



### Some remarks on Plato on emotions

### Algunas observaciones de Platón a respecto de las emociones\*

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**Abstract:** A paper is an attempt at reassessing the role of emotions in Plato's dialogues cannot be assessed. A standard view identifying (or translating or interpreting) *to logistikon* with (as) reason, *to thumoeides* with (as) the irascible and *to epithumetikon* with (as) the concupiscent is challenged so far as each of the three parts possesses emotions (affectivity) of its own. The opinion that Plato is responsible for the negative view of emotion is rejected. Plato's views on emotions are understood more accurately understood from a hierarchical perspective, i.e. when three parts of the soul are analyzed as three strata of the feeling–thinking–desiring linkages.

**Resumo:** Este artigo é uma tentativa de reavaliar o papel das emoções nos diálogos de Platão. Uma visão padronizada de identificação (ou tradução ou interpretação) para *logistikon* com (como) razão, *thumoeides* com (como) o irascível e *epithumetikon* com (como) o concupiscente é desafiada à medida em que cada uma das três partes possui emoções (afetividade) próprias. A opinião de que Platão é responsável pela visão negativa da emoção é rejeitada. Os pontos de vista de Platão sobre as emoções são entendidos de forma mais precisa, vista de uma perspectiva hierárquica, ou seja, quando três partes da alma são analisadas em três estratos das ligações sentimento-pensamento-que desejam.

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## I. Introduction

Classicists, while paying increasing attention to affectivity in ancient Greek philosophy, have tended to prioritize Aristotle and the Hellenistic period over earlier times. Although secondary literature concerning Plato is enormous and each year there are new titles published, there is no monograph on either affectivity in general or particular emotions in Plato. Since the topic has not been systematically explored, the role of emotions and affectivity in Plato's dialogues cannot be adequately assessed.

As a matter of fact, there is something queer here: now we hear that Plato was not interested in affectivity and the reason for this is that his view of the human being is set exclusively in rationalist terms (this would explain absence of a monograph on this topic), now that he is responsible for what is called a negative view of emotions. A standard account of Plato's position in this respect is described, for example, as follows:

[in Plato] [...] emotion is inferior: emotions are primitive and disruptive to the normal and optimal function of mind. Third, emotion should be under the control of reason for the sake of our normal activities of thought and action.<sup>2</sup>

or:

Plato [...] proposed what may be called 'the negative view of emotion' [...] According to the negative view, emotions usually affect reasoning for the worse.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ZHU, J. & THAGARD, P., *Emotion and Action* in: *Philosophical Psychology* 15, 2002, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> EVANS, D., *The search hypothesis of emotion* in: *Emotion, Evolution, and Rationality*. Ed. by D. Evans & P. Cruse, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 179 – what is the first sentence of the paper.



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or:

The degrading of feelings and emotions to a low status is not just a byproduct of metaphysics; it belongs to metaphysics' essential constitution. The model was set by Plato and has been followed ever since.<sup>4</sup>

These statements are misleading and result, in my view, from an erroneous reading of Plato's account, especially from a mistaken identification of the meaning of the division of the soul into three parts. On one occasion it was pointed out to me that the *negative view of emotion* refers to nothing more than to a not-univocally-positive role of emotion in human life. I must say, this looks as a far-fetched explanation. If it were so, why not to call it simply an ambivalent view of emotion? Furthermore, it appears that apart from wisdom and the good itself nothing else is the object of a positive view in Plato. Such phenomena as *sophrosune* (*moderation, temperance*) can too be either beneficial or harmful<sup>5</sup>, yet I never heard of a negative view of *sophrosune* in Plato<sup>6</sup>.

Now, it would be dishonest to pass over in silence some honourable exceptions in addressing Plato's position in an accurate way. For example C. A. Ruckmick in his *Psychology of feeling and emotion, sketching a historical perspective*, claims that:

The inward voice of 'conscience' of Socrates was not entirely intellectual or cognitive, but partly also emotional. Indeed it had something of the character of a divine common sense. Virtue and happiness became the highest goal of man! Plato made two of his three essences the basis of the highest feelings [...]

Pleasure, then, becomes double-headed: it may be impure and generally combined "with more or less pain," or it may be "the true and enduring pleasure" of pure reason which contemplates truth and goodness and beauty.

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<sup>4</sup> HELLER, A. *A Theory of Feelings* [1979]. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009, p. 1 (sic!) – but, obviously, no evidence is given from Plato's text.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. *Meno* 88b: *such of these as you think are not knowledge [episteme], but different from knowledge – do they not sometimes harm us, and sometimes profit us? For example, courage, if it is courage apart from prudence [phronesis], and only a sort of boldness: when a man is bold without sense, he is harmed; but when he has sense at the same time, he is profited, is he not? – Yes. – And the same holds of temperance [sophrosune] and intelligence [eumatheia]: things learnt and coordinated with the aid of sense [sun no] are profitable, but without sense [aneu nou] they are harmful?* (Lamb's transl.) and also *Euthydemus* 281e: *Is it not precisely that, of all the other things, not one is either good or bad, but of these two, wisdom [sophia] is good and ignorance [amathia] bad?* (Lamb's transl.).

<sup>6</sup> PLATO keeps his neutral position with regard to several other things. For example in *Lysis* 217b *body as body (soma kata soma)* is said to be *neither good nor bad*.



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[...] Emotions, therefore, also take on this dual character; not all emotions are to be avoided, but only those of base origin.<sup>7</sup>

Although this is but a short account without presenting any argument, Ruckmick's position is clear in making distinctions as to Plato's evaluation of affectivity. Interestingly, one year earlier, J. Macmurray in his book *Reason and Emotion* presenting some anterior standpoints goes back as far as to Plato and observes (I will come back to this point below) that:

[...] in Plato's thought [...] It is not that our feelings have a secondary and subordinate capacity for being rational or irrational. It is that reason is primarily an affair of emotion, and that the rationality of thought is the derivative and secondary one. [...]<sup>8</sup>

Again, this is a general consideration but it does not qualify Plato's view in terms of the negativity of emotion. As for more recent authors the more explicit comes to my mind is the following: "*In the tri-partite soul, each part has its own reason, emotion, and desire [...]*"<sup>9</sup>.

As it is, although these are only short remarks without argument or analysis, they avoid any evaluative content as to suggesting either a *positive* or *negative view of emotion* in Plato.

Thus, I develop a criticism of attributing to Plato this kind of approach because even a preliminary overview proves that he must not be held responsible for the so-called negative view of emotions. As a matter of fact, each of the three parts of the Platonic soul possesses emotions (affectivity) as well as a reasoning and volitional faculty of its own. Plato's position is, therefore, more subtle: apart from a criticism of emotions we are given a praise of emotions, especially when they are put in a close relationship with some other mental phenomena.

One of my main thesis is that instead of dividing the soul into three distinct psychic functions of reason, emotion and desire, Plato's view is that of

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<sup>7</sup> RUCKMICK, C. A. *The Psychology of Feeling and Emotion*. New York – London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1936, pp. 31–32.

<sup>8</sup> MACMURRAY, J. *Reason and Emotion*. London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1935, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> ARONOFF, P., review of: W. W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* in: *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2003.05.27.



forming into hierarchy three inextricable nexuses of thinking, desiring and feeling at three superimposed layers. In the *Republic* they are called *to logistikon*, *to thumoeides* and *to epithumetikon* and in the *Phaedrus* they are metaphorically represented respectively by the charioteer, the white and the black horse<sup>10</sup>. In fact, the lowest layer, *to epithumetikon*, has potentially, to put it quantitatively but not qualitatively, as much of thinking as the highest one and the highest one has as much of feeling as the middle one.

