they are liable to shame if such recognition is not forthcoming. Aristotle makes no bones about 'honored goods' being the 'objects of emulation' and that they include 'wealth and numerous friends

and offices and all such like' (Aristotle 1991: 161–2 [1388b4–5]). We have already seen that when he discusses the two virtues concerned with honours, he makes it clear that true honours are ultimately attached only to moral goodness; in his exploration of emulation he stresses the same point by noting that wealth, high office and other such honoured and emulated goods are so honoured for being a source of potential 'advantage and benefit to others' (Aristotle 1991: 162 [1388b11–13]).

Aristotle's view of the development of moral selfhood is essentially a non-autonomous one, as explained in Section 2.3. It is no wonder, therefore, that the ideal of emulation reached its nadir in a Kantian moral outlook that emphasized individual moral autonomy, a purely formalist (rationalist) justification of moral values, and a notion of moral failure as resting on guilt rather than shame. Inspired as he was by Kantian morality, Kohlberg placed no stock in emulation; if asked, he would probably have consigned it to his notorious 'bag of virtues' (1970). Notably, Kohlberg was not alone in this view: until the 1980s or even the 1990s, few theorists in moral education fully appreciated the role of emotions such as emulation in representing and conveying moral value.

7.4 How Does Aristotle's Account of Emulation Solve the Methodological and Moral Problems?

The analysis of Aristotle's emotional virtue of emulation in Section 7.3 can help clarify the methodological fault in the currently dominant conception of role modelling.

Aristotle's 'emulation' has affective, conative, cognitive and behavioural elements built into it. In the context of role-model education, the *affective* element would be a kind of pain at the relative lack of a desired quality possessed by the role model; the *conative* element would be the motivation to acquire such a quality (without, of course, taking anything away from the role model); the *cognitive* element would consist of the development of an understanding of why this quality, displayed to a pronounced degree by the role model, is something deemed to be of moral value, and what reasonable ways there are for one to transform oneself in order to acquire it; and the *behavioural* element would involve the actual striving for this quality. Character-education sources on the emulation of role models emphasize the conative and behavioural elements, but display an unfortunate lack of concern for the emotional prerequisites of (Aristotelian) emulation, and more or less disregard its cognitive component.

Let me make clear that the complaint here is not that of Rousseau or Kant – that the very idea of emulation is symptomatic of a 'heteronomous conception of morality'. There is good reason to believe – on Aristotelian as well as Humean grounds – that all morality is necessarily socially embedded. The complaint is, rather, that the picture painted of role-model education in current educational discourse is, to a large extent, educationally under-ambitious and morally underdeveloped. Where, for instance, are the cognitive content and the rational self-persuasion involved in Aristotle's 'emulation'? But this question invites an immediate challenge: did Aristotle himself not emphasize the need for early habituation, which, at least in its

early stages, constitutes a relatively mindless process (see Chapter 3)? So is there anything wrong, from an Aristotelian perspective, with designing and describing role-model education as a copycat process? Well, we may easily agree with Aristotle on the necessity of pre-rational habituation, but there are different views about when such habituation kicks in and when children can start to activate their own *phronesis*. The recent trend has been to consider children capable of rational reasoning on moral matters earlier than was previously thought (Kristjánsson 2002: Ch. 6). In any case, most of the existing teaching material on role-model education seems geared, not towards young children, but towards children at the upper primary-school or high-school level. By that time few educators would doubt that habituation is no longer the only possible, or even the best suited, method of moral instruction. Bear in mind that the leading character educationist, Lickona, is himself an ardent believer in moral reasoning with older children (Lickona 1991: Ch. 12).

In summary, whereas the method of role modelling as described in character-education sources betrays an inadequate grasp of the dynamics of emulation, not least its affective and cognitive elements, role modelling conducted along Aristotelian lines would take full account of all those elements.

But how does Aristotle's account of emulation solve the substantive moral problem? Many accounts of role modelling in character education seem to personalize the method beyond good measure and to come down on the anti-Socratic side of the *Euthyphro* question. Moral qualities become important because they are displayed by the role models, rather than being displayed by the role models because they are – substantively and independently – important. But is there anything wrong with that; did Socrates not commit the notorious 'Socratic fallacy' of claiming both (1) that one cannot know that an object, *a*, is an example of some predicate or concept, *x*, until one knows the definition of *x*, and (2) that it is insufficient to present examples of *x* in order to define *x*? Geach (1966), who identified the 'Socratic fallacy', claimed that we typically 'know a heap of things' about *x* before we can define *x*, and that bringing examples of *x* is often enough to make valid points about *x*, in default of any further specification.

Now, Aristotle himself takes great pains in stressing the educative and adjudicative role of the *phronimos* (the person of practical wisdom). He even defines virtue with reference to the reason that the *phronimos* would give to define it (Aristotle 1985: 44 [1107a1–3]). Two strands of contemporary neo-Aristotelianism have taken this and some other remarks made by Aristotle to indicate that the *phronimos* is the final arbiter of moral correctness; that there is no further appeal to be made. Current-day virtue ethics thus instructs us to ask, like Aristotle, what the virtuous agent would feel/do in the circumstances and take our cue from that (see, for example, Hursthouse 1996: 24; for a critique, see Kristjánsson 2002: Section 2.2). And the recently popular *phronesis-praxis* perspective on education, which advocates an experiential, anti-foundationalist stance, tells us that for Aristotle the *phronimos* is the ultimate yardstick of what is fine and pleasant (Dunne 1993: 55; for a critique, see Chapter 11). The trouble is that both these types of 'neo-Aristotelianism' quietly ignore the fact that for Aristotle standards for proper action and emotion are followed by the *phronimos* because they are morally appropriate, and not the other way round. The *phronimos* knows what is morally good because he understands the intrinsic value

of the virtues, not merely because he has been initiated (and can help initiate others) into a specific moral practice.

A certain historical parallel can be drawn here to illustrate the substantive thesis. Consider the ideas of Mo di (or Mozi), the originator of Mohism in Chinese philosophy. The utilitarianism of Mohism offers a refreshing contrast to both the passivity of Daoism and the rule fetishism of Confucianism. The centre of moral gravity in Mohism is impartial utilitarian concern for all persons. The ultimate normative value is thus one, objective, undivided and cosmopolitan: the welfare of mankind. In each problem situation we need to find standards (*fa*) that tend towards this ultimate end: some aids or tools to help us pass correct judgements. This is where moral exemplars come into the picture: social and political superiors and, most importantly, 'Heaven' as the noblest, wisest moral agent: 'Any one in the Great Society who takes any business in hand, cannot dispense with a standard pattern. For there to be no standard and the business to succeed, this just does not happen' (trans. in Hughes 1942: 44). Moral education thus starts and is sustained by emulating the judgements and conducts of moral exemplars – a point not appreciably different from Aristotle's. However, even more explicitly than Aristotle, Mo di makes it clear that moral action must not and cannot be mere imitation of the *fa*. That a practice is ritual and customary and followed by the best available *fa* is not the ultimate justification for its moral rightness. And even though the intentions of 'Heaven', on the one hand, and the sphere of the morally right, on the other, are extensionally equivalent – given that 'Heaven' is perfectly noble, wise, impartial, benevolent and reliable – the correct reason for following 'Heaven's' example is not that we know his intentions, but rather that we understand independently the value of what 'Heaven' upholds. The crux of the matter, once again, is this: 'What is right is right not merely because Heaven intends it. Rather, Heaven intends it because it is right' (Fraser 2004).

To return to Aristotle, whereas he clearly sides with Socrates on the *Euthyphro* question, his account nevertheless transcends the strict either/or dichotomy that this question suggests. Aristotle takes for granted that emulation focuses on desired, honoured goods. When applying his ideas to the method of role modelling, we may assume that such education will be about certain qualities, deemed morally worthy of emulation. The role model is, on this assumption, taken to represent those qualities and, hence, to serve as a lively reminder of them: to evoke in students a certain emotional state as a necessary spur to emulation. Those morally worthy qualities would, *in principle*, be recognizable and morally justifiable, independent of the role model. Yet there is, *in fact*, in the Aristotelian model no other way for young people to get to know those qualities and to learn to emulate them than by following the example of the role model. Its exemplariness is thus a contingent fact that helps the role model fulfil the all-important educative role of representing and conveying moral virtue.

7.5 Aristotelian Role Modelling in Practice

In this chapter, I have analysed Aristotle's emotional virtue of emulation and brought it to bear on the ongoing educational discourse about the use of role models in moral education. To recapitulate, three problems mar this method, as described in a number of current sources, and two of them are serious and pervasive. The first problem is that it is methodologically simplistic and under-ambitious in offering us a didactic model of emulation as mere imitation. The second problem concerns the implicit assumption in some of those sources that students should learn to emulate ideal persons rather than ideals embodied in persons. I have shown how Aristotle-inspired role modelling overcomes both these problems.

What, then, would Aristotelian role-model education look like in practice? Let us focus on two points of emphasis. In the first place, it would highlight *moral content*: the reasons why the given quality to be emulated is morally commendable, how it contributes to human well-being. It would see moral exemplars as representative, rather than constitutive, of moral virtue. To be sure, we may 'know a heap of things' about a virtue simply by seeing it enacted by virtuous persons; and following the example of the virtuous is, in fact, the way in which young people learn to be virtuous. If we want to understand fully the nature of the good life and the role of the particular virtues in such a life, however, we need objective, exemplar-independent standards to help us grasp that truth. That is precisely what is meant by taking account of the cognitive element of emulation.

In the second place, Aristotelian role modelling would take account of the affective element of emulation by trying to evoke in moral learners an inwardly experienced, emotionally driven demand for self-transformation and by reminding them of the truth that no one can construct for you the bridge upon which you must cross the stream of life – no one but you yourself. This emotionally driven demand would then be felt as pain at their relative lack of the desired moral quality, and the educator would show the learners how such pain could only be alleviated by their taking reasonable and realistic steps themselves to acquire the quality in question.

To recap, there seems to be little empirical truth in the first part of *Assumption F*, which states that the actual role models of today's youth are becoming increasingly negative and unworthy. Nevertheless, systematic modelling on positive exemplars remains an important facet of moral education. The kind of role modelling proposed by leading character educationists does not, however, sufficiently echo Aristotle's virtue of emulation. Aristotelian role modelling – in so far as it amounts to more than simply 'latching onto' moral exemplars – may be a more complicated and challenging endeavour than that which is implicit in the typical character-education accounts. However, it would, as far as I can see, also be considerably more valuable, both morally and educationally.

Assumption F is wrong.

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Chapter 8

Aristotelian Friendship between Parents and Children

8.1 Three Types of Friendship

Assumption G: 'True character friendship, as described by Aristotle, cannot be formed between parents and their children, for both structural and moral reasons. And Aristotle himself was the first to draw attention to the moral reasons.'

Is this assumption true?

Can parents and their children really be friends? The prevailing philosophical assumption seems to be that they cannot – at least not in any salient and philosophically relevant sense of the term 'friendship'. Nevertheless, this assumption will seem to be counter-intuitive to many laypeople and some philosophers. The aim of the present chapter is to challenge this assumption; and in order to do so, we must first explore what philosophers tend to mean by 'true' or 'real' friendship.

Help is at hand, for most contemporary philosophical discussions of friendship draw, either explicitly or implicitly, on Aristotle's exploration of friendship as a generically human relationship of deep moral significance. In Aristotle's canonical account, all friendship rests on conscious, reciprocated goodwill between two persons. The different reasons and motivations mediating the goodwill, however, call for a distinction among three kinds of friendship. Of those three, only one – *character friendship* – is true and 'complete'. The other two – *friendship for utility* and *friendship for pleasure* – constitute lean counterparts of character friendship and can, in fact, only be subsumed under the concept of friendship to the extent that they resemble the true, primary kind. In character friendships, friends love one another because of their respective virtuous characters and wish the best for one another, each for the other's own sake. Such friendships last 'as long as they are good; and virtue is enduring'. In friendships based on utility, by contrast, we love others not for themselves, but only in so far as we can gain some good from them for ourselves; in friendships based on pleasure, we are fond of others, not because of their moral characters, but simply because they appear pleasant to us (witty or affable, for instance). These two inferior types of friendship are easily dissolved because they are conditional upon coincidental, fleeting and non-moral characteristics. Remove those characteristics – the relevant benefits – and you remove the friendship (Aristotle 1985: 209–16 [1155b16–1157b5]). Nevertheless, both types of friendship are morally and politically significant to a certain extent; friendship for utility, for instance, lays the foundation for 'civic friendships', which hold small closely knit societies together and make them function: as in ships aiming for the same port where the sea travellers have to be friends in relation to the 'advantage proper to a journey' (Aristotle 1985:

225 [1160a14–15]) until the journey is completed. This is not, however, tantamount to saying that utility friendships will in the end slide into character friendships as some interpreters (for example, Cooper 1993) have claimed.

In true character friendship, *A* loves *B* (1) for *B*'s own sake, (2) for what *B* really is and (3) because *B* has a virtuous character – with each of these conditions implying the other two (see Irwin's commentary in Aristotle 1985: 359). Because moral virtue is an objective merit and, once gained, an enduring one, character friendships tend to be stable and lifelong, come rain or shine. Such friendships are, to be sure, instrumentally and extrinsically valuable in many ways, for they are both highly advantageous and immediately pleasant; but their true value cuts deeper, being non-instrumental and intrinsic. The ultimate pleasure derived from them is what Mill would call a higher-quality pleasure or, in Aristotle's terms, a pleasure that completes virtue, not 'as some sort of ornament' but rather as 'pleasure within itself' (Aristotle 1985: 20–21 [1099a16–18]).

8.2 The Value and Nature of Aristotelian Friendship

The moral worth of Aristotelian friendship lies in its being a virtue or involving virtue. As a relationship of virtue, it is at once conducive to and constitutive of the ultimate human *telos* of *eudaimonia*, and is thus 'most necessary for our life' (Aristotle 1985: 207 [1155a1–3]). This last remark can hardly be considered an overstatement, given the number of words that Aristotle devotes to his discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* – much more than is devoted to any of the individual moral and intellectual virtues. In Aristotle's schema, the actualization of *eudaimonia* is partly dependent upon moral luck; lack of certain important goods makes it impossible for one to lead a happy life. Lack of friends is one of those goods, and perhaps the most salient one, as 'having friends seems to be the greatest external good' (Aristotle 1985: 257 [1169b7–10]). Virtuous persons without such goods will never be wholly miserable as long as they remain fully virtuous, but the absence of a life-enhancing relationship such as friendship will 'oppress and spoil' their blessedness, and they will not 'altogether have the character of happiness' (Aristotle 1985: 21, 26 [1099b2–6, 1100b23–34]).

Aristotle's distinction between 'complete' friendship and the two other types, which are only 'friendships by similarity' (Aristotle 1985: 215 [1157a31–4]), has commended such widespread philosophical assent because it seems, for one thing, to resonate well with ordinary language. Although the term 'friend' is sometimes used indiscriminately and with exaggeration, most people would – if pressed – be more than ready to accept that there are friends and there are friends. A distinction between persons who are our 'real' or true 'friends' (*qua* 'kindred spirits', 'other selves') and those who are merely our acquaintances or companions (such as drinking buddies and squash partners) will be familiar enough to most people. There is a related distinction in ordinary parlance between 'being a friend to' and 'being a friend of': my neighbour, the electrician, was a real friend *to* me when the electricity went off in my flat; but although I hold him dear for that, he is not, therefore, necessarily a friend *of* mine (cf. Telfer 1991: 250). We evidently have good reason to give Emerson's

statement – in a discussion of friendship that is scarcely less famous and considerably more poetic than Aristotle's – a sympathetic nod: 'I hate the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances' (Emerson 1991: 227).

I assume in what follows that Aristotle, Emerson and ordinary language are right in that there exists a primary form of 'real friendship' that must be distinguished from less complete alliances of advantage and mutual comfort. Moreover, I assume with Aristotle that this primary form is best described as that of 'character friendship', possessing, at least broadly, the characteristics that he ascribes to it. Indeed, in subsequent sections of this chapter, I use the word 'friendship', unless otherwise stated, as a short form for 'character friendship'. In addition to the conceptual issue, I do not hesitate to make lavish use of Aristotle's substantive insights, which relate to both the psychology and the moral character of friendship.

However, given the professed aim of this chapter – to counter the assumption that parents and children cannot be friends – the adoption of an Aristotelian viewpoint may seem to be an odd strategy; Aristotle's characterization of friendship is, after all, often thought to rule out the possibility that children can *be* or *have* friends in the primary sense. Children, the argument goes, do not possess full moral virtue and, hence, cannot arguably have the type of friendship that presupposes such virtue. For if friends are to mutually admire each other's moral character, there must be something worthy of such admiration (see, for example, Pakaluk 1991: xiv). It is true that, in Aristotle's view, friendship *between children* is typically of the friendship-for-pleasure kind, which he deems to be fractionally closer to real friendship than friendship for utility, as friends for pleasure 'find enjoyment in each other or in the same thing' (Aristotle 1985: 218 [1158a17–23]). I argue, however, that there are sound Aristotelian reasons for holding that parents and their children are capable of true character friendship with one another.

One way to argue that the intimate relationship between parents and their children can instantiate complete friendship in the Aristotelian model would be to point out that Aristotle discusses loving parent–child relationships in some detail in his extended section on friendship. Such an argument would be facile, however, as the Greek term *philia* can be used to denote all types of (non-erotic) love. Because the term *philos* (friend) carves up the conceptual landscape differently from the English term 'friend', one cannot assume that because Aristotle explores what is translated into English as the 'natural friendship' between parents and children under the rubric of *philia*, he therefore means that parents and children can be (1) each other's friends in the primary sense, as distinct from (2) simply loving one another (with the existence of (2), of course, not being reasonably under contention). Although we have good reason to preserve the distinction between (1) and (2), I argue that (1) is possible in addition to (2).

It would be untenable to claim that children are capable of character friendship with their parents from birth. Such friendship presupposes some minimal 'comprehension or [at least] perception' of the moral character of the other to be cherished and admired (Aristotle 1985: 230 [1161b26–7]). From precisely what age such comprehension can exist may be a matter for debate. After the quick demise, during the last decade or so, of Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development – now generally dismissed as methodologically flawed (see, for example, Kristjánsson 2002:

Ch. 6) – moral educators tend to be somewhat wary of attempts to relate children's moral maturity to any clear-cut stages. Let me simply note in passing that according to William Damon's structural–developmental theory of justice conceptions, it is generally not until eight to twelve years of age that children are able to co-ordinate complex and competing justice claims (such as desert, equality or entitlement); and in Martin Hoffman's equally renowned developmental account of empathy, children do not show direct signs of what he calls 'reciprocity' until eight to ten years of age (Damon 1980; Hoffman 2000: 242). Judging from those findings, the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm was probably not far off the mark – the weaknesses of his theoretical underpinnings notwithstanding – when he suggested that children are not capable of true love until the ages of eight-and-a-half to ten (Fromm 1957: 40). In any case, my claim that children are capable of being their parents' character friends is restricted to that latter part of childhood in which the necessary rational apparatus to allow for a conception and appreciation of the ingredients of friendship has been established – perhaps typically from the age of eight to ten onwards, although this age will vary considerably among individuals.

In the following section, I use a widely read article by Joseph Kupfer (1990) as the springboard of my discussion. In this article, Kupfer argues that parents and their children are incapable of mutual full-blown friendships, even when the children have reached adulthood. This is why he alludes only briefly, if approvingly, to the traditional argument, derived from Aristotle's analysis, that children and parents are incapable of friendship because of children's lack of full moral virtue, a point which obviously carries no weight after a child has reached maturity. Instead of this point, Kupfer adduces various *structural* (psychological and social) arguments for the impossibility of parent–child friendships, and in Section 8.3, I concentrate on rebutting those arguments with respect to parent–child relationships in general. However, my aim is not merely to undermine Kupfer's strong thesis, but also to challenge the weaker thesis that parents and their non-adult children cannot be friends. Therefore I turn, in Section 8.4, to the more traditional argument, of which Kupfer does not avail himself – that there are *moral* barriers to such friendships – and try to refute it. In Section 8.5, I finally present some concluding remarks.

8.3 Structural Barriers to Friendship?

Kupfer's article offers a sustained and systematic attack on the idea that parents and their children can be friends. More precisely, Kupfer marshals a number of arguments that are meant to demonstrate that, whereas parents and their children can enjoy relationships rich in qualities that are lacking in the best of friendships, they cannot become the 'true' or 'complete' friends that they might be with peers. He delineates various obstacles that, in his view, are built into the structure of the parent–child relationship, preventing it from ever growing out of the one-sided dependency characteristic of the earliest phases of the relationship (Kupfer 1990: 15). I refer to Kupfer's three prime structural arguments as (1) the unequal-autonomy argument, (2) the non-independence argument and (3) the special-value argument.

According to Kupfer's (1) unequal-autonomy argument, friendship requires that the parties enjoy equal autonomy; otherwise unequal influence and power will lead to unequal dependency and to one party's disproportionate reliance on the other. Furthermore, unequal autonomy is likely to constrain the mutual and full self-disclosure that characterizes true friendships. Because children are less autonomous than parents in their relationship, (that is, according to Kupfer's understanding of autonomy, less self-determining, less able to choose for themselves on the basis of their own values), then such a relationship cannot constitute friendship. Kupfer seeks indirect support in a parallel thesis, which he ascribes to Aristotle, about the need for equal virtue in friendships: 'Only if the friends are equally virtuous will they mutually strive for the other's good for his own sake' (Kupfer 1990: 16). It must be noted, however, that although Aristotle thinks friendship is ideally a relationship between persons of equal virtue, he does not exclude relationships based on superiority from the category of friendship. Quite the contrary, Aristotle states explicitly that within each of the three types of friendship are some that rest on equality and others on superiority: 'For equally good people can be friends, but also a better and worse person; and the same is true of friends for pleasure or utility' (Aristotle 1985: 232–3 [1162a34–b4]). In other words, Aristotle's threefold division of friendships between equals is meant to apply to unequal parties as well, so that there are actually six different types of friendship possible rather than three. Aristotle does think that a type of equality (or proportionality) is achieved in friendships based on superiority, provided that the superior person is 'loved more than he loves' (Aristotle 1985: 220–21 [1158b24–9]). But this does not change the fact that the Aristotelian account allows for full-blown friendship between a superior and an inferior party. To suppose otherwise, as Kupfer seems to do, is to make a travesty of Aristotle's argument.

