

On the Relevance of Plato's View on Affectivity to the Philosophy of Emotions*

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Although often considered outdated or useless, Plato's views on affectivity in general and on emotions in particular contain observations recurring in subsequent theories of emotions. Without putting forward a claim about the character of these similarities – either influential or purely anticipating or simply coincidental – some examples are provided to illustrate them. If the examples referred to are relevant to the current discussion, then Plato's views are wrongly taken as valid only for historical research, or worse, neglected completely. They should rather be considered helpful in disentangling the aporias inherent to the debate over affectivity. The paper discusses the issue of taxonomy of feelings (family – genera – species) as well as the place of affectivity within mental states in Plato's work.

1. Introduction

Let me start with Tadeusz Zielinski's leitmotif, being, as it is easy to see, a paraphrase of what is believed to have been an ornament above the entrance to Plato's Academy: "Let no one ignorant of psychology enter [here]". Zielinski believed that a serious study of the Classics without psychology is simply impossible. As for the big quarrel which exploded in 1872 between the philosophical conception of the Classics supported by Nietzsche and Rohde and the historical conception defended by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Zielinski sided with the former and he thought that the final victory of the latter was fatal for the Classics. Maybe today things have changed in a way Zielinski would have wished. It is true that nowadays we are more familiar with different approaches adopted in viewing and treating ancient thought. And Zielinski maybe would sympathize with what is called *appropriationism*, i.e. a position which in

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its spirit is about using ancient thought for advancement of our knowledge not of the ancient Greeks themselves but of the issues ancient Greeks and we are interested in. In a word, appropriationism makes us more at ease with the criticism of anachronism which, after all, is unavoidable and only varies in degree. In order to avoid it altogether one should approach ancient thought from the inside, that is, from the position of ancient thought¹. But even then one could commit mistakes as in the case of, for instance, Aristotle, who misunderstood Heraclitus' *thumos* from his fragment B 85 and interpreted it in *Eudemian Ethics* 1223b23 as anger which as such is inconsistent with *thelein* (LSJ: "to be willing (of consent rather than desire), wish")².

In what follows I, therefore, look for a relevance of Plato's view on affectivity to the psychology of emotions understood not as "the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings", but rather as "an inexhaustible mine of suggestion"³. I hope this does not distort his thought in its main points and, in the end, is fruitful as to advancing the current research and, eventually, our knowledge of affectivity.

This is not to say that some historical benefits cannot be drawn from this kind of investigation. Think for instance about the passage on "courageous men feeling no base fears" in the *Protagoras* (360a8-b3: ἀνδρείοι οὐκ αἰσχροῦς φόβους φοβοῦνται) that has been commented on by C. C. W. Taylor thus: "On the courageous man's honourable fear see Ar. *EN* III. 6-7"⁴. And that is the whole of his comment. It seems to me amazing but it is, nonetheless, characteristic of how Plato is overshadowed by Aristotle, who was, it is true, more explicit in his analysis of affectivity. However, Plato is a forerunner of Aristotle in more than one respect. For instance, while in the *Laches* and *Phaedo* (see below) pleasure and unpleasure are genera of the kinds of emotions, in the *Philebus* it looks as if they were some components of emotions. We are told in 50b7-c3 that emotions, listed as they are⁵, all of them "contain a mixture of pleasure and unpleasure"

¹ See B. Cassin (ed.), *Nos Grecs et leurs modernes* and M. Lærke, J. E. H. Smith & E. Schliesser (eds.), *Philosophy and Its History*.

² See R. Zaborowski, *Sur le fragment DK 22 B 85 d'Héraclite d'Ephèse*.

³ A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, p. 39.

⁴ Plato, *Protagoras*, transl. with notes by C. C. W. Taylor, *ad loc.*, and with no modification in the revised edition of 1991.

⁵ The list is patently pre-Aristotelian, so to speak. Please compare Plato's ὀργὴν μὴν καὶ πόθον

(ἐν οἷς ἔφαμεν εὐρήσειν μειγνύμενα τὰ νῦν πολλάκις λεγόμενα). It means that these states are identified as containing a mixture of pleasure and unpleasure. This anticipates Aristotle's qualification of *pathe* as states "followed by pleasure or unpleasure" (*EN* 1105b: οἷς ἔπεται ἡδονὴ ἢ λύπη) or more specifically Aristotle's description provided in *Rhetoric* because of "and": "followed by unpleasure and pleasure" (1378a: οἷς ἔπεται λύπη καὶ ἡδονή). Similarly Plato's replacing wisdom with measure in the hierarchy of goods in the same dialogue (*Philebus* 66a6-8) can be regarded as a prefiguration of Aristotle's μέσον, "middle" or "mean"⁶.

Generally, I have met two viewpoints: either Plato is considered as one who has no interest in affectivity, or – apparently contradictory because it means that Plato has an interest in affectivity – Plato's views on affectivity are taken as negative⁷. In 2012, I tried to show how much both views are defective⁸. It is true that in several passages

καὶ θρῆνον καὶ φόβον καὶ ἔρωτα καὶ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον προυθέμεθα καὶ ὅποσα τοιαῦτα with Aristotle's ἐπιθυμίαν ὀργὴν φόβον θάρσος φθόνον χαρὰν φιλίαν μῖσος πόθον ζῆλον ἔλεον (*EN* 1105b).

⁶ See also Plato, *Republic* 619a5-7: "[...] but may know how always to choose in such things the life that is seated in the mean and shun the excess in either direction, both in this world so far as may be and in all the life to come" (transl. P. Shorey) and P. Shorey's comment *ad loc.*: "An anticipation of the Aristotelian doctrine, *Eth. Nic.* 1106 b 6 f. Cf. *What Plato Said*, p. 629, on *Laws* 691 C."

⁷ M. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, p. 248: "It is possible to show convincingly that in dialogues such as the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, Plato's arguments rely centrally on the notion that appetitive and emotional needs and desires are potent forces of both distortion and distraction, and that clear and adequate judgments concerning value can be made only by getting the intellect free and clear of their influence altogether [...] etc." Another example of the same tendency is S. Leighton, *The Value of Passions in Plato and Aristotle* (available on-line: <http://hdl.handle.net/1974/1914>, retrieved Jul. 1, 2016), p. 4: "[in Plato] passions are either simply disruptive or are disposed to be so [...]" He, true, adds in a footnote (16), that "at times his [i.e. Plato's] attack seems to be on the bodily passions", but then (p. 5) makes a claim about "Plato [being left] with a very negative view of our passions". That this is too general can be inferred, for instance, from passages where Plato adds a qualification to, say, love, as this is the case in *Phaedo* 81a7 (ἀγρίων ἐρώτων). He who was fair is Aquinas, since he remarks: "Plato held neither with the Stoics, who asserted that all pleasures are evil, nor with the Epicureans, who maintained that all pleasures are good; but he said that some are good, and some evil [...]" (*ST*, Qu. 34, Art. 3, transl. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province). Nowadays a neutral position is that of, e.g., A. W. Price, *Emotions in Plato and Aristotle*, esp. 122-30 & 140-41.

