

# Emotions through another lens: a critique of the dichotomic conceptualization of emotions\*

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## Emociones desde otra lente: una crítica a la conceptualización dicotómica de la emoción

**ABSTRACT:** *The classical dichotomical framework has shaped the western conceptualization of emotions and is still alive in our common imagery impregnating our own assumptions about the polarity emotion/reason. Thereby, my main purpose is to suggest that another framework can be defended. In order to it, I will firstly analyse the basis of this logic, as well as I will also offer a critique of its main principles and consequences. Finally, as a way of surpassing the old dichotomic model, I will argue in favour of the links between reason and emotions taking into account the new evidences found over the last decades. To conclude, I will point out some of the benefits of replacing a dualistic framework by an interactive one.*

**RESUMEN:** *La conceptualización occidental de las emociones viene marcada por un modelo dicotómico, el cual sigue vivo en nuestro imaginario colectivo sobre las mismas, impregnando así nuestras propias asunciones sobre el par razón/emoción. Por ello, el principal objetivo de este artículo es sugerir que otro marco conceptual también puede defenderse. Para ello, analizaré, en primer lugar, los principios básicos de este modelo en relación a la conceptualización de la emoción, así como también ofreceré una crítica de sus principales premisas y sus consecuencias. En segundo lugar, como un posible modo de superar el viejo modelo dicotómico, argumentaré a favor de la relación entre razón y emoción teniendo en cuenta los datos aportados por otras disciplinas en las últimas décadas. Para concluir, señalaré algunos beneficios para la ética derivados de remplazar un marco conceptual dualista por uno relacional.*

**KEYWORDS:** *emotion, reason, framework, dualism, dichotomy, logic of domination, interaction.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *emoción, razón, marco conceptual, dualismo, dicotomía, lógica de la dominación, interacción.*

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### 1. The conceptualization of emotions in the western cultural tradition

It seems certain that the meaning of a word is its use in the language (Wittgenstein, 1953; & Bloor, 1976), so that the meanings of the term "emotion" commonly used in our collective imagery would reflect some tacitly accepted assumptions.

Therefore, since when we define we are creating a useful way to understand our reality, and since frameworks "do not fade away because their original context has changed, but are often preserved in our conceptual framework as residues" (Prokhovnik, 1999, 33), I would like to claim in this manuscript that a conceptual analysis of the meanings traditionally associated to the term "emotion" could shed some light on present problems in the theory of emotions as well as it could provide us with a new critical perspective about our own cultural past. In other words, we could finally understand why generally a sensible person would prefer "reason" as our main competence and would reject emotion.

In order to it, it is essential to remember that almost two decades ago K. Warren argued that "there are important connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature" (Warren, 1990, 126). Nevertheless, there is a third hidden element that should not be forgotten: emotions.

She brilliantly defined the *logic of domination* as the conceptual framework behind the conceptualization of women and nature, that is to say, as "a set of basic be-

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liefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions which shape and reflect how one views oneself and one's world" (Warren, 1990, 127). But this lens has also been used to construct the commonly accepted image or what reason and emotions are.

According to Warren, the three principles of this framework are:

- 1) the excluding dualism, that is, a dichotomic structure where B is defined as "not-A";
- 2) the appraisal and hierarchical structure of the pair A/ B, where one (B) is judged as worse than the other one (A), since A is the privileged term and B (not-A) the defective one; and
- 3) the justification of the subordination of what is seen as inferior: since A is better than B, A should dominate B, so that the domination would be morally justified as inherent to the relation of A and B (not-A).

Thus, the core of the *logic of domination* would be the argumentative structure that leads to the justification of the subordination. In the same line, Prokhovnik also pointed out the same idea when she criticized the "Berlin Wall mentality" (1999, 21), as well as Plumwood did denouncing what she called "the logic of colonisation" (1993, 41).

This structure has shaped the conceptualization of emotions, women, and nature. In fact, there is a "historical correlation of reason with maleness, and the way in which the dichotomy between reason and emotion emerged" (Prokhovnik, 1999, 51). Hence, emotions have been defined as not-rational, subordinated to reason and, therefore, as elements of the human psyche, which reason has to dominate. Perhaps due to an "excessive celebration of reason" (Solomon, 2004, 11), they have been thought as what limits, denies or disturbs rationality, so that the domination of emotions seemed to be necessary in order to flourish as "rational animals".