The very difference between the three nexuses is that in each of them thinking, desiring and feeling are of different rank, say, of different quality. If taken separately – which is only a way of speaking but in fact such insulated items do not exist *in crudo* – they are to be listed under the labels such as thinking (λογιστικον), thinking (θυμοειδεις), thinking (επιθυμητικον<sup>11</sup>), feeling (λογιστικον), feeling (θυμοειδεις), etc. on the one hand and their content as *to logistikon*'s thinking, *to logistikon*'s feeling, *to logistikon*'s desiring, *to thumoeides*'s thinking, *thumoeides*'s feeling, etc. on the other.

This point is relevant to a general character of psychic phenomena and the question whether they exist as separate or whether such separate items are only abstracted concepts with no actual existence. If this interpretation is sound<sup>12</sup>, then, the more profoundly the position against which I argue is

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<sup>10</sup> Pace PRICE, A. W., *Parts of the Soul in Plato's Phaedrus* (unpublished, quoted with permission). Yet, although he sees *the psychology of Socrates' second speech in a way that relates it to the Republic, but despairs of any one-to-one mapping between the soul-parts that are distinguished there, and the elements of the chariot of the soul here*, he recognizes that [i]t [the good horse] is thus prone to the partiality and fixation characteristic of much emotion. Indeed, if we think of the width of its repertory, which takes in shame and fear as well as a sense of honour, we may think of it as well-meaning but unintelligent emotion; it is not an extension of the charioteer. Yet, the explicit one-to-one mapping between the three part of the soul in the *Republic* and the three elements in the *Phaedrus* is at least as old as Plutarch's remark that: *Plato himself, after he had compared the form of the soul to a charioteer and a pair of horses, likened, as it is obvious, the rational part [to logistikon] to the charioteer, and the appetitive part [to men peri tas epithumias] to one of the horses, which was resty and unmanageable altogether, bristly about the ears, deaf and disobedient both to whip and spur; and the spirited [to de thumoeides] he makes for the most part very obsequious to the bridle of reason, and assistant to it* (*Platonic Questions* 1008C, transl. Goodwin modified).

<sup>11</sup> Although Plato refers to the lower soul as *alogistos*, it shares – as observed rightly by PRICE, A. W., *Are Plato's Soul-Parts Psychological Subjects in: Ancient Philosophy* 29, 2009, p. 13, n. 15 – 'primitive thinking', unworthy of *to logistikón*.

<sup>12</sup> It seems to be supported by PLUTARCH, for, as he states, *it is not easy to conceive any human passion [pathos] devoid of reasoning [logismou] and any motion of the thought [dianoias kinesis]*



rooted in tradition of reading Plato, the more important it is to pursue such interpretation<sup>13</sup>.

Nevertheless, one should be particularly cautious in ascribing to Plato the reverse of what I criticize, i.e. a positive view of feelings, if by a positive view of feelings we understand that *emotions usually affect reasoning for the better*. In short, *usually* is to be applied neither as regards *for the better* nor *for the worse*. I am insisting on this in so far as within a current stream of re-evaluating affectivity in the history of philosophy it becomes more and more frequent to pass from one extreme to another. When avoiding *over-intellectualization of emotions*<sup>14</sup> I would not like to fall into over-emotionalization of thoughts. Indeed some enthusiasts happen to be eager as to deny, for example, that the Stoics are *proponents of a life devoid of all affect and attachment*<sup>15</sup> or that they *advocated repression of every feeling we call an emotion*<sup>16</sup>.

While it is true and manifest that the Stoics distinguished negative and positive affective states, nevertheless (1) they made great use of the term *apatheia* in order to advocate a complete eradication of feelings (this is what *apatheia* meant) and (2) they can be taken responsible for a verbal and conceptual blunder: even if it could and should be distinguished that the Stoics used to speak, on the one hand, about *pathe* which should be eradicated, then, on the other hand, about *eupatheiai* which are *positive* and characterize a sage, a confusion would have been better avoided if they had termed all affective phenomena as *pathe* and then had distinguished negative *kakopatheiai* and

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*without desire, emulation, joy or sorrow (On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus 1025D).*

<sup>13</sup> Commenting on my interpretation one of noted scholars working on emotions in the Greek world has said: *there is huge potential for confusion if we talk about reason as 'the highest level of affectivity'* [personal communication Dec. 15, 2012]. I would insist that *logos* – which is most commonly rendered by *reason* – is a synthesis of thinking, desiring and feeling, all three of the highest order. As for translating *logos* by *reason* in this context, I accept it only as far as by *reason* are understood *several* psychic functions, just like this is the case, for instance, in Descartes whose *cogito* includes *several* functions, as different as doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, wanting, refusing as well as imagining and sensing (see DESCARTES, R. *Meditationes de prima philosophia* II, 28 in: *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. 7. Ed. by C. Adam & P. Tannery, Paris: Vrin, 1957: *Res cogitans. Quid est hoc? Nempe dubitans, intelligens, affirmans, negans, volens, nolens, imaginans quoque, & sentiens.*).

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. GOLDIE, P. *The Emotions. A Philosophical Exploration*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2000, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> SHERMAN, N. on GRAVER, M. *Stoicism and Emotion* [back dust jacket].

<sup>16</sup> LONG, A. A. on GRAVER, M. *Stoicism and Emotion* [back dust jacket].



positive *eupatheiai*<sup>17</sup>.

Otherwise, in order to save the Stoic approach to affectivity, we need a rather tricky interpretation founded on a gap existing between the Greek and English concepts:

[...] while the *pathē* Stoics sought to eliminate are indeed cases of emotion in our sense, not everything we now call an ‘emotion’ was considered by Stoics to be a *pathos* and subject to elimination.<sup>18</sup>

which amounts to saying that they did support a hostile view as to *pathe* and at the same time did not support a hostile view as to all emotions, that is to say they were supportive of emotions as long as they are not *pathe* but are critical of them to the extent they are *pathe*. Yet, they seem neither to conceptualize emotions that are not *pathe* in any other way than by a term *eupatheiai* nor – if we accept this interpretation – to conceptualize the entire family of emotions, namely *pathe* plus *eupatheiai* together.

This paper is a part of a major work in progress. Its first part includes a treatment of dialogues considered separately in view of (a) particular emotions, (b) issues treated implicitly, (c) issues treated by Plato explicitly. The second part is intended to be a synthesis of results collected in the part 1, more particularly an attempt at reconstructing Plato’s approach to affectivity and particular emotions, which considers all dialogues and takes into account the evolution and modifications of his opinions.

In the third part I compare Plato’s views on affectivity and particular emotions with some subsequent philosophers or psychologists and try to

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<sup>17</sup> To deny that *eupatheiai* are *affective phenomena* seems hardly plausible but not implausible. On the one hand we are told that each of three *eupatheiai* is the opposite (*enantia*) of a corresponding *pathos* (DIOG. LAERT. VII, 116). From this one can infer that *eupatheiai* being the opposite of *pathe* are not *pathe* at all. Moreover the sage is said to be *apathe*s (DIOG. LAERT. VII, 117). On the other hand, however, the three principal *eupatheiai* listed by the Stoics are *chara* (*joy*), *eulabeia* (*caution*), and *boulesis* (*wishing*), which cover respectively (1) *delight, mirth, cheerfulness*, (2), *reverence and modesty*, (3) *benevolence, friendliness, respect, affection* (Hicks’ transl.). The character of at least some of them is undeniably dominantly or purely affective.