⁸ See R. Zaborowski, *Some remarks on Plato on emotions*. Generally speaking, in Plato's view nothing is either positive or negative as such and is considered positive or negative only because of its relation with values of, respectively, nobleness or wrongness. See e.g. *Symposium* 180e4-181a6: πᾶσα γὰρ πρᾶξις ᾧδ' ἔχει: αὐτὴ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς πραττομένη οὔτε καλὴ οὔτε αἰσχρά. [...] καλῶς μὲν γὰρ πραττόμενον καὶ ὀρθῶς καλὸν γίγνεται, μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ αἰσχρόν. οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὸ ἐρᾶν καὶ ὁ Ἔρως οὐ πᾶς ἐστὶ καλὸς οὐδὲ ἄξιος ἐγκωμιάζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ ὁ καλῶς προτρέπων ἐρᾶν.

Plato sustains the superiority of thought over feeling. But this is only (i) in the epistemic contexts, (ii) in relation to bodily feelings and, (iii) with reference to (too) strong feelings. One can have in mind the following passage from the *Phaedo*:

Now the soul of the true philosopher believes that it must not resist this deliverance, and therefore it stands aloof from pleasures and lusts and griefs and fears, so far as it can, considering that when anyone has violent [sic!] pleasures or fears or griefs or lusts he suffers from them not merely what one might think [...] The evil is that the soul of every man, when it is greatly [sic!] pleased or pained by anything, is compelled to believe that the object which caused the emotion is very distinct and very true; but it is not. (transl. Fowler, 83b5-c8: ταύτη οὖν τῆ λύσει οὐκ οιομένη δεῖν ἐναντιοῦσθαι ἢ τοῦ ὡς ἀληθῶς φιλοσόφου ψυχῆ οὕτως ἀπέχεται τῶν ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν καὶ φόβων καθ' ὅσον δύναται, λογιζομένη ὅτι, ἐπειδὴν τις σφόδρα ἠσθηῖ ἢ φοβηθῆῖ ἢ λυπηθῆῖ ἢ ἐπιθυμήσῃ, οὐδὲν τοσοῦτον κακὸν ἔπαθεν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὅν ἄν τις οἰηθείη [...] ὅτι ψυχῆ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀναγκάζεται ἅμα τε ἠσθηῖναι σφόδρα ἢ λυπηθῆῖναι ἐπὶ τῷ καὶ ἠγεῖσθαι περὶ ὃ ἂν μάλιστα τοῦτο πάσχη, τοῦτο ἐναργέστατον τε εἶναι καὶ ἀληθέστατον, οὐχ οὕτως ἔχον).

But it should not be forgotten that in another dialogue written at the same time, either just before or just after the *Phaedo*, the role of love is praised: love is fundamental in cognition, it is not (or not only) bodily, and the qualification of intensity is not applicable.

It is obvious, therefore, that anyone who intends to work on Plato's philosophy of affectivity should better reject both viewpoints as unjustified. And so I do. I am of the opinion that both views are false because Plato has important things to say to us about emotion and the emotions. Plato's works include various claims, remarks and hints to questions pertaining to the psychology of affectivity, e.g. about the variety of emotions and stratification of affectivity, a close relation of feeling and thinking (a feeling-thinking linkage), no value for emotion as such, cognitive vs non-cognitive (or anti-cognitive) characters of emotions, and obscuring factors in affective dynamics. Further themes include: a hydraulic approach to affectivity, control of emotions and/or their expressions, a formal axiology of emotions, esp. of love and hatred, the objective character of an emotion, autonomy of normative emotions, correctness vs incorrectness of an emotion, distinction of affectivity into two classes (klitic and ekklitic, what now is called valence), intensity vs depth of an emotion, no active without passive component and vice versa in the affective process, memory of feelings, as well as more specific

(transl. Fowler: "For of every action it may be observed that as acted by itself it is neither noble nor base. [...] For when the doing of it is noble and right, the thing itself becomes noble; when wrong, it becomes base. So also it is with loving, and Love is not in every case noble or worthy of celebration, but only when he impels us to love in a noble manner.")

issues, for instance: the status of surprise. Hence I will not argue against either view. I don't want to discuss either the way Plato's views are presented and what many of us have heard about them and/or are used to believing in this respect. I will simply pinpoint passages in which I think important elements of Plato's approach are present and go directly to Plato's text.

But let me spell out my premisses. First, I understand Plato as a modern reader would, whose mind is certainly filled with the modern way of thinking and which is distanced from that author by more than two millennia of the history of philosophy. Then, I realize that in some points what I learn about affectivity from current research resembles or reminds me of what I find in Plato's dialogues. Needless to say, Plato is rarely referred to, if at all, in current research on emotions – this should not however be discouraging. I take it for granted that what Plato says is important for the philosophy of affectivity – not only historically, as it was considered in ancient times, but, first of all, universally. Finally, I regard a number of Plato's claims as prefigurations or anticipations of contemporary statements or ideas. Because of that, a further elaboration of these prefigurations or anticipations can be helpful for current research.

Yet, I want to add a proviso and say, with a bit of exaggeration, that I analyse Plato only for the sake of not committing a plagiarism. I am not interested in Plato's view on emotions, i.e. in putting together pieces of what the views on affectivity of an ancient philosopher are, but I am working on emotions as such, i.e. what they are. But since I meet in Plato's dialogues crucial and still valid things about affectivity, I must consider them. If, however, what I say distorts his views and is but my misinterpretation, I will then gladly accept all of what I have said in my papers on Plato either as my own views inspired by a reading of Plato or as my own view with no relation to Plato whatsoever.

