

GREEKS, NEUROSCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

All mammals display emotions but only humans are thought to have sophisticated cognitive capabilities. Many philosophers have valued them over emotions and considered them a means of taming our emotions and enabling us to rise above animals in our behavior and accomplishments. Political philosophers from Plato to the present have emphasized the need or reason to constrain or channel emotions if political orders are to be created and preserved. Political scientists and psychologists have long assumed that emotional arousal reduces the ability of people to carry out complex cognitive tasks or make good decisions.

From the time of the ancient Greeks there have also been thinkers alert to the personal and social benefits of emotions. In the last decade, research in neuroscience has begun to explore the relationship between cognition and affect and numerous studies indicate that they interact in complex, often positive ways, that are still poorly understood. In this chapter, I summarize the debate about emotion and reason by drawing on ancient and modern sources. I argue that affect and reason are both essential to good performance of complex cognitive tasks. Together, they determine the kind of sensory inputs we seek or respond to and how we evaluate this information and act upon it. I am particularly interested in explaining conflict and cooperation. What matters most in interpersonal and international relations, I contend, is the kind of reason employed and the nature of the affect with which it interacts.

I begin by reviewing contemporary understandings of reason and emotion in political science and psychology and contrast them with the understandings of ancient Greeks. Recent work in neuroscience offers provisional support for some of the key insights of Greek philosophers. I turn to the Greeks because their writings are the most self-conscious in their conceptualization of reason, affect and their relationship. Drawing on the tragic playwrights, but mostly Plato and Aristotle, I offer definitions of reason and emotion and construct a typology to help us understand their relationship and its implications for international cooperation and conflict. As my definitions and typology are rooted in Greek thought they are culturally specific. I nevertheless maintain that the Greeks grasped something universal about human nature, making my typology and its categories broadly applicable to any culture or policymaking elite. Their application will reveal considerable variety and in this sense foreground, not ignore, cultural as well as individual variation.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND THE EMOTIONS

The Enlightenment constituted a sharp break with past thinking and practice. Its rejection of Aristotelian *telos* (the end something is intended to achieve, and how that end drives its development) helped pave the way for modernity.¹ Rejection of *telos* required a corresponding reconceptualization of reason. It was reduced from an end in itself to a mere instrumentality -- “the slave of the passions,” in the words of David Hume.² Max Weber would later coin the term “instrumental reason” to describe this transformation, which he recognized which had come to dominate the modern world and our approach to it. Freud incorporated it in his model of the mind; the ego embodies reason and mediates

between the impulses of the Id and the superego and external environment. Rational choice employs a similar understanding of reason; it assumes that actors rank order their preferences and engage in the kind of strategic behavior best calculated to obtain them. Reason has two faces for modern social science. Psychologists emphasize the ways in which complex thought processes interact with emotion. Political scientists, by contrast, emphasize reason's ability to structure means-ends relationships for goal seeking and downplay the role of emotion.

The modern conceptualization of reason as instrumental was part and parcel of the shift in focus away from the ends we should seek to the means of best satisfying our appetites. This understanding is absolutely fundamental to political science. In its formative years, the discipline was concerned primarily with law and public administration. The former aimed to provide rules and the latter organizations, both reason-based, that would allow society and its members to achieve their goals in an efficient way. More recently, game theoretic and rationalist models start from the premise that much all behavior is goal-oriented. While not always rule-based, they assume it can still be structured and understood rationally. Scholars who work in this tradition are also interested in how rational behavior can work against actors' goals, as in the well-known example of the tragedy of the commons. Emotions did not enter into the design of laws and institutions or models of strategic interaction. Both enterprises rest on the Enlightenment assumption that reason, not emotion, is the proper basis for individual and collective behavior.

Psychologists and political psychologists are among the only social scientists to express a serious interest in affect. They have most commonly applied concepts from

cognitive psychology -- cognitive biases, heuristics and prospect theory -- to the study of foreign policy decisionmaking.³ Other international relations scholars, the author included, have used motivational models of decisionmaking, drawing in particular on Irving Janis and Leon Mann, to help explain such events as the First World War, the Sino-American component of the Korean War and the Falklands-Malvinas War of 1982 and intelligence failures preceding these and other wars.⁴ Psychobiography, rooted in Freudian concepts, illuminated the careers of such well-known figures as Martin Luther, Mahatma Gandhi, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon.⁵ Their authors have attempted to show how their personality structures empowered these individuals and helped to make them successful religious or political figures, and in the case of the politicians were also responsible for the worst, occasionally self-destructive, acts or decisions. All these approaches turn to emotions to explain deviance from rational behavior and attribute bad outcomes to emotional arousal or the personality structure responsible for it. A singular exception is the effort by the author and Janice Gross Stein to show how motivated bias made it possible for Mikhail Gorbachev to take the risks that facilitated resolution of the Cold War and how Ronald Reagan's underdeveloped schema about the Soviet Union made him more emotionally receptive than his advisors to Gorbachev's overtures.⁶

For Aquinas, most emotions were related to capital sins. In his 1649 *Passions de l'Âme* [Passions of the Soul], Descartes equated emotions with "uproar," "social unrest," vehemence and rowdiness. For Kant, they were illnesses of the mind (*Krankheiten des Gemüts*), although he touted the therapeutic value of the emotions associated with the sublime. Social science, with its emphasis on reason, is steeped in this tradition. Reason

is conceived somewhat differently by psychologists and political scientists. The former associated it with complex cognitive processes that involve logical inference, and the latter with means-ends relationships central to goal seeking. Emotions have been traditionally considered damaging to both activities. Only recently, and in part thanks to neuroscience, have some psychologists and political scientists begun to consider that emotions can have beneficial consequences for social and political behavior.⁷

NEUROSCIENCE

Research in neuroscience indicates that emotions are involved in decisionmaking, generally in a positive way, and from the earliest stage of deciding what information deserves our attention.⁸ Most questions about emotions nevertheless remain unanswered, and, I would argue, many important ones have not yet been posed.

