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Marlene K. Sokolon. *Political Emotions: Aristotle and the Symphony of Reason and Emotion.* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006. x + 217 pp. $38.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-87580-361-6.

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Published on H-Ideas (December, 2007)

In this book, Marlene K. Sokolon explores the political character of emotions in Aristotle's account by considering the emotions in the *Rhetoric* (book 2: chapters 2-11) as bases for the virtues and conduct examined in the ethical and political works. Fourteen emotions are considered, generally presented as paired contrasts, under two headings: emotions concerning the subject and household (anger-gentleness, love-hate, and fear-confidence) and those concerning the community and justice (shame-shamelessness, benevolence-selfishness, pity, indignation, envy, and emulation). In each case, Sokolon outlines Aristotle's account of the emotion and then comments on its political character, frequently with illustrations from famous political speeches. But the emphasis is not on rhetoric. Instead, Sokolon's aim is to develop a general understanding of political emotion, using Aristotle. Thus the specific emotions of the *Rhetoric* are systematically tied into discussions of the ethical and political works.

Sokolon challenges the idea that emotions should be suppressed in political action and decision making. Instead, she proposes that reason and emotion both have necessary functions and that the two must work in unison. She argues this by showing the political importance of the emotions considered in Aristotle's account and, on this basis, by showing the usefulness of Aristotle's account for an understanding of political emotion in general. In brief, Sokolon holds that Aristotle's account properly avoids dichotomies of mind-body, nature-nurture, and reason-emotion.

The core of the work–and six of its nine chapters–focus on the specific emotions. These are enclosed by three theoretical chapters considering Aristotle's and modern approaches to the study of emotions and the implications of Aristotle's approach for current analysis. In my view, these six chapters are the book's strength. The three theoretical chapters are interesting but they suggest more than they explicate or demonstrate. This is inevitable, of course, given the breadth and depth of the issues being considered. By contrast, the six chapters based on specific emotions are detailed and concrete. It was an especially engaging idea to consider the character virtues in the ethical works in terms of their raw emotional component as outlined in the *Rhetoric*. I certainly intend to invite students to do this the next time I teach the ethical and political works.

This core account is generally excellent: well written with lots of illustrative material, while faithful to the text. It is, however, persistently uncritical of Aristotle, even in cases where his account (or its translation) does not square with current understandings. On Aristotle's account, for example, one can be "angry" with persons but not with objects whereas the English word "anger" applies to both. Sokolon notes this but without any suggestion that this differs from our usage.

Sokolon uses her own translations throughout the work especially in naming the emotions. These namings frequently differ from those in the standard translation by W. Rhys Roberts (Rhetoric [1954]). I am not competent to judge the adequacy of Sokolon's translations, but they raise questions. Where Roberts contrasts anger with calm (treated just as a lack of anger), Sokolon contrasts anger with "gentleness," treating this gentleness as if it were a political emotion in its own right (and not just a lack of anger). This does not always make perfect sense as, for example, when she claims that revenge can be more dangerous when done "gently." Similarly, Sokolon contrasts shamelessness with shame as two separate emotions where Roberts treats it as just a lack of shame. In fact, Aristotle does not discuss shamelessness as a separate emotion in its own right, and so this seems to favor Roberts's rendering.

In another case, Roberts's simple and basic "friendly feeling" is rendered in more inflated terms by Sokolon as

"love." "Love" overstates the emotion being described in this passage (*Rhetoric* 2:4) in a way that also overstates its political character. Thus Sokolon describes books 8 and 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as devoted "entirely" to discussing the political significance of friendship (p. 79). In the same way, Sokolon describes as "benevolence" and "selfishness" what Roberts renders as "kindness and unkindness." Here again, the effect is to treat as two separate emotions (benevolence and selfishness) what seems in the text to be simply one emotion and its lack (kindness and a want of kindness). And here again the emotion is described in terms that overstate its socio-political character. Indeed, Sokolon further describes this "benevolence" as "pure altruism" (p. 130) and yet she also notes that this "benevolence" does not include a "wish for the other's good" (p. 131). But this rendering really does not make sense. If it does not include a wish for the other's good, how could it possibly be altruism or benevolence? This is not just a semantic point. Sokolon's aim is to reveal the sociopolitical character of the emotions and, in this case, she specifically wants to show that for Aristotle human beings are not entirely egotistical. These are important points; they should be shown through careful explication, not guaranteed by inflated linguistic descriptions.

In short, readers may question whether Sokolon overstates the political character of certain emotions. But these are minor flaws. I think she is certainly correct in noting their political character in principle and in recommending Aristotle's approach for the understanding of political emotion in general.

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Citation: Don Carmichael. Review of Sokolon, Marlene K., *Political Emotions: Aristotle and the Symphony of Reason and Emotion.* H-Ideas, H-Net Reviews. December, 2007.

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