A similar approach, though it eventuated much more by accident on the one hand, and much more solid, on the other, was, I believe, that of Jonathan Shay⁹. His two books on Homeric epic show how much both the modern psyche and the Homeric psyche have in common. This is all the more convincing because his results are supported by empirical data and also because Shay is not a classicist. Having no bias in this respect, he collected data about American veterans having no relation with the *Iliad* and the

⁹ See J. Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam* & J. Shay, *Odysseus in America*.

Odyssey. This is why it can be said that

S[hay]'s astonishing and impressive sources of references provided by modern psychology and psychiatry confirm, perhaps even in a larger degree than the often arduous philological inquiries, that poems maybe are *fiction, but that the bard sang the truth* (p. xv).¹⁰

Once a similarity between features of both psyches had been established, Shay could draw on Homer in order to better grasp elements in veterans' syndromes of behaviours and attitudes that were unclear to him. Doing this, he used Homeric epics as a kind of a psychiatric syndromes manual.

In what follows I intend modestly to touch upon only two questions of the whole gamut of issues treated by Plato: first, the taxonomy of feelings, then, the taxonomy of mental states¹¹.

2. Exemplification

2.1. Taxonomy of Feelings

2.1.1. Genera of Family

In the *Laches* we meet a list of basic emotions to the number of four. They are all objects of courage:

and further, all who are not merely courageous against pain or fear, but doughty fighters against desires and pleasures (transl. Lamb, 191d6-e1: καὶ ἔτι αὐτῶν μὴ μόνον ὅσοι πρὸς λύπας ἀνδρεῖοί εἰσιν ἢ φόβου, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἐπιθυμίας ἢ ἡδονὰς δεινοὶ μάχεσθαι).

Although the word *basic* is not mentioned by Plato, I take them to be *basic* (or *natural*) because the list is reiterated several times, e.g. in the *Theaetetus* 156b4-6:

[...] καὶ ἡδοναί γε δὴ καὶ λύπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ φόβοι κεκλημέναι καὶ ἄλλαι [...].

Please note (1) the distinct sequence in enumerating, and (2) the difference, which is that this list is left open by καὶ ἄλλαι ("and others").

As basic emotions, they are explicitly mentioned by the Stoics¹², which simply means that they followed Plato or, if you prefer, were anticipated by him. Three of them are given as paradigmatic in the *Phaedo*, in the context of acquiring virtue:

¹⁰ R. Zaborowski, *Homer in America*, p. 559.

¹¹ For a more theoretical treatment of the issue see R. Zaborowski, *Investigating Affectivity in the light of N. Hartmann's Layered Structure of Reality*, esp. sections 2 & 3, pp. 212-219.

¹² See DL VII, 111: εἶναι γένη τέτταρα, λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, ἡδονήν.

I suspect that this is not the right way to purchase virtue, by exchanging pleasures for pleasures, and pains for pains, and fear for fear, and greater for less, as if they were coins. (transl. Fowler, 69a7-9: μὴ γὰρ οὐχ αὐτὴ ἢ ἡ ὀρθὴ πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἀλλαγὴ, ἡδονὰς πρὸς ἡδονὰς καὶ λύπας πρὸς λύπας καὶ φόβον πρὸς φόβον καταλλάττεσθαι, καὶ μείζω πρὸς ἐλάττω ὥσπερ νομίσματα).

One can guess why desire is omitted here. Is it because changing one desire for another is an aspect of the way towards virtue? An answer in the positive would be mistaken in the context of the *Republic* 580d7-8, because it mentions desire or, more precisely, three kinds of desire, and, also, (three kinds of) pleasure but not pain or fear:

The three parts have also, it appears to me, three kinds of pleasure, one peculiar to each, and similarly three appetites and controls. (transl. Shorey, τριῶν ὄντων τριτταὶ καὶ ἡδοναὶ μὴ φαίνονται, ἐνδὸς ἐκάστου μία ἰδίᾳ· ἐπιθυμίαι τε ὡσαύτως καὶ ἀρχαί).

Four emotions are listed again – but with two variations – in the *Laws* II. We hear about the arising of emotions in those who are not capable of λόγος, i.e. in children.

Four examples given are pleasure, friendship, unpleasure, and hatred:

pleasure and love, and pain and hatred, spring up rightly in the souls of those who are unable as yet to grasp a rational account. (transl. Bury, 653b2-4: ἡδονὴ δὴ καὶ φιλία καὶ λύπη καὶ μῖσος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνωνται μήπω δυναμένων λόγῳ λαμβάνειν).

One should not be, however, misled by thinking that pleasure, friendship, unpleasure, and hatred are mutually exclusive with λόγος. This is rather to show that emotions and affectivity are present *already* in children, i.e. before λόγος occurs, so that we could use the argument for the sake of a non-cognitivist view of affectivity. We can be sure that the four emotions are understood not as purely bodily but as mental phenomena, for they belong to the psyche (ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνωνται). It is clear that though being mental they can still not be related to/based on/resulting from thinking, which is absent at this stage.

However, a question arises: why does Plato not rather rely here on fear and desire instead of love and hatred as he does in the *Laches*? And: does that mean that Plato's list of what we call basic (or natural) emotions should be – because of two partly different sets of four – expanded to six, namely pleasure, unpleasure, fear, desire, friendship/love, and hatred? I think there are two options: either we should expand it so, and then Descartes' number of six basic emotions comes to the mind (with the difference that Descartes lists wonder instead of fear) or they are only the most typical emotions without being basic. This is plausible because on another occasion we are given different lists. They include (1) not all of the above six, (2) other, different items, e.g.

anger, yearning, mourning, fear, love, jealousy, envy, and the like. (transl. Fowler, *Philebus* 50b7-c1: ὀργὴν μὴν καὶ πόθον καὶ θρηῖνον καὶ φόβον καὶ ἔρωτα καὶ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον προυθέμεθα καὶ ὅποσα τοιαῦτα, see also 47e1-2: ὀργὴν καὶ φόβον καὶ πόθον καὶ θρηῖνον καὶ ἔρωτα καὶ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα).

And it cannot be accidental, given the frequency of similar lists. Moreover, Plato suggests that the number is bigger and hard to define. The last list is not complete and now Plato is explicit about it since it ends with ὅποσα τοιαῦτα (Fowler: “and the like”, or ὅσα τοιαῦτα, Fowler: “and the like”) which is confirmed by πολλὰ ἔτι τὰ λοιπά; καὶ πάνυ γε (Fowler: “still many others [...] left [...] very many”) in 50c8-9. By this token, we are invited to think not only that there are other phenomena of this kind but also that they are many. Yet, Plato is imprecise as to a number or even a range of the number of these items.