We must avoid an *argumentum ad verecundiam* here, however. Aristotle might simply be wrong about the possibility of friendship between unequal parties, and, after all, Kupfer concentrates on the problem of unequal autonomy rather than that of unequal virtue, which could be a different and less surmountable problem. Aristotle aside, Kupfer can nevertheless be criticized for proposing too restrictive a conception of friendship. If friendship is possible only between persons of equal autonomy (in Kupfer's sense), then various relationships that seem to constitute possible examples of friendship, such as the relationship between the guru/mentor and disciple/student, are excluded from the reckoning. Kupfer's considerations about the impossibility of the parent–child relationship ever growing fully out of the dependency relationship that characterizes its beginnings seem equally applicable to the guru–disciple relationship. However enlightened disciples eventually become, one would have to argue, they may never be able to interact with their old gurus on a completely equal footing; yet it would be counter-intuitive to suppose that gurus and their disciples cannot be friends (cf. McEwan 2005, on the friendship formed between Émile and his mentor in Rousseau's famous book).

Simply to fault Kupfer on the grounds of contrary intuitions may be hasty, however. In order to do full justice to Kupfer's non-equality argument, we must look more closely at how he elaborates upon it. Of particular importance are two further expressions of the argument: one ontological and the other epistemological. The ontological expression (1a) relates to the nature of one's self-concept; the

epistemological one (1b) to one's privileged knowledge of another person. Kupfer's point in (1a) is that one's level of autonomy in general depends upon one's self-concept. Inevitably, the child's self-concept includes different aspects of the child's history with the parents (*qua* receiver of care). Similarly, the parents' sense of self is informed by the history of unequal autonomy *vis-à-vis* the child (*qua* providers of care, guardians and protectors). Hence, in its interactions with its parents, the child can never view itself fully as the author of its own being, which means that the condition for full autonomy in the relationship is never satisfactorily met (Kupfer 1990: 16–18).

But is Kupfer's condition of full autonomy not too strict and demanding? It smacks of the Kantian notion of an autonomous self as necessarily formed and sustained independent of the selves of others and prior to all its contingent ends. Needless to say, many recent criticisms of Kantianism have dismissed the idea of such a disembodied, socially rootless self, as opposed to the Aristotelian embodied, socially rooted self that I described in Section 2.3. According to the Aristotelian conception, our lives as human beings are, by necessity, intertwined and shackled with the heavy chains of social and psychological interdependence, but this does not bar us from gradually becoming autonomous agents – authors of our own lives. Thus, if my sense of myself requires me to seek recognition from others, and my social existence and social relations are essential rather than contingent parts of my personhood, it is unreasonable to insist that because someone else has helped shape my identity, I cannot be fully autonomous with regard to that person. To paraphrase Robert Frost's famous lines in 'The Star Splitter': if one by one we counted out potential friends for having played a role in shaping our self-concept, it wouldn't take us long to get so we had no friends left to live with.

Kupfer's point in (1b) is that the parent witnesses the child's coming to be. This gives the parent intimate, privileged knowledge of the child's development and character, aspirations and humiliations. Thus the parent has special access to the child's personal identity, which the child does not and cannot enjoy with respect to the parent. This epistemic superiority, then, rules out friendship between the two (Kupfer 1990: 17–18). Now, I have already challenged the general thesis that a relationship of superiority precludes friendship; the same considerations would apply here. More specifically, we may also question the empirical thesis that the parent is, in fact, typically such an expert on the child's character that he or she has a privileged status with regard to the child. I wonder if, in the complicated juggling act of modern-day child-rearing, where the demands of spouse, work, friends and hobbies vie with those of children for parents' attention, children are not typically more exclusive experts on their parents than vice versa. In the first years of life, the child's full-time job is growing up, and it has ample time to study its parents' characters (and character weaknesses). How often we see small children who have become deftly aware of their parents' little foibles and whims, and having learnt to play up to them, can use them to their advantage. Older children commonly use their privileged knowledge of their parents' characters to woo and manipulate them in a more systematic fashion. If this manipulation process works both ways, and not merely in one direction as Kupfer suggests, then his contention that one-sided privileged knowledge precludes the child's autonomy in the parent-child relationship

cannot hold up to scrutiny. I conclude, then, that neither the general (philosophical) part nor the empirical part of Kupfer's unequal-autonomy argument sustains it.

Let us turn next to Kupfer's (2) non-independence argument. Part of the delight in friendship, he says, turns upon the way in which two people discover each other and gradually get to know each other as distinct individuals. However, the relationship between parents and their children cannot progress in this way because their lives have already been entwined since the child's beginning. Hence, they will never be able to encounter and discover each other as beings with independent histories: as true 'others'. The parents are too 'naturally familiar' to the child, and vice versa, for them to become friends (Kupfer 1990: 20–21).

Some of the things Aristotle has to say about the parent–child relationship may seem to reinforce Kupfer's insights: 'For a parent is fond of his children because he regards them as part of himself; and children are fond of a parent because they regard themselves as coming from him.' Furthermore, a parent 'loves his children as [he loves] himself […] Children love a parent because they regard themselves as coming from him' (Aristotle 1985: 230 [1161b16–29]). So on this understanding, it is, indeed, the case that parents and children are not true 'others'. However, the impression that this reinforces Kupfer's argument about the radical difference between the parent–child relationship and friendship is illusory; it does anything but. Aristotle's point is that in *all forms* of true *philia*, be it the loving relationship between a parent and a child or the fondness between two friends, one party is related to the other 'in the same way as he is related to himself, since a friend is another himself' (Aristotle 1985: 260 [1170b5–14]). The notion of the friend or the non-erotically beloved person as 'another self' is precisely what gives the idea of *philia* its unity. It is not as if we first learn to love ourselves and then incorporate others under the same umbrella; rather the capacity to love ourselves and the capacity to love others (family members, friends) arise together and cannot be separated (Aristotle 1985: 253–6 [1168a28–1169b2]; cf. Brewer 2005: 741).

We hardly need Aristotle to tell us all this. It is a common and familiar – if perhaps not an uncontroversial – claim in modern psychology that all forms of deep affection aim at self-extension; that is to say, they aim at satisfying the human need to overcome our separateness, to leave the prison of our aloneness. In his book on the art of loving, Erich Fromm went as far as to hold that 'the desire for interpersonal fusion is the most powerful striving in man' (Fromm 1957: 18). 'I *am* Heathcliff', was Cathy's climactic revelation in *Wuthering Heights*. It is far from true that this desire for the collapse of ego boundaries separates both erotic and non-erotic love from friendship. In fact, precisely the opposite seems to hold: in deep friendship, we also seek union with another self in order to form a new whole, a new entirety – or, as Emerson puts it: 'The essence of friendship is entireness' (Emerson 1991: 232). If it is true, as Kupfer maintains, that the selves of parents and children are naturally entwined from the beginning, then this fact should, *ceteris paribus*, facilitate rather than hinder their friendship from forming.

Finally, Kupfer argues that we need not lament the fact that friendship does not capture the essence of the parent–child relationship, for even if the relationship fails to pass muster as friendship, it offers us something that friendship cannot. In other words, Kupfer's (3) special-value argument rests on the assumption that the parent–

child relationship produces value that is radically different from that produced by friendship. This unique value allegedly rests on four essential characteristics of the parent–child relationship that it does not share with friendship: (3a) identification, (3b) unconditionality, (3c) permanence and (3d) aesthetic worth.

By (3a) 'identification', Kupfer means experiencing another person's well-being and suffering as constitutive of one's own well-being and suffering. Thus parents take pride in their children's achievements as if they were their own achievements. By contrast, 'friends are glad for one another and receive pleasure, but they don't seem to take pride *in* one another's achievements' (Kupfer 1990: 21). What Kupfer is saying here is basically the natural converse of his earlier point (2) about parent–child non-independence: just as parents and children cannot, whereas friends can, separate their life histories, friends cannot, whereas parents and children can, identify with each other's achievements and failures as if they were their own. If my considerations presented in response to (2) were correct, then Kupfer's general point does not hold here either; mutual identification is just as much a characteristic of deep friendships as it is of successful parent–child relationships. More specifically, I would question Kupfer's contention about the nature of extended pride. His idea of how people claim value for themselves by identifying with valued others seems much too restrictive. Consider the '*we* are number 1!' chant of ecstatic football fans around the world. The players on the field are not even the personal friends of the fans who are identifying with them – let alone their parents or children! In the case of our friends, taking pride in their achievements seems even more natural and appropriate – or as Emerson emphatically put it: 'I must feel pride in my friend's accomplishments as if they were mine, and a property in his virtues' (Emerson 1991: 222).

One's fondness for one's friends is conditional upon their retaining their identity: their moral character. Although 'virtue is enduring', as Aristotle pointed out (see earlier), even the best can become morally corrupt. And does a Latin proverb not tell us that 'corruption of the best becomes the worst'? In such cases, one's fondness may appropriately be revoked – the friendship cancelled. However, Kupfer observes, this conditionality does not apply to the parent–child relationship: (3b) 'parents (ideally) feel an "unconditional" love for their children: a love that is untouched by accomplishments or failures, kindness or callousness' (Kupfer 1990: 22). In response, I must say, first, that a parent–child relationship can also have its own pathology. However much one party has invested emotionally in the other, the two may become so alienated from one another in the end that the emotional deposit is withdrawn. Kupfer might reply that he is talking about unconditional love as an ideal, and that such an ideal is not compromised by particular extreme examples of the breakdown of unconditionality. A second and more telling response would be that even if it is true that unconditionality ideally characterizes parent–child relationships but not friendships, this acknowledgment does not demonstrate that parents and children cannot be friends; the value of unconditionality could simply complement the friendship, just as the value of romantic love often complements friendship, by adding new layers of intimacy, without disintegrating the underlying friendship (cf. Klaasen 2004; for the opposite view, see Conlon 1995). I return to this point at the end of this section.

Kupfer's insistence on (3c), the permanency of the parent–child relationship, as opposed to the essential impermanency of friendship, is closely related to the value of unconditionality. Precisely because of the unconditionality of parent–child relationships, they retain their solidity and stability, no matter how functions and needs shift. 'Friendship is different. We can acquire and lose friends' (Kupfer 1990: 24). If Kupfer is still talking here about true character friendships, this seems to be a frivolous way of describing their onset and closure. For Aristotle, by contrast, the dissolution of such friendships can never be taken light-heartedly; whether or not we should cancel a friendship that has gone bad is an agonizing question. Aristotle's conclusion is that we should wait and see, and only give up the friendship when we are sure that the other person has become 'incurably vicious'. For if 'someone can be set right, we should try harder to rescue his character than his property, in so far as character is better and more proper to friendship' (Aristotle 1985: 244 [1165b17–21]). Aristotle's notion of the essential permanency of friendships, which can never be treated lightly, seems to be more intuitively plausible than Kupfer's conception. I would submit that in the view of most people, friendships are – to cite Emerson once again – 'not glass threads or frostwork, but the solidest thing we know'. And even if we may talk of choosing or ending friendships, friends are essentially 'self-elected' (Emerson 1991: 225, 229).

The parent–child relationship has, finally, in Kupfer's view, (3d) aesthetic worth that cannot be attributed to mere friendship. What he has in mind there is the aesthetic dimension involved, first, in the 'reversal or exchange of roles' when the child nurses the aged parent in the same way as the parent once nursed the helpless child, and, second, in the 'closure of nexus' when grown children have children of their own (Kupfer 1990: 24–5). In aesthetic terms, the craftsman's product finally plies the craft on the craftsman himself. But why can such an aesthetic dimension not be added to friendship? Think of the relationship between the guru and the disciple; does it not culminate ideally in the closure at work when the disciple starts paying back the emotional and intellectual debt incurred: when the disciple becomes the giver and the guru the receiver? Or think, more mundanely and typically, of two friends in a situation in which one has been the stronger party, constantly pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the other, but where a change of fortunes brings about a reversal of roles. Is that not also an aesthetic closure, in Kupfer's sense? I agree with Emerson that friendship adds 'rhyme and reason' to our whole life journey – that it aids and comforts us through 'all the passages of life and death' (Emerson 1991: 227). Surely that imparts friendship with what Kupfer characterizes as aesthetic worth?

All in all, it seems to me that Kupfer systematically overstates and overdraws the distinction between the values which characterize parent–child relationships and friendships, in order to provide focus to his own thesis that parents and children cannot be friends. Most of the specific values he discusses indicate, as I have argued, the commonalities of parent–child relationships and friendships rather than their dissimilarities. And even if it were correct that the relationship between parent and child has some special value that cannot be reduced to the value of friendship and is even incommensurable with it, we cannot conclude that parent–child relationships cannot also be friendships. More plausibly, such value would be surplus value, added on top of the value of friendship. As Klaasen has argued convincingly in the context of

the relationship between friendship and romantic love, incommensurability does not imply incompatibility: 'While we cannot square a circle, because squares and circles are incommensurable, we can inscribe a circle within a square, or a square within a circle' (Klaasen 2004: 414). Well-ordered, loving, parent–child relationships might well – even given the incommensurability of values – *contain* within them friendships between parents and children, without any loss to the essential characteristics of parent–child friendship.

8.4 Moral Barriers to Friendship?

It is now time to shift the scrutiny from the alleged structural barriers preventing parent–child friendships to potential moral barriers. As noted at the outset, it is commonly assumed that such a moral barrier is implicit in Aristotle's account, because children – lacking in full virtue – do not yet possess the moral qualities required for character friendship; neither in order to admire moral character in others nor to be admired for their own moral character.

Notice first, in any case, the weight that Aristotle ascribes to loving relationships within the family: an astounding amount, if we compare him with his teacher, Plato. Parental love of children and the child's affections for and trust in its parents facilitate, in Aristotle's view, moral upbringing (*padeia*) within the family, where the foundations of moral virtue are laid. The importance of parent–child *philia* notwithstanding, the question remains: does such *philia* constitute friendship, or may it coexist with friendship, in the primary sense? Because Aristotle's answer to that question is often taken to be negative (see, for example, Jacquette 2001), the moral-barriers thesis would be dealt a serious blow if a positive answer to this question could reasonably be wrenched from Aristotle's account.

In order to explore this issue, recall first the Aristotelian theory of the levels of moral development delineated in Section 2.2. Keeping that theory well and truly in mind, it strains credulity, for a number of reasons, to think that Aristotle considers lack of full virtue to prevent a person from engaging in true friendship. The first reason is that most people never reach Level 6 of full virtue, and even those who more or less reach that level continue to be prone to occasional error. Insisting that only people of full virtue can be character friends thus comes at the hefty price of accepting that very few people are ever capable of such friendships. Aristotle admits that character friendship is 'rare' (Aristotle 1985: 213 [1126b24]), and that may well be true relative to the majority of people he thinks will remain forever at the lowest levels of moral development; if such friendship required full virtue, it would, however, be exceedingly rare rather than merely rare. Second, Aristotle famously (or rather, infamously) held that women are barred from full virtue owing to their lack of 'authority'; yet he explicitly states that a husband and his wife can enjoy 'friendship for virtue, if they are decent. For each has a proper virtue, and this will be a source of enjoyment for them' (Aristotle 1985: 232 [1162a25–7]). The third and final reason is that an important guiding light in one's progress through the six levels is, according to Aristotle, one's participation in friendships, which keeps the young 'from error' and makes the older and more morally advanced 'still better from their activities and

their mutual correction' (Aristotle 1985: 208, 266 [1155a10–16, 1172a10–14]). If the persons under discussion here had already achieved full virtue, they would not have had anything new to learn or correct morally from their friendships. It is probably true that those passages in Aristotle's corpus which suggest that character friendship is the exclusive provenance of the fully virtuous can be attributed to his teleological bias in tending to define things with respect to their most fully realized instance (see Brewer 2005: 725–6, citing a view by the Aristotelian scholar John Cooper).

This was the deconstructive evidence at hand, showing why Aristotle could not, or at least should not, have held the view that children are barred from character friendships for moral reasons. There is, however, considerable constructive evidence to be found in Aristotle's work for the claim that children do possess moral virtue – even if not a Level 6, *phronesis*-guided virtue of all-round moral excellence – that would be sufficient to ground friendships between them and their parents. Recall from Section 2.3 the two Aristotelian moral virtues which seem to be specific to young people: emulation and shame. Recall also the virtues and other praiseworthy characteristics such as open-mindedness, optimism, trust, courage and guilelessness that come more easily to the growing-ups than to the grown-ups for developmental reasons. Furthermore, if the developmental theories of Damon and Hoffman, referred to earlier in this chapter, hold true, children from the age of approximately eight will have a strong sense of desert-based Aristotelian justice (as an emotional virtue). These are surely states of character for which children can be loved and admired by grown-up friends.

To those Aristotelian insights, we could perhaps add the following piece of anecdotal evidence: in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, when hundreds of thousands of Americans were turned into refugees in their own country, a nurse who was interviewed on TV said that, contrary to what she and her colleagues had expected, displaced children presented much less of a problem than adults did, for the children were 'more adaptable and resilient'. All these insights indicate that the direction of virtuous exchange between parents and children in character friendships need not flow solely from the former to the latter, as the child's superior possession of certain morally praiseworthy qualities can also enlighten and instruct the adults (cf. Sherman 1989: 173). It is no wonder that Aristotle singled out, as the group least prone to friendship, 'older and sour people' rather than young people (Aristotle 1985: 216 [1157b14–15]), and that Emerson noted how friendship is available even to 'ploughboys and tin-peddlers' (Emerson 1991: 227).

8.5 Jointly Produced Sensibilities

Let me bring my exploration to a close by reiterating Aristotle's point about the character-forming and reforming function of friendship. 'Good people's life together allows the cultivation of virtue' (Aristotle 1985: 259 [1170a11–13]). Children do not benefit from friendship with their parents by simply replicating the parental virtues, but rather by critically enlarging their knowledge of life's options and gradually shaping their own evaluative outlooks. Similarly, parents reshape and reinvigorate their evaluative outlooks by attending to the guilelessness and sincerity of their

children. A parent–child relationship described in those terms will, I believe, fall squarely within the ambit of Talbot Brewer's astute characterization of friendship, for and in virtue, as the locus of shared, virtuous activities, accompanied and completed by a running appreciation of 'the words and actions emanating from the two jointly produced sensibilities whose ongoing collaboration makes these activities possible' (Brewer 2005: 758). To the extent that the benefits of this collaboration enter the texture of conduct and thought of both parties – the parents and their children – friendship between them has been instantiated and actualized.

To recap, I have tried to rebut the assumption that there are either structural or moral barriers which exclude true friendship between parents and their children. Kupfer's multi-faceted structural arguments failed to succeed, or succeeded only on an overly restrictive conception of friendship. And following the interpretative approach that I have taken to Aristotle's account, it does not bar parent–child friendships for moral reasons, as it is commonly taken to do. Quite the contrary, Aristotle's insights lend considerable strength to the view that such friendships are possible. Moreover, if we reject his empirical claims about large groups of people, including slaves and manual labourers, being barred from developing and appreciating moral virtue, such friendships may indeed turn out to be common.

Assumption G is wrong.

Chapter 9

What Can Aristotle Teach Us about Generosity?

9.1 'What Have *You* Done?'

Assumption H: 'Aristotelian virtue is primarily about self-improvement. There is little room for other-regarding virtues (benevolence does not even count as a virtue) and therefore little to be learned from Aristotle about why we should help people in dire straits.'

Is this assumption true?

The general part of this assumption can be disposed of fairly quickly: as I highlighted in Section 2.1, distinct from much of current virtue ethics, Aristotle empathically espouses the view that the primary value of the moral virtues lies in the benefits they extend to others. That the virtues are also constitutive of one's own *eudaimonia* is not tantamount to saying that they are primarily about self-improvement (I revisit this point in Section 9.3). Furthermore, Aristotle characterizes a specific emotional virtue of kindness to others: *kharis*. When one shows kindness to those in need – stands by the poor or those in exile, for instance – one does that not in order to obtain anything in return but only 'as something for the recipient' (Aristotle 1991: 149–50 [1385a16–35]). The common assumption that Aristotle does not embrace benevolence as a virtue beggars belief, given what he actually says on the subject (witness, for example, Aristotle 1985: 252 [1168a5–9]). It could be argued, however, that although Aristotle encourages us, in general terms, to 'stand by' those in need, he does not give us much specific advice about why or to what extent to help the poor and the underprivileged. That issue is worth considering within today's context of First World abundance and Third World deprivation.

Time and again harrowing images of starving children with swollen bellies are beamed out of poverty-ridden African countries. I am probably not the only moral philosopher whose child has posed the chilling question: 'What have *you* done to help those children?' Every day approximately 33,000 children die unnecessary deaths from malnutrition and other poverty-related diseases. Most of those deaths could be prevented if all reasonably well-off people in the Western world diverted as little as 2 per cent of their income to famine relief and global population control: an amount which would not noticeably reduce their current standards of living (see Engel 2005).

More than a billion people throughout the world currently live in conditions of absolute poverty, beneath any minimal level of material conditions for a satisfactory life. Enormous human capabilities lie fallow because of an utter inability to cultivate them. Empty sacks cannot stand upright. Yet too many of us who believe, in principle,

that we should be our brother's keeper – and even make a living out of delivering that message in classrooms – fail to practise what we preach. Instead, we have become veritable experts at subterfuge. Rather than being properly shamed into action by the deceptively simple questions raised by our own children, we have gained mastery in sidestepping or dodging them by alluding to the alien workings of an economic system for which we cannot be held accountable; by extending equal condemnation to all people, thereby diffusing responsibility, and so forth. The honest thing would be to admit that we who live in pockets of affluence surrounded by seas of destitution – we who look for stomach for our meat while others look for meat for their stomach – are simply not being *generous* enough. And generosity is a moral virtue – even a distinct *Aristotelian* moral virtue.