It is easy to see how emotions have been identified with instincts, natural tendencies, disturbances, illnesses, intuitions, or wrong judgments, that is to say, with all those concepts that share the trait of being "non-rational" or somehow the opposite to reason, which has always been related to universality, objectivity, autonomy and correctness.

At the same time, women have been described throughout our cultural past as especially connected to emotions, intuitions, nature, and instincts, which means that they have been associated, whether to emotions themselves, or to all those characteristics that are normally connected to emotions. Hence, this dichotomic framework has assumed that emotions and women shared the trait of being closer to our bodily nature, to our primary instincts, than to reason.

Therefore, it can be argued that women, emotions, and nature have been under the same conceptual framework, which sees reality through a dualistic lens: on the one side

femaleness-emotion-nature-body-weakness-heteronomy-subjectivity-wrongness/evil,  
and on the other side

male-reason-culture-soul-strength-autonomy-objectivity-correctness/goodness.

As an example of it, I would like to argue that emotion has been identified at least with four difference concepts that assume this logic, showing that if reason has always been related to universality, objectivity, autonomy and correctness, then emotions have been seen as subjective, instincts, confusions, disturbances, diseases, intuitions

or the source of mistakes:

### 1.1. Emotions as our primitive nature

Traditionally the term "emotion" has appeared associated to our corporal dimension and, therefore, to the natural or material side of human beings. Indeed, this association reflects the weight of another pair body-mind, analogous to reason-emotion. For that reason the classification starts with this position. It is very common to find this sensitive or corporal vision of the emotions that connects them to a natural force that pushes us, like the wind (Nussbaum, 2006, 24-25). On that matter, if reason is understood as the highest level of our nature, then emotion is related to the animal side of human beings. In that sense, emotions have been seen just as instincts, corporal reactions, appetites, impulses and sensations.

This reduction of the emotions to pain and pleasure sensations is perhaps one of the most repeated in the history of the philosophy, it can be found in Plato's *Fedon* as well as in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, where he associates them to non evidence knowledge or corporal affections. Thomas Aquino follows the Aristotelian vision understanding them as impulses or appetites, fruits of the sensitive and appetizing side of the soul (Aquino, 1989). In the same way, J. Locke reduces emotions to ways of pleasing and pain, which are impressions of sensations. They would be examples of how we experiment pleasure and pain (Locke, 1689, II. XX, 1-18; II, xxii.II)

Another influential case is the one of R. Descartes, in whose theory emotions would be sensations of the soul that imply reactions, desires and that, since they determine the will and deceive the reason, must be remedied. For Descartes emotions would be, as thirst or hunger, "corporal sensations that indicate some of the conditions of the body of the own individual" (Oksenberg, 1992, 378). Emotions would be a kind of thoughts provoked in the soul -but they are not actions of the soul-, or objects of the perceived external senses in the soul, that is to say, sensations, or strong agitations, which today would be passions and not emotions, referred and motivated by some movement of the soul. Thus, since they are defined as perceptions or feelings, it is possible to infer that emotions are corporal sensations as long as emotions are caused by the body. Actually in his work *Principia philosophiae* he defined them as "natural appetites" (Descartes, 1951, IV, CXC). Therefore, for this philosopher emotions would be corporal sensations. At this point is important to suggest that, although he talks about passions of the soul, this does not mean that they are cognition, since "of" does not mean "by" in this case.

All those conceptualizations, which see emotions as physical reactions that contribute to the conservation of life, would also fit in this category. Indeed, according to Solomon (1977):

"There is a common-sense view that emotions are feelings, distinct experiences not unlike physical sensations, something like nausea or anxiety. This is reflected in our ordinary talk about emotions (she hurt his feelings) and it forms the basis of some of the most persistent and respectable philosophical theories of emotion" (42).