<sup>18</sup> GRAVER, M. *Stoicism and Emotion*. Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 210. See also ZABOROWSKI, R., *Clément d’Alexandrie et Origène sur les émotions (avec une considération de l’apport des Stoïciens, d’Aristote et de Platon)* in: *Eos* 94, 2007, pp. 251–276.



evaluate to what extent Plato's contribution is helpful in advancing the theory of affectivity. Perhaps it is right to say that there is no theory of affectivity in Plato.

But, as it were, given the literary character of Plato's dialogues<sup>19</sup>, in Plato there is no theory of anything. Yet, there are systematic treatments of several issues and we meet a number of systematic treatments of affectivity as well. Besides, we find scattered allusions to affectivity and particular emotions through many dialogues. For this reason a distinction between issues treated implicitly and explicitly should be stressed as strongly as possible<sup>20</sup>. In what follow I am going to focus on a few issues treated by subsequent philosophers or psychologists but which Plato dealt with before. Since Plato is rarely, if at all, identified by them as their source, I name this kind of relation *anticipation* or *pre-figuration*<sup>21</sup>.

For undertaking the kind of approach of which I am adherent I draw an additional argument from the following. In an celebrated claim, A. N. Whitehead stated that: "[t]he safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See PRICE, A. W., *Parts of the Soul in Plato's Phaedrus* (unpublished, quoted with permission): *One common divergence between literary and philosophical approaches to Plato's dialogues is this. Literary treatments tend to take the dialogues one at a time, rather as if they were novels, each asking to be taken on its own terms, though of course with opportunities for comparison and cross-illumination. Philosophical treatments tend to take the dialogues together as continuing attempts to identify philosophical truth, so that material from one can and must be used to supplement and interpret others. Here again there is a bifurcation: lumpers (or unifiers) try to find a single philosophy throughout the dialogues, splitters (or distinguishers) try to identify significant developments and changes of mind. Even splitters, however, group certain dialogues together, and pool their arguments and conclusions to achieve an adequate articulation of a philosophical position.*

<sup>20</sup> Quite recently, MOSS, J., *Pictures and passions in the Timaeus and Philebus in: Plato and the Divided Self*. Ed. by R. Barney, T. Brennan & C. Brittain, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 260 announces that [t]he aim of [her] chapter is to show that Plato does after all have a theory of the passions. But this is verbal, since her paper, in my opinion, presents a couple of remarks relevant to Plato's view on affectivity and not his theory in any systematic way.

<sup>21</sup> The example as the one in the footnote 21 shows us an occurrence of what can be called *anticipation* or *pre-figuration*. What I mean is that, though not using the same wording and/or not being explicit to the extent Darwin was, Plato's account can be retranslated into Darwin's expressions since it refers to the same phenomena, i.e. phenomena of an isolation resulting in production of peculiarity.

<sup>22</sup> WHITEHEAD, A. N. *Process and Reality* [1929]. New York: Free Press, 1979, p. 39. But in fact the importance of Plato goes even beyond the realm of philosophy. Please have a





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I think that the category of *anticipation* or *pre-figuration* complies with what Whitehead had in mind. For in order to explain his thought quoted above he speaks about Plato's writing as *an inexhaustible mine of suggestion*:

I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them. His personal endowments, his wide opportunities for experience at a great period of civilization, his inheritance of an intellectual tradition not yet stiffened by excessive systematization, have made his writing an inexhaustible mine of suggestion.<sup>23</sup>

I doubt if it could be seriously assumed that Whitehead's dictum should be limited to all Plato's views with the one exception of affectivity. I would rather believe the opposite and say that Plato prefigured many ideas pertaining to the philosophy of affectivity. By *prefigured* or *anticipated*, I mean that *his writing* has been *an inexhaustible mine of suggestion* also for subsequent philosophies of affectivity.

I would be positive on that point and say that it would be surprising to credit Plato with an inspiring and powerful anthropology and, at the same time, to deny that he is a crucial *mine of suggestion*, either as a hint, or *in nuce*, or in an explicit form, for treating issues discussed within the philosophy of affectivity through centuries and still today.

From a range of issues alluded or referred to in this or that way by Plato, let me point to the following five:

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look, for example, at what seems to be a fairly Darwinian approach in PLATO: *That, while these larger settlements were growing out of the original small ones, each of the small settlements continued to retain, clan by clan, both the rule of the eldest and also some customs derived from its isolated condition and peculiar to itself. As those who begot and reared them were different, so these customs of theirs, relating to the gods and to themselves, differed, being more orderly where their forefathers had been orderly, and more brave where they had been brave; and as thus the fathers of each clan in due course stamped upon their children and children's children their own cast of mind, these people came (as we say) into the larger community furnished each with their own peculiar laws.* (*Laws* III, 681a–b, Bury's transl.) Now, consider DARWIN, C. *The Origin of Species*. [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.] London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1860, p. 120: [...] *I do not doubt that isolation is of considerable importance in the production of new species* [...].

<sup>23</sup> WHITEHEAD, A. N. *Process and Reality*, p. 39.



## II. Exemplification

(1) Variety of emotions and stratification of affectivity. On a number of occasions we can see how much Plato's position is complex, in the most succinct way probably in the *Republic*, Book IX: “*The three parts have also, it appears to me, three kinds of pleasure, one peculiar to each [...]*” (580d, Shorey's transl.)

Plato seems to maintain this position in the *Phaedrus*. I say *seems* because this time his views are expressed in a metaphorical way. While a common reading of Plato's allegory of charioteer interprets the charioteer as the reason<sup>24</sup>, the white horse as the spirited part and the black horse as the appetitive part, in a more careful reading, however, we note that charioteer as well as the white and black horse include several affective functions: the black horse experiences fear and rage, while the white horse experiences holy awe (*aidos*), anger, shame and amazement, and the charioteer experiences bodily sensations (warming, tickling) as well as psychic emotions (yearning, anger, fear and respect).

He is also described as experiencing emotion – literally *pathos pathon* (254e1) – so he is given exactly the same predicate as the black horse (254e6: *paschon*).

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<sup>24</sup> I know only one exception of not identifying the charioteer with the reason which is PRICE, A. W. *Mental Conflict*. London – New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 78: *It is the charioteer who 'catches sight of the light of his beloved', which fills him 'with tickling and pricks of longing' (253e5–254a1). Here a cognitive experience is itself intensely felt; indeed the feeling is integral to the cognition, guaranteeing that (as the charioteer has yet explicitly to comprehend) to look at the boy's face is to recollect the Form of Beauty (cf. 250e8–251a7) [Prize's italics for felt] – yet p. 71 & p. 74 he writes: the charioteer of the soul, namely reason & The charioteer is the emblem of reason (similarly (1989): driver (that is, reason) [...] the cognition is reason's, the benefit the whole soul's, and (1992): «the rational» part (to logistikon)). A selection of examples can be the following: W. K. C. Guthrie (1957): charioteer represents the reason, McGIBBON, D. D. (1964): *It is generally (sic!) agreed that [...] the charioteer symbolizes reason*, ADKINS, A. W. H. (1970): *the charioteer – the intellect – is troubled by his horses*, ROMILLY de, J. (1982): *la raison étant le cocher*, FERRARI, G. R. F. (1987): *In the charioteer and good and bad horses respectively we can discern, as is commonly (sic!) agreed, at least an approximate correspondence to the reasoning, spirited and appetitive parts of soul (to give them their usual labels) familiar from the analysis in the Republic*, OSTENFELD, E. N. (1987): *the soul (= reason) as a charioteer*, KAHN, C. H. (1996): *the charioteer, reason*, BOBONICH, C. (2002): *The Reasoning part of the soul is the charioteer and two horses represent the two lower parts*, BURNYEAT, M. F. (2006): *In the Phaedrus the soul is a composite imaged as a charioteer representing reason and two horses representing spirit and appetite*, MOUZE, L. (2007): *Ici le cocher symbolise la raison*, ROWE, C. (2009): *Whatever passion there is in true Platonic love has to be supplied by the charioteer, reason itself*, etc. Yet, please be mindful of a proviso stipulated above, n. 12.*