And here we are at the point where we are about to recognize the infinite number of them. In the *Republic* IV (431b9-c1) they, i.e.:

[...] the mob of motley appetites and pleasures and pains (transl. Shorey, [...] τὰς γε πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἡδονὰς τε καὶ λύπας)

certainly refer to the huge number of desires, pleasures and unpleasures – this time no fear on the list – where their number surely does not mean species of desires, pleasures and unpleasures but only desires, pleasures and unpleasures as distinct as their objects can be. They are opposed to “the simple and moderate appetites” (transl. Shorey, 431c5: τὰς δὲ γε ἀπλᾶς τε καὶ μετρίας), if accompanied by “reason and right opinion [and] guided by consideration” (transl. Shorey, 431c5-6: μετὰ νοῦ τε καὶ δόξης ὀρθῆς λογισμῷ ἄγονται), what means, it seems to me, that as such they are neither good or bad but can be either good or bad depending on whether they are or are not moderate. In the *Theaetetus* there is, however, a question of naming affective genera. And obviously, we don’t look this time for names of distinct desires, pleasures, or unpleasures because of their objects as above in the *Republic* IV:

Now we give the senses names like these: sight and hearing and smell, and the sense of cold and of heat, and pleasures and pains and desires and fears and so forth. Those that have names are very numerous, and those that are unnamed are innumerable. Now the class of objects of sense is akin to each of these [...]. (transl. Fowler, 156b2-c1: αἱ μὲν οὖν αἰσθήσεις τὰ τοιαῦτα ἡμῖν ἔχουσιν ὀνόματα, ὅψεις τε καὶ ἀκοαὶ καὶ ὀσφρήσεις καὶ ψύξεις τε καὶ καύσεις καὶ ἡδοναὶ γε δὴ καὶ λύπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ φόβοι κεκλημέναι καὶ ἄλλαι, ἀπέραντοι μὲν αἱ ἀνόνομοι, παμπληθεῖς δὲ αἱ ὀνομασμέναι· τὸ δ’ αὖ αἰσθητὸν γένος τούτων ἐκάσταις ὁμόγονον [...]).

But what does that mean? Is that only a way of speaking or are they literally

“unnamed and innumerable”¹³? There are two things: first, there are nameable and unnameable emotions/feelings. Second, the former are many, while the latter are unlimited¹⁴. But what is the basis of the first distinction? Are they nameable/unnameable as such? Are they so because either (1) they have no names yet or (2) they have no names at all? And if (2), they have no names at all this is because either (2a) they are known but cannot be named or (2b) because they are unknown?

The second distinction of many vs unlimited perhaps better supports (2a), i.e. they are known but cannot be named, because there is no question of a scarcity of names here (see 1) nor unknown natures of emotions (see 2b). (2a) sounds a bit nihilistic in the sense of Gorgias’ feature of being apprehensible but incommunicable (in this case unnameable). In other passages, Plato makes no such distinction and claims that the number of affections/impressions/emotions/feelings is infinite¹⁵. So in the *Theaetetus* 156a7-b2:

From the union and friction of these two are born offspring, infinite in number, but always twins, the object of sense and the sense which is always born and brought forth together with the object of sense. (transl. Fowler, ἐκ δὲ τῆς τούτων ὁμιλίας τε καὶ τρίψεως πρὸς ἄλληλα

¹³ They are infinite and this is why the qualification *unnamed* should not surprise. Think about their mixture. See R. Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, Art. 68: “I’m only talking about the principal passions here; there are ever so many more – indeed an unlimited number of them.” (transl. J. Bennett).

¹⁴ Are they unlimited ontically or epistemically? Plato seems not to answer this question. What I mean is that it is not the same to claim they are innumerable because any new event or occurrence of emotions/feelings/affections/sentiment add to the general stuff of affectivity and to claim that they are so many that we are unable to count them. Secondly, is their being unnameable an effect of their being innumerable or are these two features independent? Or: is their being unnameable independent of their being many (but in fact countable) or is it just a consequence of our epistemic incapacity to treat them in their entirety?

¹⁵ Glenn Most objected to me that *infinite* means *negative* in Plato. I am not sure if this can be applied here (for instance in the *Philebus* 27e7-9 it is suggested that “pleasure would not be absolute good if it were not infinite in number and degree” (transl. Fowler, οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἡδονὴ πᾶν ἀγαθὸν ἦν, εἰ μὴ ἄπειρον ἐτύγγανε πεφυκὸς καὶ πλήθει καὶ τῷ μᾶλλον)). In *Symposium* 203a6-8 we are told about daemons being many and various, one of them being Eros, without any hint of negativity (οὗτοι δὲ οἱ δαίμονες πολλοὶ καὶ παντοδαποὶ εἰσιν, εἷς δὲ τούτων ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ Ἔρως, see also 209e2-3: γεννήσαντες παντοίαν ἀρετήν). When asked for pointing to a passage where emotions/passions are explicitly considered by Plato as negative, this eminent scholar said that there are plenty of such passages. In the *Philebus* 42d1-2 λῦπαί τε καὶ ἀλγηδόνες καὶ ὀδύνη καὶ πάνθ’ ὅποσα τοιαῦτ’ ὀνόματα are listed without labelling them under a genus term. More recently W. McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 45, n. 1 assumed that: “It has been often remarked that the emotions are fluid and undefinable, that they are in perpetual flux and are experienced in an infinite number of varieties. [...] The colour-sensations present, like the emotions, an indefinitely great variety of qualities [...]”

γίγνεται ἔκγονα πλήθει μὲν ἄπειρα, δίδυμα δέ, τὸ μὲν αἰσθητόν, τὸ δὲ αἴσθησις, αἰεὶ συνεκπίπτουσα καὶ γεννωμένη μετὰ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ.),

as well as in the *Laws*:

passions infinite both in number and in magnitude, and that, although they are eminently just, they are also eminently unseemly. (transl. Bury, 860b4-5: ἐστὶν μὲν ἄπειρα παθήματα πλήθει καὶ μεγέθει, δικαιοτάτα δὲ πάντων παθημάτων καὶ συμπάντων αἴσχιστα)¹⁶.