### 1.2. Emotions as desires

Another frequent meaning would find its origin in the association of the concept of emotion to desire. There is a tendency to identify emotions with tastes and preferences, with determinations that are taken arbitrarily, like a whim, a movement to-

wards what is wanted for some – justified or unjustified- reason. In other words, they would be seen as an inclination or preference for something. Thus, if reason has been understood as universal or objective, then emotion has been seen as desires, even as subjective or personal “childish” wishes, that is, as a subjective desiderative reality. Needless to say that connecting emotions to desire leads in many cases to connect them to vices, as long as reason has been related to the moral *ought* and not to the will, so that emotions explain and reason justifies. An example of this could be some of the affirmations of I. Kant (1989) when defining envy as an impulse or desire to destroy the other people’s happiness, or the ingratitude as a desire of justice.

### 1.3. Emotions as disturbance

A very common use, often related to the first two uses, is the one that defines emotions according to the role they play with respect to reason. As a result, emotions are defined in terms of how they affect reason. Consequently, emotions turn out to be, not only a non-rational element, but an obstacle for reason. In this sense, emotions have usually been treated as obstacles for reason, confusions or even disturbances of it. Therefore, it is well-known that this use of the concept “emotion” includes in its definition the negative evaluation of emotions and triggers a series of adjectives commonly related to them as blind, deaf, dark, dirty, messy, turbulent, stormy, etc.

Actually, this use of emotion can also be found in literature, i.e in *Don Quijote*, *Hamlet* or *Othello*, among many other classical works. As P. Goldie and F. Spicer argue: “the emotions were characteristically thought by philosophers as status which give rise to perturbation in what might roughly be called right thinking” (2002, 1).

At the same time, the connection between emotions and disturbance has also been linked to the idea that emotions are dysfunctional or pathological elements. Indeed, they are frequently described as diseases (in an ontological sense) or vices (in a moral sense), reflecting again the split between reason and emotion, and body and mind.

To pose this classification precisely, let us distinguish two senses of the word “disturbance”: the epistemological one and the moral one. On the one hand, emotions can imply confusion for reason, blinding the *recta ratio* and, therefore, leading us into an incorrect, false opinion. On the other hand, if we establish a nexus between epistemology and morality, this confusion can be interpreted as a disturbance of autonomy, that is to say, as a disturbance of the capacity to freely decide and judge, and, as a result, as an obstacle for moral agency, as reason is normally seemed as the only source of autonomy.

Consequently, if reason has been understood as a source of autonomy, then emotions have been seen as an inner enemy influenced by culture, education and personal desires, the tendency of viewing emotions as a non suitable source for the normative speech, as an obstacle that would limit the capacity of free decision making.

Again, Solomon is really clear at this point, when he argues that “there is the equally old view that emotions are physiological disturbances of some sort, remnants of an animal psyche or Freudian “it” that we inherit from a more “primitive” (i.e. less reasonable and more emotional) past” (1977, 42).

#### 1.4. Emotions as wrong opinions

These three meanings or uses of the term "emotion" bring us to the last one. Since emotions under this conceptual framework have been seen as instinct, impulses, desires and/or disturbances, it seems obvious that the only kind of knowledge that can be reached by this element is *doxa*.

Certainly, emotions have been seen as simple beliefs and consequently as a source of inferior knowledge, especially if we compare it to the wisdom and the correction that can be achieved through reason. In other words, if reason (*recta ratio*) is the source of wisdom, emotions are incorrect appraisals and, as a result of it, the source of mistakes.

Whereas in this use the emotion acquires some characteristics and functions normally attributed to reason, we should not forget that emotion would be defined as something secondary, inferior and, mainly, as an uncertain knowledge.

If one keeps in mind the previous meanings, a whole logical picture appears: emotions are natural impulses from the body that are related to what is dirty or obscure and therefore also to what is a disturbance to reason. As a result, if something is disturbing, it cannot be a good source of knowledge. Locke gave us a good example of this idea: "Tell a man, passionate in love, that he is jilted; bring a score of witnesses of falsehood of his mistress, 'tis ten to one but three kind words of hers shall invalidate all their testimonies" (Locke, 1689, IV, xx. 12). However, the stoics are the best image of this meaning, for they saw them as false, inconsistent or misled judgments<sup>iii</sup>.

