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IS PAIN AN EMOTION? SOME TAXONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS WITH A COMPARATIVE REVIEW¹

Czy ból jest uczuciem? Kilka taksonomicznych uwag wraz z porównawczym przeglądem

{ΦΥ.} Ἐν τοῖσιν ὠσὶν ἢ ἐπὶ τῇ ψυχῇ δάκνη;

{KP.} Τί δὲ ῥυθμίζεις τὴν ἐμὴν λύπην ὅπου;

“Guard: Is the pain in your ears, or in your soul?”

Creon: And why would you define the seat of my pain?”

(*Antigone* 317–318, transl. R. Jebb)

ABSTRACT

After some remarks regarding the polysemy of pain and emotion I set forward a criterion for the selection of philosophers which I consider in the main part of the paper. I then present and analyse the views of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Aquinas, Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza on pain as an emotion. Finally, I focus on the four meanings of pain and conclude that the lexical ambiguity of the concept of pain mirrors the complexity of pain.

STRESZCZENIE

Po wstępnych uwagach dotyczących wieloznaczności bólu i uczucia, ustanawiam kryterium do wyboru filozofów, których poglądy odnoszą się do tej kwestii. W części głównej artykułu prezentuję poglądy Platona, Arystotelesa, stoików, Tomasza z Akwinu, Hobbsa, Descartesa i Spinozy. Skupiam się na znaczeniu słowa ból i stwierdzam, że leksykalna wieloznaczność koncepcji bólu odzwierciedla złożoność samego bólu.

¹ A shorter version of this paper was given at the International Congress *Philosophy of Pain*, Salamanca, May, 2–4, 2018. I thank the participants whose questions helped me to ameliorate the text. The final version of the paper was completed during a stay in the Hardt Foundation in Sep./Oct. 2018. I benefited also from a discussion with Salvo Vasta and from the remarks of anonymous reviewers, to whom all I am grateful.

Keywords: pain, emotion, taxonomy of pain, taxonomy of affectivity

Słowa kluczowe: ból, uczucie, taksonomia bólu, taksonomia uczuciowości

Introduction

This issue is doubly knotty. This is because to know whether pain is an emotion depends on how both terms, emotion and pain, are understood. Since, as it happens, both words are polysemous, several answers may be given. Not only *yes*, e.g. when pain is understood as mental, and *no*, e.g. when pain is understood as physical, but also *yeses* for various (including diverging) reasons and *noes* for various (including diverging) reasons are plausible.

Philosophical task uses words and words play a role since philosophizing cannot be made without words which represent concepts. What follows is written in English but only one English-writing philosopher will be referred to. This means that a delicate issue of correspondence – both diachronic and synchronic – between languages surfaces. It is true that I use translations. But no argument is intended to rely on them². I use them for the reader's convenience, since the paper is written in English but discusses quotations from authors writing also in various other languages. The text is about the concept of pain and not about words. Where necessary, I add original terms in square brackets.

The English word *pain* stands for both³ i) a physical pain, that is physical suffering, that is an ache, as well as ii) mental pain, that is mental suffering, that is grief. But this is general and, although rarely, the word *ache* may refer to the mental⁴, and the word *grief* to the physical domain⁵. Accordingly, to know whether *pain is an emotion* looks like a non-identical question to whether *ache is an emotion* and whether *grief is an emotion*, or, again, whether *suffering is an emotion*, etc.

² One reviewer seemed to imply that my text is about the history of translations. It is not. To prove it I should, however, provide different translations or add original passages, or rewrite the text with original passages only.

³ See *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, (eds.) W. Little, H.W. Fowler, J. Coulson & C.T. Onions, (3rd ed.) vol. 2, Oxford 1973: "The opposite of pleasure; the sensation which one feels when hurt (in body or mind); suffering, distress". See also *Cambridge English Dictionary*, Cambridge 2018: "a feeling of physical suffering caused by injury or illness and emotional or mental suffering".

⁴ See *Cambridge English Dictionary*, Cambridge 2018: "a continuous pain that is unpleasant but not very strong". See also *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, (eds.) W. Little, H.W. Fowler, J. Coulson & C.T. Onions, (3rd ed.) vol. 2, Oxford 1973: "ache: pain, esp. a continuous or abiding pain, physical or mental".