There is considerable ambivalence in our attitude towards our children's natural generosity and compassion, expressed through their comments and gestures and through their uncomfortable questions. On the one hand, we admire those qualities in the young and view them as manifestations of burgeoning moral maturity. On the other hand, the virtue of generosity – at least generosity in the context of the issue of world poverty – exists in few curricula in the field of moral education, be they categorized (depending on country and educational tradition) as curricula in 'values education', 'character education', 'citizenship education', or 'life skills'. The upshot seems to be that although we find it to be morally charming and praiseworthy to have a general emotional orientation – akin to Aristotle's *kharis* – towards helping those in dire need in far-away countries, we think, for some reason, that it is unimportant, or even damaging, for this orientation to be translated into action. Generosity towards the world's poor thus becomes a mere emotional virtue without any significant action-guiding ramifications – much like the pleasant or painful emotions felt towards fictional characters in a novel. This may be the chief reason why this issue is so seldom engaged head-on in moral-education classes.

The lack of serious and robust engagement is not confined to the classroom. If we consider the general moral outlooks to which people currently tend to subscribe, either explicitly or implicitly, and the answers to poverty relief which those outlooks typically provide, we find either that they fail to accommodate our responsibility towards strangers in straitened circumstances or that they have implications which seem counter-intuitive or counter-productive, if not positively counter-moral.

Consider, for example, the view of (1) *moral sentimentalists* such as David Hume and Adam Smith, according to which our judgements about moral rightness depend on our capacity for sympathy. The trouble is that a moral attitude of exclusive and unmitigated sympathy towards all those in dire straits could well be counter-productive, rendering us so downcast that we would eventually fall victim to 'sympathy burn-out' and 'donor fatigue'. A certain degree of inurement to misery is necessary in order to be functional in alleviating misery. Moreover, the sentimentalist could be accused of overlooking the morally relevant Aristotelian distinction between sympathy *qua* compassion (pain at another's undeserved bad fortune) and sympathy *qua* pity (pain at another's deserved bad fortune). Arguably, we have a stronger moral obligation towards relieving the plight of the 'God's poor' than the 'devil's poor', to use a somewhat archaic expression. And if (2) mere *prudential* reasons are invoked to justify our involvement in poverty relief – forgoing short-

term privileges in order to secure long-term ones – those reasons will not extend far, for the poor are not those most likely to threaten us in the foreseeable future, even if we fail to assist them.

But what about (3) a *human-rights* approach? Are we not violating the human rights of those poor whom we leave in the lurch? It may be generally debatable how much weight the reference to human rights carries in a secularized, postmodern world, where this notion has been severed from its original religious habitat (witness Locke and the American constitution) of a divine law in a world given by God to all human beings in common. More specifically, if we understand 'human rights' in a more restrictive sense to denote those rights ratified in United Nations' treaties, it is not clear that our failure to help the world's poor constitutes a breach of human rights – for two reasons: (a) true, welfare rights, including protections against severe poverty and starvation, are mentioned in the original 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the subsequent International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights from 1966 (ratified to date by more than 140 countries), which spells out and 'operationalizes' these rights, makes it clear that welfare standards are ability-calibrated norms to be realized progressively, thereby relegating them, in effect, from rights to goals; (b) On the UN's understanding, human rights constitute political norms dealing primarily with how people should be treated by their own governments; they are not ordinary moral norms, applying to interpersonal and pan-national conduct (see Nickel 2005).

The three moral perspectives which comprise the staple diet of first-year philosophy undergraduates – virtue ethics, Kantianism and utilitarianism – do not seem to fare much better with regard to the issue of world poverty. Consider (4) the creed of contemporary *virtue ethics*, according to which an action is right if and only if it exercises the agent's moral virtue(s). Virtue ethics is here, as always, sullied by its self-centredness, which obscures or ignores the essential other-concern of morality. If it is right to help the world's poor, it surely has to do primarily with their interests rather than our interests in preserving and promoting our own virtuousness. In (5) *Kant's moral philosophy*, a famous distinction is made between perfect and imperfect duties towards others. Thus we have an unexceptional (perfect) duty not to harm others, but we are only loosely (imperfectly) bound to help others – those in dire need, for instance. And because we cannot help everybody, we are, to a large extent, entitled to decide for ourselves which needy persons we will favour with our attention. According to this view, devoting our attention to the impoverished *Persons A* and *B* does not exempt us from our imperfect duty to help *Persons C* and *D*, but we violate that duty only if we are not filling our proper quota elsewhere. Kantianism here smacks of too much *sang-froid* and rationalist detachment. My national government in Iceland decided to concentrate its developmental help on the Cape Verde Islands for many years. Even if that assistance had constituted a morally respectable percentage of our GNP (which in fact it did not), it would have been overly cavalier to hold that our help to Cape Verde protected us from violating any moral duties towards the starving masses in, say, Ethiopia. Being unable to fulfil all of one's moral duties may be morally understandable, if regrettable. Not violating such a duty simply because one's 'quota' has been filled elsewhere is quite another and considerably more nebulous matter, however.

Finally, on a typical (Singerian) reading of (6) *utilitarianism*, we are obligated to send famine relief organizations as much money as possible, up to the point at which we would begin to cause serious suffering for ourselves and our dependents (Singer 1972: 234). This means that on pain of living an immoral life, utilitarians must give away most of their financially valuable assets (Unger 1996: 134). This demand is morally counter-intuitive for at least two distinct reasons: (a) it presupposes a strong doctrine of moral responsibility which forecloses the reasonable option of considering ourselves more responsible for those problems to which we have directly contributed or are contributing than for those which we have not directly brought about ourselves; (b) it is too demanding a philosophy to be practical. Any moral theory which denies us the right to provide our family, friends and life projects with special preference will lead to a life of hypocrisy or neurotic self-flagellation (see, for example, Cottingham 1991). Singerian act-utilitarianism deprives us of the fig leaves we commonly use to hide world poverty from our view, but it does so at the cost of turning us into single-minded utility machines, and thus merely trades one loathsome thing for another.

There are advanced types of rule-utilitarianism and even of sophisticated act-utilitarianism which circumvent those counter-intuitive implications (see, for example, Kristjánsson 2002: Ch. 2). Similarly, exponents of each of the other five outlooks will be more than ready to demonstrate that there are manoeuvres within their own theoretical repertoires which enable them to avoid any embarrassing implications and prod us to vigorous action in fighting world poverty. In considering such ingenious manoeuvres, we enter the realm of academic hair splitting – the standard fare of undergraduate ethics courses. Fortunately, most people engaged in moral education at earlier levels of the school system have come to realize, at least in our present post-Kohlbergian era, that such quibbling with theoretical nuances and noxious counter-examples is not a healthy diet for younger moral learners. If the promotion of generosity is, for example, a valuable educational goal at those earlier levels, it is not generosity as measured by pat answers to moral dilemmas, from the perspective of this or that theory, but generosity as measured by the cultivation of a generous personality: namely, generosity as a character state in the Aristotelian sense. Few contemporary educators would, I hope, want to deny that helping to create such a state in moral learners is a worthy aim of moral education.

Aristotle's generous persons not only perform the right generous actions; they perform them for the right reason (namely, the reason for which the truly virtuous person would perform them) and from a 'firm and unchanging' state of character (Aristotle 1985: 40 [1105a33–b9]). In other words, generosity not only involves right actions, it involves being the kind of person who is consistently disposed to such actions. It is 'hard work' to become and remain such a person, however (Aristotle 1985: 51 [1109a23–6]). If we are to guide the young in that direction, we must not only inculcate in them the right general dispositions of generosity and the other virtues through repetitive moral habituation from an early age; we must also teach them, as they become older, to be inspired by – and be motivated to emulate – the right kind of role models or moral exemplars: in this case, people exhibiting the true character state of generosity. What, precisely, is that state and how do we best

go about the business of helping the young to actualize it? That is the question which occupies us in the remaining sections of this chapter.

For now, it helps perhaps to note that people can perform generous actions without really being generous. We do not want moral learners to emulate such persons. In order to bring the character state of generosity into sharper relief, it may be salutary at the outset to try to illuminate the imperfect character states in which those persons find themselves and to juxtapose them with the desired state – my strategy in the following sections. I begin in Section 9.2 by characterizing two types of persons who may seem to be generous but who do not really possess generosity as an Aristotelian *hexis*. I do so by dint of fictional characters from two well-known novels – Nick Hornby's (2001) *How to Be Good* and Albert Camus' (2000) *The Fall* – showing how the protagonists of both novels fall short of true generosity. In Section 9.3, I provide further consideration to Aristotle's specification of generosity and explore how Aristotle's generous person morally surpasses both previous character types, which I refer to as 'the do-gooder' and 'the vain'. Section 9.4 addresses didactic issues – how to teach generosity – by emphasizing the Aristotelian or quasi-Aristotelian method of 'service learning'. Finally, Section 9.5 presents some concluding remarks. Hopefully, as we gauge the issue of generosity, we can discover ways in which our children can learn to act so that they need not avoid their own children when they ask: 'What have *you* done?' In doing so, my discussion will reveal why *Assumption H* is wrong.

9.2 The Do-Gooder and the Vain

Both *How to Be Good* and *The Fall* are tales of moral development or, more specifically, of a moral conversion. Whether it is a question of moral progress or regress is a more moot point in each book.

How to Be Good tells the story of David, a married man with two children who, at the beginning of the story, is described by his wife as 'the definition of aggrieved. Permanently' (Hornby 2001: 3). That description is well deserved: David is a grumpy curmudgeon, an egotist whose attitude towards others is standoffish at best and disdainful at worst. Fittingly, he makes his living by writing a regular newspaper column entitled 'The Angriest Man in Holloway', in which he vents his anger on everyone and everything. After undergoing a marriage crisis, however, and meeting the ex-drug-snorting drifter turned spiritual healer, Dr Goodnews, who sucks all wrath out of him, David undergoes a conversion and becomes a newborn do-gooder. His wife realizes the change which has occurred when David suddenly decides to give eighty pounds to a homeless child standing in a doorway. That is only the beginning of a cascade of philanthropic gestures. He donates his son's computer (unbeknownst to the son) to a battered-women's shelter; gives the family's Sunday roast to the homeless; invites a runaway to stay in the guestroom; and tries, with little success, to persuade his neighbours to follow suit. 'We don't care enough,' David observes. 'We look after ourselves and ignore the weak and the poor. We despise our politicians for doing nothing, and think that this is somehow enough to show we care, and meanwhile we live in centrally heated houses that are too big for us'

(Hornby 2001: 79). For various reasons, most of David's efforts fail. His idealistic plans turn out to be disruptive rather than constructive; yet he continues to work with Dr Goodnews on a book on how to be good: 'It's about how we should all live our lives. You know, suggestions. Like taking in the homeless, and giving away your money, and what to do about things like property ownership and, I don't know, the Third World and so on' (Hornby 2001: 210).

Blazing with his new-found radicalism and quasi-religious fervour, David closes his eyes to the fact that his temerarious and intrusive activities, which alienate all those around him, simply end up as fool's errands. His well-meaning wife, who had originally chosen her profession as a GP because of her love for humankind, finds her moral ballast eroded; his children, who initially react positively to what they see as bouts of high-minded generosity, lose their orientation. His family has been devastated and all his big projects – undone by their grandness – come to naught. David has behaved like a Singerian utilitarian gone mad, and the results are predictable. 'How could I have forgotten,' his wife asks, 'that this is what always happens with zealots? They go too far, they lose all sense of appropriateness and logic' (Hornby 2001: 74). In the end, even David seems to realize that his behaviour has bordered on madness (Hornby 2001: 223), and his conversion is, at least partly, revoked.

David's predicament is not only *his* predicament, but the predicament of countless zealots who pitch their expectations too high and treat those around them, including their loved ones, merely as means to an end. The world is not a better place, for all their efforts; and their goals wind up as castles in the air. In sum, David is a typical do-gooder who, in vehemently avoiding one type of vice, falls into the opposite error. The do-gooder may seem to behave generously; but upon closer inspection, we realize that he does not possess the character state of generosity. First, his character trait is not in a medial state; rather, his generosity has reached such excesses that the remedy has become worse than the disease. He has no sense of proportion, no sense of human nature. By making unreasonable demands on those around him, he undermines and marginalizes his own projects, in the long run doing a disservice to the supposed beneficiaries of his generosity. Although he acts for the right reason – compassion for those in need – his actions are not really those of generosity but of over-generosity. Second, his actions flow from a protean rather than a stable state of character. Misanthropy, or at least complacency, suddenly turns into a flow of excessive philanthropy. Indeed, the do-gooder's misplaced generosity can only be understood against the backdrop of a previously settled disposition of emotional disengagement and callous negligence. When trying to straighten the bent wood, the corrective typically becomes an over-corrective, and the wood breaks. This is not the kind of 'generosity' that we want moral learners to emulate.

When we meet Jean-Baptiste Clamence, the protagonist of *The Fall*, he is operating as a 'judge-penitent' in a seedy Amsterdam bar, subjecting his carefully chosen victims to long, drawn-out soliloquies about his former life as a respected Paris lawyer and his eventual fall from idealistic but mistaken grace to sobering guilt. In Paris of old he was a noisy busy-body, defending the poor ('the widow and the orphan') in noble court cases and ostentatiously helping the blind to cross streets: 'My heart was on my sleeve. You really might have thought that justice slept with

me every night' (Camus 2000: 15). He was popular and famous for those gestures and took delight in his fame. His day was made by relinquishing his seat in the bus to old ladies or handing them objects they had dropped. He also 'gave a great deal in public and in private' and 'was considered generous' (Camus 2000: 18). Living in a self-construed fool's paradise of moral fecklessness and self-righteousness, his world begins to crumble one fateful November night, when he witnesses a woman committing suicide by throwing herself into the River Seine. He does not 'move an inch' while she drowns; with no audience, he is not impelled to act. He realizes that his ultimate motivation in life is not to *be* admirable, but only to *seem* admirable (Camus 2000: 52, 58). Guilt sets in.

From that day onward, Clamence becomes mistrustful of himself. He stands revealed before his own eyes as a hypocrite. He gives up his law profession and assumes his new vocation as an Amsterdam barfly. Obsessed with guilt, he indulges in 'public confessions as often as possible': 'I accuse myself up hill and down dale' (Camus 2000: 102). When he finds a listener, he navigates skilfully towards the topic of guilt: gradually and imperceptibly passing from 'his' guilt to 'their' guilt. Everybody is guilty; everybody is a hypocrite like he is and 'the more I accuse myself, the more I have a right to judge you' (Camus 2000: 103). Only in that way does he sense an easing of pain, a moral and psychological closure: closing the circle of his own guilt by encompassing others in it.

Christian interpreters are wont to read *The Fall* as a Christian allegory of sin (in this case, the deadly sin of pride), fall and ultimate redemption (see, for example, Quinn 1991). That reading does not sit well with the fact that both the author Camus and the protagonist Clamence are avowed atheists who take the Christian promise of redemption from sin as a prototypical example of shamming: of self-deceitful denial of guilt. Robert Solomon (2004) has recently suggested an original alternative interpretation, according to which Clamence is self-deceived about his own source of guilt: his later incarnation mistakenly visits blame on his earlier one who, in point of fact, led a perfectly virtuous life in the Aristotelian sense. Solomon views Clamence's years in Paris as a life of proper rather than improper pride, and the trajectory of his moral development as one from proper pride to improper resentment. Solomon asks us to recall the Aristotelian character ideal of the *megalopsychoi*, the great-minded persons who take natural pride in their accomplishments and gestures because they are morally entitled to do so, and bask in the honours bestowed upon them. These great-minded persons are truly admirable and they admire themselves for their admirability. We resent this picture because the Christian notion of the inevitable pathology of all pride has become second nature to us. If we reject that conception and return to an Aristotelian one, in which proper pride is accepted and hailed, however, we realize that whereas Clamence's accusations of duplicity leave his former incarnation untouched, they hit at the later Clamence. He has replaced proper pride with shame and shame with shamelessness, in which he wallows. Clamence in Paris was a genuinely virtuous man, but the resentful, recollecting Clamence in Amsterdam is cynical, hypocritical and cruel (Solomon 2004: 56–7).

However original Solomon's interpretation, it can, in my view, be faulted for seriously misconstruing Aristotle's notion of the true virtue of the *megalopsychoi*. To be sure, the *megalopsychoi* demand due recognition of their achievements from

others, but they do not perform their actions in order to receive such recognition. In fact, they are not overly concerned with external honours, thus distinguishing themselves from the vain honour lovers who consider themselves to be worthy of great things when they are not. The *megalopsychoi* are concerned only with honour awarded retrospectively to good people, and they are, by definition, modest about their achievements (Aristotle 1985: 97–104 [1123a34–1125a35]; cf. Kristjánsson 2002: Chs 3–4). Compare this character state to the descriptions of Clamence's earlier self, and the difference is striking. Clamence was obsessed with superiority; he did not feel comfortable 'except in lofty surroundings'; he needed to 'feel *above*' (Camus 2000: 19). His generosity was a means of 'being seen and hailed by the largest number' (Camus 2000: 21). He looked upon himself as 'something of a superman' (Camus 2000: 23). Whenever he left a blind man on the pavement to which he had convoyed him, he used to touch his hat to him. Obviously the hat-touching was not intended for the blind man, who could not see it. 'To whom was it addressed? To the public.' As Clamence subsequently admits to himself and his silent listener, he was 'bursting with vanity' (Camus 2000: 37).

I think we have good reason to take Clamence at his word, and to identify him as an example of Aristotle's 'vainglorious' persons rather than the '*megalopsychoi*'. Similar to the former but different from the latter, Clamence performed admirable actions not for their own sake, but merely in order to be admired for them – for the sake of hubris. Even after his conversion, Clamence continues to be in love with himself exclusively and to use others as means to his own end. He revels in his own 'charming repentance' (Camus 2000: 104); his guilt is counterfeit and hypocritical. He continues to hide his inner corruptions from himself and from the world. My interpretation of the moral development described in *The Fall* is thus one of a trajectory from vanity to pseudo-guilt.

Returning to the issue of generosity, which is the focus of this chapter, Clamence correctly describes his previous attitude towards it: my 'selfishness culminated in my generosities,' he says (Camus 2000: 63). He realizes that he was not being truly generous, even at the height of his seemingly generous activities; rather, he acted like many people who decide to 'do without generosity in order to practise charity' (Camus 2000: 84). What was missing? *Acting for the right reason*, of course. Clamence appeared to act generously, but he did not act from the reason a truly generous person would act, and thus failed to practise generosity. Just like the do-gooder, Clamence's disposition does not encompass the kind of 'generosity' we want moral learners to emulate.

9.3 Aristotelian Generosity

To this point, I have made lavish use of Aristotelian insights in order to brush aside putative examples of 'generous' persons as not really instantiating the true character state of generosity. What, then, does that state precisely involve?

Aristotle tells us that generosity is a state of character concerned with wealth ('wealth' meaning anything than can be measured by money) – both its giving and taking, but, more specifically, its giving. As with the other Aristotelian moral virtues,

generosity is medial state placed between two extremes – in this case, the states of 'wastefulness' (excess) and 'ungenerosity' (deficiency). Generous persons are good users of riches; they give the proper amounts to the right people, at the right time and for the right reason. In general, they aim at what is fine in giving, and they take pleasure in it, just as they take pleasure in other virtuous activities. However, they do not give *in order to* take pleasure in the giving or in being seen by others as being good givers, like the vainglorious Clamence did; their pleasure simply supervenes upon and completes the virtuous activity. Nor do they carelessly throw away their own possessions or overburden themselves and their families, like the do-gooder David did; for this would make them less able to continue giving in the future. Moreover, 'what is generous does not depend on the quantity of what is given, but on the state of the giver, and that kind of giving fits one's property. Hence one who gives less [than another] may still be more generous, if he has less to give' (Aristotle 1985: 85–8 [1119b20–1120b10]).

One of the two extremes of the character state of generosity – ungenerosity – is significantly worse than the other, for it is 'incurable' if allowed to take root in a person. This is because ungenerosity comes more naturally to people than wastefulness does and because old age tends to make people ungenerous. The only way to forestall ungenerosity, then, is to nip it in the bud in early childhood – never to allow its onset to succeed in the first place. People who are deficient in giving are called 'misers', 'tight-fisted' or 'skinflints'. Aristotle also wants to include in the category of the ungenerous a related character type – those who take money from the wrong sources – for they, too, are 'shameful lovers of gain'. Falling under that description are, for example, the pimp, the robber and the gambler (Aristotle 1985: 91–3 [1121b13–1122a17]).

Although wastefulness is also a vice with respect to generosity – namely the excess – it is 'quite a lot better' than ungenerosity, because it is easily cured by correct upbringing, or (if that fails) by old age and experiences of scarcity which most people go through at some time or another. Many wasteful persons (witness David) seem to be foolish rather than base in their characters. There is, however, a more sinister type of wastefulness abroad, combined with ungenerosity (in taking rather than giving) and intemperance. Such persons 'become acquisitive because they wish to spend, but cannot do this readily, since they soon exhaust all they have; hence they are compelled to provide from elsewhere'. These people are less easily cured than are those who are merely foolishly wasteful (Aristotle 1985: 90–91 [1121a10–1121b13]).

Aristotle discusses another related character state, magnificence – generosity on a large scale, involving 'heavy expenses' – with its own respective extremes of excess and deficiency. Aristotle points out that magnificence implies generosity, but not vice versa, for relatively poor persons can be generous and 'give to many a wanderer', but may be unable to hold lavish wedding banquets or donate substantial amounts of money to worthy causes. A deficiency of magnificence is called 'niggardliness' and an excess of magnificence is 'vulgarity' (Aristotle 1985: 93–7 [1122a17–1123b33]). Although interesting in itself, the distinction between generosity and magnificence probably has little relevance in today's life in the Western world. The majority of

Westerners have enough money to behave magnificently, not merely generously, when the occasion calls for it.