One can investigate further and ask why this is so nihilistic and why emotions could be known but unnameable. One reason is that they are individual and their individuality pertains to an event occurring at a particular moment. The same is hardly experienced twice and they differ more than numerically:

For instance, a person might have an alarming reaction to yellow because of a yellow car that hit her previously, and someone else might have a nostalgic reaction to a comfort food. These effects are too individual-specific to be captured by English words.¹⁷

What is said here about the limits of language in grasping affective features can be compared to Plato's observation: passions/emotions are infinite and unnameable in number and magnitude. While language can well be sufficient for capturing affective phenomena at genera and species levels, it is not sufficient for adequately identifying them at sub-species or sub-sub-species levels, i.e. at the level of individual event/occurrence.

In other cases, this can be simply a question of epistemic incapacity or laziness in description¹⁸. To the extent it is so, eagerness and the efforts of the scientific community may make us more optimistic and we can nourish some hope for building the network of words so that they can one day describe emotions correctly and accurately. Until then, it might be better to recognize that there are many emotions/feelings/affectations/sentiments – and this is the point that Plato makes as regards genera (i.e.

¹⁶ No example of *pathema* is given. *Pathema* is synonymous with *pathos* in what precedes: καὶ πάθος ὅπερ ἂν [...] ἐὰν δὲ γε δίκαιον μὲν ὁμολογῶμεν, αἰσχροὺν δὲ εἶναι πάθος (*Laws* 859e11-860a5). On a possible identity of *pathos* and *pathema* see also *Protagoras* 352e6-353a5: [...] τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, ὃ φασιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἡδονῶν ἡττᾶσθαι [...] τοῦτο τὸ πάθημα ἡδονῆς ἡττᾶσθαι [...]. See also *Gorgias* 481c5-d2 quoted below.

¹⁷ *Qualia* in: *Wikipedia* (retrieved on July 17, 2015). See also R. S. Peters, *Emotions and the Category of Passivity*, pp. 117-118: “A man may feel blue on Monday mornings; but we do not have a word for the shade of blue he feels on a particular Monday. Fear, too, covers what a man might feel for a bull in a different field, in the same field where there is an easy escape route accessible to the bull, and in a field where there is no escape route at all.”

¹⁸ See A. O. Rorty, *A Plea for Ambivalence*, p. 432.

groups of emotions) and probably species levels.

2.1.2. *Species of Genera*

2.1.2.1. *Fear*

In the *Protagoras* we hear about δέος καὶ φόβος¹⁹ as well as about δέος/αιδώς/φόβος/αἰσχύνη distinction in the *Euthyphro* 12b9-c1:

ἀλλ' ἵνα γε αἰδῶς ἔνθα καὶ δέος εἶναι· ἐπεὶ ἔστιν ὅστις αἰδούμενός τι πρᾶγμα καὶ αἰσχυρόμενος οὐ πεφόβηται τε καὶ δέδοικεν ἅμα δόξαν πονηρίας (transl. Fowler: But I think that where reverence is, there also is fear; for does not everyone who has a feeling of reverence and shame about any act also dread and fear the reputation for wickedness?).

In the *Laws* I we are told there are two kinds of fear:

can we discern two kinds of fear, of which the one is nearly the opposite of the other? (transl. Bury, 646e4-5: δύο φόβων εἶδη σχεδὸν ἐναντία δυνάμεθα κατανοῆσαι;)

– labelled both, first, as φόβος. Of them one fear is of evils we expect to occur and it has no special name. The second has reputation as its object and is called shame (αἰσχύνη).

The latter is

opposed to pains and to all other objects of fear, and opposed also to the greatest and most numerous pleasures (transl. Bury, 647a4-6: ὁ ἕτερος ἐναντίος μὲν ταῖς ἀλγηδόσιν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις φόβοις, ἐναντίος δ' ἐστὶ ταῖς πλείσταις καὶ μεγίσταις ἡδοναῖς)

and is glossed by αἰδώς. For both kinds of fear Plato uses the same verb (646e7-10: φοβούμεθα μὲν [...] φοβούμεθα δέ [...]). They are two kinds (or species ?) of φόβος and only the second has a special name which is αἰσχύνη, replaced soon by αἰδώς.

2.1.2.2. *Pleasure/Joy group*

In the *Philebus* we hear about:

ἡδονὴν καὶ τέρψιν καὶ χαρὰν καὶ πάνθ' ὅποσα τοιαῦτ' ἐστὶ (19c7-8, transl. Fowler: pleasure and gaiety and enjoyment and all that sort of things)²⁰.

This passage tells us more about what ὅποσα τοιαῦτ' here as well as in the passage quoted above refers to. While in the *Philebus* 47e2 and 50c1 ὅποσα τοιαῦτ' refers to

¹⁹ See 358d5-e7. Likewise courage, see 359b8: ἀνδρείους λέγοι θαρραλέους.

²⁰ The other kind of things, opposed to these, are: νοῦν, ἐπιστήμην, σύνεσιν, τέχνην καὶ πάντα αὐτὰ τούτων συγγενῆ (19d, Fowler: “mind, knowledge, intelligence, art, and all their kin”).

genera (groups) of emotions, here it points to species of the genus, i.e. different kinds of the same group, let it be called pleasure or joy. Does this mean that, *mutatis mutandis*, there are many named species of pleasure/joy and unlimited unnameable species of them as well? Moreover, now ἡδονή seems to be rather a species than a genus term as it is in the *Laches* and *Phaedo* passages quoted above. But if it is species term, what is the genus term including this species together with others, i.e. τέρψις καὶ χαρά and all others (named and numerous or/and unnamed and unnumerable) of this genus? Given that ἡδονή refers now to a species, more precisely to a species of the genus we would call pleasure or joy, we should, I suppose, accept that either ἡδονή refers to species and not to genus, or that there is no distinction between genus and species in Plato or, finally, that it refers to both, genus as well as species. This last is the solution I would favour, but I must say I have for that no other reason than a possibly similar situation occurring in modern Indo-European languages, say, English, French, Italian or German.

Now the question is: is this confusion related to all groups of the family and for all of them the genus term is confused (or interchangeable) with the species term, or: is this a peculiar case with ἡδονή? For example, the Stoics avoid the problem because they speak about ἡδονή including the following species: κήλησις, ἐπιχαιρεκακία, τέρψις, διάχυσις²¹. So far, so good. But the counterpart [ἐναντίαν] of ἡδονή, one of the three *eupatheiai*, is χαρά of which species are: τέρψις, εὐφροσύνη, εὐθυμία²². Unless one wants to credit the Stoics with setting up a contradiction, we should admit they use τέρψις in two different, in this case clearly opposite meanings. If so, we are back to the problem of the double meaning of emotion words, though not in the sense mentioned above, i.e. genus vs species term but as two opposite species terms. What matters here is that Plato is explicit about a bigger number of species than he iterates. He is silent about what these species are. Furthermore, there is no genus name or the genus name is the same as of the one of species of that genus, i.e. ἡδονή (pleasure)²³.