⁵ See *Cambridge English Dictionary*, Cambridge 2018: "very great sadness, especially at the death of someone", but *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, (eds.) W. Little, H.W. Fowler, J. Coulson & C.T. Onions, (3rd ed.) vol. 2, Oxford 1973 mentions that "grief" understood as "physical pain or discomfort is obsolete and indicates: mental pain, distress, or sorrow".

Of the philosophers I will discuss below three are Greeks (if the Stoics are counted as one), two others wrote in Latin, one in French, and one in English. This means that the question “Is pain an emotion?” should be articulated, respectively, as: “Is *lupe a pathos?*”, “Is *tristitia a passio/affectus?*”, “Is *displeasure a passion?*”, and: “Is *tristesse a passion?*”, provided that we agree that all of the authors I refer to meant the same concepts, i.e. those identified in English by *pain* and *emotion*. Of this we know better if we compare what they describe by *pain* and by *emotion*. I think that they understand *pain* and *emotion* in the same way since all of them classify, either explicitly or implicitly, the former as one among basic kinds of the latter, which makes it clear that, characteristically, all of them gave a positive answer to the question “Is pain an emotion?”. If, however, we want to take the English-speaking philosopher, Thomas Hobbes in this case, should we clarify whether our question is still the same (“Is pain an emotion?” – or rather: “passion”, since this is the term Hobbes uses) or should be it modified into “Is displeasure a passion?” since for Hobbes pain is just one of two kinds of displeasure, in a similar way as for Spinoza, for whom the analogous term is *tristitia* which divides into two kinds too, *dolor* and *melancholia*. The main issue therefore is to know whether *pain* is understood more broadly, as a metacategory⁶, and is about the genus called in English *pain* or *suffering* and which includes two species, ache (physical pain or suffering) and grief (mental pain or suffering), while, say, by Spinoza it is called *tristitia* (again with two species, *dolor*, similar to ache because it refers to the senses, and *melancholia*, similar to grief because it indicates a mental state) or rather it is to be used more narrowly, as a pain proper, this is physical pain, and limited to English ache and Latin *dolor*. In what follows I adopt the former option.

At this juncture it is manifest that the second category used in the question is similarly complex or may be even less clear than *pain*. This is because to know “what a pain is”, is probably easier than to know “what an emotion is”, since the category emotion is broader than the category pain in a similar way as a family is broader than a genus. In the case of pain we may rely on a description of an experience. Many may say that they experience pain and this seems to be the case. But do they say equally that they experience emotion? This may be disputable and in some cases it is. Therefore, while both terms are abstract terms, the former is much closer to the particular experience than the latter. But, again, this is

⁶ By *metacategory* I understand a term which is used as a label to signify a concept which includes all elements of the set, here of the whole affective world as a family including all its members (genera) and of pain as a genus including all its members (species), regardless of any meaning given to it in common or philosophical parlance. Its selection is, one might say, arbitrary to some extent and it could be replaced by another. In this sense the Greeks use the metacategory *pathos* and *lupe*, while Aquinas uses *passio* and *tristitia*, Hobbes *passion* and *displeasure* (or *grief*), Descartes *passion* and *tristesse*, and Spinoza *affectus* and *tristitia*.

relatively general, because within the genus of pain, one species, say physical pain, is more tangible than another species, say mental pain. Being less physical it is also less concrete. Again, many say that they feel pain when ill and this is surely true. But what evidence do we need to make us sure and certain that we are feeling mental pain rather than actual physical pain? Imagine that Paul has longed for Laura for one week while she has not sent him a word. Does he suffer? Or will he suffer when this has been going on for a longer time⁷? Obviously various other factors are involved but this is only to show that mental pain is less palpable or maybe, more correctly, the threshold at which it occurs or can be acknowledged as such is less graspable.

If by pain we understand ache, i.e. a sensation in a part of one's body, then it is hardly an emotion. It then rather falls in the same group as hunger, thirst, cold etc. It belongs to reactions of the organism to an external, and often an easily identified, stimulus, sometimes localized in a precise part of the body. But then there are painful feelings non-localizable (or not easily localizable) or ascribed to the whole body, and finally there are kinds of mental pain. In this sense the ambiguity of the word pain parallels the ambiguity of the word feeling, which may stand both for a sensation and for an emotion. This ambiguity or double meaning is generally recognized⁸. Once again⁹ we are concerned with a categorial difficulty: words should not determine our knowledge of pain and emotion but in order to progress we have to have at hand already some words allowing us to think about pain and emotion. But then, there is a risk they determine the way we progress.