Perhaps enough has been said to establish the grounds for favouring Aristotle's character state of generosity over the states embodied in the persons illustrated in Section 9.2. Yet a few additional points may be noted.

First, Aristotle steers clear of the objection of self-centredness that has been levelled at contemporary virtue ethics (see Section 2.1). There is no hint in his exploration of generosity of the thesis that generosity is a virtue primarily because of its effect on the giver, with the effect on the beneficiaries reduced to a mere happy, coincidental side effect; rather, generosity is a virtue precisely because it is beneficial *to others* (Aristotle 1985: 87 [1120a22–3]). That it also helps the generous cultivate their own excellence is, if anything, the happy side effect. Those who are generous to a fault have little concern for their own interests and are liable to go over the top of the curve and slide down the slope of excess from time to time. Their giving is then so excessive that they leave less for themselves than they would have been entitled to morally, for 'it is proper to a generous person not to look out for himself' (Aristotle 1985: 88 [1120b4–6]). Thus it seems to lie in the nature of generosity to entail its own intermittent excess.

Second, the virtue of generosity is particularly germane to children and moral upbringing, for children – thinking as little as they do of money matters – naturally embrace generosity. They may even become pleasantly 'intoxicated' by it, easily falling prey to the excess of wastefulness. However, Aristotle does not consider that to be a serious problem, for the wasteful child already 'has the features proper to a generous person' and only needs to be guided, through proper habituation and other means, to give proportionally 'rightly and well' in order to acquire the true character state of generosity (Aristotle 1985: 90, 206 [1121a19–25; 1154b10–11]; cf. Aristotle 1991: 164–9 [1388b31–1390b10]). I would suggest that this ideal of a child's natural desire to give – out of pure compassion for those in straitened circumstances while taking proper pride and pleasure in the giving – honed to perfection through external guidance, is a worthy state to aim at in moral education.

9.4 Cultivating Generosity through Service Learning

Once the aim has been set, a variety of questions may arise about its attainability. How do we translate the child's natural generosity into proper action that may effect real change in the world? How can we in the West raise children whose generosity has become second nature and who will, for example, be ready to donate enough to prevent 33,000 other children from dying unnecessary deaths every day? How do we cultivate persons for whom to be or not to be generous is not a question – people with the mettle in their bosoms to match the tongues in their heads? As already noted, Aristotle specifically recommends moral habituation and the emulation of worthy role models. Those are not two distinct processes, as we have seen in previous chapters, but features of the same general process of moral sensitization, in which the virtues are first activated through habituation, then polished through comparisons with others and, finally, refined through critical assessment and reassessment once

the moral learner acquires practical wisdom (*phronesis*). At the beginning, learning by doing is the key feature: just as we learn a craft by mechanically imitating the production of the products that we must produce ourselves when we have learnt it, and just as we learn to be a harpist by playing the harp, so also do we become virtuous by performing virtuous actions. First we are told to do them; later we do them for their own sake (Aristotle 1985: 34 [1103a31–b1]).

The modern method of moral education which comes closest to Aristotle's description – and which, importantly for our present concerns, can be aimed at cultivating generosity – is that of *service learning*. Through service learning, the child is exposed to real-world experiences and instructed to act virtuously in the given circumstances. This is done in the hope that such virtuous actions will become ingrained parts of the child's character. Let us start with a real example from the City Montessori School in Lucknow, India, which has made education for morality the centrepiece of all its educational efforts (see Cottom 1996). Influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, the original founders of the school wanted it to exemplify the principles of unity of humankind and universal brotherhood. It is one of the world's largest schools, with 15 branches and pupils ranging in age from kindergarten to 12th grade. One of the school's building blocks is *service* (along with universal values, excellence and global understanding). The basic idea is that those building blocks must go beyond intellectual appreciation to volition and the desire for improvement. The school provides numerous opportunities for its pupils to engage in community service in nearby villages, where they help educate impoverished children and adults in basic hygiene, literacy and first aid. This is not done exclusively in the context of moral-education classes; rather, moral concerns and actions are woven into the larger fabric of learning and all the diverse disciplines. The achievements of this school have made headlines as an example of moral and educational efforts which seem to work. Yet few other educational institutions are evidently willing to emulate its radical agenda.

On a scale less radical and perhaps not as grand as that of the City Montessori School, service learning has been introduced into the curricula of various US schools in recent years as part of character education or citizenship education (for an enlightening overview, on which much of the following discussion draws, see Kahne and Westheimer 1996). The aim of such education is considered to be at least threefold: (1) positive moral and psychological effects on the students (cultivation of generosity and other virtues, increased self-esteem, use of multiple intelligences), (2) improved classroom atmosphere and educational achievements and (3) benefits for the surrounding community. Students have been mobilized to conduct various tasks in such service-learning projects as running errands for staff in health clinics, distributing survival kits to the homeless, collecting clothes to send to Africa and working a set number of hours in community-service activities before graduating from high school. Through these activities, students are supposed to develop a sense of altruism by realizing the joy of reaching out to others.

Despite considerable anecdotal evidence to indicate that service learning can bring about the desired results, it remains a non-mainstream method even within the context of character and citizenship education. Why is that so? There are three likely reasons. (1) The sobering, practical fact is that service learning requires much

more of the teacher's effort and organization than does the time-honoured method of reading a moral story in class and discussing its implications. (2) Doubts have been raised about the possibility that service learning achieves its transformative goals consistently enough for it to be considered a viable method of moral education. Stories have been told about students who return from service projects imbued not with a spirit of generosity and altruism, but with a condescending attitude of moral superiority, having looked upon the people they served as clients to be pitied rather than as resources from which to learn. If true, such outcomes should remind us of the point that successful habituation requires the presence of a tutor who helps moral learners to conceptualize their experiences correctly, from a moral point of view. A service-learning initiative involving the homeless, for instance, is probably a waste of time from the point of view of moral education unless it is accompanied by the students' critical reflection, guided by their teacher, on such issues as the plight of today's homeless and the growing economic disparity between the rich and the poor. Unfortunately, many service-learning activities in the USA seem to have a minimal reflective component.

(3) The most unfortunate reason for the relative absence of service learning from moral-education curricula is that this method has evidently acquired a bad name after being hijacked in the USA by neoconservatives (some of whom have, unfortunately, aligned themselves with the character-education movement). Those neocons have used service learning to speed up one of the most unsavoury features of their agenda, which denies a role for government in helping the underprivileged, via political duties, and makes it a matter of individual *noblesse oblige*: personal, supererogatory acts of kindness (see further in Kahne and Westheimer 1996). On that understanding, service learning promotes charity rather than social change, and contributes to the political status quo. I call this reason 'unfortunate' because Aristotle, the father of service learning, makes no such distinction between the personal and political: political action is considered to ensue naturally and seamlessly from personal virtues. For Aristotelians, generosity will be a public as well as a private virtue; acting shy of the misery of the poor in one's own country or the world as a whole is not something which a respectable government could ever do in the Aristotelian model. Moreover, it seems to me that those who want to confine the aim of service learning to personal acts of charity have become liable to Clamence's blame (in his later incarnation) on those who decide to 'do without generosity in order to practise charity' (Camus 2000: 84).

9.5 Generosity and Civility

Our duty to help the world's poor is not easily accommodated by traditional moral theories. However, for the purposes of moral education, nothing much may turn on this fact. I have suggested that the goal of moral education, at least during the earlier stages of the school system, is to help create persons who possess the general moral virtues rather than persons who can give pat answers to complicated dilemmas. One of those virtues – and arguably the one most relevant to the issue of world poverty alongside justice and compassion – is generosity. I have explored and raised the

cudgel for Aristotle's characterization of generosity and warned against perversions and misapplications of the virtue, as seen, for example, in the personas of the self-exalted Clamence and the delirious David.

One fundamental method of making young people generous – at least from the Aristotelian perspective adopted in this book – is to give them the opportunity to engage in generous activities. Service learning is an attempt to do just that; and we may confidently hope that if implemented correctly it can achieve positive results. Yet further dissemination of this method requires the severing of the link which, through an unfortunate historical accident, has been forged between service learning and a conservative agenda which reduces all acts of generosity towards strangers to acts of personal charity. Generosity needs to be established as a political ideal as well as a personal one. It serves us well to recall at the end of this chapter that the Greek term for being 'generous' (*eleutherios*) has a wider meaning: to be 'civilized', as opposed to being 'boorish' and 'slavish'. The virtue of generosity is best understood – as it seems to have been understood by Aristotle – as one of the virtues that comprise the general character state of civility. By being ungenerous we are being uncivil; and an education in civility can never be complete without a strong emphasis on generosity.

If this is not a clarion call to help those in dire straits, then what is? Aristotle tells us why it should be done and how to bring up agents who possess the character state conducive to such an endeavour.

Assumption H is wrong.

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Chapter 10

Aristotelian Agreeableness and Teaching

10.1 Manners versus Morals

Assumption I: 'Agreeableness is not a moral virtue in itself, as Aristotle would hold that it is. Its value – the value of teachers being friendly towards their students, for instance – can be reduced to established moral virtues or explained independently, using non-moral reasons.'

Is this assumption true?

During the recent renascence of Aristotelian and quasi-Aristotelian virtue ethics, lavish attention has been paid to many of the moral virtues of action and reaction that Aristotle delineates in his corpus. Not all the Aristotelian virtues have received the same consideration or the same good press, however. For example, his three civil virtues of friendliness, truthfulness and wit in social intercourse (Aristotle 1985: 107–14 [1126b11–1128b9]) tend to be absent from philosophical agendas. Aristotle considers those virtues to be intimately connected and characteristic of the same kind of person. It resonates well with the spirit, therefore, if not fully the letter of Aristotle's account, to refer to them collectively as a single virtue: the virtue of agreeableness in social intercourse (hereafter, simply *agreeableness*). I am not the first to do so; Nussbaum also lumps the three together as belonging to the same sphere of human experience (1993: 246).

The aim of this chapter is to wrench from Aristotle's account a specification of agreeableness, to spell out some of its contours and to subvert the point of *Assumption I* by offering a defence of agreeableness as a moral virtue. I begin, in the following section, with a review of Aristotelian agreeableness, which provides the springboard for the subsequent discussion. I also add a few relatively straightforward comments about how it could be defended as a moral virtue from the Aristotelian perspective adopted. But first I must ask why agreeableness as a virtue or as a set of virtues has met with such stony silence in philosophical circles. The reason is simple enough. Agreeableness is thought to be a matter of etiquette or manners rather than morals; and a common rallying cry of modern moral inquiries is precisely that 'manners are not morals'. Manners are, according to the received philosophical wisdom, at best a handmaid of morality that can, by no means, be allowed to give herself the airs of a mistress. This is not merely an academic assumption; the general public in the Western world seems to scoff increasingly at manners, thinking them a poor cousin of morality (see, for example, Martin and Stent 1990). In our cynical and fractured times, in fact, the very words 'manners' or 'etiquette' typically conjure up an air of the sanctimonious, the bigoted, the hidebound, the myopic: of morally irrelevant rules that have congealed into banal formalities. Whenever there is a conflict between such rules and the strict, well-grounded directives of morality proper, etiquette rightly and

understandably loses. Moral theorists often go further than considering manners a quaint, dispensable frill. Many regard them as a noxious historical residue from an era of class-based customs in which people from the higher echelons of society used complicated courtesy codes as instruments of marginalization and oppression which assign women, the poor, the young and other under-privileged groups to lower social stations. In fact, the stubborn insistence of some business schools, military academies and the contemporary character-education movement in moral education to retain 'politeness', 'refinement of manners' and 'decorum of behaviour' on their agendas is commonly taken as an indication of the lack of philosophical sophistication of those agendas and values.

In order to secure a place for agreeableness as a true moral virtue, this received wisdom must be challenged. One might, in the first instance, be considered well aided in that endeavour by the efforts of a number of philosophers who have recently assumed the task of recasting and reconceiving the role that manners play in a flourishing human life and of questioning the strict distinction between manners and morals. In retrieving the philosophical mileage of manners, those philosophers have adopted one of two strategies which I refer to below as the *reductionist thesis* and the *independent-value thesis*. According to the reductionist thesis, manners (or, more precisely, what is morally significant in manners) can be reduced to established moral virtues. According to the independent-value thesis, manner-based values form an independent value category with an important, albeit not moral, role to play in human life. In Section 10.3, I argue, however, that neither of those two strategies can make sense of the value of agreeableness, and that both fall short, for different reasons, of the 'relatively straightforward' Aristotelian justification of agreeableness broached in Section 10.2. In Section 10.4, I discuss and rebut various objections that might be pressed against the proposed Aristotelian account of agreeableness as a virtue, and finally, in Section 10.5, I conclude with an illustrative practical example of an area in which agreeableness as a moral concern is particularly salient: the school as the site of profound and sensitive teacher-student interactions.

10.2 An Aristotelian Notion of Agreeableness

Like other Aristotelian virtues, agreeableness is a medial state of character flanked by the extremes of deficiency and excess. Although Aristotle's discussion is divided into three parts – as if he is exploring three independent medial states in life, in which each has its own specific set of characteristics and specific extreme conditions – he notes that all three relate to the same sphere of human interaction. All are 'concerned with associations in certain conversations and actions' when 'we meet people'. Two of those medial states have no fixed name (in Greek), he says, but all are concerned with what is pleasant in, or with truthfulness in, such interactions. Truthfulness must be understood here in a restrictive sense, because civil truthfulness is not about telling the truth *per se*, which comes within the province of another virtue. Rather truthfulness, here, refers to telling the truth about oneself when one engages in casual conversations. This medial state is therefore 'also concerned with practically the same [conditions of social life]' as the other two that relate more directly to

social amusements. The extent to which those three Aristotelian virtues belong to the same sphere of human life and resemble one another makes them easily amenable to my strategy of presenting them as manifestations of a single underlying virtue: agreeableness. In any case, the descriptions of the mean and the extreme states of agreeableness in the following are distilled from Aristotle's respective accounts of friendliness, truthfulness and wit (Aristotle 1985: 107–14 [1126b11–1128b9]).

First consider some of the characteristics of agreeable people – people who have attained the praiseworthy golden mean of this virtue. Generally, one could say, such 'intermediate persons' accept and object to things in dealing with their fellow citizens 'when it is right and in the right way'. Agreeable people are friendly; their friendliness differs from friendship only to the extent that the affection inherent in friendship is missing; thus agreeableness is exhibited towards casual acquaintances rather than towards friends. Indeed, agreeableness does not seem to be connected to any particular emotion or emotions: a rarity in the Aristotelian characterizations of moral virtues (see Fortenbaugh 2002: 87–92). In the business of everyday life, when we need to engage in various encounters and transactions with people from all walks of life, agreeable people aim to 'share pleasure' or 'avoid causing pain'. They are straightforward about their own accomplishments and acknowledge their qualities 'without belittling or exaggerating'. The echo here is from Aristotle's description of the truly virtuous persons, the *megalopsychoi*, who are neither arrogant and vain nor pusillanimous and humble; rather they are proudly modest about their own achievements (Aristotle 1985: 97–104 [1123a34–1125a36]). The medial state is, nevertheless, closer to deficiency than to excess, for agreeable persons are decently modest in their inclination to 'tell less, rather than more, than the truth' about themselves. They are socially agile or dexterous in knowing when a joke or a pun is called for – and responding appropriately to those made by others – depending upon the company they are keeping. Agreeable people thus 'joke in appropriate ways' and are called witty. The witty are not unduly eager to raise a laugh, for they are self-censored enough to say that and only that which 'suits the decent and civilised person'.

Excessive agreeableness constitutes, like the excess of any other virtue, a blameworthy character state: a vice. Excessively agreeable people are best described as 'ingratiating': 'these are the ones who praise everything to please us and never cross us, but think they must cause no pain to those they meet'. If they behave in this way with an ulterior motive in mind, they are 'flatterers'; otherwise they are 'pointlessly foolish rather than bad'. When the ingratiating talk about themselves, they have a tendency to boast: to claim qualities that win themselves a positive reputation, even though they lack those qualities altogether or have less of them than they claim. They are willing to do almost anything to keep the table laughing and thus resemble 'vulgar buffoons', as they are prone to cracking jokes that sophisticated persons would never make or want to hear.

Deficient agreeableness comprises the other and more serious blameworthy extreme. In sharp contrast to the ingratiating, people who 'oppose us on every point and do not care the least about causing pain are called cantankerous and quarrelsome'. Regarding truthfulness about themselves, those people normally have little self-esteem and tend to deny or belittle their actual qualities. They are socially awkward

in that they never saying anything to raise a laugh and thus 'seem to be boorish and stiff'. Such boors are positively 'useless' when they meet other people, for they contribute nothing themselves and object to everything, 'even though relaxation and amusement seem to be necessary' in the encounters of everyday life.

Aristotle offers no moral justification of agreeableness, in particular. Such a justification can, however, be readily teased out of his general justification of the moral virtues, coupled with his account of the three essentially interrelated virtues of agreeableness. Recall that although the Aristotelian criterion of attained virtue is not enjoyment *per se*, but enjoyment of the things that we ought to enjoy, Aristotle acknowledges the value of simple pleasures and amusements in life. For one thing, agreeableness directly inspires such pleasures; we feel a warm glow of 'relaxation and amusement' stemming from it. Furthermore, agreeableness signals willingness to participate with others in co-operative social practices: to be part of a well-functioning group. In general, agreeableness makes life easier; it is a facilitator of various positive human attributes or qualities. In contrast, disagreeable persons make either too little or too much effort to please. By being boorish or sulky or plain obnoxious, they undermine social practices and make life more difficult for everyone around them. Consider, for example, how much school work could be enhanced if teachers and students worked towards the common goal of learning in a spirit of mutual agreeableness instead of the culture of mutual annoyance and poor discipline that often prevails. Agreeableness is like a social glue that binds relationships and communities. By exuding likeability, positivity and good manners, the agreeable person strengthens that glue, and thus contributes to human *eudaimonia*, while the disagreeable (in particular the 'cantankerous and quarrelsome') person dilutes and destroys it.

Although such an Aristotelian justification of agreeableness does not, by itself, bestow a benediction upon every quirk of etiquette, it is clear that if agreeableness matters morally, then manners matter. One of the reasons why agreeable persons are so easy to get along with – so 'connected', so 'nice' – is that they follow socially accepted norms and practices. They avoid being rude or hurtful, and they do so by not rocking the boat. Agreeableness therefore involves more than a modicum of conformism: acceptance of conventional social mores. It is at this point that many philosophers would want to dig in their heels, and I address some of their potential complaints in Section 10.4. However, first it is in order to explore justifications of agreeability and good manners other than the simple Aristotelian one outlined above.

10.3 Two Potential Face-Savers and Why They Fail

Aristotle talks explicitly about the moral value of agreeableness and good manners in connection with amusement, relaxation and social convenience. Many philosophers would complain that such dallying with demeanour and niceties lacks any real moral ballast. Although the belief that good manners are morally insignificant in the end still commends considerable assent, some writers have recently aired views that sound a healthy counterpoint. Notably, however, those unorthodox views follow

different paths than Aristotle's simple defence does. I refer to these potential face-savers of good manners as the *reductionist thesis* and the *independent-value thesis*, and argue that both are inferior to Aristotle's defence: that any victories gained by pursuing them are, in fact, pyrrhic victories, as they reinforce rather than obliterate – either explicitly or implicitly – the distinction between manners and morals.

The *reductionist thesis* holds that the value of good manners can be reduced to that of established moral virtues. Good manners have no independent moral value, therefore; their moral value is limited to the extent to which they instantiate 'real' virtues. Now, to begin with a couple of caveats, no one will deny that there is a contingent connection between good manners and (other) moral virtues. From a developmental perspective, the inculcation of manners obviously predates the teaching of moral concepts. For example, we say to toddlers, 'You don't want that nasty dirty thing' long before we teach them the value of temperance. It is not as if one learnt first to eat in accordance with the virtue of temperance and respect for one's physical health, and then, subsequently, to eat in ways that are not disgusting to one's society. Rather, good table manners developmentally precede and inspire morals (see Hursthouse 1988: 213–14). Another way in which manners build or lead to morals is through the oblique, almost coincidental, infusion of a social custom with moral significance. For example, there is nothing morally significant *per se* about the side of the road on which one drives. Nevertheless, once a society has decided, through its customs and laws, to favour one side, it becomes morally significant (dangerous for people) to defy that preference (cf., in a different context, Corvino 2005: 530).

The *reductionist thesis*, while incorporating those insights, goes far beyond them in claiming that the *only* moral value that can be ascribed to manners lies in their instantiation of virtues that are extrinsic to the manners. Sarah Buss (1999) is a noteworthy exponent of this thesis. In an intriguing essay, which proceeds by suggestive and often astute forays into the many issues nesting around the notion of good manners, Buss decides to concentrate on a prototypical example of good manners – courtesy – arguing that discourteous persons behave in a way that is immoral as well as simply impolite. She claims that one of the primary objectives of good manners, such as courtesy, is to make oneself agreeable to others, a claim which makes it salutary to speak of her thesis in the same breath as the Aristotelian one of agreeableness.

Buss consents to the Aristotelian point that a system of manners plays an important role in our moral life. She refuses, however, to consider a manner-dependent virtue, such as courtesy, to have value as an independent moral virtue. An act of courtesy may be intrinsically agreeable to others, which is a good thing, but it is not a virtue simply by virtue of that fact. Rather, it is a virtue through the implicit acknowledgement that the person to whom we extend the courtesy deserves to be treated with *respect*: 'Not only are good manners essential to treating people with respect, but this is the essential point of good manners' (Buss 1999: 805). Conversely, to acknowledge the intrinsic value of people – to treat them with respect – requires that we treat them politely. Being discourteous is being disrespectful, and being disrespectful is a vice.