#### 1.5. Three exceptions... or modifications?

Even in those cases that are normally seen as exceptions this logic of domination can be found. Those who wanted to give a main role to emotions seem to be under the logic of domination too for they just changed the way one of those three principles are understood, but they did not deny the logic itself.

The three better known examples are:

a) David Hume and the slave's passage (Hume, 2005, II, iii, iii, 415-416). The humean defence of reason as slave of passions maintains the three indicated principles changing the domination's roles. Since reason is seen as the passions' slave, it is not hard to see that the dualism is accepted, as well as the appraisal and evaluative structure, the non complementary perspective and the justification of the domination. The only thing that has changed would be who dominates whom, that is, who the dominated one is, and who the dominating one is, but not the domination itself.

b) The case of the Romanticism and all those who have seen emotions as a way of running away of the dominating reason (Sartre, 1987). They did not deny the dualism, the appraisal and evaluative structure or the justification of the domination. On the contrary, they just pointed out that sometimes that domination can be too tough, so that a way of escaping from that sensible rules and structure turns to be necessary and somehow valuable. However, they would still see reason and emotion as non complementary sides of our nature. That is, as long as reason is the dominating side, emotion is the only way left to "breath".

c) The emotionist intuitionism that sees emotions as intuitions and, therefore, as the key to a direct kind of knowledge has neither gone beyond that logic. Scheler, and

especially Schopenhauer could be seen as paradigmatic examples of this conceptualization of emotion. According to Schopenhauer (2003), emotions, and especially compassion, would be the key to morality, to what cannot be seen through reason, so that it would reveal another kind of direct and true knowledge that has nothing to do with the one that we get through deduction or induction. As well as there are two human dimensions, reason and emotion, this conceptualization points out that there are also two non complementary, unrelated, unconnected fields of knowledge: reason would be the tool to get the scientific knowledge through deduction or induction, while emotion would be the tool to get directly to another kind of knowledge, the moral or evaluative one, since emotions are seen as the way to get to know the values.

Although the identification of emotions with intuitions can be seen as one of the most positive conception of them, since they would be the key to perceive values, the "Berlin Wall" mentality would still impregnate this idea of emotions. Analogous to the reason/ emotion dichotomy, this meaning of emotion settled another polarity between two unconnected epistemic fields.

Therefore, they cannot be considered as examples of an overcoming of the classic logic. On the contrary, they would be different ways of assuming the main thesis of it. That is, they would be a variant, but not a negation or overcoming of that frame.

Consequently, the conceptualization of emotions, women and nature share the same framework. While men were defined as highly rational beings, women have been seen as highly emotional (and intuitional) animals that are connected to our primitive nature, dominated by will and desire – and not by reason-, unable to reason in a proper way, and, therefore as a disturbing element and sometimes as a source of evil. As a result of it, women and emotions have also shared the same prejudices against them, since they have been under the same logic of domination: although both might be biologically necessary, women had to be under the domination of men as emotions had to be under the domination of reason, for both were thought to be intrinsically connected to nature, instead of to culture or reason.

Needless to say, this framework still impregnates our way of understanding emotions. When we describe them as it has been said, when we recommend to stay cold and to not make a decision under the "domination" of emotions, when we still perceive us as mainly rational animals sometimes "disturbed" by a uninvited guest called emotions, when we argue that reason justify and emotions just explain, when we blame emotions for our mistaken decisions, when we make them responsible of the *akratic* cases, or when we criticise them for lacking rational proprieties, then we are reproducing the main elements of the old picture.

## 2. Breaking the *Berlin Wall* logic: a critique to the dichotomic framework

If it is accepted that the logic of domination has been the lens through which we have seen emotions and their relation with reason, and if it is accepted that this old framework is still part of our collective imagery -as we can verify in our everyday language about emotions-, then it is the time to ask if this logic is sustainable nowadays.

In these sense, two different sorts of reasons why the traditional framework should be surpassed can be found. Thus, I will firstly criticise this conceptualization of emo-

tions because of the three principles that shape the traditional framework, giving reasons why these assumptions are problematic themselves. Secondly, I will argue that the consequences that arise from the conjunction of these three principles are also indefensible at the present.