In neuroscience, and psychology more generally, this is no accepted definition of emotions. For the ancient Greeks, *pathema* described mental states not directly arising from their actors' own initiatives but generally in response to those of others. The Latin *affectus*, from which our "affect" derives, was based on a similar understanding; it referred to the emotional response of an event or experience. The word "passion" in French and English is derived directly from the Greek. Moderns continue to associate emotions, or affect – the two terms are generally used interchangeably, with feelings or passions. They are sometimes ordered in typologies of like and dislike, pleasure and pain and judgments of good and bad.⁹ In neuroscience, emotions are increasingly conceived as a superordinate psychological mechanisms that coordinate, regulate and prioritize other physiological processes. They have accordingly assumed to play a motivational, as

opposed to passive role. This understanding is shared with Thomas Aquinas and prominent mid-twentieth century psychologists like Sylvan Tomkins and Magda Arnold. Appraisal theory, attributed to Arnold, maintains that people make immediate appraisals of everything they encounter.¹⁰ Building on this understanding, Nico Frijda suggests that emotions be defined as "event-instigated of object-instigated states of action readiness."¹¹

In neuroscience, as in psychology, there is a debate over whether emotions represent a natural class of phenomena. Up to the mid-nineteenth century, vitalism was the dominant paradigm and attributed emotions to some quasi-spiritual quality known as the *élan vital*. This understanding was reminiscent of the ancient Homeric notion that emotions like courage arose in the *thumos*, imagined to be an internal organ. Darwin sought to explain emotions as an evolutionary development and was struck by the communality of facial expressions he observed.¹² This was the beginning of the basic emotions hypothesis, which has been elaborated by modern scholars who stress similarities in facial expressions and brain circuits across cultures.¹³ Since Darwin, neurophysiology has attempted to explain emotions as states triggered by biochemical reactions in response to external stimuli, and thus universal in nature.¹⁴ There has been a corresponding attempt to account for the alleged similarity of emotions as a response to such universal concerns as threat, loss, competition, status.¹⁵ Critics insist that universality does not prove biological origin.¹⁶

Another important mid-nineteenth century development was the development of the "Berlin Biophysics Club," centered around Carl Ludwig, Hermann von Helmholtz and Ernst Brücke. They rejected all non-observable entities, and in the process, helped to establish modern medicine. This orientation ultimately led to behaviorism in psychology. Its

radical form, developed by John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner, excluded emotions and largely rejected instinct in favor of stimulus-response learning. In the 1970s, behaviorism lost ground to equally simplistic information processing approaches based on cybernetics and computers. Here too, as I noted earlier, efforts were made to subsume emotions to cognitions.

Neuroscience has the ability to look inside the brain, something traditional psychology could not do. MRI imaging can link affect to observable events inside the brain.¹⁷ At first, cognition and affect were studied separately as they were considered different faculties. Neuroimaging focused on the Amygdala as the source of emotions, but later research indicated that the Amygdala interacts extensively with other brain systems linked to cognition and awareness.¹⁸ These systems in turn influence the Amygdala through verbal and emotional communication. There is now widespread recognition that neither emotion nor cognition can be studied separately.¹⁹ Neuroimaging further indicates that affects, unlike cognitions, are not encoded as information. "They are diffuse global states generated by deep subcortical brain structures, interacting with primitive ciscertomatic body (core self) representations that remain poorly mapped."²⁰ Panskepp argues that while interdependent, cognition and affect represent two different features of the brain.²¹ Evolutionary psychologists disagree, with some arguing that they are so interrelated that they cannot be conceptually distinguished.²²

The MRI is a remarkable tool, but the most it can do is identify "hot spots" in the brain associated with different activities, emotions and cognitive processes. This gives neuroscientists the ability to image neural networks associated with emotions. These are, of course, correlative, not causal associations. We know nothing about what dopamine

does "upstream" in the brain.²³ This has not prevented neuroscientists from speculating about affect and how it emerges from neural activities. There are roughly three schools of thought in this regard. Ultra-reductionist behavioral neuroscience denies that affect is an inherent part of the mammalian brain. It describes it as epiphenomenal and the result of higher cognitive functions. Cognitive neuroscience maintains that emotions exist in their own right and are important for cognitive function. This view is closely associated with Antony Damasio and Joseph Le Doux.²⁴ Damasio discovered that cognitive decisionmaking is impaired when the affective structures of the orbito-frontal cortex are damaged. His neuroimaging of anger, fear, sadness led to the discovery that the subcortical system, also known as the limbic system, figures prominently in the development and expression of emotions. Le Doux helped to describe how fear is elaborated within the Amygdala. A third approach, affective neuroscience, argues that emotions arise in deep subcortical structures of mammals and that humans are not alone in experiencing emotions.²⁵ Support for this view comes from the finding that some affect is prereflective.²⁶ There is considerable evidence that affective reactions can occur without subjects being aware of them and can be pre-cognitive.²⁷ Raw affect, positive and negative, may be hardwired into the brain.²⁸