The point is that the affective functions of each of them are of different rank. Even if *to logistikon*'s connection with affectivity is weaker than is the case of *to thumoeides* and much weaker than is the case of *to epithumetikon*, *to logistikon* is not devoid of affectivity utterly. Therefore, what is stated by the three quotes above accounting for *a negative view of emotion* in Plato's philosophy seems ill grounded.

Another piece of evidence, among others, includes:

Now, in general, courageous men do not feel base fears, when they fear, nor is there anything base in their boldness? True, he said. And if not base, then it must be honorable. He admitted this. And if honorable, then good? Yes. And the cowardly and the bold and the mad, on the contrary, feel base fears and base boldness? (Protagoras 360b, Lamb's transl.)

or

*the distinction between the good and bad sorts of pleasure (Gorgias 495a, Lamb's transl.).*

Then, since the affectivity is qualitatively differentiated, a treatment of emotions *en bloc*, their evaluation included, is impossible. Their value, role, importance, and functioning depend on their place within the structure of the human being, in Plato's words, on the part of the soul they are ascribed to. Rather we often see that Plato considers affectivity and particular emotions according to their specific essences.

In short, psychic emotions differ from bodily emotions so much that, to some extent, they have more in common with other psychic phenomena of the same level (i.e. of the same part of the soul) than they do with bodily emotions. Consequently, with Plato we realize that affectivity taken as a whole is neither exclusively negative nor exclusively positive. The value of *to epithumetikon*'s affectivity is not the same as the value of *to logistikon*'s affectivity.

Now, if one agrees that affectivity is various and inherently differentiated, one will welcome Plato's model as all the more useful. If, however, one is inclined to treat the whole of affectivity as one-dimensional, Plato's model will appear to him pretty useless.

Not only fear and pleasure as such are ambiguous in value. It is sufficiently known that the affectivity of love is governed by a vertical distinction as



well<sup>25</sup>. Next, it works for madness too, since Plato acknowledged two types of madness. The distinction he set in the *Phaedrus* is the following:

because the lover is insane, and the other sane. For if it were a simple fact that insanity is an evil, the saying would be true; but in reality the greatest of blessings come to us through madness, when it is sent as a gift of the gods (244a, Fowler's transl.).

Of course, this is to be taken strictly. That is: *the greatest of blessings come to us through madness*, but it does not follow that *every* madness produces a great blessing. This is the point that needs to be made. And we must not forget the second requirement: insanity is the greatest of blessings *only when* it is sent by gods or, if you prefer, is associated with the highest of the soul, *to logistikon*.

It is true that the examples of fear, pleasure, love and madness I have referred are all – apart from the *Republic's* three kinds of pleasure and the *Phaedrus's* allegory account – evidence of a twofold division and do not respect the threefold division of the soul. Let me, then, allude to an example of a threefold division: “*this single term [philia] embraces these two things, and also a third kind compounded of them both. [...]*”.

One of them is describes as bodily, because this is the

love with the body and hungering after its bloom, as it were that of a ripening peach, urges himself on to take his fill of it, paying no respect to the disposition of the beloved [...].

Another, being mixture, is presented as

[t]he kind which arises from a blend of these presents difficulties, – first, to discover what the man affected by this third kind of love really desires to obtain, and, in the next place, because the man himself is at a loss, being dragged in opposite directions by the two tendencies, – of which the one bids him to enjoy the bloom of his beloved, while the other forbids him.

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<sup>25</sup> See *Symposium* 180d–e: *True, if that goddess [Aphrodite] were one, then Love would be one: but since there are two of her, there must needs be two Loves also. Does anyone doubt that she is double? Surely there is the elder, of no mother born, but daughter of Heaven, whence we name her Heavenly; while the younger was the child of Zeus and Dione, and her we call Popular. It follows then that of the two Loves also the one ought to be called Popular, as fellow-worker with the one of those goddesses, and the other Heavenly.* (Fowler's transl.)



In the third case we deal with a person

that counts bodily desire as but secondary, and puts longing looks in place of love, with soul lusting really for soul, regards the bodily satisfaction of the body as an outrage, and, reverently worshipping temperance, courage, nobility and wisdom, will desire to live always chastely in company with the chaste object of his love<sup>26</sup>.

Thereby we arrive at what can be labelled as bodily, bodily–psychic and psychic kind of friendship. The second one is ambiguous in character but negative in value, for Plato goes on telling us

Since, then, love has so many varieties, ought the law to prohibit them all and prevent them from existing in our midst, or shall we not plainly wish that the kind of love which belongs to virtue and desires the young to be as good as possible should exist within our State, while we shall prohibit, if possible, the other two kinds? – Your description of the subject, Stranger, is perfectly correct.

Because of his position Plato can or, what I am calling for, should be considered as a forerunner – in Whitehead’s words *an inexhaustible mine of suggestion* – of any hierarchical and comprehensive approach to affectivity. Plato’s threefold distinction of affective – as well as of other – functions can be compared, for instance, with modern proposals made by Edith Stein or Nicolai Hartmann.

According to Stein one should distinguish (a) all kinds of sensations or sensual feelings, (b) feelings representing the psycho–physical individual, (c) deepest level of feelings, in other terms the (purely) spiritual person, her sentiments of love and hate etc. For Nicolai Hartmann emotional acts are of three kinds: (a) receptive acts, (b) prospective acts, (c) spontaneous acts. And so on and so forth.

(2) Closely related to the themes of the variety of the emotions and the stratification of affectivity is what I call the feeling–thinking–desiring linkage. Actually, as already said, the threefold division is not into three distinct psychic functions but into three sets composed of three functions and deployed hierarchically. Instead of a usual interpretation as follows:

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<sup>26</sup> PLATO, *Laws* VIII, 837a–d (Bury’s transl.).



<i>Republic</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>	Interpretation
<i>to epithumetikon</i>	the black horse	desire
<i>to thumoeides</i>	<i>the white horse</i>	<i>spirit (emotion)</i>
<i>to logistikon</i>	the charioteer	reason

I would suggest regarding Plato's approach as follows:

<i>Republic</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>	Interpretation
<i>to epithumetikon</i>	the black horse	thinking–feeling–desiring of the basic rank/level
<i>to thumoeides</i>	the white horse	thinking–feeling–desiring of the middle rank/level
<i>to logistikon</i>	the charioteer	thinking–feeling–desiring of the highest rank/level

My interpretation differs from the standard one because (1) there is no level of being entirely affective, and (2) affectivity is not limited to only one level of the psyche. This is explicitly confirmed by the passage from the *Republic* IX:

The three parts have also, it appears to me, three kinds of pleasure, one peculiar to each, and similarly three appetites and controls. (580d, Shorey's transl.)

and also by the *Phaedrus*' allegory, in which three parts of the soul are represented metaphorically as the black horse, the white horse and the charioteer, all of which are calculating and thinking as well as experiencing emotions, sharing memory as well as volition (resp. desire), namely the black horse perceives, remembers, calculates, and experiences emotions, while the white horse perceives, experiences emotions, remembers, and controls himself.