⁷ A physical pain *may* bring about mental pain and there *may* be mental pain without physical pain (e.g. being tortured versus seeing a beloved person being tortured). See V. Boudon-Millot, *Must We Suffer in Order to Stay Healthy? Pleasure and Pain in Ancient Medical Literature in: Pain and Pleasure in Classical Times*, (ed.) W.V. Harris, Leiden & Boston 2018, p. 46–48 for examples of dying out of (mental) grief. Note that pleasure may have a similar effect. Compare D. Konstan, *On Grief and Pain in: Pain and Pleasure in Classical Times*, (ed.) W.V. Harris, Leiden & Boston 2018, p. 202: “Of course, grief differs from corporeal pain: the death of a person we love is not the same as a physical blow”.

⁸ See E.R. Perl, *Ideas about pain, a historical view* [in:] *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* 8, 2007, p. 71: “The word ‘pain’ and its synonyms commonly refer to conscious experiences associated with bodily injury or disease, but are also used to describe discomfort related to other unpleasant feelings. These different circumstances are the bases of a long-standing uncertainty regarding how to think about pain and its mechanisms”. See also L. Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, (eds.) G.E.M. Anscombe & G.H. von Wright, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1967, p. 485: “[...] this concept [pain] resembles that of e.g. tactile sensation [...] and at the same time that of the emotions [...]”.

⁹ See Plato, *Cratylus* 438a-b: “And you say that he who gave the first names also knew the things which he named? [...] But from what names had he learned or discovered the things, if the first names had not yet been given [...]?” (transl. H.N. Fowler). See also R.D. Ellis, *The Moral Psychology of Internal Conflict. Value, Meaning, and the Enactive Mind*, Cambridge 2018, p. 188: “in order to say “this physical process equals pain” [...], we already would have to know what “pain” feels like.”

To end this introduction let me mention Edward R. Perl's overview of research since 1800. This is interesting because his standpoint is neural, yet he makes a similar remarks concerning the essence of pain and its being or not being an emotion. He concludes:

So what is pain? Its ordinary expression has attributes and an underlying neural organization of both a specific sensation (detecting, signalling and recognizing noxious stimuli) and those of an emotion. Should pain be considered both a specific sense and an emotion? Given these two sides, it is no wonder that there has been debate and uncertainty about the nature of pain over the ages¹⁰.

Recently Craig proposed a homeostatic emotion theory of pain which has gained acceptance significantly¹¹. According to Craig:

[...] the human feeling of pain is both a distinct sensation and a motivation – that is, a specific emotion that reflects homeostatic behavioral drive, similar to temperature, itch, hunger and thirst¹².

This means that emotion is a complex phenomenon of which two components are a sensation and a motivation. This is why “in this new view, pain is one of many distinct homeostatic emotions that directly reflect the condition of the body”¹³.

My aim is different to Perl's. I intend to overview philosophical works in order to see how the question whether pain is an emotion is answered. Accordingly, I treat pain as a philosophical category rather than as “an objective fact of science and culture”¹⁴. Proceeding thus I hope to contribute to the taxonomy of affectivity. The range of my selection goes from Ancient Greek thinkers up to Spinoza. The

¹⁰ E.R. Perl, *Ideas about pain, a historical view* [in:] *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* 8, 2007, p. 78.

¹¹ See timeline in E.R. Perl, *Ideas about pain, a historical view* [in:] *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* 8, 2007, p. 73.

¹² A.D. Craig, *A new view of pain as a homeostatic emotion* [in:] *Trends in Neurosciences* 6, 2003, p. 303. Yet Craig (p. 303) starts his paper with the following claim: “Pain is an enigmatic feeling [sic!] from the body, distinct from the classical senses because it is multifaceted”.

¹³ A.D. Craig, *A new view of pain as a homeostatic emotion* [in:] *Trends in Neurosciences* 6, 2003, p. 304. See also I.A. Strigo & A.D. Craig, *A neurobiological view of pain as a homeostatic emotion* [in:] *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Pain*, (ed.) J. Corns, New York 2017, p. 104: “Pain in humans consists of a feeling and a motivation that an adverse condition in the body which the homeostatic spinal and brainstem mechanisms cannot rectify automatically and which urgently demands a behavioral response. The concept that pain and all affective feelings from the body constitute homeostatic emotions is compelled by the termination pattern of the homeostatic sensory pathway identified in primates [...]”.