²¹ DL VII, 114, transl. Hicks: “Pleasure [...] ravishment, malevolent joy, delight, transport. [...]”.

²² DL VII, 116, transl. Hicks: “Joy, the counterpart of pleasure [...] Thus [...] they bring [...] under joy, delight, mirth, cheerfulness”.

²³ The same holds true for fear (φόβος), applied both as genus and species term, see *Laws* 646e4 sq. above. A more general remark is that, in some cases, the same name serves both as a genus and as one of the species of this genus. See also *Symposium* 205b4-6: ἀφελόντες γὰρ ἄρα τοῦ ἔρωτός τι εἶδος ὀνομάζομεν, τὸ τοῦ ὄλου ἐπιτιθέντες ὄνομα, ἔρωτα, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἄλλοις καταχρώμεθα ὀνόμασιν (transl. Fowler: “for we have singled out a certain form of love, and

2.1.3. Families of Class

I started with (i) Genera of Family issue and then said a word on (ii) Species of Genera. But I have said nothing about Plato's family term that corresponds or would correspond to our family term emotions/feelings/affections/sentiments. If one regards the *Philebus* passages quoted above (19c7-8, 47e1-2, and 50b7-c1), where "anger, longing, mourning, fear, love, jealousy, envy and some others of that kind" (ὀργὴν μὴν καὶ πόθον καὶ θρηῆνον καὶ φόβον καὶ ἔρωτα καὶ ζῆλον καὶ φθόνον προουθέμεθα καὶ ὅποσα τοιαῦτα) are introduced, one doesn't find any general term whatsoever including all of them. And in *Symposium* 207e2-4 (ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν οἱ τρόποι, τὰ ἦθη, δόξαι, ἐπιθυμίαι, ἡδοναί, λῦπαι, φόβοι, τούτων ἕκαστα οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ πάρεστιν ἐκάστω [...]), there is again, no family term.

However, in the *Theaetetus* 156b4-5 (above) "pleasures, unpleasures, desires and fears" (ἡδοναί γε δὴ καὶ λῦπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ φόβοι) are called "senses" (αἰσθήσεις). This is what Plato tells us, but I feel lost.

This is because his list of αἰσθήσεις includes senses²⁴ of which each differs by organs as well as by object. This is the case of Plato's "sight, hearing, smell, the sense of cold and of the sense of heat" (ὄψεις τε καὶ ἀκοαὶ καὶ ὀσφρήσεις καὶ ψύξεις τε καὶ καύσεις), but not of ἡδοναί γε δὴ καὶ λῦπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ φόβοι as well as of many others, of which numerous are named and innumerable are unnamed. Typically we don't think of pleasure, unpleasure, desire and fear as having separate organs to be felt and distinguishable by their objects characterized by several properties, for instance you cannot hear colour, but you can like colour as well as desire or fear it.

Why then are they put by Plato in the same box of αἰσθήσεις? Well, this is so. I confess I have no reply and maybe I have but to follow Plato and admit of αἰσθήσεις being a family term comprising what we are used to understand as two distinct categories: senses and emotions. Very well then. But if so, i.e. if ἡδοναί γε δὴ καὶ λῦπαι καὶ ἐπιθυμίαι καὶ φόβοι are of the kind, pardon me, of the family of αἰσθήσεις, should not the same be said about βούλεσθαι, σκοπεῖσθαι, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, βουλευέσθαι, δοξάζειν

applying thereto the name of the whole, we call it love; and there are other names that we commonly abuse").

²⁴ Remark that there is no mention of taste whereas the senses of heat and of cold are taken separately.

ὀρθῶς ἐνευσμένως, and other mental acts as they are listed in the *Laws*? Many will find this odd, I am afraid. But this is what occurs and this time λῦπαι καὶ [...] φόβοι are put in the same box as will, opinion and other acts are. So, shall we think that sometimes emotions/feelings go with senses and sometimes with thoughts? But what are they called in Plato? Alas, there is no particular word in this context. We have only a general one that encompasses all of what we call thoughts and emotions/feelings. This word is κινήσεις (“motions”):

[...] by its [soul’s] own motions, of which the names are wish, reflection, forethought, counsel, opinion true and false, joy, grief, confidence, fear, hate, love, and all the motions that are akin to these [καὶ πάσαις ὅσαι τούτων συγγενεῖς] or are prime-working motions; these, when they take over the secondary motions of bodies [...]. (transl. Bury, *Laws* 896e9-897a5: ταῖς αὐτῆς κινήσεσιν, αἷς ὀνόματά ἐστιν βούλεσθαι, σκοπεῖσθαι, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, βουλεύεσθαι, δοξάζειν ὀρθῶς ἐνευσμένως, χαίρουσαν λυπουμένην, θαρροῦσαν φοβουμένην, μισοῦσαν στέργουσαν, καὶ πάσαις ὅσαι τούτων συγγενεῖς ἢ πρωτουργοὶ κινήσεις τὰς δευτερουργοὺς αὐτῶν παραλαμβάνουσαι κινήσεις σωμάτων [...]).

As it is, Plato doesn’t call them otherwise than motions (κινήσεις), even though the word is proper to physics and movement of bodies, which in this context is a kind of secondary motion. It looks now as if there were no sense, emotion/feeling and thought term in Plato – as we are used to categorize classes of mental acts – but rather only two different, general class terms, αἰσθήσεις and κινήσεις covering our three modern concepts²⁵.

Please remark that, they are not passions in traditional sense of being acted upon or being passive states because, as Plato tells us, they are that by means of which souls exerts action on all (things) of heaven, earth and sea. Or: if we still think that joy, sorrow, courage, etc. are passive states which exert motion on bodies, then will, search and belief, either true or false must be taken for similar passive states too, because there is no distinction set by Plato between what we call feelings and thoughts in the passage in question. What therefore about the whole class of what we call mental acts/states/functions, including thought and emotion/feeling?