As to the charioteer, he perceives, experiences bodily sensations and psychic emotions, remembers, and has an intuition (254e7: *pronoia*). It seems that neither of three parts of the soul accounts for a pure thinking or pure feeling, pure perception or pure memory etc. One could note that if they had none of the same, I mean homogeneous functions, they could not communicate with one another.

This description of several functions linked with one another makes one



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remember a notion of emotional intelligence and/or rationality of emotions<sup>27</sup>, both quite fashionable nowadays. Yet, the idea is not that new and has already been set forward in the past. To borrow only two examples from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, let us remember that in 1916 Robin G. Collingwood claimed: “But emotion is not a totally separate function of the mind, independent of thinking and willing; it includes both these at once”.

And some twenty years later, John Macmurray was emphatic on the co-existence of feeling and thinking<sup>28</sup>. What is relevant to my purpose is that doing this he mentioned Plato:

The only one of the great philosophers who recognized this parallelism between thought and feeling, and who maintained that our feelings could be true or false, was Plato. He insisted on it both in the *Republic* and in the *Philebus*.

Moreover, he underscored the fact that “[t]his view of Plato has usually been treated by commentators as a forgivable eccentricity in Plato’s thought [...]” and, in this context, he underlined that “[i]t seems to me not merely true but of much more profound significance than Plato himself recognized”.<sup>29</sup>

(3) A corollary of the two previous themes is the metriopatheia view. According to it, the only feelings which are appropriate are feelings kept (or felt) at the right degree. Any deviation from the right measure is a mark of inappropriateness of feelings and it should not be forgotten that a too-weak deviation is as much inappropriate as a too-strong deviation.

One could recall that *meson* (*the middle*) is, to some extent, culturally inherent to ancient Greek thought and mentality. If one thinks about, for instance, prescriptions as those of Delphi (*metron ariston, meden agan*), he will be better aware that the ideal of *apatheia* could be introduced only later, after Alexander’s conquest and when cultural exchange with the Orient could have

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<sup>27</sup> Is there any difference between two expressions? At any rate, it seems to me that by speaking about feeling–thinking linkage much more symmetry is respected without prejudicing whether feeling/thinking is subordinate to thinking/feeling. For more see ZABOROWSKI, R., *Feeling–Thought Linkage and its Forms in the Ancient and Modern Times in: Greek philosophy and the issues of our age*, t. 1. Ed. by K. Boudouris & M. Adam, Athens: Ionia Publications, 2009, pp. 230–240.

<sup>28</sup> See MACMURRAY, J. *Reason and Emotion*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> MACMURRAY, J. *Reason and Emotion*, pp. 25–26.



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taken place. In philosophy it was settled in 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC by Zeno and Chrysippus, both probably not of Greek descent.

The term *metriopatheia* is not attested in Plato's dialogues. However, we meet a conception which can be termed in that way and this in two versions. A right position can be conceptualized either by means of (1) both (extreme ?) poles associated with one another or (2) one middle term.

A mixture of two extremes is needed in order to build an appropriate character and this through generations if a fully good character is to be achieved. This mixture – the middle term – is not named but Plato is clear enough to say that neither element can work in isolation:

[...] and the courageous do the same, eagerly seeking natures of their own kind, whereas both classes ought to do quite the opposite. – How so, and why? – Because in the nature of things courage, if propagated through many generations with no admixture of a self-restrained nature, though at first it is strong and flourishing, in the end blossoms forth in utter madness. – That is likely. – But the soul, on the other hand, that is too full of modesty and contains no alloy of courage or boldness, after many generations of the same kind becomes too sluggish and finally is utterly crippled. (Statesman 310d–e, Fowler's transl.)

Neither courage – and he does not speak here about an extreme courage – nor modesty brings about a good result. The point is that when isolated it degenerates into its extreme because of, say, absence of its opposite. It means that neither modesty (*aidos*, which can be also translated as respect, shame, holy awe<sup>30</sup>) nor courage (as well as boldness – here Plato seems not to differentiate between degrees of courage and uses both synonymously: *tólmes andreías*) is positive when taken as such.

Each needs to be modified by its opposite if it is not to become an extreme. Courage as well respect/shame/holy awe is negative when it occurs in its unmixed (*akeratos*) form and gets exaggerated (*lian*).

This idea is reiterated in the *Laws*, and this again in the context of a project of

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<sup>30</sup> See LSJ: reverence, awe, respect for the feeling or opinion of others or for one's own conscience, and so shame, self-respect. See also *Laws* II, 671d: *with the aid of justice, to fight against the entrance of such ignoble audacity, by bringing in that most noble fear which we have named "modesty" and "shame."* (Bury's transl.)





forming desirable states of character:

Let us recall our previous statement that we must cultivate in our souls two things – namely, the greatest possible confidence, and its opposite, the greatest possible fear. – Which you called, I think, the marks of modesty. – Your memory serves you well. Since courage and fearlessness ought to be practised amidst fears, we have to consider whether the opposite quality ought to be cultivated amidst conditions of the opposite kind. – It certainly seems probable. – It appears then that we ought to be placed amongst those conditions which naturally tend to make us exceptionally confident and audacious when we are practising how to be as free as possible from shamelessness and excessive audacity, and fearful of ever daring to say or suffer or do anything shameful. (I, 649b–d, Bury’s transl.)

The right policy is to acquire a central state by avoiding any one-sidedness: of (too much) courage (i.e. boldness and audacity) by looking for fear and of (too much) fear by looking for courage and endurance.

Plato does not name this right mean state – as Aristotle will do, for example – yet, we are told that:

[e]very man ought to be at once passionate and gentle in the highest degree. [...] we affirm that it behoves the good man to be always at once passionate and gentle. (*Laws* V, 731b–d, Bury’s transl.)

since there are occasions which call for being harsh and others for being mild<sup>31</sup>. For instance, one should be free to express anger at a man who is uncontrollably and incorrigibly evil. More generally, we can say, there are circumstances in which anger is appropriate and not to express it would be inappropriate. Put this way, the remark anticipates what will be claimed by Aristotle for whom the rightness of time, occasion, people, purpose and manner is crucial to the evaluation of an emotion<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> For instance: *it is permissible to show pity to the man that has evils that are remediable, and to abate one’s passion and treat him gently, and not to keep on raging like a scolding wife; but in dealing with the man who is totally and obstinately perverse and wicked one must give free course to wrath.* (*Laws* V, 731d, Bury’s transl.)

<sup>32</sup> See ARISTOTLE, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b: [...] *whereas to feel these feelings at the right time, on the right occasion, towards the right people, for the right purpose and in the right manner, is to feel the best amount of them, which is the mean amount – and the best amount is of course the mark of virtue.* (Rackham’s transl.)