¹⁴ J. Moscoso, *Pain. A Cultural History*, London 2012, p. 5.

criterion of selection is their interest in the philosophy of affectivity¹⁵. Thus Descartes on the one hand and Spinoza and Aquinas on the other are, respectively, author of monograph and authors of separable parts in their treatises dedicated explicitly to emotions. As for Hobbes and Aristotle, they devoted chapters of their works to emotions. The Stoics offered an influential taxonomy of emotions which, in fact, had been anticipated, to some extent at least, by Plato.

Exemplification

A standard and most common word in Greek for pain is *lupe*. A *Greek-English Lexicon* by Liddell – Scott – Jones (*LSJ*) gives for it:

- [1.] pain of body, *opp.* ἡδονή, *also*, sad plight *or* condition,
2. pain of mind, grief¹⁶.

There are also other Greek words with the meaning *pain* and covering both the physical and mental realm¹⁷. This means that, on the one hand, the Ancient Greek has several words for pain, and, on the other, these words often have two parallel senses of *pain of body* as well as of *pain of mind*. If so, *lupe* presents an ambiguity resembling that of English *pain*. This shows that, at least at the linguistic level, there is no clear-cut divide between the physical and the mental pain and the only way to make a distinction is to qualify the noun: the physical suffering, the mental pain, the mental *ache*, etc.

i) Plato

For the sake of space I refer to one dialogue only¹⁸. In the *Phaedo* Socrates shares his feelings after his fetters have been released:

¹⁵ One reviewer questioned what exactly does “having an interest” mean. This is quite surprising given that the problem is clarified in the following discussion. To the question “why, for instance, [I] did consider Aquinas and not Bonaventure” I answer that, to the best of my knowledge, Bonaventure didn’t write a monograph on emotions, nor even a chapter. His views on emotions are not influential either (see e.g. S. Knuutila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, Philosophy, Oxford 2004 and H. Landweer & U. Renz (eds.), *Klassische Emotionstheorien: Von Platon bis Wittgenstein*, Berlin & New York 2008). For the same reason I left out the paragraphs I initially wrote on Homer, Democritus, Gorgias, and Antiphon the Sophist.

¹⁶ Compare F. Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, (eds.) M. Goh & Ch. Schroeder, Leiden & Boston 2015: *pain, affliction, sorrow, suffering*.

¹⁷ See a recent discussion in See V. Boudon-Millot, *Must We Suffer in Order to Stay Healthy? Pleasure and Pain in Ancient Medical Literature* [in:] *Pain and Pleasure in Classical Times*, (ed.) W.V. Harris, Leiden & Boston 2018, esp. p. 39.

¹⁸ Plato’s *Philebus* alone is rich enough in this regard and his views on *lupe* have been largely studied. See e.g. D. Frede, *Disintegration and restoration: Pleasure and pain in Plato’s Philebus* [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, (ed.) R. Kraut, Cambridge 1992, p. 425–463 and M. Evans, *Plato and the meaning of pain* [in:] *Apeiron* 40 (1), 2007, p. 70–97.

“What a strange thing, my friends, that seems to be which men call pleasure [ἡδύ]! How wonderfully it is related to that which seems to be its opposite, pain [τὸ λυπηρόν], in that they will not both come to a man at the same time, and yet if he pursues the one and captures it he is generally obliged to take the other also, as if the two were joined together in one head. [...] Just so it seems that in my case, after pain [τὸ ἀλγεινόν] was in my leg on account of the fetter, pleasure [τὸ ἡδύ] appears to have come following after”¹⁹.

It is clear that we are dealing here with a physical pain, referred to once as *to luperon* and once as *to algeion*, and a physical pleasure, say, a sensation of pain and a sensation of pleasure. Whether they generate any feeling or emotion of displeasure or sorrow and any feeling or emotion of pleasure or joy cannot be discussed here. And may not be discussed because earlier Phaedo avows:

a very strange feeling [πάθος] came over me, an unaccustomed mixture of pleasure [ἡδονῆς] and of pain [λύπη] together, when I thought that Socrates was presently to die. And all of us who were there were in much the same condition, sometimes laughing and sometimes weeping [...] ²⁰.