First, it is open to discussion the non complementary, excluding dualism, which is the basement of the whole framework. Dualism and dichotomy are certainly a way of seeing and explaining reality, but not the only possible one. This kind of dual analyse might be useful to simplify reality, but in any case we cannot forget that this kind of methodological tools are a way to approach reality, and not reality itself.

A so extreme way of understanding the division between reason and emotion is not accurate anymore, especially today, first of all, because it does not allow any kind of interaction nor overlapping, splitting human psyche in two unconnected universes; secondly because it seems that through this logic we are condemned to live in an eternal inner tension; and thirdly, because one of the two elements involved seems to be less essential to the whole than the other one, without giving specific reasons for this assumption. In other words, if the two elements are necessary for the whole, why should be taken from granted that just one can be right?

Thus, a dichotomic vision of reason and emotion implies a very problematic way of compartmentalizing human nature. Dichotomy assumes that being difference always means being the opposite, being an antagonist element. But why should emotions be described as necessary irrational or why should reason be completely disconnected from emotions by definition? As a result, this kind of simplistic vision does not allow seeing the involved elements as complex and relational.

The western cultural tradition has assumed an excluding dualism and an irreconcilable antagonism, so that the sad final result is that the only thing we have agreed in our cultural past is that reason and emotions are incompatible realities, where emotions are the non rational side and reason is the non emotional side of us. On that matter, the only options left seems to be, whether to choose reason as our main and best skill denying emotions, or *vice versa*.

With respect to the second principle, it would not be acceptable, not only to judge characteristics when we are defining, but to conclude that since the characteristics from A are better than those from B, then those characteristics are also morally better. It would be necessary to argue why reason is itself better than emotion, or why emotions have always been put in the B (not-A) position, as women and nature have been.

The inner evaluative appraisal of dichotomy can be found, not only in the terms and adjective linked to emotions, but in the development of the lexical family of the term emotion itself. Thus, emotions are commonly associated to negative terms. Whilst reason is associated to light and vision's metaphors, emotions are connected to darkness, and described as blind, deaf, turbulent, or wuthering. Moreover, terms as emotional or sentimental are normally used in a pejorative sense, whilst rational seems to be always a eulogy. In the same sense, we are used to talk about rationality but not so much about "emotionality". As a result of this value's judgment -inherent to dichotomy- the lack of interest, and the underrating suffered by emotions -eclipsed by cognition's studies- can be explained.

Finally, it is really difficult to justify the third principle of the *logic of the domination*, that is, the justification of the domination itself. Defending this principle would imply

committing a *naturalistic fallacy* due to the fact that we would have derived how things *should be* just because of the way something *is*. We would be saying that, because you are "like this", it is correct to treat you "like that", so that a descriptive appraisal would turn out to be a normative one without any specific explanation about the link. This logical gap from "how you are" to "how you should be (treated)" should be somehow justified to keep on defending this principle. At least, it should be explained why being different means being worse and why if you are worse you deserve to be dominated by somewhat better than you.

In addition, this is not only logically questionable, but also methodologically, since the introduction of normative judgments in the definition of a term would be unjustifiable. Briefly said, it would not be allowed to jump from the epistemological field to the moral one identifying what can have an influence in our rational capacity with a morally wrong dimension.

In the same sense, since reason is identified with morality and moral correctness, the strong *moral intellectualism* taken for granted in this logic is quite doubtful. It is at least questionable that, being rational always means being logically and morally correct. Assuming this identification would be a way of making reason responsible for all our valuable skills as well as a normative criterion, so that reason would become the source of logic, knowledge and morality. In this sense, this old framework would lead to an identification of ontology, epistemology and axiology.

However, I would like to give some other reasons why I argue that this logic is problematic nowadays. First of all, the final result of it would be a schizophrenic picture of ourselves and our abilities, where we have whether to amputate a part of us, or to live in an eternal fight with ourselves, which is questionable in both, an ontological and moral sense.