Admittedly, the difference between Aristotle and Plato is that Aristotle posits that there is a middle state lying between two opposed states. So, mildness (*praotes*) constitutes a *meson* between *orgilotes* (irascibility) and *analgesia* (insensitivity, see *Eudemian Ethics* 1220b), while for Plato *praos* (mild) is a feature to be taken as a complementary to *thumoeides* (high-spirited as well as inclined to anger/courage)<sup>33</sup>.

While it is true that in a majority of cases Plato speaks more often about *too strong* than about *too weak*, there are contexts where Plato focuses on a complete absence of feeling too<sup>34</sup>. For instance, in the *Philebus* Plato advocates a well-balanced life, one that is composed of intellectual as well as affective elements:

[...] if you had no memory you could not even remember that you ever did enjoy pleasure, and no recollection whatever of present pleasure could remain with you; if you had no true opinion you could not think you were enjoying pleasure at the time when you were enjoying it, and if you were without power of calculation you would not be able to calculate that you would enjoy it in the future; your life would not be that of a man, but of a mollusc or some other shell-fish like the oyster. [...] – I ask whether anyone would be willing to live possessing wisdom and mind and knowledge and perfect memory of all things, but having no share, great or small, in pleasure, or in pain, for that matter, but being utterly unaffected by everything of that sort. – Neither of the two lives can ever appear desirable to me, Socrates, or, I think, to anyone else. – How about the combined life, Protarchus, made up by a union of the two? – You mean a union of pleasure with mind or wisdom? – Yes, I mean a union of such elements. – Every one will prefer this life to either of the two others – yes, every single person without exception. (*Philebus* 21c–22a, Fowler’s transl.)

To sum it up. Plato’s insistence on not getting rid of pleasure and not limiting life to pleasure alone can be considered as a pre-figuration of Aristotle’s

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<sup>33</sup> A question cannot be answered here is whether being passionate (*thumoeides*) and gentle (*praos*) amounts to exactly the same as keeping *meson* in Aristotle’s terms. If so, then we would have two description of the same phenomenon, analytic by Plato and synthetic by Aristotle.

<sup>34</sup> ARISTOTLE ridicules a complete absence of feeling comparing it to the life of a stone (in *Eudemian Ethics* 1221a speaking about *being without feeling like a stone*) – this image had been before settled by PLATO in the *Gorgias* 492e: *Then it is not correct to say, as people do, that those who want nothing are happy. – No, for at that rate stones and corpses would be extremely happy.* (Lamb’s transl.). We can add that stones do not feel fear/unhappiness/hatred but – and this is the right point – they do not feel courage/happiness/love either.



avoidance of *too many* and *too little* and focusing on the middle. As he said:

[...] for instance, we have a bad disposition in regard to anger if we are disposed to get angry too violently or not violently enough, a good disposition if we habitually feel a moderate amount of anger; and similarly in respect of the other emotions. [...] for this is concerned with emotions and actions, in which one can have excess or deficiency or a due mean. For example, one can be frightened or bold, feel desire or anger or pity, and experience pleasure and pain in general, either too much or too little, and in both cases wrongly [...] (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b–1106b, Rackham's transl.)

and Plato together with Aristotle anticipated Descartes' viewpoint<sup>35</sup>:

And now we know them all [i.e. passions], we have less reason to fear them than we had before. For we see that naturally they are all good, and that we ought to avoid only the ill use of them, or their excesses [...]<sup>36</sup>.

(4) Cognitivism versus anti- (or not-)cognitivism. One of the burning questions within the current debate about emotions is whether emotions by their nature are or are not cognitive. While some support the cognitive nature of emotions and others deny it, in the *Laches* Plato writes:

our friend appears to me to mean that courage is a kind of wisdom [sophian] [...] what kind of wisdom [sophia] courage may be, by your account [...] But what is this knowledge then, or of what? – I must say you question him quite correctly, Socrates, so let him just tell us what he thinks it is. – I say, Laches, that it is this – the knowledge [epistemen] of what is to be dreaded or dared, either in war or in anything else. (194d–195a, Lamb's transl.<sup>37</sup>)

On this account courage is a knowledge of what is to be feared and to be dared. Similarly in the *Protagoras*:

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<sup>35</sup> Even if DESCARTES didn't want to recognize it and tried to compromise ancient philosophers' views on affectivity in the following way: *There is nothing more clearly evinces the learning which we receive from the Ancients to be defective, than what they have written concerning the passions.* This is the very beginning of his treatise *The Passions of the Soul* = art. i, transl. anon. with minor corrections by P. Easton (available from [http://net.cgu.edu/philosophy/cartes/Passions\\_Part\\_One.html](http://net.cgu.edu/philosophy/cartes/Passions_Part_One.html), retrieved March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> DESCARTES, R. *The Passions of the Soul*, art. ccxi, transl. anon. with minor corrections by P. Easton.

<sup>37</sup> See also *Laches* 199a–b: *And courage, my good friend, is knowledge of what is to be dreaded and dared, as you say, do you not?* (Lamb's transl.).



Then the wisdom that knows what is and what is not dreadful is opposed to the ignorance of these things? [...] And the ignorance of them is cowardice? (360d, Lamb's transl.)

Its opposite, i.e. ignorance, is called cowardice and there is no mention of fear. What, then, is fear, or, to put it otherwise, of what is fear a knowledge<sup>38</sup>? According to the cognitivist view, to fear is to believe something is bad and to be courageous in front of something is to believe this is good. But given Plato's claim about fear's appropriateness in some circumstances<sup>39</sup> I would rather assume that courage and fear pertain both to the same realm, i.e. of what is to be dared and feared. Yet, courage's relation is under the aspect of the dared and fear's relation is under the aspect of the feared.

As I would understand it, if anything fearful faces the agent, it is either to be feared or to be dared. If it should be feared but there is no fear felt, we have a case of boldness (i.e. a wrong, excessive courage), and if it is feared, we deal with (a right, appropriate) fear. On the other hand, if it is to be dared and it is dared we deal with a courage, and if it is feared we deal with (a wrong, excessive) fear which amounts to cowardice. And so on with other feelings<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Expression *knowledge of fear* (*Laches* 191b: *phobou epistemen*) pertains to Aeneas who knew how to provoke fear in enemy (see e.g. *Iliad* XII, 39).

<sup>39</sup> As to fear this is expressed by PLATO rather indirectly. He states, for instance, that *the fearless and the courageous are not the same thing* (*Laches* 197b, Lamb's transl.) what anticipates ARISTOTLE, *EN* 1106b referred to above. See also *Protagoras*, 350b–c: *But you must have seen at times, I said, persons who are without knowledge of any of these affairs, yet behaving boldly in each of them. – I have, he said, and very boldly too. – Then are these bold ones courageous also? – Nay, that would make courage a base thing, he replied; for those you speak of are out of their senses. – What then, I asked, do you mean by courageous men? Surely the same as bold men? – Yes, I do still, he said. – Then these men, I went on, who are so brave, are found to be not courageous but mad? And in those former cases our wisest men are boldest too, and being boldest are most courageous? And on this reasoning, wisdom will be courage? You do not rightly recall, Socrates, what I stated in replying to you. When you asked me whether courageous men are bold, I admitted it: I was not asked whether bold men are courageous.* (Lamb's transl.)