Neuroscience has entered the debate about the consequences of emotions. Some cognitive scientists emphasize the negative view of emotions and regard them as atavistic holdovers from earlier evolutionary states. They deny that they contribute to survival as they formerly did. More positive understandings regard emotions as the source of intimacy and therefore as the basis of all interpersonal relations. According to this view, which we will see, is close to that of the ancient Greeks, emotions help people to

overcome problems. More fundamentally, they are critical for social survival as they are the foundation for social bonds and the relationships they enable and sustain.²⁹ These affiliative bonds can become strong enough that the group in a real sense becomes the person's self.³⁰ Group identification in turn is an important resource in the competition for scarce goods and status.³¹ Emotions abet survival.³²

With respect to decisionmaking, there is strong evidence that mild, positive affect is beneficial.³³ It promotes flexibility in thinking.³⁴ It encourages people to consider a wider array of variables when making decisions.³⁵ It also has the potential to reduce defensiveness.³⁶ There has been considerable work on stress and decisionmaking, and there a consensus has emerged that mild stress enhances hippocampal-dependent cognition and leads to greater vigilance. By contrast, acute stress degrades it and can have a lasting physiological impact.³⁷

GREEKS AND EMOTIONS

My approach to reason and affect builds on Greek philosophy and literature, not neuroscience. Although, it will become apparent, neuroscience offers support for the Greek belief that affect can play a very positive and necessary role in shaping constructing social identities and creating and maintaining social order. Unlike the moderns, the Greeks have a more elaborate, and I contend, more useful, conception of reason, which allows us to theorize about the conditions under which it and affect will have beneficial or negative consequences for individuals and their societies. I will exploit their understanding to develop a typology of reason and affect that is applicable not only to decisionmaking but to human behavior more generally.

Emotions: Let me begin with the Greek understanding of emotions. As with so much else about the Greeks, the appropriate starting point is Homer. His *Iliad* showcases the two faces of emotions. Friendship (*philia*) and group identification hold together both the Trojan and Greek communities. Sexual passion – Paris' affair and abduction of Helen – and the anger it arouses bring these communities into conflict. Competition for status between Achilles and Agamemnon threatens Greek solidarity, and Achilles' anger following the death of his beloved Patroclus threatens to deny him human status. His sympathy for King Priam of Troy, who has come to collect the body of his son, restores his humanity.³⁸

The Greek approach to emotions differs from moderns in two important ways. They did not believe that means could be divorced from ends. In contrast to American social science that studies political behavior in terms of instrumental reason, Greeks sought to explain behavior not only in terms of the goals actors sought but with reference to their identities. Self-interest and identity were commonly reinforcing and confronted people with difficult choices when they were not. Unlike modern Europeans, Greek philosophers did not conceive of emotions as states of agitation independent of cognition. They described them as mediated, actually aroused, by the interpretations people place on the words, deeds and intentions, of others. Aristotle considers emotions to result of reasoning and malleable because they can be altered by changing the attributions we make about others' motives.³⁹ In *Philoctetes*, Sophocles shows how successful persuasion can turn on the ability to reshape another actor's attributions and emotions.⁴⁰ Thucydides and the playwrights recognized that emotions can be made self-validating when action based on them provokes the expected behavior.⁴¹ For Greeks, the distinction

between cognitive (cold) and motivational (hot) processes, fundamental to contemporary psychology, was unthinkable. Cognition, for the Greeks, could not be divorced from affect, and vice versa.

The Greek approach to emotions indicates the existence of more cultural variation than Darwinists are prepared to admit. The Greek lexicon of the emotions is not the same as ours, and Greek terms for seemingly shared emotions do not necessarily coincide with ours. This is most evident in the case of love, friendship and anger.⁴² Greek conceptions of honor and shame differ in significant ways from their nineteenth century Southern and contemporary Mediterranean and Middle Eastern counterparts.⁴³ For both, however, shame is a pain or disturbance concerning bad things that appear to lead to loss of reputation.⁴⁴ Greeks and moderns also differ in the number of emotions they acknowledge.⁴⁵ There are even greater differences between Western and non-Western understandings of emotions.⁴⁶ There is evidence that these differences are systematically related to ethical conceptions.⁴⁷

Of the Greek philosophers, Aristotle offers the most complete analysis of emotions. He describes every emotion (*pathos*) as evoking pain or pleasure. Pain and pleasure are not emotions, but sensations (*aisthēseis*) mediated by the intellect. Anger is accompanied by both pain and pleasure; the former because a slight that arouses the anger diminishes one's dignity, and the latter from the anticipation of revenge. Aristotle defines anger as something that is "properly felt when anyone gets what is not appropriate for him, though he may be a good enough man. It may also be aroused when anyone sets himself up against his superior."⁴⁸ As for revenge, he quotes Homer to the effect that it is "Sweeter it is by far than the honeycomb dripping with sweetness."⁴⁹

People suffer pain when they fail to get revenge.⁵⁰ Anger is not an appropriate response to affronts from people who are more powerful than we are, because it is unlikely that we can gain revenge. We can, however, experience this pleasure vicariously when offenders receive their comeuppance.⁵¹ This response is nicely captured by the German concept of *Schadenfreude*.