Secondly, defending this logic means defending a simplification as well as a reductionism. Through this framework emotions would be reduced to some of their aspects. Thus, although it cannot be denied that emotions have a physiological base, it would be a reduction to identify them just with the corporal side since an emotion is something more than its corporal dimension if we see them also as mental states. In the same way, emotions are intentional, they imply desires and aims, but it does not mean that they are just desires themselves. It is also true that emotions have an influence in reason and in the process of decision making, but it does not necessarily mean that this influence is always negative. In fact, this interaction can be useful, positive and necessary to achieve functional solutions. Finally, although it is certain that all emotions imply a judgment or a belief about how an object or experience is lived by someone, there's no reason to say that they are negative or incorrect beliefs: As long as you feel that something is dangerous for you, it is really correct and logical to be afraid of it, so that, in any case, the belief behind having an emotion would be the wrong thing, but not the emotion itself.

In another sense, the final image that arises from the union of these three principles has also some questionable consequences in theorizing about emotions. Through this logic emotions have been defined as a relative concept, and not by themselves, as a second class category, the same way women and nature have been: "Emotions are what reason is not", "women are what men are not", "nature is what culture/reason is not", or in the best cases "emotions should be useful to reason" and "nature should be useful to culture/reason" as "women should be useful to men".

As a consequence of it, since emotions are put in the not-a position, an instrumentalization of them seems to be inherent to this dichotomic framework, for emotions are not only defined depending on reason, but are valued depending on whether they can be useful or not to reason's interests. An example of it can be found in the greek theories about *eupátheiai* o *metriopathēs*. It can be said that Plato, Aristotle and many other Greek philosophers defended a group of emotions: the rational ones, the balanced ones. However, if emotions can only be defended when they are good (*eu-*) or balanced (*metrio-*), then it means that emotion themselves are naturally bad or unbalanced, and that they can only be saved if they received a propriety that comes from reason. In other words, it seems that they would be good when they turn out to be rational emotions, that is, when they are not themselves anymore. But why should all the mental states share the characteristic of rationality in order to be taken into account? In other word, it is quite suspicious that in order to be taken into account you have to get ride of the characteristics that conform you or, in other words, you have to become what you are not. Thus, the idea that we should only accept rational emotions is a reflection of the old picture, where being rational is a kind of passport to legitimacy and moral correctness.

Another consequence would be the constant confusion or identification of the emotional dimension to what is seen as low, negative, primitive or devaluated in any sense, so that everything that is defined as non-rational is supposed to be connected, the same way women are identify with nature, so that the final outcome is that everything that is defined as "non rational" (emotions, instincts, intuitions, desires...) seems to be described as *somehow* the same.

Needless to say that this kind of homogenization is as wrong as it can be to say that all the colours that are not "red" are the same colour because they share the trait of being "un-red". But why everything that is not rational has to be defined as irrational?

Thirdly, from an ethical perspective, this logic implies the assumption of the idea that emotions are the cause of irrational behaviours and actions, the same way women have been seen as a source of evil. It might be also thought from this old lens, that it is quite common to feel that your heart tells you to do something and your head to do the opposite. Besides, it is commonly thought that what your head tells you to do is right and what your hearts "force you to do" is incorrect. However, we should remember that both systems are functional according to our interests and evolved because they were functional for us, so that it would be ridiculous in an evolutive sense to perpetuate a system that always lead us into a mistake. So my question here is why we make emotions responsible of our mistakes when we see ourselves just as rational animals. In fact, in many cases, reason and emotion lead us to the same conclusion through different paths. We can decide to help someone after calculating the possibilities of going through bad times because we want to be sure that we will receive what we have giving before, or we can decide to help just because we feel sadness and indignation or compassion after seeing that person in that situation. I do not mean that emotions have to be a moral or normative criterion. Rather, I just question the essential connection that is taken for granted between reason and moral correctness.

Finally, as a theoretical consequence of this logic, we are lead to use unequal criteria and exigencies for reason and emotions. However, it seems sensible that if two elements are necessary parts of a whole, then they should be treated analogously or, at least, it should be explained why it is needed to be stricter to one of them. Nevertheless, it seems that emotions should not bring any new problem, should not have

any extreme, pathological or exceptional case, should always be perfect and right to be accepted at the same level that reason is, while it seems there is no problem in ignoring the exceptional and pathological cases that comes from reason. It seems that emotions do not satisfy formal criteria that were used for reason, while these criteria change depending on whether we are dealing with reason or with emotions.

