
Chapters 2 and 3

Deborah Black <deborah.black@utoronto.ca>
To: Michael Fatigati <michael.fatigati@mail.utoronto.ca>

Mon, Mar 25, 2019 at 2:57 PM

Hi Michael,

I finally finished going through the second of the two chapters you sent me, and my apologies for taking so long on this one. I have made many comments, so I will just sum up a couple of broad concerns:

1. I think you need to make it very clear how resolution is relevant to the emotions. While resolution is discussed in the same contexts as emotions, insofar as it completes the motive actions that the appetites in general incline us to, no one would consider the actual resolution to act and subsequent action as itself an aspect of the emotions. While you don't claim that resolution is itself such an aspect, reading through the elaborate reconstruction of resolution does raise the question of what exactly this is telling us about the emotions.

2. I worry sometimes in the reconstruction that you are making generalized claims based on the roles assigned to resolution and the faculties involved in particular contexts. That is, while perhaps it's true that all inclinations arise only from conceptualization and its animal analogues, and that resolution involves an actual judgment that this should be done now, it's not clear to me that one couldn't simply have an inclination based on a judgment (so is judgment necessary but not sufficient for resolution?) Perhaps one could solve this by taking the view, expressed in linguistic texts, that complexity is not incompatible with mere conceptualization so long as there is not actual assent (as e.g. in imperatives). It may be Avicenna has no answer for this, but I had a worry as I was reading this that you were constructing a theory for Avicenna beyond what his texts really warrant.

3. I think the main reason for the above worries is that the chapter invites confusion re the nature of human emotions. By focusing so much on practical judgment and intellect versus imagination, one is left wondering about the status of inclinations arising directly from reason, e.g., shame, wonder, etc. I fear that Avicenna may simply bracket these concerns in his account of *ijma'* because they would complicate the understanding of resolution. But since resolution is a secondary issue for your thesis, you can't afford to do this sort of bracketing.

One the minutiae of my comments, you might want to take special note of the worries regarding *fikr* in the final sections. I think there is a way to translate it that respects the ambiguities, which are inherent in Avicenna's conception of cogitation. That in turn makes his reading of the Rhetoric less of an exegetical move and more of a natural interpretation of the terms in the Arabic text.

Deborah L. Black
Professor of Philosophy and Medieval Studies
Mailing Address:
Dept. of Philosophy, University of Toronto
170 St. George St., Room 400
Toronto, ON Canada M5R 2M8
Office: 170 St. George St., Room 501
416-946-0216
Fax: 416-978-8703
deborah.black@utoronto.ca
website: <http://individual.utoronto.ca/dlblack/>

From: [Michael Fatigati](#)

Sent: Monday, September 17, 2018 10:38 AM

To: [Deborah Black](#)

Subject: Chapters 2 and 3

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