Anger is a key emotion for Aristotle because so much of Greek life revolved around public competition and confrontation. Citizens were constantly judging one another and making their opinions known.⁵² The Greeks had a narrower and more precise understanding of anger than contemporary Westerners for whom anger can be provoked in many ways. Harm is a case in point. For the Greeks, harm does not trigger anger, even when it is intentionally inflicted. Harm provokes hostility or hatred (*misein*), unless it also entails a slight. For Aristotle, anger can only be directed at individuals – unlike hatred, which can be felt towards entire peoples – and only toward those who can feel your anger.⁵³ Reflecting a widely shared understanding, Aristotle considers someone who is in a position to avenge a slight and fails to do so servile and contemptible, and unworthy of being Greek.⁵⁴ Classical Greeks nevertheless recognized that anger not infrequently provokes ill-considered actions that have serious adverse practical consequences. Thucydides tells us how Athenians voted out of anger (*hupo orgēs*) to kill all Mytilenean males as punishment for their unsuccessful rebellion.⁵⁵ Diodotus convinces the assembly to reverse its decision, and in Thucydides' account does so on the grounds that it is not in the Athenian interest.⁵⁶

These differences have important implications for behavior. Anger is a luxury for Greeks because only the powerful people can indulge themselves this way. Anger was

considered alien or inappropriate to slaves, women, the poor and weak cities in their relationships with stronger actors. In modern Western society, anger is a universally felt emotion. The weak must accordingly find surrogate targets for its release, such as subordinates at the work place and wives and children. In extreme cases this results in wife beating or "going postal." Alternatively, it can prompt confrontations that the angered party is likely to lose. In *Why Nations Fight*, I found that seven percent of all wars involving great or rising powers from 1648 to the present were motivated by revenge, and that the initiators lost every one of these wars.⁵⁷ Behavior of this kind almost certainly occurred in Greece as well. In the *Iliad*, Thersites, the only commoner mentioned by name, expresses his anger at Agamemnon for leading Greeks into an endless, costly war, and is promptly struck down by Odysseus. In Oedipus, we encounter the first instance of "road rage," which has fatal consequences for Oedipus' father, who misjudged the power balance between his entourage and the younger stranger he met on the road.

Friendship was another key emotion for Greeks, and one that was also understood differently. For Plato, friendship (*philia*), not common interests or beliefs, are the foundation of the city. Regional peace in turn is built on friendship among cities (*poleis*).⁵⁸ At both levels, relationships are created and sustained through a dense network of social interaction and reciprocal obligations that build common identities along with mutual respect and affection.⁵⁹ All communities are organized around the principles of hierarchy and *philia*. The latter embrace affection, friendship and belonging, and at its core signify some form of freely chosen association.⁶⁰ *Philia* is routinely used to describe the bonds of marriage and the political "friendship" of citizens

who choose to associate with one another in a political community.⁶¹ In the last third of the fifth-century, as Pericles' funeral oration indicates, the term is also used to characterize a citizen's relationship to his polis and responsibility for its well-being.⁶² Without intended irony, Athenian playwrights describe as "demos-lovers," people who have the same degree of affection for their polis as for their family and friends.⁶³

Friendship is a central theme of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Friendship, he asserts, is necessary for happiness, the ultimate human goal. He describes three kinds of friendship: that of utility, pleasure and excellence. The first two are instrumental in intent and only the last is true friendship because it is pursued as an end in itself. True friends are good people similar in virtue, and attain virtue largely through friendship. Virtue has many meanings for Aristotle but is best described as experiencing the right feelings at the right time and using the right means to pursue the right ends. Put another way, it leads people to hew an intermediate path between the extremes of excess and deficiency in all emotions and pursuits. Here too friends help one another by example and reciprocity. Between true friends, this takes the form of goodwill, of giving without expectation of return.⁶⁴ Plato and Aristotle consider friendship the most important means by which citizens could stretch their identity. It encourages them to widen their understanding of self-interest to encompass the interests of his friends and, by extension, the city, if not all of Hellas. Friendships also provide rewards not available to autonomous individuals, allowing people to realize their full potential as human beings. This is why Aristotle insists that the good life is only possible in the polis.

Modern social science puts great emphasis on socialization. People learn through the examples of others and the rewards and punishments meted out in response to their

behavior. Greeks also emphasized emulation as a source of learning and its ability to make certain behavior habitual. For this reason Aristotle considered good role models essential to education and the development of virtue. Virtue also required reflection. Emulation was superficial learning and did not provide people with the incentive to mimic the actions of friends and other role models in circumstances where it would harm their short-term interests. For these relationships to have positive social consequences people had to understand why the practices that instantiated them were important and in their long-term interest. Reflection had the potential to reinforce example and, in the case of friendship, to lead to virtue.

Reason: The Greeks were the first to conceptualize different kinds of reason. Instrumental reason, to use Weber's term, was for the Greeks the simplest kind of reason. It describes the strategic calculations that enable us to pursue, and often, satisfy our desires in the external world. David Hume was right in calling this kind of reason the "slave of the passions" because it has no ability to alter or shape our goals. At best it can restrain them when goal seeking in inappropriate circumstances would likely lead to failure or punishment.