<sup>40</sup> For a recent account of Plato's approach to affectivity in terms of cognitivism see PRICE, A. W., *Emotions in Plato and Aristotle in: The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*. Ed. by P. Goldie, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 122–130: [...] *allusion to it makes excellent sense as a recognition of a less (or less purely) cognitive conception of the emotion. [...] Once this is granted, it throws open whether, so far, Plato's account of the cognitive aspect of desires and emotions has in general been to doxastic (that is, belief-related), rather than perceptual. [...] Thus we find in Plato a double development out of Socratic simplicity. Emphasis is still placed upon the cognitive aspect of emotions, whether or not this involves the presence of actual belief.*



But, characteristically Plato supported also a different, anti- (or not-) cognitivist position. First, in the *Philebus* Plato says that “[...] pleasure and pain often follow them – I mean true and false opinion”. (38b, Fowler’s transl.)<sup>41</sup> This testifies on behalf of Plato’s awareness that this is the case on many occasions (*pollakis*) but not always. What is meant, in my view, is that *sometimes* pleasure and unpleasure arise in other ways than because of or following opinions, either true or false. This is what is confirmed, as it seems, by Plato in the *Theaetetus*: “[...] the momentary states of feeling of each person, from which our perceptions and the opinions concerning them arise” (179c, Fowler’s transl.).

Therefore, sensations (*aistheseis*) and opinions (*doxai*) being in accordance with them (*kata tautas*) do stem from feelings (*pathos*)<sup>42</sup>. If this reading is correct, one could say Plato’s cognitivism is not a total one, since there is a room for a different claim in his approach to affectivity<sup>43</sup>. Rather than saying that Plato contradicts himself, I prefer to suggest that in relation to some feelings the

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<sup>41</sup> See also *Philebus* 36c: *phoboi* – there are true and false fears (as well as expectations and beliefs).

<sup>42</sup> An example of a thought determined by a feeling or a feeling–preference will be a wishful thinking. See also *Theaetetus* 186b–c where we are told that while thoughts are acquired through education, feelings (*pathemata*) are occurring without any education, that is are given directly, as such: *Is it not true, then, that all sensations which reach the soul through the body, can be perceived by human beings, and also by animals, from the moment of birth; whereas reflections about these, with reference to their being and usefulness, are acquired, if at all, with difficulty and slowly, through many troubles, in other words, through education?* (Fowler’s transl.)

<sup>43</sup> The same seems to be supported also by *Rep.* 401e–402a: [...] *and so, feeling distaste rightly, he would praise beautiful things and take delight in them and receive them into his soul to foster its growth and become himself beautiful and good. The ugly he would rightly disapprove of and hate while still young and yet unable to apprehend the reason, but when reason came the man thus nurtured would be the first to give her welcome, for by this affinity he would know her.* (Shorey’s transl.) It makes me think, even if vaguely, about some modern philosophers for whom the order of values is mirrored in the order of feelings (Max Scheler called his own position *emotional intuitionism* and *non-formal apriorism*) or for whom the act of feeling (*Gefühlakt*) is what apprehends values directly (Nicolai Hartmann). See also a recent comment on the Platonic passage above by WHITING, J., *Psychic contingency in the Republic in: Plato and the Divided Self*. Ed. by R. Barney, T. Brennan & C. Brittain, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 181–182: *these affective dispositions to love and hate the right things are part of what enable her eventually to grasp the reasons why the former are fine and the latter shameful [...].* In the same volume, J. Moss, *Pictures and passions in the Timaeus and Philebus*, p. 273 draws attention to the fact that *on the Timaeus account, one might object, appetitive passions must be much more primitive, responses to pictures only, for in this dialogue Plato denies that the appetitive part can understand logoi (71a [...]), and denies that it has any share in doxa, belief (77b [...]). This would seem to show that the Timaeus’ account of appetitive passions cannot be a cognitivist one.*



cognitive thesis is true and in relation to some others it is false or, rather, inapplicable. Plato is not contradicting himself but correctly recognizes the intricacy of affective phenomena, of which some are determined by earlier beliefs while others determine subsequent beliefs without this implying anything about how they are conditioned. Rather than a proof of an inner contradiction this is another piece of evidence of the recognition by Plato of the difference between several genera within the class of affectivity<sup>44</sup>.

Let me end with (5) a remark on one specific issue. In the recent *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson published a paper *Demystifying Sensibilities: Sentimental Values and the Instability of Affect* in which they analyze what they call *obscuring factors*. The most obvious of them is repetition, but they take into account also mood effects, social ingratiation, contagion, opposite tendencies, hostility. As for Plato, he considers in the *Philebus* that pleasures when compared to unpleasures seem bigger and unpleasures because of pleasures look smaller. Plato explains:

But now, because they are seen at various and changing distances and are compared with one another, the pleasures themselves appear greater and more intense by comparison with the pains, and the pains in turn, through comparison with the pleasures, vary inversely as they. – That is inevitable for the reasons you have given. – They both, then, appear greater and less than the reality. Now if you abstract from both of them this apparent, but unreal, excess or inferiority, you cannot say that its appearance is true, nor again can you have the face to affirm that the part of pleasure or pain which corresponds to this is true or real. (*Philebus* 42b, Fowler's transl.)

Plainly, neither Plato uses a category of obscuring factor nor Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson refer to Plato. Yet, the point is similar and in this sense Plato seems to me to anticipate analyses and discussions on obscuring factors. More particularly his account goes along with the claim that “our sensibilities can be bolstered by a psychological explanation invoking the interference of other emotions”<sup>45</sup> because he tells us that the intensity of one depends on

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<sup>44</sup> One could also remark that if all emotions were based on beliefs, then the akrasia would be just a matter of mistaken belief/s, what seems not to be the case in Plato. As noted by BOBONICH, C., *Akrasia and Agency in Plato's Laws and Republic* in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 76, 1994, p. 20: *desires can vary in strength and the strength of her desire for an option is not always directly proportional to her judgment of its goodness.*

<sup>45</sup> D'ARMS, J. & JACOBSON, D., *Demystifying Sensibilities: Sentimental Values and the Instability of Affect* in: *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*. Ed. by P. Goldie, Oxford:



how it is compared with another.

## Conclusion

In the light of these statements Plato can hardly be taken for supporting, not to speak about introducing, *the negative view of emotion*. He is rather a partisan of a much refined position which – it is necessary to repeat – does not endorse *the positive view* either. Plato avoids or, if you prefer, does not put forward a general evaluation of affectivity as such. It can not be evaluated simply and generally, since the affectivity as a class includes several kinds of affectivity understood as genera of which the value varies. Since low affectivity is negative and high affectivity positive, affectivity as a whole can be said neither to be negative nor to be positive<sup>46</sup>.

In short, in Plato an absence of both a negative and a positive view of affectivity is a corollary of the fact that he considers affectivity to be complex. In his dialogues Plato is sensible of the fact that the evaluation of emotions varies according to their entanglements with other phenomena. Generally, when related to the body alone, they are to be avoided or not to be followed or developed as such, whereas in association with some mental states (e.g. *phronesis*), they are a necessary constituent of human progress and people's philosophical life.

To give just one example of distorting Plato's account, look at J. A. Lambie's claim that: "It is a commonplace of Western thought to contrast reason and passion, and to emphasize the irrational aspects of emotion [...]"

Plato is Lambie's one of examples he relies on: *See Plato, The Republic, Book IV, 435–441c*. Finally, he claims that:

It is one of the main contentions of this article that deliberative rationality is worsened by emotions of which one is unaware but improved by awareness of one's emotions<sup>47</sup>.

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Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 600.

<sup>46</sup> Or, should he be credited with either a no–positive–no–negative view of affectivity or a positive–and–negative view of affectivity, see e.g. PLATO, *Symp.* 181a: *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.* (Fowler's transl.).