A class of (what seem to be modern) mental acts including families of thought and

²⁵ But see Plato, *Laws* 896c-d1 where Plato lists: τρόποι δὲ καὶ ἦθη καὶ βουλήσεις καὶ λογισμοὶ καὶ δόξαι ἀληθεῖς ἐπιμέλειαί τε καὶ μνήμαι (transl. Bury: “Moods and dispositions and wishes and calculations and true opinions and considerations and memories”). Again, no class term is given other than “being akin to soul” (ψυχῆ).

feeling would correspond to Plato's category of motions²⁶. But in Plato there seems not to be family terms corresponding to our thought and feeling. Accordingly, seen from our perspective, only class, then genera and species levels seem to be conceptualized in Plato. If, however, one objects that the term for feeling (or emotion) is *pathos* – as it is in Aristotle and the Stoics²⁷ – one should be reminded that while, on the one hand, πάθος together with πάθημα refers to what is experienced, e.g. *Gorgias* 481c5-d2:

ὁ Καλλίκλεις, εἰ μή τι ἦν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάθος, τοῖς μὲν ἄλλο τι, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ αὐτὸ, ἀλλὰ τις ἡμῶν ἰδίον τι ἔπασχεν πάθος ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι, οὐκ ἂν ἦν ῥάδιον ἐνδείξασθαι τῷ ἑτέρῳ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πάθημα. λέγω δ' ἐννοήσας ὅτι ἐγὼ τε καὶ σὺ νῦν τυγχάνομεν ταυτὸν τι πεπονθότες [...] (transl. Lamb: Callicles, if men had not certain feelings, each common to one sort of people, but each of us had a feeling peculiar to himself and apart from the rest, it would not be easy for him to indicate his own impression²⁸ to his neighbor. I say this because I notice that you and I are at this moment in much the same condition [...]),

on the other, πάθημα is broader and means not only emotions/feelings/affects/sentiments in the sense of purely bodily and bodily/psychic affections²⁹ but also purely psychic (or intellectual) acts as it can be inferred from the *Republic* VI, where Plato provides us with a hierarchy of, say, intellectual experiences³⁰:

²⁶ For instance one can compare Plato's categories on the list with the content of Descartes' *cogito* which are: "[...] dubitans, intelligens, affirmans, negans, volens, nolens, imaginans quocumque, & sentiens" (R. Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia* II, 28). If so, Descartes' *cogito* is a similar general category to Plato's *kinēseis*.

²⁷ See *EN* 1105b: λέγω δὲ πάθη [...], *EE* 1220b: λέγω δὲ πάθη [...], *Rhet.* 2, 1, 8: ἔστι δὲ τὰ πάθη [...]. As for the Stoics see *DL* VII, 110: ἔστι δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος [...].

²⁸ I don't see any reason to render here *pathema* as "impression" rather than as "experience" or as "feeling".

²⁹ E.g. *Philebus* 33d2-4: τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν ἐκάστοτε παθημάτων τὰ μὲν ἐν τῷ σώματι κατασβεννύμενα πρὶν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν διεξελθεῖν ἀπαθῆ ἑκείνην ἐάσαντα, τὰ δὲ δι' ἀμφοῖν ἰόντα (transl. Fowler: "some of the affections of our body are extinguished in the body before they reach the soul, leaving the soul unaffected, and that other affections permeate both body and soul").

³⁰ See J. Adam's note to this: "The exercise of νοῦς is correctly spoken of as a πάθημα ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γιγνόμενον, but the faculty itself could hardly be thus described." And Shorey (*ad. loc.*) adds: "Here the word διάνοια is given a technical meaning as a faculty inferior to νοῦς, but, as Plato says, the terminology does not matter. The question has been much and often idly discussed." However, none sense provided by LSJ for πάθημα is good because νόησιν [...] διάνοιαν [...] πίστιν [...] εἰκασίαν are not what we are used to understand by *affections, feelings*, especially because traditionally we are accustomed to divide mental states into passive feelings (or emotions) and active thoughts. Here this is not the case: νόησιν [...] διάνοιαν [...] πίστιν [...] εἰκασίαν are not *poiema* but *pathema*. What matters is that, as we have – or so I would suggest – a hierarchy of affective functions, so there is a hierarchy for intellectual acts. Similarly in Aristotle, *De anima* 408b26: τὸ δὲ διανοεῖσθαι καὶ φιλεῖν ἢ μισεῖν [...] πάθη (transl. Hicks: "reasoning, love and hatred are not attributes of the thinking faculty", transl. Smith: "Thinking,

τέτταρα ταῦτα παθήματα ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γιγνόμενα λαβέ, νόησιν μὲν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀνωτάτῳ, διάνοιαν δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ, τῷ τρίτῳ δὲ πίστιν ἀπόδος καὶ τῷ τελευταίῳ εἰκασίαν [...] (511d7-e2, transl. Shorey: these four sections, assume these four affections occurring in the soul: intellection or reason for the highest, understanding for the second; assign belief to the third, and to the last picture-thinking or conjecture).

To conclude: in Plato we have no clear-cut terms nor clear claims about relations between species within genus, genera within family and families within class of the mental. There is neither general term for the whole class nor sufficient terms for genera and/or species within genera.

2.2. *Taxonomy of Mental States*

It has been claimed³¹ that emotions, or I would prefer to say affectivity, doesn't form a natural class. But this cannot be a strong claim. If it were, the same could be claimed about thought which presents, too, a big variety of forms. If we bracket for a while our own thought/emotion dichotomy maybe we would more likely adopt Plato's perspective with no strict divide between thoughts and feelings³². Then we would be more willing to see mind as a whole. Without splitting it into two opposite kinds of acts we could benefit from viewing several genera of "willing, searching, caring, advising, having an opinion true as well as false, rejoicing, being in sorrow, being courageous, scarred, hating, loving etc." (*Laws* 897a1-3) without granting any of them either exclusively a pure thought-nature or exclusively a pure emotion-nature. The corollary would be that also species of these genera, say dread, horror, scare, alarm, terror, fright, panic, anxiety, awe, concern, and anguish for fear or, to take another example, pleasure, gaiety, happiness, delight, cheerfulness and others that can be provided by English speakers for the genus of joy, could not be considered any more as simply of emotion-nature. Although emotion is probably dominant in this kind of acts, they are not purely affective and contain some, however small it be, part of thought (inversely, what we take to be a kind of thought, say, deliberation, calculation etc. is a linkage of a thought ingredient (possibly predominant) and of a feeling ingredient.

loving, and hating are affections not of mind").

³¹ E.g. by A. O. Rorty, *Introduction*, p. 1.