A second, higher form of reason, is called *phronēsis* by Aristotle and generally translated into English as practical reason. It is the product of reflection on our behavior and that of others, especially positive role models. For Aristotle, it is concerned with particulars, but can help make for better life by influencing the means we use to achieve and encouraging us to think about their appropriateness.⁶⁵ Adam Smith describes a similar kind of reflection for which the market is a catalyst. It can teach self-interested

people prudence, discipline and a set of qualities Smith calls “propriety,” and lead us to defer short-term gratification for longer-term, more substantial rewards.⁶⁶

For Plato and Aristotle there is a third kind of reason. It is a drive in its own right that seeks to understand what makes for the happy life and to educate the appetite and spirit to work with it toward that end.⁶⁷ Reason of this kind has the potential to make us wise. Toward this end reason can construct ideal worlds that we can use as models for our own worlds and behavior. Plato created such worlds in his *Republic* and *Laws* to illustrate societies based on the principle of fairness. In our own time, John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas have theorized about such worlds, giving more emphasis to the principles of equality.

Instrumental reason is a double-edged sword. It makes it possible for individuals to satisfy their appetites and spirit. It is the foundation of order because it makes human actions more regular and predictable. Instrumental reason allows people to make connections between ends and means to maximize their chances of getting what they want. It can lead them to recognize the advantages of pursuing their goals in socially sanctioned ways. The majority of people stop on red and go on green, whether the signals emanate from traffic lights or prospective business or sex partners. Societies can effectively shape behavior by virtue of the motives they emphasize, the channels they deem appropriate for their attainment and the rules they associate with these channels. Instrumental reason can also be disruptive. Actors intent on achieving their goals recognize that there are shortcuts in the form of free riding and cheating. Both kinds of behavior have the potential to undermine the *nomos* that sustain order and predictability. Free riding and cheating arouse concerns, if not the fears, of other actors, encouraging

them to behave in similar ways, if only to protect themselves and their interests. When enough actors violate *nomos*, those who continue to play by the rules are at a serious disadvantage and have strong incentives to follow suit. Thucydides describes such a downward spiral in fifth century Greece, and history offers the late Roman Republic, the Roman Empire and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century as additional examples.

The second level of reason -- let us stay with Aristotle's characterization of it as *phronēsis* -- encourages actors to reformulate their behavior on the basis of reflection. It goes beyond the simple feedback associated with instrumental reason that lets actors calibrate their behavior to make it more accurate or effective. It involves learning about one's environment and how it works. It can enhance order and predictability when actors come to appreciate that their ability to satisfy their appetites or spirit is enhanced by, or even depends on, a robust society, and it is thus in their interest to act in ways to make that a reality. Second-level reason provides incentives for the kinds of community sustaining activities and individual self-restraint that Tocqueville, drawing on the Greeks, calls self-interest well-understood

Phronēsis for Aristotle, and propriety for Smith, encourages people to formulate more refined and elaborate goals. These goals are even more dependent on order and predictability and give actors additional incentives to exercise self-restraint. *Phronēsis* can also prompt recognition that multiple and open hierarchies are ultimately in the common interest. In the modern era, it led to the counter-intuitive understanding that the world's wealth was not a finite and unchanging, and that mercantilism, based on this premise, was counter-productive for even powerful actors.

COOPERATION AND CONFLICT

We are emotional beings, not computers. Reason always functions in tandem with affect and can have quite divergent consequences depending on how they interact. Reason combined with positive affect in the form of affection builds empathy. It encourages us to see others as our ontological equals and to recognize the self-actualizing benefits of close relationships. For Plato, *eros* can be educated by reason and directed toward the good and the beautiful and even the kind wisdom concerned with the ordering of states and families.⁶⁸ From Socrates to Gadamer, philosophers have maintained that dialogue has the potential to make us recognize the parochial and limited nature of our understandings of justice. Affection and reason together make us seek cooperation, not only as a means of achieving specific ends, but of becoming ourselves. They bring many of us – individuals and social collectivities – to the recognition that self-restraint, that is self-imposed limitations on our appetites and spirit, are essential to sustain the kinds of environments in which meaningful cooperation becomes possible.

Reason almost always interacts with affect. Instrumental reason divorced from emotional commitments reinforces people's conceptions of themselves as autonomous and egoistic. It leads them to act in selfish, if sometimes, efficient ways and to frame relationships with others in purely strategic ways. People are treated as means, not ends in themselves, to use Kant's famous distinction. In these circumstances, the pursuit of self-interest is likely to intensify conflict and undermine or prevent the emergence of communities that enable actors to advance their interests and satisfy their spirit more effectively by means of cooperative behavior. Modern social science, which welcomes,

utilizes and propagates such an understanding of human beings, stands in sharp contrast to traditional philosophy, not only in its assumptions about human beings, but in the kinds of behavior it encourages and endorses. Ironically, the same social science that worries about the tragedy of the commons frames human beings as autonomous, egoistic actors, encouraging people to behave in ways that bring this situation about.