This time it is clear not only that mental pain (sadness, *lupe*) and pleasure (joy, *hedone*) are meant but also that they are called *emotion* (*pathos*) or, to be more precise, are constituents of a mixture of what is itself a *pathos*.

ii) Aristotle

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Rhetoric*, respectively, Aristotle explains:

By the emotions [πάθη], I mean desire, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendship, hatred, longing, jealousy, pity; and generally those states of consciousness which are accompanied by pleasure or pain [λύπη]²¹.

By emotions [πάθη] I mean such things as anger, fear, shame, desire, and generally those experiences that are in themselves usually accompanied by sensory pleasure or pain [λύπη]²².

The emotions [πάθη] are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgements, and are accompanied by ple-

¹⁹ Plato, *Phaedo* 60b-c, transl. Fowler.

²⁰ Plato, *Phaedo* 59a, transl. Fowler.

²¹ Aristotle, *EN* 1105b, transl. Rackham.

²² Aristotle, *EE* 1220b, transl. Rackham.

asure and pain [λύπη]; such are anger, pity, fear, and all similar emotions and their contraries²³.

It seems that in all three contexts *lupe* is *not* an emotion but instead a component of it, either inherently as may be implied from *Rhetoric*, or *typically* (ὄλως), as it is said in *EN*, or *mostly* (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ), as it is said in *EE*. In *EE* a qualification is added, though a little attenuated by ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ (*mostly*): *sensory* (ἡ αἰσθητικὴ) *unpleasure*. To be more precise pain is one of two components, the other being pleasure, necessary or typical to emotion, although *Rhetorics* differs from *EN* and *EE* (*pleasure and pain* versus *pleasure or pain*). It means that an emotion may not be accompanied or followed by pain and still be an emotion if only it is accompanied or followed by pleasure. Therefore, let us admit that *lupe* (as much as its opposite *hedone*) is what is required for a phenomenon to be an affective one. It means that according to *EN* the entire family (according to *EE*, *almost* the entire family) of affective phenomena is composed of such members which must be either pleasant or unpleasant (according to *Rhetoric*, pleasant *and* unpleasant) or pleasant or unpleasant *sensorily* (according to *EE*)²⁴.

Now, in other passages *lupe* (more exactly the corresponding verb) seems to be on a par with other emotions:

[...] for example, capable [δυνατοί] of feeling anger or pain [λυπηθῆναι]²⁵ or pity. [...]

For example, one can be frightened or bold, feel desire or anger or pity, and experience pleasure and pain [λυπηθῆναι] in general, either too much or too little, and in both cases wrongly [...]²⁶.

²³ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1378a, transl. Freese.

²⁴ This reminds us broadly of the current notion of valency of emotions and, just like valency, un/pleasure makes a divide of the whole affective realm into two opposing subdomains. For the sake of simplicity I put aside the qualification ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ because it would require a separate treatment in order to know, first, when un/pleasure is *not* a component of an emotion and, second, how an emotion is an emotion when it is not accompanied by un/pleasure. One option is to admit that this happens in the case of non-valenced feelings such as surprise. Wonder/suprise is absent from all three Aristotelian lists, though Aristotle considers it (τὸ θαυμάζειν) in the *Metaphysics* 982b – perhaps influenced by Plato – to be the beginning of the philosophy. For Plato (*Theaetetus* 155d) wonder is a feeling/emotion (τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν).

²⁵ Rackham (in: Aristotle 1934) suggests that “[p]robably for ‘pain’ we should read ‘fear.’”, and similarly Crisp (in: Aristotle 2000) opts for (δυνατοί) φοβηθῆναι (capable of feeling fear). But this modification is arbitrary insofar as it has no basis in textual tradition. Several other editors opt for λυπηθῆναι without even mentioning φοβηθῆναι. See Burnet (in: Aristotle 1900), Tricot (in: Aristotle 1972): *éprouver peine*, Barnes (in: Aristotle 1984): *being pained*, Rowe & Broadie (in: Aristotle 2002): *becoming distressed*, Taylor (in: Aristotle 2006): *distress*.

²⁶ Aristotle, *EN* 1105b and 1106b, transl. Rackham.