To put it simply, the value of courtesy can be reduced to the value of respect; and respect is an acknowledged moral virtue. It is this conception that Buss offers as the fulcrum with which the common philosophical underestimation of the moral value of good manners can be overturned. Now no one will deny that there are numerous occasions in which (1) being disrespectful and (2) being discourteous or otherwise disagreeable go hand in hand. In fact, this is probably most often the case. Buss, however, is making the stronger claim that discourteousness and disagreeableness can be reduced to disrespect, and that claim invites immediate counter-examples.

Consider, first, a boorish teacher T_1. T_1 knows her subject well and commands an array of formal teaching methods to facilitate student learning. However, T_1 tends to be unapproachable. She has no sense of humour, is always curt and stiff with her students, and, when she is in a bad mood, can even be rude. Yet she is equitable; she does not discriminate among them, and even when she appears rude, appears equally rude to all. She is genuinely concerned that the students learn what she is teaching, and is relatively successful in achieving that goal. Students leave her class well prepared for further studies. Nevertheless, her students do not really like her and would all prefer to have a friendlier teacher. T_1 is neither agreeable in general nor courteous in particular. Yet it would seem unreasonable to maintain that she, by definition, disrespects her students. She may actually respect them (and they do not feel 'dissed', as they might put it), although she is socially awkward in various ways and lacks an important moral virtue – the Aristotelian virtue of agreeableness. Someone might retort to this by saying that although T_1 is not intentionally disrespectful, she is being unintentionally so. To be sure, people can be unintentionally disrespectful through negligence of some considerations which other people find particularly meaningful. For example, people might be negligently disrespectful of the mourners at a funeral by appearing in inappropriate clothing, even if it was not their intention to hurt anyone. However, there is a distinction to be drawn between unintentional disrespect and simple disagreeableness, and the latter seems to be a better description of T_1. This is, arguably, not a merely pedantic distinction, for if it is ignored, the notion of disrespect becomes bloated beyond good sense: every disagreeable act or gesture becomes an automatic sign of disrespect, which is hardly a helpful restriction of moral language.

Consider the mellow teacher T_2. She does not know her subject well and her didactics leave something to be desired. Her lack of knowledge requires that she steer clear of questions that might embarrass her, so she carefully skims the surface of the subject matter and often diverts the discussion to school gossip and other irrelevant things. Her students do not leave her class well prepared for further studies in her subject. Nevertheless, T_2 projects the image of a kindly, polite and caring person. She frequently smiles at her students and is sensitive to their feelings: She aims to 'avoid pain' and to 'share their pleasures' (to cite Aristotle's description of agreeableness), without appearing ingratiating. She is, all in all, an agreeable, friendly person. Yet she disrespects her students *qua* learners. She does not stretch them or elicit the best in them. Just as T_1 was disagreeable without being disrespectful, T_2 is disrespectful without being disagreeable. Such counter-examples do not augur well for Buss' courtesy-as-respect thesis.

Michael J. Meyer (2000) presents an alternative version of the reductionist thesis, presenting the notion of good manners primarily in terms of *civility*. In distinguishing between social (liberal) civility and the civility of etiquette, he acknowledges the more personal and subtle nature of etiquette, but contends that the virtue of liberal civility provides at least a sketch for a portrait of an ideal close-knit community, such as the family, and he therefore focuses attention there. Meyer takes unambiguous exception to the 'facile view' that civility can be fully understood in terms of the non-moral dimensions of etiquette. Rather, being civil and socially agreeable is a moral virtue that is, in Meyer's view, intimately associated with the practice of reasonable public discourse – indeed 'a constitutive component' of such discourse. Liberal civility involves a disposition to promote a level of shared understanding about basic societal arrangements, and a disposition to do so through tolerance and mutual compromise.

When Meyer fleshes out his view that liberal civility embodies important core practices of shared citizenship, his list of practices reads like the catalogue of topics to be taught in a citizenship-education class. There is nothing objectionable about championing such practices. What is at fault, however, is Meyer's rendering of them as subsets of a single class of actions, the opposite of which is 'rudeness' (Meyer 2000: 77) – making rudeness a distended term, to say the least. What Meyer fails to grasp is that the opposite of tolerance is intolerance; the opposite of a will to compromise is lack of a will to compromise, and so forth. The meaning of rudeness is lost when it is conceptualized as the opposite of all civic virtues. Thus Meyer's reduction of the moral value of good manners to the value of established civic virtues seems, like Buss', to be off the mark. Yet that does not alter the fact that people who are intolerant and unwilling to compromise are often (perhaps most often) disagreeable and rude as well.

Cheshire Calhoun (2000) offers a more subtle account than Meyer's of the relationship between civility and compliance with good manners. She realizes that nothing is gained for conceptual clarity and much is lost by making the label of 'incivility' applicable to virtually any example of moral or mannerly misbehaviour, or by claiming that civility is *nothing but* a matter of being respectful, considerate and tolerant. Rather, Calhoun contends, civility must be understood as a distinct virtue. That may sound distinctively Aristotelian. Unfortunately, however, instead of the reductionism that she renounces, Calhoun proposes another kind of 'nothing-buttery': civility is nothing but the virtue of communicating (rather than merely possessing) the basic moral attitudes of respect, tolerance and considerateness.

Calhoun's distinction – the distinction between simply *treating* people with respect or tolerance, on the one hand, and *communicating* such moral attitudes, on the other – is not a negligible one. She notes that not every case of treating people respectfully involves communicative interaction. As true as that statement is, it does not really bolster her case for incivility as a communicative failure, for in many such cases communication is neither possible nor required. Furthermore, she claims that it is possible to be uncivil while treating a person respectfully to a certain extent. Consider the example of a university admission officer who carefully follows affirmative action guidelines, but who tells the new students: 'You got in only because you are black.' Calhoun considers such an individual to be uncivil, yet,

at the same time, respectful ('although not fully so'), because the equal-opportunity policy is being followed and the officer does not insult the students with damaging jokes (Calhoun 2000: 261). Notice Calhoun's own reservation, however: 'although not fully so'. Is that not the important observation about this example: the admission officer is not being fully respectful – or he is only respecting the rule, not the person? Perhaps we need a special term to describe that particular kind of disrespect, but Calhoun gives us no good reason to suppose that incivility is the most felicitous term for the purpose, nor – more importantly for our present purposes – that every morally significant violation of good manners can be described as incivility (in her sense of the term).

By reducing the morally salient aspect of agreeableness or civility to that of other moral virtues (or to a communicative display of such virtues), the reductionist thesis becomes liable to perversion into the very vice it was created to resist: the 'manners-are-not-morals' fiction. The reason is this: we notice that the reduction fails to capture various morally significant cases of disagreeableness, such as the behavioural style of our teacher T_1, and thus obscures rather than illuminates the distinction between the moral and the non-moral in manners. Precisely because of that, the goal of accommodating the moral element in manners within the realm of moral virtue becomes even less attainable than before the reduction.

The other main strategy in saving the face of manners is to argue that they have an independent non-moral worth which often equals or surpasses the worth of moral virtues. Let us refer to this as the *independent-value thesis*. Judith Martin (a.k.a. the well-known columnist 'Miss Manners') utilizes this strategy (Martin 1993). Her contention is that the decline of etiquette is one of the most serious social problems of our times. This assertion is based on her observation that compliance with etiquette, far from being a weak and optional virtue, is the oldest social virtue and an indispensable partner of morality. In Martin's view, morals and manners are complementary, sometimes overlapping, social values, and if they come into conflict, giving precedence to manners may be the more virtuous choice.

When one examines the examples she takes of such putative conflicts, however, one realizes that she has a rather restrictive conception of what constitutes moral virtue. For instance, when someone tells us some painful truth about us which we have no desire or need of knowing, Martin considers that situation an indubitable case of the employment of the virtue of honesty, which can only be trumped by the dictates of good manners. Or if a stranger offers unsolicited advice about our health in a restaurant, she classifies that as an instantiation of the virtue of benevolence, albeit eclipsed and proscribed by proper etiquette. Martin does not consider the possibility that the examples she gives might not be classifiable as cases of the moral virtues she suggests, or that those virtues would, on such occasions, be overridden by *other* moral virtues. Indeed, she does not consider the possibility of moral dilemmas, or of the need for perceptual awareness – the sensitive appreciation of the uniqueness of each particular situation – which must (according to Aristotle at least) be applied before we can say that a moral virtue is truly being instantiated in a given situation. Rather, Martin thinks of moral virtues as Platonic patterns in Heaven into the grids of which each given action unproblematically fits or does not fit. Most of Martin's readers will realize intuitively that there is something *morally* amiss with the two

paternalistic interventions she describes as displays of moral virtues. She, therefore, acquires her conclusions on the cheap, so to speak, by obliquely helping herself to the benefits of considerations that she discounts as possibly stemming from moral virtues, and by disguising those considerations as non-moral values.

One way to establish the independent-value thesis is to valorize good manners as non-moral values and promote them to the level of moral virtues: Martin's strategy. Christopher Morris takes another tack – to relegate moral virtues to the level of good manners (Morris 2000). Morris compares manners with morals and law, and claims that behind each of the three lies an understanding that their respective norms are authoritative; that they constitute pre-emptive reasons to act or to refrain from acting, to adopt certain attitudes, to assign responsibility and the like to everyone to whom they apply. Morris quickly admits that this understanding is mistaken in the case of manners; their authority is not that sweeping. His subsequent manoeuvre, then, is to show that the same applies to law and morality. Most importantly, what he calls 'common morality' allegedly fails to live up to its self-image, and we should be content with a more modest picture of it, given how artificial are some of its norms, how full of inconsistencies, errors and dilemmas. The pretensions of common morality are as bold as those of manners, but, according to Morris, its failures to live up to them are equally bold.

Morris implicitly adopts a version of moral particularism to undermine the authority of morals and bring it down to the level of manners. This may work in the case of 'common morality'. However, Morris has not shown that his charge sticks in the case of comprehensive moral theories. Consider for instance the moral generalism underlying Aristotle's theory of *eudaimonia* as the ultimate human end to which all the moral virtues contribute. Although Morris' error theory hits at common morality, it leaves the potential authority of such a comprehensive moral theory untouched.

Like Martin and Morris, Aristotle obviously upholds a theory of the independent value of manners. However, his theory is of the independent *moral* value of manners in so far as they underlie agreeableness as a moral virtue: a virtue which contributes to *eudaimonia* through what we might call its 'companionable qualities' (to borrow a Humean phrase). By refusing to rally to Aristotle's account, the writers that I have discussed in the present section have arguably failed, for a variety of reasons, to make full sense of what it is about manners that makes them virtuous.

10.4 Objections and Rejoinders

In this section, I explore briefly some objections that a possible interlocutor might want to lodge against the Aristotelian account of agreeableness as an independent moral virtue. I present them in what I take to be a reverse order of weightiness – and try to parry each one as concisely as possible.

The Non-Responsibility Objection

'People are responsible for their vices; they are, however, not responsible for various emotional and personality-derived characteristics that might make them disagreeable to others (such as being boorish or lacking in wit).'

The first and most obvious thing to say about this objection is that it is completely un-Aristotelian. As I explained in Chapter 2, Aristotle implicates emotional qualities in the specifications of most of his proposed virtues and vices, and he argues that we are 'in a way jointly responsible' for all our states of character, having been able, at some point in our developmental process, to choose what kind of persons we became (Aristotle 1985: 70 [1114b21–25]). In order to avoid question-begging, one needs to add that this is not merely Aristotle's position on responsibility; this is also the view of the reigning cognitive model of emotions (see, for example, Oakley 1992). The non-responsibility objection should give us little reason to pause.

The Triviality Objection

'Compared to the established moral virtues, agreeableness is too trivial to pass muster as such a virtue.'

The most convenient way of countering this objection would be to bite the bullet and accept the value of agreeableness as trivial compared to the standard virtues. That would not mean, however, that it could not count as a virtue. More precisely, the fact that agreeableness will often be trumped by other moral values does not undermine its standing as a moral virtue. Agreeableness is, after all, not the virtue of being agreeable under all circumstances, for the virtuous person 'will be guided by consequences – i.e. by what is fine and what is expedient – if they are greater [than the benefits of sharing pleasure or avoid causing pain]' (Aristotle 1985: 109 [1114b2–7]).

Another way of countering the triviality objection would be to refuse to bite the bullet and point out, instead, that whereas agreeableness may possess less moral depth than most of the other virtues, it has greater breadth or scope than most of them, for a greater number of actual circumstances exist which require its application. Although our virtues of bravery and magnificence (grand-scale generosity) may have few opportunities to be truly tested, for instance, agreeableness is tested in almost every casual encounter at school, in the office or at the local grocery store.

The No-Harm Objection

'Vice harms other people. Disagreeableness may affect others negatively but does not really harm them. Therefore, disagreeableness is not a true vice (and, conversely, agreeableness not a virtue).'

This objection is likely to draw on a distinction commonly ascribed to John Stuart Mill – a distinction between merely 'affecting others' and 'affecting the interests of others' (positively harming them) – a distinction undergirding his famous Principle of Liberty (see, in particular, Rees 1960). Others have argued that this would be a tenuous, if not an untenable, distinction to make for a devout utilitarian

who regards 'utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions' (Mill 1972: 74), and for whom all pain and absence of pleasure matters morally. This is a tangled topic which I shall skip here except in so far as it relates to the objection in question. Ted Honderich (1974) suggests an interpretation of Mill which seems to do justice both to his distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding actions and to his contention that the Principle of Liberty is subordinate to the Principle of Utility. Honderich argues that, in Mill's view, actions that may be classified as exclusively self-regarding are actions that do not violate what *ought to be* the interests of others, and 'what ought to be the interests of others' is specified in accordance with the Principle of Utility. On this interpretation, Mill is not cordoning off in advance an area of actions that cannot possibly harm others, as every 'mischief which a person does to himself may seriously affect, both through their sympathies and interests, those nearly connected with him and, in a minor degree, society at large' (Mill 1972: 137). He is simply arguing, on empirical grounds, that there is a class of actions whose harmful effects upon the interests of others are always, in fact, outweighed by the harm caused by prohibiting the actions. Whereas the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding actions is irrelevant to our present concerns, the general point of Honderich's argument is highly relevant to it, as it strips the non-harm objection of its alleged founding father. Parenthetically, Mill did not even consider all breaches of agreeableness to fall within the zone of empirically outweighed harm – of actions which should not be legally interdicted – for he considered violations of good manners, if done publicly (*qua* 'offences against decency'), to come within the category of offences that harmed the interests of others to a degree sufficient to warrant prohibition (Mill 1972: 153). Notably, on the matter of indecency, especially towards children, Aristotle had equally strong feelings: there is 'nothing which the legislator should be more careful to drive away than indecency of speech; for the light utterance of shameful words leads soon to shameful actions' (Aristotle 1941a: 1304 [1336b2–7]).

The Nonconformist Objection

'Moral reasons override other reasons. However, reasons to be agreeable are often overridden by aesthetic or prudential reasons for sticking out one's neck and challenging accepted customs. Therefore, agreeableness cannot be a moral virtue.'

The easiest way to meet this objection would be to reject the assumption of the 'overridingness' of moral reasons: agreeableness could be a moral virtue even though its injunctions could, in some instances, be overridden by non-moral reasons. Rather than grasping the nettle in that way, however, I argue that the most plausible and historically famous calls for nonconformity to custom have, in fact, been driven by moral concerns, which are thought to trump the moral concerns implicit in custom and 'good manners'. It does well to start here again with a nod to Mill. Independent of his call for individual freedom, Mill also champions nonconformity and idiosyncrasy: 'peculiarity of taste, eccentricity of conduct' (Mill 1972: 119). However, we need not study Mill long to realise that he is not advocating nonconformity for nonconformity's sake, nor for the sake of the merely aesthetic or prudential. What he warns against, incidentally, is not the 'intelligent following' of custom, but rather the 'mechanical

adhesion to it' (Mill 1972: 117). It is precisely because the tyranny of the majority in modern societies makes eccentricity a reproach that 'it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric' (Mill 1972: 124–5). And why should it be desirable to break through that tyranny? It is because 'nonconforming opinion' is required for questions of truth to be 'vigorously and earnestly contested'; and truth is one of the prerequisites of human well-being. Conformity in opinions, feelings and customs is bad because of the 'baneful consequences to the intellectual, and through that to the moral nature of man' (Mill 1972: 105, 112, 114). If there is a duty, in Mill, to appear disagreeable to others at times, it is a *moral* duty *qua* antidote to intellectual intoxication and stagnation. An interesting corollary of Mill's duty to nonconformity is the duty not to take offence at those who do so, or at those who like to challenge us, make fun of us or scold us: 'It would be well, indeed, if this good office [of warning us of our improprieties] were much more freely rendered than the common notions of politeness at present permit', instead of being considered 'unmannerly and presuming' – a lesson which sounds even more topical in our age of political correctness than it did in Mill's time (Mill 1972: 134; cf. Barrows 2005). Recall that it was also part of the Aristotelian virtue of agreeableness to have the necessary wit not to take undue umbrage when others are making jokes at our expense.

One of the most renowned groups of people which deliberately set out to shock and scandalize polite society was the avant-garde modernist artists of the early twentieth century. The aim of these artists was to break existing rules and create a crisis for the viewer, in order to usher in the new. Much of their art was experienced as genuinely disagreeable by fellow artists and the general public alike. It would constitute a grave misunderstanding, however, to consider their work to be an historical example of aesthetic reasons overriding moral ones. Nothing was further from the minds of the Surrealists, for instance, than prioritizing the aesthetic. Their concern was primarily a moral one. Fettered by a false dualist philosophy, which divides the terrain of our possible experiences into the real and the unreal, suggests André Breton, the self-proclaimed 'high priest' of Surrealism, we have lost our ability to venture into the realm of 'the marvelous' – a realm that comes to light in subconscious processes, dreams, obsessions and hallucinations. The aim of what Breton termed the 'complete nonconformism' of Surrealism was to release us from those self-imposed chains through the liberation of our minds (Breton 1969: 47). And liberation from alienation is a moral goal, not merely an aesthetic one: namely, the reintegration of a lost Paradise from which we have gone astray (Breton 1969: 40; see further in Tsai 1997). Even the Dadaists such as Duchamp, whose *Fountain* (1917) remains the true icon of shocking art, had a motive far superior to that of simply juxtaposing low and high art in order to deconstruct the latter; these artists wanted to convince the public that life was a disgusting riddle with no solution (see, for example, Ades 1978). In so far as the promotion of nihilism is a moral goal, Dadism was, no less than other modernist ideologies, a moralistic movement. This explains why contemporary postmodern art has lost its shock value, along with the demise of all the manifestoes and the grand theories. It is not because of the gradual mainstream absorption of counterculture, and not even because artists have run out of ways to ratchet up the shock value in order to maintain the level of

shock; it is because the postmodern rejection of a genuine human self, a self that is temporarily alienated and stands in need of liberation, has divested the postmodern art movement of a moral goal. When postmodern artists try to shock, they are simply being disagreeable, which is why the postmodern art project, as many critics have realized, has long been going nowhere fast.

These observations do not fully rebut the nonconformist objection. However, they do detract considerably from its persuasiveness, by showing that some of the most initially plausible examples of the value of agreeableness being overridden by non-moral considerations do not, in fact, hold water. This makes the nonconformist objection liable to collapse into the triviality objection (that agreeableness is trivial compared to *other moral* values) to which I responded above.

The Relativist Objection

'Codes of agreeableness and good manners are highly local and vary from time to time, place to place. The same does not apply to the moral virtues. Therefore, agreeableness is not a moral virtue.'

Notably, this objection will not bother moral relativists who have no more reason to baulk at the relativity of agreeableness than at the (alleged) relativity of all moral values. However, the objection will hit at moral objectivists, particularly moral naturalists such as Aristotelians or utilitarians, who like to uphold agreeableness as a moral virtue. Their most reasonable response would be this: it is true that what counts as agreeable in one culture or sub-culture does not necessarily count as agreeable in another. Cultural relativists may exaggerate those differences somewhat – some acts of indecency towards children seem, for instance, to be constant across cultures – but that does not change the fact that agreeableness allows for more cross-cultural latitude in its manifestations than do many standard moral virtues such as bravery or general truthfulness. Nevertheless, there has probably never been a culture where being agreeable in accordance with the local norms was not considered to be morally valuable. Moreover, some established moral virtues, such as generosity and respect, also call for considerably varying expressions in different cultures. Being generous in entertaining friends or being respectful towards one's teacher does mean the same in Place *A* and Place *B*; yet few will doubt that generosity and respect are moral virtues, and the same should apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to agreeableness.

This relatively simple response may, however, dodge an important consideration fuelling the relativist objection. The complaint may not really be about relativity *per se*, but rather about the different formation of and motivation behind agreeableness on the one hand and true moral virtues on the other. The objection could then be reformulated as such: agreeableness and related values are socially relative in the sense of being necessarily socially embedded and heteronomously formed and sustained. People internalize codes of agreeableness through their cultural upbringing; they are guided by the external will of moral educators and the norms of social conventions. They learn to become concerned not only with *being* agreeable but, more importantly, with *appearing* agreeable to others. Their motivation rests on the fear of being ridiculed or shunned by others – on fear of *shame*. By contrast, true moral virtues rest on self-imposed laws that moral agents have set themselves under

the aegis of their own reason. Such virtues are autonomously formed and sustained. The motivation behind them lies in the fear of *guilt* – of the moral agents having failed themselves rather than having failed others.

The relativist objection formulated in those Kantian or quasi-Kantian terms is obviously a direct descendant of a long-running discussion about the difference between 'shame societies', based on moral heteronomy, and 'guilt societies', based on moral autonomy; and about the distinction between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*. I do not enter that discussion here except to articulate two well-rehearsed points: first, as I noted in Chapter 1 in relation to ancient Greek society, a close empirical look at so-called 'shame societies' blunts the distinction between shame and guilt as moral motivators. In such societies, shame does not typically require the gaze of an external audience; the internal gaze of an imagined other will do (Williams 1993). Second, it may – as Hegel famously pointed out (1991) – be a radical error to regard *Moralität* as fully independent of *Sittlichkeit*; individual moral consciousness will simply have no meaning outside the context of established social norms on which it fundamentally depends. In that case, the fact that agreeableness is socially relative in the sense of being other-entwined and other-identified – derived from our social, rather than our supposed 'pure moral', existence – no longer constitutes an objection to it as a potential moral virtue (see once again my discussion of the Aristotelian self in Section 2.3; cf. also Calhoun's remark about her notion of civility: that the 'reasons for not counting civility among the moral virtues are [...] plausible only so long as one ignores how deeply social the enterprise of morality is' (Calhoun 2000: 273)).