For this reason, theories of cooperation in international relations – realist, liberal institutionalist, social capital and “thin” constructivist – cannot explain cooperation. The most they can do is tell us something about the circumstances likely to bring cooperation about (e.g., coordination, leadership, institutions, trust), in situations where actors are predisposed to cooperate. They tell us nothing about how this commitment comes about or how it can be encouraged in a non-cooperative environment. All these theories also frame the problem narrowly, as issue-based cooperation. For analytical purchase, they rely on the same explanatory mechanisms imported from micro-economics: external stimuli in the form of environmental constraints and incentives and the choices of other actors. They frame the problem of cooperation on a case-by-case basis, with actors cooperating or defecting in each instance on the basis of instrumental calculations of self interest. The more interesting and fundamental question, as noted above, is the underlying propensity and willingness to cooperate with a given set of actors. In its absence, order is impossible, and cooperation, if possible at all, is unlikely to extend beyond the most obvious, important and self-enforcing issues.⁶⁹

Plato and Aristotle address approach the problem of cooperation differently. For their answers, they turn to reason, not instrumental reason, but reason the drive because of its potential to construct ordered and just worlds by constraining and educating

appetites and spirit. These are separate but related processes. The initial stage consists of limiting expressions of appetite (e.g., overindulgence of food or alcohol) and spirit (ill-chosen methods of competition or ill-timed expressions of anger) that are self-defeating or self-destructive. Reason must go on to teach appetite and spirit alike to become more discriminating, develop more refined tastes and seek higher goals. Plato distinguishes between *epithumia*, which are unreasoning or animal desires, and *eros*, which can be educated by reason and directed toward the good and the beautiful and even the kind wisdom concerned with the ordering of states and families.⁷⁰ For Aristotle, reason can constrain and educate appetite and spirit alike. Together with education it can lead people to more sophisticated appetites and ways of satisfying the spirit, which in turn require greater self-constraint and longer postponement of gratification. For both Plato and Aristotle, reason the drive must also deflect people and their societies from seeking wealth as an end in itself, as opposed to acquiring it as a means of satisfying the requisites of a good life. They condemn the appetite for wealth on the grounds that it can never be satisfied; when people become consumed by its pursuit, they have no time for leisure and reflection. Both activities are important components of the educational process because from time to time we need to take ourselves out of our daily routines and reflect upon them and the lessons they can teach us about life and happiness. For intellectually gifted people, leisure also allows the pursuit of wisdom through philosophy.⁷¹

Education is a life-long project whose object Plato describes as the attainment of mental health in the form of psychological balance.⁷² Aristotle characterizes it as a process that teaches people to follow the mean between excess and deficit in almost

everything.⁷³ Justice is not an overarching virtue for Aristotle as it is for Plato, but for both philosophers it is a mental state that we might not unreasonably equate with truly enlightened self-interest.⁷⁴ Justice has several key components, the first of which – the exercise of appropriate self-restraint – I have already noted. Education not only teaches reasons for self-restraint, it seeks to make its exercise habitual. With maturity, education increasingly becomes a self-guided process: reason, experience and reflection combine to provide more sophisticated grounds for self-restraint. Reason widens citizens’ horizons and circle of concerns by convincing them of their dependence on their community, not only for physical protection, but for creating and maintaining the conditions and fostering the relationships that enable appetite and spirit to be satisfied in the most fulfilling ways.⁷⁵

For reason to constrain spirit and appetite, it must educate them, just as it must constrain them to educate them. This seeming tautology is resolved by the active involvement of parents and guardians who impose on young people the kind of restraints they are incapable of imposing on themselves, and educate them by means of the examples of their own lives.⁷⁶ Role models are critical components of individual and civic education necessary to bring about reason-informed worlds.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, as Socrates discovered, people are at least as likely to resent, even punish, others who lead just lives. Plato and Aristotle sought unsuccessfully, I would argue, to find some way out of this bind, and the difficulty of doing so was an important reason for their general pessimism. Plato resorted to the “noble lie” to create his fictional city of Kallipolis; its founders agree among themselves to tell their descendants that their nomos was established by the gods. He does not tell us how the founders themselves gained enough

wisdom and insight to devise these laws and willingly submit themselves to their constraints.

The understanding of reason shared by Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle differs in important ways from modern conceptions of reason. For the ancients, as we have seen, reason is an instrumental faculty and a drive with goals of its own. A second important difference is its relation to affect. Plato and Aristotle believe that reason can only have beneficial effects in concert with the proper emotions.⁷⁸ Dialogue is valuable for Plato because of its ability to establish friendships. When we feel warmly toward others, we empathize with them and can learn to see ourselves through their eyes. This encourages us to see them as our ontological equals. Affect and reason combine to make us willing to listen to their arguments with an open ear, and, more importantly, to recognize that our understandings of justice, which we think of as universal are in fact parochial. We come to understand a more fundamental reason for self-restraint: it makes it possible for others to satisfy their appetites and spirits. Self-restraint is instrumentally rational because it makes friendships, wins the loyalty of others and sustains the social order that makes it possible for everyone actors to satisfy their appetites and spirit. Self-restraint also brings important emotional rewards because spirit and appetite are best gratified in the context of close relations with other people.

For Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle, what holds true for individuals holds true for their cities. The most ordered and just cities are those with properly educated citizens. Guided by reason and love for their polis, they willingly perform tasks to which they are best suited and take appropriate satisfaction from their successful completion. The foundation of the city is the friendship (*philia*) that citizens develop with one another, and

regional peace is built on friendship among cities (*poleis*).⁷⁹ At both levels, relationships are created and sustained through a dense network of social interaction and reciprocal obligations that build common identities along with mutual respect and affection.⁸⁰

This preceding discussion suggests a 2 x 2 matrix of emotion and reason that underlies diverse forms of behavior, especially cooperation and conflict. Emotion can be divided into positive and negative affect. Do the actors in question feel positively or negatively about the others with whom they must interact? Although this condition can be set up as a binary for purposes of presentation, it is better conceived of as a continuum, with highly positive feeling anchoring one end and highly negative the other. The reason dimension is divided between instrumental reason and *phronēsis*.

Table 1: Cooperation and Conflict

	Instrumental Reason	<i>Phronēsis</i>
Negative Affect	limited cooperation or escalating conflict	Possible reevaluation
Positive Affect	Cooperation more likely	Cooperation

While a simplistic representation of a far more complex reality, this matrix captures something essential about social relations. It indicates that negative affect combined with instrumental reason is most likely to produce conflict. This is because actors pursue short-term gains by whatever means seem most likely to produce the ends they seek. They are unconstrained by any negative longer-term consequences of their actions (e.g., creating or exacerbating a conflict spiral) or by the dislike, anger or hostility they may provoke. The world realism purports to describes lives in this quadrant. To the extent that it is populated by actors who combine negative affect with instrumental reason, it will be made self-fulfilling and self-sustaining. It is the most difficult of worlds from which to exit.

The mirror image of this world is found in quadrant four, where positive affect interacts with *phronēsis*. Actors will be more reflective about their goals and willing to sacrifice immediate payoffs for greater rewards over the long-term. They will exercise self-restraint because of their affection for those with whom they interact. Such a world can also be made self-fulfilling as actors stretch their identities through cooperation, providing even stronger incentives for them to frame interest collectively rather than selfishly. Common action can also build common identities, bringing interests more into harmony. Adam Smith believed that commerce had the potential to create such a world. Neoliberals assert, without much evidence, that we live in such a world, or would in the absence of governmental intervention and regulation. In practice, no political world maps on to this description, although some come closer than others. It remains an ideal, realized perhaps only in family and small group relations.

The other two quadrants describe possibly cooperative but generally unstable states. Positive affect combined with instrumental reason has the potential to create and sustain cooperation if actors exercise self-restraint on the basis of their feelings toward one another. Self-restraint in this circumstance can bring positive rewards in circumstances where it is not necessary for to make concessions. Such restraint and rewards can encourage actors to rethink their behavior and move them and their world toward quadrant four. The Federalist Papers -- number ten in particular -- assume that American politics takes place in this world. Factions, according to James Madison, must make alliances with other factions to achieve a majority. As issues change, so too will the make-up of alliances. Yesterday's allies will be today's opponents but may be allies again tomorrow. Thoughtful actors accordingly have every incentive to treat each other well and seek compromises outcomes even when they have the votes to impose their preferences.⁸¹ Through comity, everyone benefits. In effect, such behavior builds trust and respect can move this world into the fourth quadrant.

Phronēsis combined with negative affect also has positive potential. Enlightened conceptions of self-interest can restrain actors and keep their attention focused on longer-term goals. They may be willing to cooperate with actors for whom they care little toward these ends. The resolution of the Cuban missile crisis provides an illustrative example. Kennedy came to believe that Khrushchev had made a very serious miscalculation when he sent missiles to Cuba and was looking for a face saving way out of the crisis. He was willing to offer a non-invasion pledge, and when push came to shove, a private promise to withdraw the Jupiter missiles from Turkey. Khrushchev in turn was surprised that Kennedy had not exploited the early discovery of the Soviet

missiles to overthrow Castro and humiliate the Soviet Union. Kennedy's forbearance reduced Khrushchev's fear that the president would use his country's nuclear superiority to try to extract political concessions. Kennedy's behavior altered Khrushchev's estimate of the future possibilities of Soviet-American relations. From his perspective, the costs of withdrawing the missiles were greatly reduced and the possible rewards enhanced. The resolution of the crisis paved the way for *détente*.⁸²

The second and third quadrants can more readily move actors toward or into the first quadrant. Instrumental reason combined with positive affect can do this when instrumental reason is unconstrained by positive affect. Self-serving behavior can erode positive affect, provoke anger and behavioral responses that transform the initial actors' benign feelings into hostility. A similar process, but in reverse, can occur when negative affect and *phronēsis* interact to the detriment of *phronēsis*. Negative affect can undermine the commitment to longer-term goals and make it more attractive for actors to seek short-term advantages at the expense of parties toward whom they are hostile. The first pattern – movement from quadrant three to quadrant one – characterizes the onset of the Cold War. Athenian-Spartan relations prior to the Peloponnesian War and Anglo-German relations in the decade before World War I illustrate movement from quadrant two to quadrant one.

My typology suggests that psychological features of any social environment are more important than so-called structural ones. In similar structural environments – the university, legislatures, regional and international economic and political systems – we observe a wide range of behavior, ranging from highly conflictual to highly cooperative. This variation in the first instance, I contend, reflects the degree of positive or negative

affect that actors have toward one another and the level of reason on which they function. In a typology, it is possible to place systems in quadrants, in reality, however, politics more closely resembles quantum mechanics. What we find is a statistical distribution of affective valences and kinds of reasons. Systems are distinguished from one another more than degree than in kind. They do not live in isolation from one another or from their own past. Arguments to the effect that we have always done things this way or that such a strategy failed in the past usually carry much weight. Equally important are actors, who have varying degrees of potential to create new patterns of relationships and by doing so shift the distribution of affect and reason.