### 3. Beyond the boundary between reason and emotion: from exclusion to interaction

If we look beyond that dual way of compartmentalizing our psyche, relevant connections between reason and emotion can be found, so that we might reconsider our way of seeing human beings as schizophrenic animals. Following J. Prinz's idea, "asking how one thing relates to another can lead to discoveries that we would not make if the question had not been asked" (Prinz, 2004, 41). Therefore, another way of understanding the relation between reasons and emotion, and not just like eternal enemies, can help us surpassing the old framework and its problems.

Actually, recent researches focus on interactive relation between these two human dimensions, so that reason and emotions can also be related in a non dichotomical way.

Firstly, we can find an evolutionary bond between them. In relation to the evolutionary relation between cognition and emotion, or between the rational brain and the emotional one, it cannot be ignored that the emotional brain developed before the rational one. According to Ledoux, "the wiring of the brain at this point in our evolutionary history is such that connections from the emotional systems to the cognitive systems are stronger than connections from the cognitive systems to the emotional systems" (1999, 19). Thus, the philosophical disconnection between these two human dimensions should be replaced by an inclusive correlation.

As a matter of fact, it can be said that the brain's evolution recreates the *Russian dolls* model, where each new stage includes the previous one. Hence, if we understand our skills through this model, and if we assume that the old steps are included in the new ones (DeWaal, 2007), that is, that the inferior or primitive systems are needed to reach the highest one, then we could start seeing human emotionality as an evolutionary previous step needed to be rational.

This is especially relevant because the union of these ideas means: 1) that, so far, there cannot be a rational brain without an emotional one, but not vice versa; and 2) as a consequence, that, even in if we understand human beings as rational animals, just in order to be rational, we must first be emotional.

Secondly, an interactive bond can –and have been– also be detected. I would like to suggest that reason and emotion maintain not only a diachronical connection, but a synchronical one, so that the idea is not only that one system is temporally previous to the other, but also that there is an interaction between them, a functional bond.

With respect to it, there are at least two ways of understanding this connection.

Firstly, if reason and emotion are understood as mental processes beyond neurological boundaries, then reason and emotion would be concepts created to simplify what actually is complex, that is, they would be artificial limits for a blurred reality (Ekman & Davidson, 1994). In sum, if reason is understood as a human dimension that

processes information, then emotions can somehow be seen as "cognitions" as they give us information and are involved in information processing.

In this sense, it can be thought that, since "emotional processing requires stimulus input and is therefore dependent to some extent on cognitive systems for stimulus transmission" (Ledoux, 1994, 222-223), emotions are connected to rationality, for they would already be part of the cognitive system. As a result of it, emotions and reason would turn out to be two aspects of a more general system. Indeed, emotions are coherent according to what we think and want, so they can be really useful to know ourselves and to make coherent decisions.

Secondly, in a stricter sense, if cognition refers to those processes that are based in the neocortex and the hippocampus, then reason and emotion would be two completely different paths of processing information, so that emotion would be a way of evaluate the direct effects of an action, and reason would be a reflexive and sophisticated way of processing that information.

Nevertheless, in both cases we should remember that there are no boundaries in human mind (as there are in human brain), so that even in the second case reason and emotion would be somehow related.

Certainly, emotions would need a minimum cognitive basis just to process that bodily or perceptive information, and give us a perspective of all that neutral information.

Actually, even in a cold and calculated reasoning process the emotional system is involved, firstly, because emotions concentrate our attention in those pieces of information that are relevant to agent's aim, secondly, because an agent has to be motivated -and emotions play a role in human motivation-, firstly to adopt that kind of cold reasoning, and secondly to maintain it through time, so that the interaction between both systems would be necessary to produce and keep any kind of conduct, including. Needless to say that we live always under an emotional state, we are always in some mood, so that we always see the world through an emotional filter.

On the other hand, reason has also an influence in the emotional system, as we can think about our emotional reactions, learn about us, and eventually try to modify them, so that the superior processes can modify the basic ones (DeWaal, 2007, 49).

Therefore, it can be said that there is a feedback, an interaction from emotion to reason and then back from reason to emotion, which should modify our vision not only of emotions, but ourselves as dual beings divided in two tendencies.