<sup>47</sup> LAMBIE, J. A., *On the irrationality of emotion and the rationality of awareness* in: *Consciousness and*



One might wonder if Lambie did read as far as to Book IX of the *Republic* and other dialogues of Plato, such as the *Symposium* or the *Phaedrus*. Obviously, Plato didn't express his idea in Lambie's wording, though, it seems to me, his evaluation of emotions is very similar and, moreover, anterior to his. I would call Plato's approach as well as Lambie's, so to speak, hierarchical. What I mean is that both consider low feelings opposed to while feelings of a higher level concomitant with rationality.

With the above kind of example one can see how much a project of reconsidering Plato's views on emotions is well grounded. I hope that I have shown convincingly that Plato did not introduce a negative view of emotions and that he should not be classified at all among those who have proposed such a view. Contrariwise, his texts betray a deep awareness of intricacy of their nature. Because of putting forward, for instance, cognitivist as well as anti-cognitivist theses about affectivity, evaluating it now as negative, now as positive, Plato should not be understood as being inconsistent. Rather he works out distinct types of claims according to distinct kinds of affectivity.

His approach is inclusive so far as affectivity itself is rich and differentiated qualitatively. On the historical side a motive for undertaking it is simply to do justice to Plato's place in the history of affectivity and particular emotions. To this end, it is necessary to look closer at what he says in his works about affectivity in general and particular emotions in their specificity. Thus, we deal with a pre-figuration or anticipation of subsequent arguments, laws, theories of emotions. In a recently published book I find a similar method of research. In tracing the background of the modern subject Udo Thiel goes back to the ancient one, among others to Aristotle:

While it is difficult to determine with any certainty whether or not [early modern philosophers] were influenced [by Aristotle's discussion, either directly or indirectly,] these influences are present in [early modern thought].<sup>48</sup>

What is understood today in an exclusive way (if bodily then not psychic, if cognitive then not not-cognitive etc.), was understood by Plato in accordance with the very nature of different kinds of affective phenomena. There is no

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*Cognition* 17, 2007, p. 948.

<sup>48</sup> THIEL, U. *The Early Modern Subject. Self-consciousness and Personal Identity from Descartes to Hume*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 12. See also p. 7: *hint only implicitly*, p. 18: *can be reconstructed in terms of*.





single or general value common to all of them. And the same as to their cognitive/not-cognitive character. When asked whether emotions are cognitive or not, one could reply yes as well as no and both replies would be true and false. More exactly they would be partly true and partly false. The reason for this is that the question asked is too general since it aims at all affectivity taken *en bloc*.

What is characteristic is that in the case of accounting for Plato's views on affectivity we deal to a large extent with a similar phenomenon as in the case of accounting for affectivity in general. What I mean is that often their richness and multidimensionality is ignored or denied and the whole of the affective life is considered as one-dimensional. Then, several kinds of fear, pleasure, love and so on, are – according to one-dimensional approach – taken to be sufficiently distinguishable by means of a quantitative category, for instance intensity.

In my view, appealing to intensity as a category explaining the difference between species of the same group (*viz.* of the same *modus*)<sup>49</sup>, is problematic, since for example happiness is not a bigger or more intense joy, nor is joy a bigger or more intense pleasure. A mental suffering is not reducible to a physical (bodily) one. By the same token, one does not arrive at spiritual love by increasing one's sensible love<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> I distinguish between vertical and horizontal classifications of affectivity. As for horizontal one they are set in groups because of their different modi of subject-object relatedness. As for vertical (*viz.* hierarchical) distinction, see above.

<sup>50</sup> This is why we need a category of ranks or levels. Within one group of, say, pleasure, fear, dislike and so on, there are several species of the same genera (or of the same group, if we approach it from the horizontal point of view). Using Plato's conceptions they could be described as *epithumetikon* pleasure, *thumoeides* pleasure, *logostikon* pleasure, *epithumetikon* fear, *thumoeides* fear and so on. Using a more recent conception one could draw on Max Scheler's as follows: *sensible* pleasure/fear/dislike etc., *bodily* pleasure/fear/dislike etc., *purely psychic* pleasure/fear/dislike etc., *spiritual* pleasure/fear/dislike etc. For more see SCHELER, M. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. Transl. by M. S. Frings, R. L. Funk, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, for a comment see Zaborowski, R., *Max Scheler's model of stratified affectivity and its relevance for research on emotions* in: *Appraisal* 8, 3, 2011, pp. 24–34. Finally, referring to an everyday language some standard could be proposed in order to term this species synthetically. For an attempt in relation to fear and courage see Zaborowski, R. *La crainte et le courage dans l'Iliade et l'Odyssée. Contribution lexicographique à la psychologie homérique des sentiments*, Warszawa: Stakroos, 2002.



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Because of not acknowledging the many levels of affectivity, the debate over emotions contains a lot of correct as well as incorrect remarks, claims and generalizations. My impression is close to what is neatly expressed in the following:

Peters writes as if he thought that all psychologists (and perhaps some philosophers) have been wrong in some important respect in what they have written about emotion. My thesis is that they have all (or most of them) been right in some important respect. They have all, in various ways and degrees, contributed to our understanding. These two propositions are not inconsistent.<sup>51</sup>

and, more succinctly and recently: “In sum, everybody [i.e. hybrid theories, evolutionary psychology, social constructionism] is wrong and everybody is right.”<sup>52</sup>

Many are right inasmuch as their remarks, claims and generalizations apply to some species, genera or families of the entire class of affectivity but they are inappropriate as long as they understand them as applicable to the entire class, and with no reservation. As for Plato, instead of being partly right and partly wrong, he is overall right by differentiating his description in accordance with the levels of affectivity described.

Plato’s crucial contribution is his multi-level approach to psychic phenomena. It helps, at least in part, to avoid certain ostensible contradictions pertaining to affectivity. On the multilevel model, lower emotions are held to differ in their value and significance from emotions at the middle and higher levels. The multilevel model is especially promising when one considers that the varieties of emotions and their interpretations have led to different kinds of classification. A multi-level model makes possible the description of emotions in a more complete and nuanced way, explaining phenomena that on the single-level approach sometimes seem to be contradictory or false.

Such is my attempt at comparing Plato’s views on affectivity and particular emotions with those of other authors/philosophers and at evaluating his

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<sup>51</sup> C. A. Mace, *Emotions and the Category of Passivity* in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 62, 1961-1962, pp. 141–142.

<sup>52</sup> Prinz, J., *Which Emotions are Basic?* in: *Emotion, Evolution, and Rationality*. Ed. by D. Evans & P. Cruse, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 86.



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possible contribution to advancing a theory of affectivity from the point of view of our current knowledge. If similarities are shown not to hold, this will strengthen a thesis that Plato's approach is different from the modern one. In this case, conclusions will matter only to the reconstruction of the history of affectivity and particular emotions. On the other hand, if similarities do hold, this will mean that Plato's conceptualizations anticipated contemporary interpretations of affective phenomena in important respects.

Then the conclusions of this research could be applied to current research on emotions, and historical data, in this case Plato's approach, will be likely to advance the theory of emotion. If this is the case, it would be a pity to neglect his work in this field. As far as my analysis is correct, I am inclined to think that Plato's views on emotions appear to be another rich mine within Greek culture for research on affectivity and particular emotions. They are not only vital for historical research, but also a useful core of ideas from which we can benefit nowadays.

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