³² See A. W. Price, *Emotions in Plato and Aristotle*, p. 140: "Without separating off emotions as such, Plato and Aristotle alert us to their compositional intricacy, which involves body and mind, cognition and desire, perception and feeling."

If I am right in my approach, then Plato should not be charged without qualification with what, for instance, was assumed by Max Scheler, for instance, in the following terms:

Plato, too, fell victim of the deception of the ancient and historically very effective division of spirit into “reason” and “sensibility”.³³

A recent plea for “a concept that implicitly treats the emotional and the intellectual as inseparable [...]”³⁴, a concept that, in Michael Slote’s view, is absent in European philosophy while met in “the Chinese emphasis on *xin*”, is not that hopeless³⁵. Slote’s claim that such a concept “has no parallel in the West”³⁶, with the corollary that, according to him,

[p]erhaps Western philosophy and philosophers have been unwilling to see the mind as essentially involving emotional factors because of their general tendency to devalue – and even fear – (the) emotion(s).³⁷

is ill-founded in the light of what I have just suggested.

Now, for anyone who doesn’t rule out affectivity as a constituent part/element/component of the mental life, there are, I think, the following options:

- 1) thought and feeling are two independent, irreducible and separable elements of the mental,
- 2) thought and feeling are two ontically independent and irreducible but epistemically inseparable elements of the mental,
- 3) there is no such thing as pure thought and pure feeling – they are only concepts we use to describe what are two aspects of mind³⁸.

³³ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, p. 166. For more on Scheler’s defective reception of Platon see R. Zaborowski, *Plato and Max Scheler on affective world*. See also P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*, p. 1 who tries to dismantle the charge of “an extreme intellectualism in which reason is upheld to the exclusion of feeling or affection against the Greek tradition.”

³⁴ M. Slote, *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, p. xviii.

³⁵ I was told by Lijuan Lin that “[...] in chinese *xin* can mean both the emotional and the intellectual. As a word it can be both combined with the word emotion (*qing*情) – *xin qing* (心情) means "feeling", and combined with the word intellect (*zhi*智) – *xin zhi* (心智) means "intellect". That is [...] a similar case to *thumos* in the Greek poetic tradition, since it can represent not only the emotional, but also the intellectual. [...]” (a personal communication *per nuntium electronicum*, July 2015).

³⁶ M. Slote, *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, p. xviii.

³⁷ M. Slote, *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, p. 238.

³⁸ If there is no occurrence of pure feeling and pure thinking, the same can work for genera, species and sub-species of affectivity: what we call joy when we believe we experience it is

If 3) holds, then obviously taking them as ontically separate is a mistaken point of view. We have words but the Greeks had not and it is not easy to determine at this stage whose position is right. If supporters of the unity of thought-feeling such as Scheler or Slote are right, then Plato is right too.

3. *A Short Conclusion*

Although often considered outdated or useless, Plato's views on affectivity in general and on emotions in particular offer a great many observations recurring in subsequent theories of the emotions. Without putting forward a claim about the character of these similarities – either influential or purely anticipatory or simply coincidental – I intended to illustrate them with examples limited to taxonomical issues. If the examples referred to are relevant to the current discussion, then Plato's views are wrongly taken as valid only for historical research, or worse, neglected completely. They should rather be considered helpful in disentangling any aporia inherent to the debate over affectivity. Therefore, a first conclusion is general and banal for many, but surprising others: to say that Plato is not interested in affectivity or that his views are negative is inaccurate.

Second, and a more refined one is that it can be suggested that while this is true that

[i]n sum, there is no clear evidence that, for Plato, the term *πάθος* has as its specific referent what we think of as the emotions; on the occasions when it seems to coincide with the modern notion, it would appear to do so simply because the term is so capacious that these phenomena too, in the appropriate context, come under its umbrella. That the word *πάθος* did not, for Plato, specifically designate what we think of as emotion does not mean that no such concept was available to him, of course.

as observed by Konstan, it is not exact to say, as he does, that:

Plato did not devote a special discussion to the emotions [...]³⁹,

though a part of it depends on how “special” in his sentence is understood. I would rather think that he doesn't devote a special discussion to the vocabulary of the emotions, especially the categorical words required in order to deal with the realm of affectivity in an analytical way, while still providing us with a lot of material that can be

never a pure joy but most probably mixed with other affective components.

³⁹ D. Konstan, *The Concept of “Emotion” from Plato to Cicero*, p. 7.

informative and inspiring in research on affectivity. Now, if it is true that after more than two millennia we are still in a position, as described recently by A. Fridlung, that

[e]veryone claims to be studying “emotion” while doing wholly different things, yet no one can be pinned down on a *working* definition of emotion. When ask, people either offer philosophy (essentialist definitions, newly-minted neurosophistry), promissory theses (one day “it” will be localized in the brain in the Isle of Reil or down in the just-discovered Xenu protein complex), or hand-waving (it “emerges from a complex pattern of bodily and cognitive activity”) [...] ⁴⁰,

then Plato’s stance is not that inapt because it stems from the fact that language mirrors poorly or imperfectly the state of affective affairs. If a sharp categorization or conceptualization within the realm of affectivity risks deforming it too strongly, Plato’s reluctance against rigidity is the best he can offer to us. And it is the best that can be offered. The realm of affectivity is intricate and this would explain a number of theories, many of which are contradictory to one another. Plato’s approach is interesting for anyone looking for a comprehensive view of affectivity. Plato is of interest also to anyone willing to support or develop a holistic thought-feeling picture of the mental. Better than denying Plato’s contribution to the analysis of affectivity or crediting him with a negative view in this respect, I prefer to admit that compared to these two incompatible approaches, one ancient and one modern, his is more correct. In order to grasp it more closely it would be better to take into consideration the following:

[...] for that reason our age continues not to correct them [the Ancients], as my Greek fathers did the Egyptians, but to imitate them, though it seems a difficult task for our age has produced concepts that were never used among the Ancients. ⁴¹

To paraphrase Shay: Plato’s concept differ from ours but it could be the case that he says more than truth about affectivity than we do.

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⁴⁰ A. Fridlung’s mail sent on Jan. 31, 2015 to the International Society for Research on Emotion (ISRE) forum (<http://lists.psu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind1501&L=ISRE-L&F=&S=&P=35419>, retrieved on Jan. 31, 2015).

⁴¹ El Greco’s thought as it has been displayed at the exhibition *The Greek of Toledo*, Museum of Santa Cruz, Toledo, April 2014.

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