This interaction, as well as the fact that both systems are functional according to our interests, could also explain why in many cases both processes lead us to the same conclusion (Wright, 2007, 119). Thus, the initial excluding dualism would finally vanish according to the new data.

Thirdly, emotion and reason are specially connected in decision making, since the emotional system interacts with the rational one in decision making process. Recent research in neurology and moral psychology suggest that the emotional system is part of the deliberation process, which has traditionally been seen as exclusively rational. Contrarily to what it was thought, and according to Timoneda and Álvarez (2007),

Our decisions depend on the emotional prefrontal cortex rather than on the reasoning prefrontal cortex. (...) Our fMRI research shows that when we make decisions we do it by linking what we feel to what we think, instead of focusing merely on what we

think without taking into account what we feel (238).

Indeed, the bond seems to be stronger as it could be thought, since it is not a casual one. Likewise, Wagar and Thagard suggest remembering Damasio, Churchland, and many others' researchers, "there is increasing appreciation in cognitive sciences that emotions are an integral part of decision making" (Wagar & Thagard, 2006, 87).

Needless to say that the influence of the emotional system in the deliberation process would not be understood here as it was thought in the dichotomic framework, as an interference or a defect, but as a necessary element of the process itself.

This idea becomes clearer if we think about what would happen if our reasoning were a "pure" rational process without any emotional influence due to a deficit or a lack of emotions. In this case, we would start analysing all the logical possibilities and their benefits and costs for us, so that we would lose ourselves in our own calculations and calculations' consequences, and the consequences' consequences, so that we could not come to any conclusion, what would not be functional. In fact, it would turn out to be an irrational process. According to Damasio, "decisions made in these emotion-impooverished circumstances led to erratic or downright negative results, especially so in terms of future consequences" (2003, 145).

Certainly, emotions seems to play an essential role in decision making mechanism given that without an emotional repertoire an agent would not know what he cares about, what affects him, or what is worthy for him etc., so that decisions made under these conditions would not be autonomous, since we would not be able to attach any value to that data. In fact, we would not have any perspective of our world; we would just have neutral information: we would not know *how* we see the world; we would only know *what* we see.

Today the data points out that the interaction is bigger than it was thought. So we should stop seeing reason and emotion as eternal enemies. Actually, we are highly rational, but also highly emotional animals. Therefore, it seems more than possible that reason and emotions are always involved in the way we perceive reality and make decisions, as well as it seems appropriated to adopt a new image about rationality, which will probably lead us to change our ideas about autonomy, responsibility, or intelligence.

#### 4. Conclusion

I have presented empirical evidence for the bond between reason and emotion. As a result of it, I would like to conclude that the logic of domination of emotion, which still lives in our collective imagery, is not accurate in a logical, empirical and moral sense.

For that reason, we may need to change or extend the traditional concept of rationality in order to include the idea that emotions favour human reasoning and rationality needs emotionality.

At this point, I would just like to suggest that abandoning an antithetic image of reason and emotion can be an appealing path to achieve new result in many fields, especially in moral philosophy. Since many theoretical problems with respect to emotions are a product of the dualistic framework and of moral intellectualism, then there are good reasons to believe that as soon as we abandon that schizophrenic way of compartmentalizing ourselves, many problems and paradoxes will vanish.

As soon as we reconsider 1) our own conceptual roots or background about emotions, 2) the non complementary dualism, and 3) the old debates about the fight between reason and emotion, we could talk about emotions in philosophy without having to deny a part of us, without having to choose between intellectual or emotivist theories, between rationalists and sentimentalists. Moreover, we would not have to choose whether emotions are reactions or cognition, active or passive, etc. On the contrary, seeing ourselves as a net of interconnected dimensions will surely lead us to a non turning back point where we should analyse the implications of neither accepting that neither emotions are so irrational, nor reason is so unemotional.

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## Notes

1. For a wider explanation of this view, see: Ciceron, *De finibus*, III, 10, 35; Testimio, 90 b II 197, 24 Speng. [ S.V.F. I 208];or Temistio, Paraphr. In Aristot. *De anima*, III, 5.