Recall finally how close even Kant himself, the great pursuer of absolutizing abstractions, came to acknowledging agreeableness as a moral virtue. No matter how insignificant such a prescription of refined humanity may seem, he said, in comparison with his 'pure' moral laws, 'anything that promotes sociability, even if it consists only in pleasing maxims or manners, is a garment that dresses virtue to advantage, a garment to be recommended to virtue in more serious respects too' (Kant 1974: 282).

10.5 Practical Example

The argument, tendered in previous sections of this chapter, has important practical implications, especially in the field of professional ethics. Personal qualities that have typically been considered peripheral to moral virtues may now be regarded as coming under the rubric of the virtue of agreeableness, and thus be invested with increased significance. It goes without saying that those who suffer most at the receiving end of the deficiency of agreeableness are such vulnerable people as the sick, the disabled, the elderly, the downtrodden and the young. Expressions of agreeableness or disagreeableness in personal encounters with such people will be far more sensitive and of greater consequence than are our ordinary displays of the same virtue or vice in public encounters with, say, less vulnerable shop assistants and office workers. What has come to be known as a 'good bedside manner' in medical practice, in fact, may be more than a convenient and prudential code of

etiquette; it may have to do essentially with the manifestation of a salient moral virtue. Rather than focusing on doctor–patient relationships, however, I continue to explore the source of most of my examples in this chapter: the school as a venue of teacher–student interactions.

The importance of the teacher as a role model ('a moral exemplar') and a moral educator has become one of the refrains of contemporary educational discourse (see, for example, Carr 1991; Campbell 2003). Moreover, through acknowledgement of the fact that teachers are the personal symbols of the educational process, and that their covert and overt behaviour influences students' learning, light has increasingly been shed on the nature and relevance of teachers' behavioural styles. Indeed, studies of such styles now abound, often enveloped, unfortunately (but perhaps understandably) in a fog of ambiguity over the exact nature of the relationship between style and the moral dimension of teaching. A look at some recent explorations of teaching styles indicates that they commonly fall prey to one of the two fallacious theses discussed in Section 10.3 concerning the value of good manners and agreeableness.

More typical here is the *independent-value thesis*. Teaching styles are then operationalized and investigated empirically as 'professional teaching standards', culminating in a set of rules that truly professional teachers are meant to follow (see, for example, Darling-Dammond 1997). The moral virtues tend to be notably missing from that set, either because they are simply overlooked or because they have been deemed unoperationalizable. The assumption seems to be that teaching styles have a non-moral value which is somehow independent from the moral (and immeasurable) one. But as I argued in Section 10.3, this makes a travesty of the real value of behavioural styles. The other fallacious thesis – of reducing the moral value of styles to a limited number of standard virtues – has also been represented in the educational literature, if less commonly so. C.M. Clark's work on moral transactions in the classroom (1990), for instance, focuses on the virtues of honesty, responsibility and respect. Those virtues are surely important, as is Clark's general contention that moral issues are 'ubiquitous in teaching', but his implicit application of the *reductionist thesis* fails to account for the subtle way in which the teaching style itself has independent moral worth. That such style may *also* express the teacher's honesty, self-respect, respect for students and so forth, is another (if no less interesting) story.

Much that needs to be said about the failures of the *independent-value thesis* and the *reductionist thesis* has already been said in Section 10.3. The Aristotelian notion of agreeableness embraces the fact that proper behavioural patterns constitute a moral virtue, a fact that is positively resisted by the former thesis and not well accommodated by the latter. Teachers' nuances of walking and talking, their countenances and hand movements, their casual exchanges with students: all are essential extensions of their moral characters rather than haphazard extensions of their personalities, and all may convey a strong moral message (cf. Campbell 2003: 26, 46). Forestalling unpleasantness in the classroom is a moral goal no less than an efficiency strategy. Unfortunately, some of the theorists who come closest to grasping this truth obfuscate it in a cloud of conceptual confusion. For example, Gary Fenstermacher (1999), the co-founder of the 'Manner in Teaching Project' at the University of Michigan, has suggested a strict conceptual distinction between a

teacher's 'manner', which encompasses all that is moral in relation to a teacher's conduct and what reveals the teacher's character as a moral being, and a teacher's 'style', which encompasses the teacher's mere personal characteristics as a unique human being.

Fenstermacher's intention is admittedly a laudable one: to allow for a plurality of different personal styles. Teachers who often crack jokes and who rarely crack jokes may be equally good professionals, for instance. However, Fenstermacher does his own project disservice by trying to isolate such variations in style from the moral dimension of teaching. He should have stuck to a single notion of 'manner' or 'style', and then simply pointed out that some individual variations may be of equal moral worth. After all, Aristotle's description of the agreeable person allows for considerable latitude in the qualities of agreeableness; it does not identify a single, fully specified character type as being the archetype of agreeableness. David Hansen's (1993) use of the term 'teacher's style' as denoting a set of morally salient habits, which includes gestures, body movements, facial expressions and tones of voice, seems to be more felicitous than Fenstermacher's, and the lessons he subsequently draws about its moral impact on students are particularly salutary: a true must-read for all prospective teachers. My misgivings about Fenstermacher's terminology notwithstanding, studies based on his pioneering work have yielded highly relevant results, notably Catherine Fallona's (2000) research (through interviews, observations and video recordings) into teachers' actual expressions of the Aristotelian virtues. Officially taking her cue from Fenstermacher's conceptual work, Fallona examines, *inter alia*, the three Aristotelian virtues which are combined here into the single civil virtue of agreeableness. She (happily!) does not seem to realize that they may have more to do with what Fenstermacher considers to be 'style' than what he considers to be 'manner'.

In light of these considerations, it is well to conclude with a brief remark about teacher training. Unfortunately, we hear too little about the careful development of a teacher's moral character as part of a programme of professional teacher preparation (Fenstermacher 1999, for one, laments this lack). We hear even less, however, about the importance of furthering the virtue of agreeableness in prospective teachers. Although Aristotle was famously pessimistic about the possibility of teaching poorly raised dogs new tricks, he was equally sanguine about the possibility of polishing a good nature. Let us hope that most pre-service teachers fall into the latter category. To be sure, teaching agreeableness is not a matter of teaching a ready-made bag of tricks; yet there are various ways in which teacher trainers can alert their students to the importance of a morally sensitive teaching style. Video recordings and playbacks of professional teachers or pre-service teachers at work in the classroom can work wonders, for example. The crucial first step in teacher training is to set the goal of creating a teaching style expressive of the moral virtue of agreeableness; after that various ways can be devised to help prospective teachers to 'share pleasure' or 'avoid causing pain' – to cite Aristotle again – 'when it is right and in the right way'.

All in all, I conclude that none of the other accounts of the value of agreeableness or the objections to Aristotle's account canvassed in preceding sections threaten to undermine the justification of agreeableness as an independent moral virtue. I take it

that the example of agreeableness in school contexts illustrates Aristotle's case, and that teachers' agreeableness can be considered a moral virtue.

Assumption I is wrong.

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Chapter 11

Is Teaching an Aristotelian *Praxis*?

11.1 What Is the *Phronesis-Praxis* Perspective?

Assumption J: 'Teaching is best understood as *praxis* in the Aristotelian sense, guided by uncodifiable, context-dependent *phronesis*, as explained by the moral particularist *par excellence*, Aristotle.'

Is this assumption true?

To begin at the beginning, during the recent resurgence of an Aristotelian perspective in educational circles, three neo-Aristotelian sub-perspectives have come to the fore: the *ethos* perspective, the *logos* perspective and the *phronesis-praxis* perspective. The *ethos* perspective, a concomitant of moral and political communitarianism, highlights the importance of the *ethos* – the customs of the tradition-embedded community – including, *inter alia*, the *ethos* of the school. Although allegedly carved from a lore found in Aristotle's writing, especially his *Politics*, the views trotted out under this form of neo-Aristotelianism have been heavily influenced by Gadamer's endorsement of tradition-sanctioned 'prejudices' and even Hegel's radical reification of the communal spirit. In Germany, where the *ethos* perspective seems to have gained its greatest prominence, it has, with good reason, been criticized by Habermasians and others for its conservative and elitist tendencies and for being neo-Hegelian rather than neo-Aristotelian (see, for example, Schnädelbach 1987/8). Conspicuously missing from the *ethos* perspective, it is commonly lamented, are Aristotle's important notions of *logos* (rational discourse) and *telos* (rational end).

The *logos* perspective is appreciably different from the *ethos* perspective. Harking back to Green's (1976) presidential address to the Philosophy of Education Society, this perspective utilizes Aristotle's account of practical syllogisms to explain (and hopefully improve) teacher and student reasoning processes – to aid them in their thinking and rational discourse about educational means and ends. The *logos* perspective was elucidated in some detail in a number of articles in journals such as *Educational Theory* and *Journal of Curriculum Studies* in the 1980s and 1990s, but has gradually faded in importance or been absorbed into the currently mainstream perspective of *phronesis-praxis*, the form of educational neo-Aristotelianism that informs *Assumption J* and is my sole concern in the present chapter.

The *phronesis-praxis* perspective (*PPP*) is more difficult than the other two perspectives to summarize clearly. Nevertheless, its popularity, especially in the UK and Scandinavia, is pellucid; one could, in fact, speak of an all-you-can-eat *phronesis-praxis* buffet currently underway in educational circles, with reverberations reaching other work-related subjects such as medicine and nursing. In the following sections of this chapter, I rely primarily on the writings of two important advocates of the

PPP: Joseph Dunne, with his sweeping and penetrating study of Aristotle and his modern successors (1993; see also 1999), and Wilfred Carr, who has produced substantive arguments for the *PPP* in a number of writings and has attempted to fashion a 'practical' educational philosophy along its lines (1995; 2004; see also Carr and Kemmis 1986).

The cardinal motivation behind the *PPP* seems to be to resolve one of the most intractable historical problems of education – the uneasy relationship between educational *theory* and *practice* – by reconfiguring (eliminating or transcending) the very dichotomy underlying it, through a retrieval of certain Aristotelian insights. To outline these insights as briefly as possible, they concern the all-too-familiar distinctions commonly ascribed to Aristotle among three main forms of reasoning or intellectual pursuits (*dianoia*) and their respective bases and activities. I say 'commonly ascribed', because the actual distinctions drawn by Aristotle (1985: 148–57 [1139a1–1141a19]) between the different states or conditions (*hexeis*) of the soul in which it grasps the truth are evidently more complex. These three main forms are *theoria* (knowing), which is based on *episteme* (true knowledge as opposed to mere opinion) and issues in *nous* (understanding) or *sophia* (pure contemplative wisdom); *techné* (technical thinking), which is based on *eidos* (the idea of a plan or design) and issues in *poiesis* (making, production); and *phronesis* (practical wisdom), which is based on the idea of *eudaimonia* (the specifically human good) and issues in *praxis* (action, practice). Whereas the 'good or bad state' of *theoria* consists simply in 'being true or false' (Aristotle 1985: 150 [1139a27–30]), the good or bad states of *techné* are worthy and worthless products, and those of *phronesis* wise and unwise actions.

The crucial move of the *PPP*, then, is to link educational reasoning and reflection to *phronesis*, and education itself to *praxis*. Education is not a theoretical activity (Carr 1995: 33), but a practical one – practical not in the sense of *poiesis*, which is 'guided by fixed ends and governed by determinate rules' (Carr 1995: 73), but rather in the sense of *praxis*, which is more comprehensive and open-ended. Yet the old theory–practice dichotomy is transcended, as there is still room for theory of a sort – although neither of the *theoria* nor *techné* kind, as presupposed by the old dichotomy. The theory that remains is the practice-embedded theory of participant knowledge, as contrasted with the traditional spectator-like 'theory from nowhere' – the salvaged 'theory' being, if you like, of 'knowing practice'. The main target of *PPP* is, accordingly, educational (and moral) theory of the traditional kind, embodied in all sorts of educational 'technicisms' that depict teachers as classroom 'technicians' with operationalizable and behaviourally measurable skills. Dunne claims to have been moved to write his monumental work in response to one such technicism – the behavioural-objectives model (1993: 1) – and Carr directs his animadversions against all 'technological' views of teaching and curriculum (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 35). Squires (1999: 17) suggests, somewhat cheekily, that the impact of the *PPP* in England may be due to its comfortable fit with England's 'quasi-literary and anti-technological' ethos, by which experts are commonly mistrusted and abstractions regarded as alien. Yet that would not explain the positive reception of the *PPP* in Scandinavia – a culture that (perhaps through the influence of a German educational tradition) tends to be less antagonistic to technical and even

bureaucratic interventions. A more plausible historical explanation of the *PPP*'s popularity is probably its relationship to a prominent anti-foundationalist stance in contemporary philosophy.

My chief aim in this chapter is not a further tracing of the motivational roots of the *PPP*, however; nor is it to connect these roots historically to other ideological currents. Rather, it is to explore and challenge some of its substantive claims from what I believe to be a sound Aristotelian perspective. The proponents of the *PPP* have, I contend, recast and reconceived, rather than retrieved, Aristotelian ideas on a number of issues, so that the Aristotelian foundation, on which the *PPP* is supposed to build, has been changed beyond recognition. Of course, to show that the *PPP* misconstrues Aristotle on various counts is not tantamount to an invalidation of the *PPP*'s substantive claims – in so far as they are claims about contemporary educational issues as distinct from claims about Aristotle's views. However, I do hope that some of the Aristotelian arguments against the *PPP* that unfold during the course of my discussion are persuasive in themselves. With this in mind, in Sections 11.2–11.5 I identify and dispute the four cardinal claims of the *PPP*:

1. Aristotle's epistemology and methodology imply a stance that, with regard to practical philosophy, is essentially anti-method and anti-theory.
2. 'Producing', under the rubric of *techné*, as opposed to 'acting' under the rubric of *phronesis*, is an unproblematically codifiable process.
3. *Phronesis* must be given a particularist interpretation.
4. Teaching is best understood as *praxis* in the Aristotelian sense, guided by *phronesis*.

11.2 Aristotle as Anti-Method, Anti-Theory?

Do Aristotle's epistemology and methodology imply a stance that is essentially anti-method and anti-theory with regard to practical philosophy (most importantly here: morally and educationally)? Before determining an Aristotelian response to that question, I explore the answer that can be extracted from the advocates of the *PPP*.

In an article that appeared in a nursing journal, but which draws primarily on the writings of Dunne and Carr, the author unequivocally states that *phronesis* should replace 'research-based practice' (in this case, in nursing) and that we should abandon any philosophical assumptions about the superiority of scientific research (Flaming 2001). Whilst Carr formulates his views less crudely, he, too, places no stock in theory and method: 'notions like "theory", "application" and "method" have no place in practical reasoning and thus play no meaningful role in a form of philosophy specifically intended to contribute to its development' (Carr 2004: 62). Carr stresses the point that educational practice is not the application of (a time-and-place-independent) educational theory; nor is educational theory an applied theory that draws on theories from philosophy, social sciences or other forms of knowledge (Carr 1995: 35–8). The opposition here is to technical rationality and rational planning, guided by disembedded, abstract theories. Along with such theories, says Carr, one should also reject the Enlightenment notions of rationality, objectivity and

truth, in particular the idea that objective knowledge can be used instrumentally to explain educational phenomena and solve educational problems: 'There are no "educational phenomena", apart from the practices of those engaged in educational activities, no "educational problems" apart from those arising from these practices' (Carr 1995: 37; see also Carr and Kemmis 1986: 144).

Although it is 'anti-theory' and 'anti-method' with respect to the ideals embodied in the allegedly reigning Enlightenment notion of (scientific) method and (applied) theory, the *PPP* does not reject all theory and method wholesale. As noted in the preceding section, there is still room for *theory* in a non-traditional sense – theory that is practice-confined and perspectivist. Educational practice is always, it is readily admitted, guided by some theory, but such theory is internal to and liable to all the exigencies of practice. The relevant theory is not something that a *spectator*, a third-person theorist, could analyse and evaluate, but something that must be lived through by a *participant*. The 'truths' that such a theory tells 'must be seen as located in particular historical circumstances and social contexts, and as answers to particular questions asked in the intellectual context of a particular time' (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 43; see also Carr 1995: 72; Dunne 1993: 5; Saugstad 2002).

There is also some room for *method* – but, once again, not 'method' in the traditional Enlightenment sense, by which the objects of research are understood as being independent of the researcher. Rather there is room for method that views truth as socially constructed and practice-embedded, the aim of which is action rather than data – in particular, the conscious transformation of the practices themselves, by insiders, in order to achieve goals that are internal to those practices. The method under description is, as the reader will have gathered, that of 'action-research', the aim of which is to heighten the dialectical self-reflection of practitioners (for example, teachers) and their subsequent empowerment, in order to improve the relevant practices from within (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 180–84). All the main buzzwords here – 'critical social science', 'emancipatory action-research' 'dialectical, reflexive understanding', 'internal transformation' and so on – are derived not from Aristotle (at least not directly) but from critical theory: a school of thought, the ultimate aim of which was – despite its obvious perspectivist leanings – reform, liberation and justice for all mankind. Thanks to its Marxist roots, critical theory thus champions the enlightenment of practitioners (if not the 'enlightenment' of the Enlightenment), which has direct consequences for their transformed social action – action that requires an integration of theory and practice in a dialectical process of reflection and political struggle conducted by groups for the purpose of their own emancipation (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 144).

Precisely because of this ultimate emancipatory aim, the *PPP* must, in spite of its anti-realist, non-foundationalist, perspectivist and, if you like, anti-theory epistemology, distinguish itself from the radical relativism and irrationalism of contemporary postmodernism that has long abandoned any emancipatory aspirations (given that the very idea of emancipation rests on the notion of a true self which has become alienated from itself – a self emphatically rejected by postmodernism). Dunne poetically describes this as a balancing act in which the *PPP* advocate needs to skate on ice that is neither that of crystalline technicist purity, nor the soft, melting ice of postmodernism (Dunne 1993: 377–8). Carr uses considerable resourcefulness

in trying to deflect the postmodern challenge. His main strategy is to reinterpret postmodernism, so that while it retains its post-analytic, post-empiricist thrust, it avoids the precarious flight into unreason. Postmodernism indicates, on Carr's reading, 'not so much that modernity has come to an end as that it has now entered a new phase' (Carr 1995: 123). The problem with such a reading, however, is that it forfeits its relationship to the original and provocative claims made by theorists such as Lyotard and Derrida in the same proportion that it achieves its congeniality to critical theory and the *PPP* (see, for example, Kristjánsson 2002: 57–61). Carr's frequent allusions to emancipation and self-understanding would make any true postmodernist shudder. But overlooking Carr's somewhat far-fetched strategy in saving the *PPP* from the excesses of postmodernism, let us return to Aristotle himself.

The *PPP* is supposed to be, if not strictly Aristotelian, then at least Aristotle-inspired. Thus a question which seems natural to ask is the one broached at the beginning of this section: would Aristotle bestow his benediction on the kind of anti-method, anti-theory (in the traditional sense) stance implicit in the *PPP*? As far as I can see, Carr's elucidation of the notions of method and theory sets Aristotle's views on these matters utterly at naught. Aristotle's 'ice' is in fact more the 'crystalline' one of traditional theory than the semi-soft one of the *PPP*, let alone the melting one of postmodernism.

Aristotle's philosophical method is primarily directed at finding the 'first principles' (*archai*) of things. To that end, he claims that any philosophical inquiry should start from the relevant 'appearances' (*phainomena*). Sometimes these appearances are simply empirical evidence collected for a theory through a process of induction and generalization, with the aim of removing our ignorance about the matter at hand. Sometimes the aim is, rather, to remove conflicts and difficulties in the beliefs (*endoxa*) that we already hold, in which case Aristotle utilizes the method of dialectic, handed down to him by Socrates and Plato. Such dialectic seeks coherence and mutual adjustment until only the most consistent and authoritative beliefs remain. It is not a mere coherence method such as John Rawls' much-touted one of 'reflective equilibrium', however, for Aristotle allows himself to be systematically selective in his attitude towards common beliefs. It is not only the case that 'we', who possess the original *endoxa*, must be fairly reflective people (that is also a condition in Rawls' method), but, more importantly, that Aristotle incorporates in his dialectic certain features of the world which he deems necessary for the world, or for certain units of it, to be objects of scientific inquiry and explanation in the first place. Now, Rawls famously modified his originally 'narrow' reflective equilibrium to a 'wider' one, taking account not only of moral principles and considered moral judgements, but also of certain background theories about the world. However, those theories, in turn, had to be justified in terms of their fit with considered moral judgements, which made his proposal vulnerable to a charge of circularity. By contrast, when Aristotle employs what could be called 'strong dialectic', instead of 'pure dialectic', he adds to the dialectic certain assumptions (*qua* premises) that no one has necessarily considered before, but which he considers us to have distinct metaphysical or psychological reasons for recognizing: the assumption, for instance, that the soul is the 'form' of the body or that human beings have a certain nature

that must be realized if they are to live a flourishing life (see Irwin 1990, for a fuller account of Aristotle's method).