Politics is an interactive process involving actors, their goals and the environments in which they pursue them. Almost all political science focuses on these three features of politics: actors, goals, environments. Most theories and models of politics assume rationality, and further assume that it is a universal logic independent of context, culture, the goals actors seek or how they feel about others with whom they must interact. Elsewhere I have tried to show that this is not the case, that logic is culturally and contextually specific: fear, interest and honor generate different logics of cooperation, conflict and risk-taking.⁸³ In this paper I have extended this argument to explore logics associated with different emotional valences and kinds of reason. As in the case of motives and their logics, follow-on empirical work is necessary to demonstrate the analytical utility of this formulation. If successful, as I contend is the case of empirical research into motives and their logics, it could – and should – broaden our intellectual horizons and drive home the need to incorporate culture and emotion if our study of politics at every level of interaction

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- ⁴ Lebow, *Between Peace and War*; Jervis, Lebow and Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence*.
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- ⁴⁰ Lebow, "Power, Persuasion and Justice."
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⁵⁵ Thucydides, 3.36.2.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.42.1.

⁵⁷ Lebow, *Why Nations Fight*, ch. 4.

⁵⁸ Plato, *Protagoras*

⁵⁹ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, I.32-36, has the Corinthians express the same sentiments in a speech to the Athenian assembly. Their use is unintentionally ironic, as they have just subverted this very traditional notion of justice in their off-hand dealings with Corcyra.

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a14, 1159b25, 1161a23, 1161b12, and *Politics*, 1280b39, observes that for Greeks, political community is a common project that requires affection and a common commitment among citizens, and that friendship is often considered more important than justice.

⁶¹ On *philia*, see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 8-9, and *Eudaemonian Ethics*, Book 7.

⁶² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1320B7-11, 1329b39-1330a2.

⁶³ In *Antigone*, Sophocles uses *philia* in a double sense: as kinship and as affection toward the polis.

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 2, 8 and 9.

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a29-30, 1139a29-1142a. Thucydides, 3.82.4 refers to something similar in describing the stasis at Coreyra. People were no longer able to practice moderation or act with “practical intelligence” (*to pros hapan xuneton*),

⁶⁶ Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, I.1.5, VI.1.

⁶⁷ Deutsch, *Nerves of Government*, also offers a three step approach learning. The first two levels involve “steering,” based on feedback. They allows people or organizations to calibrate behavior more effectively – to zero in on a target – or the change strategies they use to reach that target. A third feedback loop at a third level of consciousness allows them to refine or alter their goals.

⁶⁸ Plato, *Symposium*, 209a-b, who distinguishes *eros* from *epithumia*, unreasoning or animal desires, that at best can be brought under control; Hall, *Trouble with Passion*, p. 65.

⁶⁹ Finnemore and Toope, “Alternatives to ‘Legalization’”; Lebow, “Reason, Emotion and Cooperation.

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⁷¹ These arguments are developed by Plato, in the *Republic*, and by Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudaimonian Ethics* and *Politics*.

⁷² Plato, *Republic*, 430e6-431a2, 441d12-e2, 444e7-445a4.

⁷³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b35-1107a4.

⁷⁴ Their conceptions of justice differ. For Plato, it was balance and harmony among the components of the psyche or city, with each performing its proper function. For Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106a15-24, 1129b17-19, 1129b25-26, justice is not an attribute a person can possess in isolation, but a quality that can only develop and find

expression in social relations. Justice is an active virtue that requires people to make, implement and adjudicate laws, not just follow them. It is the “complete” or “perfect” virtue because it requires possession and exercise of all other virtues. Aristotle accordingly distinguishes virtue, which applies to individuals, from justice, which operates at the communal level.

⁷⁵ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. II, Part 2, Ch. 8, pp. 501-03 for the doctrine of self-interest well-understood.

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1101b14-1103b-26.

⁷⁷ Plato, *Republic*, Book II, 377b to III, 399e, spends a lot of time talking about the poets as inappropriate role models. The Guardians and the literature they approve are intended as their replacement. Aristotle (see below) had a more favorable view of literature, and especially of tragedy, which he believed could have powerful beneficial consequences.

⁷⁸ Aristotle makes the most explicit case for the beneficial interaction of reason and emotion in his discussions of mimesis and tragedy in *Poetics*. In *Poetics*, 1448b7, he contends that we have impulse toward mimesis (*kata physin*), and in 1448b5-6, that the pleasure we derive from looking at representations of reality made by artists is connected to our ability to learn from them, and also functions as an incentive to learn from them. We learn from tragedy (1450) because of the pity and fear it inspires in us because of our ability to imagine ourselves in the role of the tragic hero. This association in turn produces catharsis, a purging of our soul.

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a14, 26-28, 1159b25, 1161a23, 1161b12. In 1155a32, he writes “when men are friends they have no need of justice, but when they are just, they need friendship as well; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1154b25. Plato’s

vision of an ideal community was not dissimilar. In the *Republic*, 419a-421a, Socrates describes such a community as one in which benefits are distributed fairly, according to some general principle of justice.

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⁸¹ James Madison, "Federalist Number 10."

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