If this is so it seems that Aristotle's treatment of *lupe* attests to its double sense. It is either i) a necessary or typical component of emotion or ii) an emotion.

iii) Stoics

The Stoics are authors of what is now considered a cognitive theory of emotions. For them, to have an emotion is to have a singular kind of judgement. In the light of this approach *lupe* is among four basic emotions:

The main, or most universal, emotions, according to Hecato in his treatise *On the Passions*, book ii., and Zeno in his treatise with the same title, constitute four great classes, grief [λύπην], fear, desire or craving, pleasure. They hold the emotions [πάθη] to be judgements [κρίσεις], as is stated by Chrysippus in his treatise *On the Passions* [...] ²⁷.

It is manifest that *lupe* is not physical because physical pain does not fit this definition. Since *lupe* is a judgment (*krisis*) or a kind of it, it cannot be a sensation, say a bodily ache. Usually *lupe* is defined as a judgment in the presence of what is mistakenly taken to be an evil *and* is present:

pain [λύπην] [occurs] when we miss what we desire or encounter what we have been afraid of ²⁸.

As such, *lupe* has one feature in common with pleasure (the object of the judgment is present) and another with fear (its object is regarded as evil). With such a description we may try to identify pain: it is what is felt in the presence of a present evil (for our purpose we may drop the qualification that, according to the Stoics, the consideration of evil is mistaken) ²⁹. And also we may have no doubt that it is an emotion no more no less than the other three paradigmatic Stoic emotions ³⁰.

²⁷ DL VII, 110–111, transl. Hicks.

²⁸ In: Stobaeus, *Anthology* 2.7.9.20–21, vol. 1, (ed.) C. Wachsmuth, Berlin, Weidmann 1884..

²⁹ Stoics offer a division of the basic emotions into species (*eide*). For *lupe* it runs thus: “pity, envy, jealousy, rivalry, heaviness, annoyance, distress, anguish, distraction” (DL VII, 111, transl. Hicks). This is rich and complex. Yet the criteria of distinction are not uniform. For species [1], [2], [3], and [4] are divided because of the character of the evil object, [5], [6], and [9] are characterized in view of their effects, [7] because of its origin, and [8] and [9] because of their character. For instance [9] is said to be irrational: “distraction” [σύγχυσις], “irrational grief” [λύπην ἄλογον], “rasping and hindering us from viewing the situation as a whole” (in: DL VII, 112, transl. Hicks modified). But why so if all emotions are irrational?

³⁰ Note that *lupe* differs from the other three genera in one important respect. Unlike pleasure, desire and fear, pain has no corresponding *eupatheia* (LSJ: *innocent emotion*, F. Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, (eds.) M. Goh & Ch. Schroeder, Leiden & Boston 2015: *good emotion*).

iv) Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas focuses on pain in his treatment of sorrow (Qu. 35–39 in his *Summa Theologica, Prima Secundæ* (1a2æ), a subpart of the part on passions (= Qu. 22–48)). More exactly, sorrow is one of eleven main emotions (*passiones*)³¹, but when he develops on sorrow in Qu. 35, he speaks *about dolor et tristitia, tristitia, seu dolor, dolor vel tristitia*³². Later sadness (*tristitia*) and pain (*dolor*) are distinguished but, as it seems, the relation between the two is complex, because on one occasion we are told that:

[...] pain [*dolor*] alone which is caused by an interior apprehension, is called sorrow [*tristitia*]. [...] pain [*dolor*] which is caused by an exterior apprehension, is called pain [*dolor*] indeed but not sorrow [*tristitia*]. Accordingly sorrow [*tristitia*] is a species of pain [*species doloris*] [...]³³.

still, on another occasion he states:

So then if pain [*dolor*] be taken as denoting bodily pain [*corporali dolore*], which is its more usual meaning, then it [*dolor*] is contrasted with sorrow [*tristitiam*], according to the distinction of interior and exterior apprehension; although, on the part of the objects, pleasure extends further than does bodily pain [*dolor corporalis*]. But if pain [*dolor*] be taken in a wide sense, then it [*dolor*] is the genus of sorrow [*genus tristitiæ*], as stated above³⁴.

It seems that the semantics of *tristitia* and *dolor* are not stable or, at least they are not univocal³⁵, in the sense they can be taken in a narrow or wide sense. But – no matter how the above is read – sorrow as well as pain are considered by Aquinas to be an emotion (*passio*):

³¹ Aquinas, *ST* 1a2æ 25.4. By the way Aquinas defines sorrow's object, his approach is similar to the Stoics' (see above): "[...] sadness [*tristitia*] relates to present evil [...]" (*ST* 1a2æ 25.4, transl. FEDP).