Aristotle obviously did not possess the modern concepts of 'scientific theory' and 'applied science', but if we explore his account of human nature and ethical conduct, what emerges is suspiciously like a 'theory' in that traditional sense which *PPP* advocates so ardently renounce. It is a teleological theory about 'happiness' as the ultimate good of human beings, for the sake of which we do all other things (Aristotle 1985: 1–5 [1094a1–1095a27]) – a good that is complex but objective and knowable in principle, given our empirical access to the essential specific nature (*ousia*) of human beings. This is, more specifically, a universal 'ethical theory' (Irwin 1990: 467) – a theory which transcends mere common beliefs and any particular human 'practices'. What we must be aware of, however, is that when Aristotle produces generalizations as parts of his theories, they tend to relate to natural norms rather than mere frequencies. Claims such as 'all chickens have wings' or 'pleasure completes full virtue' do not describe *usual* regularities but *normative* regularities (having to do with the natural essence of the object in question); those generalizations would not be defeated by the fact that deformed, wingless chickens do exist or that virtue sometimes fails to produce pleasure (in people who have been poorly raised, for example). All such generalizations have a certain scope ('the norm') and it is not always possible to build a specification of the scope into the generalization itself, except by saying that the generalization applies in the absence of any abnormal conditions (Irwin 2000: 109–12; cf. Karlsson 1995; I exploit this point further in Section 11.4).

The advocates of the *PPP* try to establish an anti-realist, non-foundationalist, perspectivist account of education and educational theory with reference to a philosopher whose epistemology and methodology are unabashedly realist, foundationalist (naturalist) and cosmopolitan. The odds are surely stacked against such an enterprise, or, in the tactful words of David Carr, 'put something of a strain' on the loyalties of its proponents (1995a: 146). Aristotle aside, consider any historically famous account of education from Plato to Dewey. Virtually all of those accounts embody the features of a theory, in the sense that Aristotle's account of the human good is a theory; they are general, abstract, systematic, explicit and universalizable, and they provide recommendations about practical problems. They outline what human beings need in order to flourish; how they learn; and, subsequently, how they should be taught. In other words, they are 'applied theories' in the sense denounced by Wilfred Carr. It may well be true, however, that 'pro-theory, pro-method' educational theorists have not been entirely successful in producing cogent accounts of professional practice, including teaching – accounts that resonate convincingly with the experiences of practitioners. This may explain some of the recent street credibility of the *PPP* and related perspectives and the widespread misgivings about a theory-based take on teaching.

Consider a recent theory often mentioned in this book: the theory of social and emotional learning, based on certain psychological-cum-philosophical ideas about the importance of emotional 'literacy' and its cultivation in students. How would the *PPP* judge such a theory: as untenable without further inspection simply because it is a non-situated theory (that is, a non-specific, practice-embedded theory) or

as a theory that could only have possible relevance within a particular practice? Whatever else can be said for or against those responses, they are both thoroughly un-Aristotelian, given Aristotle's methodology and his blatantly anti-perspectivist observation that 'every human being is akin […] to a human being' (Aristotle 1985: 208 [1155a20–22]). It is no wonder that Dunne expresses a concern at the beginning of his book about the validity of his own endeavour, as its conclusions admit of no (practice-neutral) 'external criterion' – although he denies at the end, somewhat sanguinely, that the circularity and inevitable prejudices of his argument are bound to discredit it intellectually (Dunne 1993: 25–6).

If Aristotle's method and theory construction are light years away from those of the *PPP*, as I have argued, why was the *PPP*'s anti-theory stance aligned with Aristotle in the first place? It probably stems from Aristotle's separation of theoretical and practical knowledge: *theoria* from both *techné* and *phronesis*. It is true, as Dunne says, that 'the spheres of theory and practice are incommensurable' for Aristotle (Dunne 1993: 238), in the sense that *theoria* distinguishes itself from the other two forms of knowledge. But the problem is that for Aristotle *theoria* has little to do with what we nowadays refer to as a scientific (or, for that matter, educational or moral) *theory*. *Theoria* refers to knowledge of *necessary* (non-contingent) things that cannot be other than they are. It is *a priori* knowledge of the unchanging: what we would, post-Frege, confine to the sphere of pure mathematics and logic. And although Aristotle's notion of the sphere of the unchanging was evidently wider than ours (incorporating, for instance, the movements of the heavenly bodies), his *theoria* did not encompass what I have referred to as educational or moral theories. It is illicit, therefore, to conclude that because Aristotle considered *theoria* to be incommensurable with practical (contingent) matters, he also considered educational and moral theories (in the traditional sense) to be irrelevant for practice (cf. Squires 2003: 5).

This is why Flaming (2001) errs when he claims that because nursing is a practical (moral) endeavour, concerned with the *eudaimonia* of patients, it cannot be research based. This is also why Saugstad (2002) commits a number of missteps in her multi-faceted argument for the claim that the Aristotelian theory–practice distinction undermines various suppositions of current educational wisdom. It is true that 'Aristotle delimits the theoretical from the practical domain' and that he does not consider theoretical knowledge to be transformable into 'applied practical knowledge'; accordingly, he does not believe in a 'one-to-one relationship' between a given specific theory and a given practice (Saugstad 2002: 385–6). But this is all true because Saugstad is thinking of theory as *theoria*; these are mere truisms that have little, if anything, to do with current educational conventions or wisdom. Nothing in Aristotle's discussion of *theoria* versus *techné* and *phronesis* excludes the possibility that a particular moral and educational theory, yielded through Aristotle's inductive method or through that of strong dialectic, could be directly applicable to educational practice. There may be *other* reasons to be found in Aristotle's writings for rejecting such a possibility; I consider (but ultimately reject) their existence later in this chapter.

I hope that enough has been said to answer in the negative the question posed at the beginning of this section. Aristotle's epistemology and methodology do not

imply a stance that is essentially, with regard to practical philosophy, anti-method and anti-theory. When Wilfred Carr claims that the 'story of the demise and eventual collapse of the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy is […] just a part of the complex history of the transition from "classical" to "modern" philosophy that began in the seventeenth century' (Carr 2004: 63), he seems to be conflating two historical developments. It is indeed true that the rise of modernity signalled the unfortunate demise of Aristotle's ideas of human nature and *telos* (a demise memorably recorded by MacIntyre 1981), as well as, of course, his cosmology. At the same time, however, modern times heralded a return to a more Aristotelian empirically based epistemology and methodology, as opposed to medieval (and Platonic) rationalism. If anything, a great deal of modern 'practical philosophy', from Marx to contemporary virtue ethics, has a distinctively Aristotelian flavour.

11.3 An Unproblematic Codification of *Techné*?

Advocates of the *PPP* want to distance themselves not only from the 'technicism' involved in Aristotle's *theoria*, if applied to practical matters, but also from the 'technicism' implicit in one of the two forms of practical thought, namely *techné*. According to the received wisdom, *techné* gives rise to unproblematically codifiable 'makings', which are out of step with any genuine teaching practice – as opposed to problematic and uncodifiable 'doings', which are guided by *phronesis*. Before turning to the 'doings', something needs to be said about the 'makings'.

The received wisdom about *techné*, on which the *PPP* relies, can be fleshed out as follows: in *techné* we have a clear, perfect idea of a plan or design (*eidos*). *Techné* is simply instrumental thinking, which helps us to bring this *eidos* into being through some mechanical means, and the process of doing so is called *poiesis* (making, production, manufacturing). The prototype of *poiesis* is the work of a craftsman or artisan such as a potter who, more or less unreflectively, directs his actions towards the given end: an end which lies in the product, not in the process, let alone in any changes effected on himself as a person (see, for example, Carr and Kemmis 1986: 32–3). Because the production process and the end-product can be precisely specified by the maker prior to the means-end activity in question, we would be talking here about an unproblematically codifiable outcome. It is specifically this 'closed' (as opposed to 'open-ended') kind of thinking and making that is frowned upon by the advocates of the *PPP* as a model for teaching or curriculum planning – where the practitioner becomes what might be called a technocrat or a passive implementer, much like the proclaimer of logical truths (on the similarities between *techné* and *theoria* in this regard, see Dunne 1993: 253). Recall here Dunne's original *bête noire* of behavioural objectives in teaching: how can the complexities of teaching and learning be reduced to such an instrumental and mechanistic technology?

Although there is some textual evidence for this mechanical reading of *techné* in Aristotle's writings, a considerable portion of his treatment of *techné* defies the rigid stereotype of the unreflective artisan. Some of Aristotle's most vivid examples of the practitioners of *techné* involve not potters and carpenters, but medical doctors, army generals, navigators and performing artists. And there, a much subtler picture

of the process from *eidos* through *poiesis* to end-product appears – a much more problematic relationship between the production and the produced (which is a change of state or a performance rather than an artefact) – a picture which blunts the force of the contrast between *techné* and *phronesis* as regards the codifiability of the outcome. It is clear, for instance, that Aristotle considers medicine to be no mere formulaic or rule-governed activity (Squires 2003: 4), let alone to be based on simple, 'value-free', means-end reasoning (*contra* Carr's description of *techné*, 2004: 61). Here the precision and codifiability of the potter's *techné* is lacking, for knowledge of the universal cannot be unproblematically translated to an individual. Knowledge of health in general is not enough to cure a sick Socrates; one must know the specifics of his ailments before prescribing a cure (see further in Dunne 1993: 282). When one's actions are not imposed on materials but directed towards other persons (as in medicine, military battle or the performing arts) or the forces of wind and weather (as in navigation), perfect precision is eluded, and one cannot determine in advance the efficacy of one's deeds with perfect accuracy (cf. Dunne 1993: 359).

Perhaps the most enduring achievement of Dunne's work is to have retrieved this concept of *techné* as only problematically codifiable from Aristotle's writings: namely, to have shown that the polarity between theoretical and experiential emphases, which has commonly been taken to coincide with the distinction between *techné* and *phronesis*, can, on closer scrutiny, be discerned within the concept of *techné* itself (Dunne 1993: 229). One can then distinguish between two types of *techné*: (1) where all rules are unproblematically formulable in advance; and (2) where they are not formulable, and deliberate reasoning is required for particular cases. This important distinction helps us to reject the gambit offered by the strict *techné–phronesis* dichotomy. It is all the more surprising why Dunne keeps referring to the notion of 'non-technical' *techné* as Aristotle's 'unofficial' concept (for example, Dunne 1993: 261), as if refusing to let go of the received wisdom of all *techné* as unproblematically codifiable, which his careful analysis has, in fact, succeeded in undermining. Tellingly, perhaps, Dunne admits that Aristotle's frequent allusions to examples of *techné* (in particular, medical analogies) in his explorations of the moral virtues may be seen as 'embarrassing' for a thesis such as his, which tries to show that in setting up *phronesis* as the paradigm of ethical knowledge, Aristotle wanted to cordon off the field of *techné* (Dunne 1993: 245–6). It is almost as if Dunne consciously concedes here that he needs to retain a distinction, which he has shown to be seriously overdrawn, in order to serve the interests of the *PPP*.

At this point, I part ways with Dunne. What for me stands out from Aristotle's explorations of *techné* is that, in some of its most salient instantiations, there is little if any difference in codifiability between it and *phronesis*. Both guide actions which require careful scrutiny of particular circumstances and which defy any rule fetishism. That neither *techné* (in this common sense) nor *phronesis* are *unproblematically codifiable* is beyond doubt, therefore; whether they are *necessarily uncodifiable* is another question to be addressed in the following section.

11.4 A Particularist Interpretation of *Phronesis*?

I introduced Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* in Section 2.1. *Phronesis* is, as mentioned, an intellectual virtue that serves the moral virtues. It is not only about universal values 'since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars' (Aristotle 1985: 158 [1141b15–17]). Like other stable character states, *phronesis* owes its inception and growth chiefly to instruction and habituation. It is critical that a person be inculcated into the right sort of habits from youth. For although *phronesis* can later be used to reconsider and revise those habits (moral dispositions) with which we were originally instilled, it will not do so unless we have been trained to appreciate the importance of such revisions. That is, although *phronesis* is an intellectual disposition rather than a moral disposition of action and reaction, it is, in a sense, also a habit which gradually kicks in through performance of the activities that the habit embodies. Indeed, all the intellectual virtues are *hexeis* and thus acquired by habit. Therefore, too, *phronesis* needs time and experience.

These are some of the general Aristotelian points about *phronesis* that the advocates of the *PPP* use as grist for their mill. They see it as a dynamic, flexible and open-textured concept that is highly relevant to education. The main emphasis is on the intimate bond between *phronesis* and the perceptual particularities of human experience. Whereas *phronesis* incorporates practical knowledge, it is 'not itself theory' and neither is it 'the *application* of theory to particular cases' (Dunne 1993: 157). To think otherwise is to succumb to what Gadamer calls the 'illusion of experience perfected and replaced by knowledge' (cited in Dunne 1993: 306). In the sphere of *phronesis*, 'practical-moral universals cannot unproblematically cover or include particular cases', precisely because the former contain 'an element of indeterminateness which is removed only through confrontation with particular cases' (Dunne 1993: 311). This is, in Dunne's words, so far from being a defect that it is, rather, 'the great merit' of *phronesis* (Dunne 1993: 314). The final, decisive move of the *PPP*, then, is to link *phronesis* with teaching as *praxis*. Such *praxis* is no longer seen as the embarrassing but soon-overcome condition of incomplete theory (Dunne 1993: 9). Just as the meaning of any ethical principle must be understood and interpreted in relation to a particular situation within a particular practice, so the teacher's capacity for practical reasoning cannot first be taught 'in theory' and then applied 'in practice'. Instead, it is a capacity that can be acquired only by an individual who has been initiated into a particular practice and has learnt to direct his activities towards goods which are internal to that practice (Carr 1995: 69; 2004: 61).

I probe more exactly the idea of teaching as *praxis* in the final section, but let me first explore the (moral) particularist interpretation given to *phronesis* by advocates of the *PPP*. As mentioned in Section 3.3, where the idea of Aristotle as a moral particularist was first introduced and challenged, a particularist view of morality considers the structure of moral reality best captured by sensitivity to particular situations rather than any system of moral theory. According to a particularist interpretation of Aristotle's *phronesis*, the passages in which he refers to particular perceptions as being at the heart of *phronesis* bring to the fore what is most essential about this virtue: that it defies any generalizations except in so far as such

generalizations are viewed as incomplete summaries of the considerations that the virtuous person recognizes.

Now, there are many forms of particularism, with the most radical one perhaps being Moorean intuitionism which considers moral properties as *sui generis*. It is not clear whether all the devotees of the *PPP* would ascribe to precisely the same understanding of Aristotle's *phronesis*, but what is beyond controversy is that all of them would interpret it in a particularist way, and that at least some salient remarks betoken an intuitionist reading. Phrases such as 'particularist discernment', 'intuitive artistry', 'discrimination', 'perceptual capacity', 'illative sense' and 'situational appreciation' abound. To unravel these, our best bet is to return to Dunne (1993), on whom most accounts of the *PPP* ultimately draw. Dunne is fascinated by Aristotle's analogy of *phronesis* to vision. Experience is, for Dunne, a comprehensive situating process of which knowledge and virtue are specific moments and to which *phronesis* contributes '*an eye*'. *Phronesis* is, in other words, the eye of moral experience: the discernment of particular situations that enables us 'to see aright' every time, but which remains ultimately experiential rather than universal 'since the universals within its grasp are always modifiable in the light of its continuing exposure to particular cases' (Dunne 1993: 280, 293, 297, 361). It is as if deciding what to do is a matter of staring at the relevant situation until its unique 'shape' jumps out at you (cf. Bakhurst 2000: 173). But how do we know whether the shape that jumps out at us is really the correct one and not some kind of a perceptual illusion? We discover that by consulting the experienced *phronimoi*, who ultimately provide the standards and yardsticks of what is fine and pleasant (Dunne 1999: 55). If our choice of action would also be theirs in the relevant situation, we know that we are on the right track. Instead of trusting principles, we trust persons. The *logos* of the situation is thus defined obliquely as the *logos* which the *phronimoi* would work out (Dunne 1993: 35, 258, 312; cf. Aristotle 1985: 44 [1107a1–3]).

What is at fault with this particularist interpretation of *phronesis*, in my view, is that it sits loosely with, or even radically diverges from, essential elements of Aristotle's moral system. There is no denying the fact that Aristotle warns us against looking for the same precision in matters of moral judgement as we would find in mathematics. Neither can we deny the fact that he takes *phronesis* to be concerned with situated particularities that are difficult to capture in a general account. Neither of these concessions, however, is sufficient to warrant a particularist interpretation of *phronesis*. What must be established is the *priority* of particular truths with regard to general truths, the priority of particular perceptions with regard to universal beliefs, and the priority of the *phronimos*' verdict with regard to the morally correct verdict. More specifically, what must be shown is that Aristotle thought that (1) any generalizing (moral) truth must be abandoned in favour of particular (moral) truths or at least reduced to a mere summary of such truths; (2) perception of particulars is epistemologically prior to the guidance of universal beliefs; and (3) what is morally correct is morally correct because the *phronimos* deems it to be so – not that the *phronimos* deems what is morally correct to be so because it is, in fact, so.

The problem for the *PPP* is that none of these claims have sufficient grounding in Aristotle's writings (see, for example, Irwin 2000). As for (1), Aristotle's account of the moral virtues involves various general truths about the characteristics of different

virtuous persons (as brave, temperate, and so on). When he uses particular examples, he does not abandon generalizations and tell us to attend only to the particularities of the described situation; rather he describes the generalizations we should seek. That they are often not unproblematically applicable to particular cases stems, *inter alia*, from the fact that Aristotle's notion of a generalization is one of normality rather than frequency (a point foreshadowed in Section 11.2), and therefore has limitations of scope built into it. It fits well with Aristotle's method (see again my discussion in Section 11.2) to say that universals are ultimately derived from particulars, but that is not tantamount to considering them reducible to mere summaries of such particulars. As for (2), Aristotle's much-cited assertion that *phronesis* is about particulars and therefore needs perception (Aristotle 1985: 160–61 [1142a12–30]) says nothing about the epistemological priority of perception. A simpler interpretation is that Aristotle considered universal moral beliefs that would be fully capable of taking into account every possible situation to be so complicated – although logically possible – that they would in actuality be impossible to learn and apply. Think, for instance, of all the comparisons that would need to be made between individuals with simultaneous, yet diverse, interests (cf. Salkever 1990: 139–40). Instead of trying to achieve such a super-human feat, it would be better to acquire a perceptual awareness that guides us to the right answer in the greatest number of factual situations – as we, more realistically, define only 'as far as we can' (Aristotle 1985: 243 [1165a35]); cf. Irwin 2000: 120). As for (3), Slote (1992: 89), for one, has argued convincingly that, for Aristotle, standards for proper action and emotion are followed by the *phronimos* because they are morally appropriate, and not that they are morally appropriate because they are followed by the *phronimos*. I concur with Slote because Aristotle does not shirk from detailed discussions of moral conflicts and the appropriate method of solving them (see earlier discussion in Section 2.1; cf. also Section 7.4). This, of course, does not subvert the important point that we must emulate and follow the *phronimoi* in order to acquire the experience and the basic virtues that enable us to appreciate the proper standards.

The real nub of the matter is not so much that the alternative interpretations offered by me, in (1) to (3), are *individually* simpler and/or more persuasive than those offered by the *PPP* enthusiasts (although I do take them to be both simpler and more persuasive, in light of Aristotle's own text). The nub is, rather, that taken *collectively*, they sit much more comfortably with the view of a dyed-in-the-wool moral naturalist who believed that 'first principles' about ethical standards were to be found in human nature: in facts about what makes us flourish as human beings. Aristotle does not 'disabuse us of theory' (as Dunne, for one, maintains, 1993: 313). He presents us with a theory of the human *telos* and with a detailed account of the virtues as golden means between two extremes in various spheres of human conduct. As Noel (1999) correctly points out, Aristotle's discussion of *phronesis* is placed firmly within his complete ethical theory of living; and although situational perception is one of the ingredients of *phronesis*, its moral and rational dimensions, as an intellectual virtue, must not be overlooked.

I would conclude that the nature of *phronesis* – and the nature of the *techné* of the medical doctor, the army general or the navigator – while not unproblematically codifiable, is not necessarily (but merely contingently) uncodifiable. A perfect

moral theory, which resolved once and for all every question of application, would be possible for a perfect being. Given that human beings are imperfect, however, and that the normal is not even always the usual, such a theory eludes them and they must, instead, rely on a theory that requires frequent rectification through confrontations with novel situations. Such a theory demands rather than excludes reflection on particularities (see, for example, Nussbaum 2000). But that makes it no less of a (universal) theory, any more than the law is any less of a (universal) law, although it must be rectified frequently to account for 'what the legislator would have said himself if he had been present there, and what he would have prescribed, had he known, in his legislation' (Aristotle 1985: 145 [1137b23–4]). Non-necessary, but actual, uncodifiability is no novelty in a moral theory; indeed it is difficult to think of any moral theory (even a utilitarian one), except of the most rigid formalist kind, which would not accommodate such uncodifiability. His accommodation of it does not render Aristotle a moral particularist.

I would be tempted to detour at this point to argue that even if Aristotle had not accepted the need for moral theory, he should have done so (for incisive arguments in favour of a moral theory, see Tännsjo 1995; Nussbaum 2000). I shall resist that temptation here except to make one final point. Much of the work of the advocates of the *PPP*, including Dunne's book, seems to be inspired by the ripple effect of MacIntyre's *After Virtue* – especially his retrieval of the notion of moral practice (MacIntyre 1981). MacIntyre has, by contrast, no praise for the kind of perceptual particularism championed in the *PPP*. He would, no doubt, consider the failure to theorize moral judgements – and to rely, instead, on a moral nose – as one more graphic illustration of the poverty of ethical thinking that has occurred since the collapse of the Enlightenment project (cf. Bakhurst 2000: 166–7, on MacIntyre's debunking of intuitionism). Whereas skills of discernment are, for MacIntyre as for Aristotle, central to moral wisdom, they are not exhaustive of moral wisdom. The particularist aspirations of the *PPP* are not part of a MacIntyrean project of regrounding morality and, more importantly, as I have argued in this section, not part of an Aristotelian project either.

11.5 Teaching as *Praxis*?

According to the *PPP*, teaching is to be understood as *praxis* and teaching excellence as *phronesis*: 'Expertise under this view does not consist of designing a set of sequenced means or techniques which "drive" learners towards expected learning outcomes. It consists of spontaneous and flexible direction and redirection of the learning enterprise, guided by a sensitive reading of the subtle changes and responses of other participants in the enterprise' (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 37). The ends of the teaching practice (*qua praxis*) cannot be specified in advance, as they are inseparable from the practice – internal to it (Carr 2004: 61). Therefore, the criteria of teaching competence can never be rigorously and exhaustively specified (Dunne 1993: 159).

We see how the idea of the essential uncodifiability of *phronesis*, as opposed to *techné*, permeates the whole notion of teaching as *praxis*. In the last two sections I argued for the similarities between *phronesis* and certain kinds of *techné*, and the

mere non-necessary uncodifiability of both. This argument may seem to spell initial trouble for the whole notion of teaching as *praxis*. Rather than pursuing that line of argument, however, let us concentrate on an essential *difference* between *techné* and *phronesis* that has so far gone unmentioned but which has ample textual evidence in Aristotle's writings and gives rise to an objection which cuts even more deeply into the notion of teaching as *praxis*.

Phronesis is the virtue of a person who knows how to live well. *Praxis*, the sphere of phronetic activity, has an end in itself (namely good ethical conduct), whereas mere production (*poiesis*) has not; the latter only has an end beyond itself (Aristotle 1985: 154 [1140b6–8]). Whereas we cannot be 'fully good' without *phronesis* (Aristotle 1985: 171 [1144b31–2]), we can, in principle, be fully good without *techné*, without partaking in any of the activities associated with *particular* kinds of *techné* (without being a medical doctor, potter or navigator, for instance.). That phronetic activity has an end in itself must not be understood to imply, along contemporary virtue-ethics lines, that the ultimate and overriding reason for being virtuous is the beneficial effect on oneself. There is no indication of that idea in Aristotle (see my earlier discussion in Section 2.1; cf. Irwin 1990: 373). Nevertheless, one of the salient reasons for being good is the effect on one's own *eudaimonia*; that is why being good is an end in itself.

Now, the natural conclusion is that *praxis* is the sphere of ethical conduct; its rationale is living and acting well because of the intrinsic value of doing so; and the highest expression of *praxis* is in politics, where people co-operate within a society. Nowhere in Aristotle is *praxis* related to specific activities or domains such as medicine or, for that matter, teaching; nowhere is it even hinted that the sphere of *phronesis* should be generalized beyond ethical engagements to cover activities with distinct ends beyond themselves (see MacKenzie 1991; Squires 1999: 112–16; 2003: 2; Waring 2000). What implications does this carry for the notion of teaching as *praxis*? One response would be to acknowledge that a crucial hiatus has appeared and simply to relinquish this notion. Another response, which I will refer to as the bullet-biting manoeuvre, would be to countenance the Aristotelian idea that *praxis* is concerned solely with ethical engagements and to conclude that teaching is exclusively an ethical activity, thus rescuing the notion of teaching-as-*praxis* by biting the bullet aimed at it. After all, Aristotle never mentions teaching as an example of *poiesis* either, so why could he not simply have thought of it as activity with an end in itself?

This second tack is taken by David Carr. He argues that teaching cannot be reduced to a set of skills or to the transference of knowledge. Rather, the deliverances of teaching are best considered to be personal, moral virtues, understood as reflective or evaluative dispositions. Indeed, Carr contends that teaching is a prime example of that sort of activity in which almost all the important practical decisions which need to be made are of a moral rather than technical nature, and that so-called educational theories are best regarded as shorthand characterizations of essentially moral or evaluative perspectives (Carr 1995a; 1995b; 1999; 2003). What should be noted is that Carr *moralizes* the notion of teaching as *praxis* here far beyond the claims of his namesake Wilfred, as well as those of Dunne; he even accuses them of a dangerous, if hidden, aspiration towards a conception of practical reason which may eventually

bridge the gap between *techné* and *phronesis*, via their exaggerated *experiential* approach to teaching as a 'hands on' practice (Carr 1995b: 330 [footnote 21]; 1995a: 147).

I must own up to a certain predilection for David Carr's bullet-biting manoeuvre. After all, all teaching has a moral dimension and perhaps carries the most obvious ethical load of any profession. I would even go as far as acquiescing to Fritz Oser's claim (1992) that the idea of professionalism in teaching must necessarily involve the capacity to stimulate moral discourse. Those sympathies notwithstanding, I think that the bullet-biting manoeuvre must be resisted, for two reasons. First, it must not be forgotten that Aristotle's favoured teaching methods are those of habituation and direct instruction, where the teacher instructs the learner about some object – some body of knowledge or some discipline. In Aristotle's writings, teaching and learning never represent a mere interpersonal relationship with no further independent object. The second and more general, Aristotle-independent reason for resisting the bullet-biting manoeuvre is the queerness of the idea of teaching as having an end in itself.

Consider a teacher stranded alone on a luxuriant desert island. This would not prevent him from continuing to engage in an ethical endeavour: a *praxis*. He could, for instance, continue to practise moderation in food and drink and use his *phronesis* to that end. That pursuit would be fully intelligible, and indeed commendable, even if it had no further moral consequences for anyone but him (for instance, if he were never rescued). Consider, on the other hand, this same teacher continuing to teach on his desert island in front of the seagulls and the penguins. We could perhaps render that activity intelligible if the teacher's motivation was to 'keep fit' as a teacher: to practise his voice and methods of presentation. But the activity would not be intelligible *as teaching*. It might be objected that the desert-island example highlights only a relatively trivial logical point – that teaching requires both a subject and an object just like some of Aristotle's moral virtues, for instance 'special justice' which 'must always involve more than one person' (Aristotle 1985: 146 [1138a18–21]) – and that the intrinsic value of teaching could still lie in the activity of teaching rather than a product beyond the activity. But then think of a teacher teaching a group of students in a situation in which an evil demon constantly wiped out all memories of the teaching in the students' minds. The activity in question could still have some kind of intrinsic value (as an inherently pleasant pastime, for example) but surely not intrinsic value *qua* teaching.

Teaching requires an audience which learns. It is far from the truth that the goods of teaching practice are *not* understandable independent of that practice. In fact, the goods of teaching are *only* understandable independent of the practice, because the end of that practice – the production of moral and/or intellectual virtue in the student – is 'a product beyond the activity' (on such ends, see Aristotle 1985: 1 [1094a3–10]). Similarly, building a house is an activity, but it produces a house, which is the end of the activity and a product beyond the activity (Aristotle 1941c: 830 [1050a23–9]). Dewey makes essentially the same point when he says that the same equation holds between teaching and learning as between selling and buying: 'No one can sell unless someone buys' (Dewey 1933: 35–6; cf. Noddings 2003: 242). From this we can divine that there need be no logical connection between a teacher's morality and the 'goodness' of the product of teaching. Generally immoral

persons could, in principle, be good maths teachers, for example, as long they do not subject their maths students to immoral treatment (cf. Orton 1998: 179). Notice that this argument does not subvert my point from Chapter 10 about the importance of the teacher exhibiting moral virtues, including agreeableness, in the classroom; I am simply making a logical point here.

It is no wonder that MacIntyre, when elaborating upon the point that all teaching is for the sake of something else and so 'does not have its own goods', concludes that 'teaching itself is not a practice' although it 'is put to the service of a variety of practices' (MacIntyre and Dunne 2002: 8–9). Coming from the man who has done more than anyone else to fuel the Aristotelian turn in education, and who seems to have been a chief motivator behind Dunne's work, Dunne considers this to be a strange and unexpected sting in the tail, leading to an 'impoverished' notion of teaching (Dunne 2003: 360). At stake in this controversy is, *inter alia*, the pedagogically loaded issue of the extent to which teachers are first and foremost professionals, in virtue of the command of their relevant discipline or in virtue of being a 'facilitator of learning' in some broader sense (for the former view, see MacIntyre's position in MacIntyre and Dunne 2002; for the opposing view, see, for example, Dunne 2003; Noddings 2003). I shall not enter into that debate here, although my sympathies would lie with MacIntyre. It is worth mentioning, however, if only as an aside, that MacIntyre's famous notion of a 'practice' – as 'any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised' (MacIntyre 1981: 175) – coincides only partially with Aristotle's '*praxis*' and does not have direct bearing on the course of my argument in this chapter. MacIntyre's notion is wider than Aristotle's in incorporating paradigmatic examples of *poiesis*, such as architecture and farming (indeed, it seems to include any public project with a socially defined point); it is narrower in excluding individual moral conduct and self-development (see, for example, Dunne 2003: 354; Carr 2003: 259, 261).

To return from MacIntyre to Aristotle, I see no escape from the conclusion that Aristotle's definition of *praxis* as having an end in itself is fatal to the *PPP*'s notion of teaching as *praxis*. This does not mean that *phronesis* is not required for teaching. It is required for teaching precisely to the extent that all teaching has a moral dimension; it is required specifically in values education (the cultivation of a host of moral dispositions to actions and emotions), but more generally in numerous educational decisions about approaches and priorities aimed at the well-being of students. For although Aristotle refuses to consider *phronesis* and *techné* to be 'included in' one another (Aristotle 1985: 152 [1140a3–6]), he sees a role for *phronesis* in eliciting and monitoring productive (extrinsically valuable) activities. But this does not make teaching exclusively a *praxis* because teaching also requires *theoria* (for example, when teaching logic and mathematics) and *techné* (in teaching various productive and performing skills). Orton (1998) comes close to the truth when presenting his 'balanced model of teacher reasoning' as resting on all three of the Aristotelian forms of reasoning (cf. Eisner 2002). Yet it is hard to avoid the conclusion that if teaching is to be described as involving essentially one form of activity rather than the other two, its strongest affinity is with kinds of *poiesis* such as medicine or navigation. Indeed, in the most comprehensive study of Aristotle's

conception of teaching undertaken so far, the author considers no possibility other than teaching as *poiesis* (Spangler 1998: 29–32).The fundamental goal of teaching is, after all, student learning which is a 'product beyond the activity' of teaching; although it will later be manifested through the students' own activities.

Dunne's (1993) *Back to the Rough Ground* calls for a return to the rooted roughness – but at the same time the flexibility and open texture – of practical school life, away from the misguided smoothness of theory. The fundamental message of my exploration is that we have, as educators, no good reason for denying ourselves the insights of moral, psychological and educational theory; or for considering teaching to be exclusively a *praxis*. There is, at least, no good Aristotelian reason for doing so – for not taking the smooth with the rough.

Assumption J is wrong.

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Chapter 12

Conclusion

12.1 Five Types of Fusion

As common as it is in recent educational literature to try to squeeze some measure of educational import from the works of certain Continental sociologists-cum-philosophers, their theoretical outlooks (postmodernism, poststructuralism) are in fact inimical to knowledge and its educative deliverance. Compared to such endeavours, the renascence of Aristotelianism in education offers a refreshing antidote. The problem is, however, that the mere halo effect of a past or present thinker never moves us far along the road to progress.

Many of the misinterpretations – or at least the seriously skewed interpretations – of Aristotle's texts that we have encountered in previous chapters can most plausibly be explained by the fact that the authors have been preoccupied with hustling their own agendas, simply enlisting Aristotle as a mouthpiece, a ventriloquist's dummy, to further those agendas. The *phronesis-praxis* perspective thus represents an anti-foundationalist stance in epistemology; Wilfred Carr is (or at least was) a critical theorist of a sort; Joseph Dunne is a proclaimer of anti-technicism in teaching; some of the exponents of character education are conservative (and fairly uncritical) moral traditionalists; Elliot Cohen is a Platonist in disguise; and Daniel Goleman and his followers propose a liberal conception of the self and its emotions. Much as their repeated allusions to Aristotle attest to the continuing power and topicality of his writings, those authors should have pursued their agendas independent of Aristotle. To be sure, by limiting one's sights to particular passages in Aristotle's corpus, it may be easy to find support for a variety of irreconcilable views. However, such uses tend to belie the whole picture: the grand view of our unrepentant systemizer.

I have tried to discharge some of the most common misapprehensions of Aristotle's writings into ten assumptions which are abroad in current educational discourse, and to declaim against them in as many chapters. One aim of this book has been to free Aristotle of those distortions. I do not reiterate my specific conclusions here; they have been summarized at the end of each chapter. Another, and more general, aim has been to flesh out the light that Aristotle's *virtue theory* sheds on current issues in *emotion studies* and in *education*. Each of the previous chapters has touched on at least two of those three key research areas – some on all three. What I hope has emerged from these forays into the views of the 'real' Aristotle is a clearer picture of the potential Aristotelian contribution to the research areas in question. It was once said that translations, like wives, are seldom faithful if they are in the least attractive. I have aimed at Aristotelian reconstructions that are faithful to Aristotle and, I dare hope, attractive to educators.

Yet this book has not given – nor was it ever intended to give – a comprehensive overview of Aristotelianism in the fields of morality, emotions and education. To do so, much more would have to be said, for instance, about the Aristotelian overarching virtue of prideful great-mindedness (*megalopsychia*) and its moral and educational implications. Aristotle's theory of the desert-based emotions, such as compassion and righteous indignation, would also have to be developed in greater detail. I have explored both those topics in previous books to which I have repeatedly referred (Kristjánsson 2002; 2006). Nevertheless, I would never contend that this book and the other two, taken together, amount to a comprehensive overview of Aristotelianism in the relevant areas. What must not be forgotten is that Aristotle did not think solely of people as moral agents, but also as biological and political beings. To aim at anything like a comprehensive account of Aristotle's views of morality, emotions and education, these three distinct spheres – the biological, the moral and the political – would have to be analysed separately and then integrated with regard to human beings, just as Tress (1997) has boldly attempted with regard to Aristotle's view of childhood. That is a task which I, as a moral philosopher rather than a classics scholar, would never dream of undertaking.

The title of the introductory chapter of this book was 'Fusing Heart and Head'. There are various types of fusion at work in Aristotle's writings; no wonder, perhaps, for an author whose very method of inquiry is based on the fusion of the words of 'the many and the wise' with certain reasonable metaphysical and psychological assumptions. By way of conclusion, then, I wish to concentrate on five different types of Aristotelian fusion that have been discussed in pages of this book: the fusions of cognition and feeling; action and emotion; biological, moral and political natures; theory and practice; and self and others.

Fusion of Cognition and Feeling

The fusion of cognition and feeling is, obviously, the most significant type of fusion for our present concerns. Aristotle claims that the rational and irrational parts of the soul can be synthesized such that the head does not rule the heart as an external dictator but that it infuses it with reason. I have belaboured this point, originally made in Section 2.3, at various junctures because it is all-important and bears repeating.

Fusion of Action and Emotion

Although emotion can, in a certain sense, be understood as 'action' of the soul, to feel and to act on one's feelings are, of course, two different things. But the Aristotelian point is that action and emotion need to be fused from the point of view of moral appraisal. Neither is more important than the other; it is impossible to live a morally informed, rewarding life without both proper emotions and proper actions. This truth is reflected in Aristotle's characterizations of the moral virtues, most of which involve an emotional element as well as an action-guiding one. Some virtues are even just emotional, full stop.

Fusion of Man's Biological, Moral and Political Natures

I have just mentioned this type of fusion above. Although Aristotle takes care to keep the analysis of each of these three elements separate and investigated by a distinct science, his point is that a full understanding of human beings is impossible without taking account of – and fusing – the analysis given by each science. Through the trajectory of our lives, we remain simultaneously biological, moral and political beings. One of the essential weaknesses of MacIntyre's (1981) *After Virtue*, a book which alerted so many people to the richness of Aristotle's ethical views, was its rejection of Aristotle's claim that an ethics independent of biology is impossible. Fortunately, MacIntyre has now come to his senses (MacIntyre 1999: x).

Fusion of Theory and Practice

Aristotle proposes a grand moral theory about human beings. He also emphasizes the practical awareness of specific situations needed to apply and constantly refine the theory, because a theory about human beings without the input of practice is empirically unfeasible. His theory is not on a par with the platinum meter bar preserved in a French museum. Nevertheless, it is a *theory*: one which duly informs and is informed by practice.

Fusion of Self and Others

Apart from the fusion of cognition and emotion, the fusion of self and others is the type which comes most often to our attention. The Aristotelian idea of moral selfhood as essentially other-entwined and other-dependent for its formation and sustenance is a powerful tool in untangling many of the falsehoods abroad in the current literature. If I am deemed to have used this tool *ad nauseam*, so be it.

Unmentioned in this shortlist of fusions, but lurking behind much of Aristotle's moral and political writings, is his synthesizing idea of morality and education: morality needs and is as much a part of education as education needs and is part of morality. Educators: take notice!

12.2 Aristotle and Five Mantras of Liberalism

> Academics are throwing themselves into the study of emotion with the rapturous intensity of a love affair. In a sense, emotion has always been at the core of the humanities: Without the passions, there would not be much history, and even less literature. Indeed the very word 'philosophy' begins with *philos* (love). But, however fraught with strong feelings the primary sources may be, only in recent years have scholars begun focusing, without embarrassment, on emotion itself, producing a body of work that regularly crosses the line between the humanities and the social sciences, with occasional forays into neurophysiology (McLemee 2003).

The trend described in this passage is real and I am part of it, for better or for worse. Although educationists have perhaps not thrown themselves into the study of emotions with the same 'rapturous intensity' as their colleagues in psychology and some of the humanities have, schooling of the emotions has become a relatively respectable topic in educational discourse. Much of the educational discussion seems, however, to have been unleashed by Goleman's populist writings on 'emotional intelligence' rather than by more scholarly sources – witness the movement of social and emotional learning in the USA. The underlying supposition is, then, that Goleman has packaged neatly for educational and public consumption an idea that can be traced back to Aristotle: an idea that also has ample academic support in present-day cognitive theories of emotion.

One of the crucial findings of this book – in my own view, at least – is how far removed the ideal of emotional intelligence is from Aristotle's ideal of emotional virtue. But these arguments were made in Chapter 6 and will not be repeated here. Rather, I shall elaborate briefly on a point made in that chapter: how snugly emotional intelligence fits into the grid of contemporary liberalism – a moral/political outlook that is, in point of fact, worlds apart from Aristotle's. It is indeed fitting, here at the close, to say something about liberalism. Most of what counts today as mainstream political philosophy is unmitigated *liberal* political philosophy; much the same holds for mainstream educational philosophy. Liberalism has become something of a latter-day Leviathan that disregards or squashes every idea that it cannot appropriate for its own aggrandizement. In this final section, I look at five common liberalist mantras and try to divine what Aristotle would find objectionable about them.

Choice

Liberalism inflates the value of autonomous choice. Provided that you respect the thin inter-human procedural rights posited by liberalism, the substance of your choice matters less than its reflection of your personal values and its instrumentality in satisfying those values. Tellingly, Aristotle does not even possess a concept of autonomy in the modern sense. This does not cancel the fact that after you acquire Aristotelian *phronesis*, it does matter that choices are yours; but what matters more is that they are morally informed and proper. Our rationality is a virtue, not an instrument. Aristotle could never acquiesce in the amoral nature of emotional intelligence.

Self-esteem

Liberalism emphasizes the benefits of high self-esteem and fosters the current self-help and therapy culture. Recall the 'feel-good factor' inherent in emotional intelligence: the ultimate aim of the bolstered self-understanding and self-control is to make us feel good about ourselves. For Aristotle, what counts is, by contrast, *self-respect*: not merely that we think ourselves worthy of great things, but that we are really worthy of them. Unfortunately, a kind of self-esteem fetishism has recently taken the educational world captive. It is as if all learning and behaviour problems at school would evaporate only if children had higher self-esteem. Apart from the

(Aristotelian) moral misgivings about that assumption, it does not seem to be borne out by empirical evidence: high self-esteem does not prevent children from smoking, drinking, taking drugs or engaging in early sex. If anything, high self-esteem fosters experimentation, which may increase early sexual activity or drinking. The modest correlations that have been found between self-esteem and school performance do not indicate that high self-esteem leads to good performance; instead high self-esteem turns out to be partly the result of good school performance. Efforts to enhance the self-esteem of pupils have not been shown to improve academic performance and may sometimes be counter-productive. In general, there is no evidence that boosting self-esteem, whether by therapeutic interventions or by school programmes, causes notable benefits (see Baumeister et al. 2003; cf. Swann 1996). It would be heartwarming for an Aristotelian to see similar academic efforts spent at exploring the empirical correlation between self-respect and school performance, self-respect and drug use and self-respect and early sexual experiences! Unfortunately, self-respect remains almost totally un-researched in empirical psychology (see Roland and Foxx 2003).

Multiculturalism

Liberalism wants people from heterogeneous backgrounds to gather around a small common core of values, while retaining their essentially separate identities. Such a bond will be fragile and easily destroyed. Aristotelian multiculturalism – while not disregarding individual and cultural differences – suggests a much larger common core of values, by virtue of the fact that human beings are a single species, sharing the same basic virtues and vices of action and emotion.

Equality

Liberalism posits that people are of equal moral worth as persons. For Aristotle, people are of unequal moral worth as persons, depending on their demonstrated levels of moral attainment: the extent to which they have made the virtues of action and emotion their own. However, people are treated equally in the sense that the scale to weigh their relative attainments is the same. There is thus no essential elitism inherent in Aristotelianism, no *a priori* assumption of moral difference prior to empirical investigation (see further in Kristjánsson 2002: Section 4.4). That Aristotle often got his empirical assessments wrong – as in the case of women, slaves and labourers – is an altogether different matter.

Rejection of Desert

Liberals reject desert as a morally salient concept because it implies (1) a thick, substantive ideal of the good, (2) a strict sense of personal moral responsibility and (3) the idea of unequal moral worth. Aristotle, by contrast, considers desert to be an important moral concept and properly felt desert-based emotions to constitute some of the most relevant emotional virtues in human beings (see further in Kristjánsson 2006: Chs 2–3).

Those brief comparisons may have further convinced readers of the senselessness of trying to align a basically liberal conception of emotional achievement, such as that often-mentioned umbrella notion of emotional intelligence, with an Aristotelian precedent. Those comparisons may also have revealed the fact that to see anything like Aristotle's conception of moral and emotional virtue required for today's schooling, one must have become disillusioned with the liberal paradigm. I hope for readers who share this disillusionment with me that this book has provided food for thought.

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