³² But he also does so as early as in Qu. 23.4 when he speaks about oppositions between eleven main emotions. Aquinas also uses various qualifications, e.g. *dolor corporalis, dolor exterior, dolor cordis interior, tristitia interior*. See R. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, Cambridge 2009, p. 188 ff., esp. 189, n. 2: "Throughout I uniformly translate *dolor* by "pain" and *tristitia* by "sorrow." Both terms may bear alternative translations [...]" See also Miner (p. 196) on a distinction between *dolor, dolor exterior, dolor interior* and *tristitia*.

³³ Aquinas, *ST* 1a2æ 35.2, transl. FEDP, I underline.

³⁴ Aquinas, *ST* 1a2æ 35.2, transl. FEDP, I underline.

³⁵ Both sadness and pain have the same opposite – pleasure: "Consequently, since the objects of pleasure and sorrow or pain [*tristitiæ, seu doloris*], viz. present good and present evil, are contrary to one another, it follows that pain and pleasure [*dolor et delectatio*] are contrary to one another". (*ST* 1a2æ 35.3, transl. FEDP). As for sorrow: "[...] the passion of "delight" or "joy" [*delectationem vel gaudium*]; the contrary of which, in respect of evil, is "sorrow" or "sadness." [*dolor vel tristitia*] [...]" Accordingly it is clear that in the concupiscible faculty there are three couples of passions; viz. love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy [*gaudium*] and sadness [*tristitia*]" (*ST* 1a2æ 23.4, transl. FEDP). Yet there are some senses in which sorrow and pleasure are also affinities (see *ST* 1a2æ 35.4).

Consequently pain [*dolor*], according as it is in the sensitive appetite, is most properly called a passion of the soul [*passio animæ*]³⁶.

v) Hobbes

With Hobbes I arrive at my only English example (though, as Bennett informs us in his preface to *Leviathan* – his edition is based on the English version – “Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* in Latin and in English; it is not always clear which parts were done first in English and which in Latin”). In *Leviathan*, Part 1, chap. 6 is devoted to “[t]he interior beginnings of voluntary motions, commonly called the passions, and the speeches by which they are expressed”, all in all ca 4000 words. As regards pain Hobbes writes this:

[...] some displeasures are in the senses, and are called PAIN; others in the expectation of consequences, and are called GRIEF³⁷.

It looks as if Hobbes offers a general name of a genus – displeasure – with two kinds or species of it: pain when in reference to the senses and grief when related to the mental, in so far as expectation presupposes a conceptualization. But when he enumerates what he calls *simple passions*, Hobbes abandons his general name in favour of *grief*, or more exactly ‘*grief*’ which – he adds – is replaceable by other names depending on the context:

Each of these simple passions called ‘appetite’, ‘desire’, ‘love’, ‘aversion’, ‘hate’, ‘joy’, and ‘grief’ has different names for different contexts in which it occurs³⁸.

If I understand Hobbes correctly, he does not attach importance to words, and their application is fluid or, at least, not rigid, although his terminology is less vague than in Aquinas³⁹. What matters is that within the family of passions, one of the simple kinds is displeasure (or ‘grief’). It constitutes a genus which, in turn, divides into two species, one sensual and the other mental.

³⁶ Aquinas, *ST* 1a2æ 35.2, transl. FEDP. Aquinas offers a further division of sorrow into four species (*species tristitiæ*): pity, envy, anxiety and torpor. Again, this is rich and complex and, again, as with the Stoics, the criteria of distinction are not uniform, for [1] and [2] are characterized in view of their objects, while [3] and [4] by their effects.

³⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan* I, 6, (ed.) Bennett.

³⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan* I, 6, (ed.) Bennett.

³⁹ The mental – but not the sensual – species is divided into subspecies: dejection, shame, pity (compassion, fellow-feeling), emulation, and envy. The division is set in such a way that it is hard to say it is exhaustive. It is poorer than in the Stoics but richer than in Aquinas and, again, as in the Stoics and Aquinas, it is based on varying criteria since [1] is characterized by a feature of belief, [2], [3] and [4+5] by the object, and then [4] and [5], or rather [4a] and [4b] further by a component of grief, i.e. what it is *combined with*.

vi) Descartes

Descartes' treatise is the only monograph referred to in this paper. Descartes puts the corresponding emotion (*tristesse*) among his six basic emotions (*passions*):

Look over my list and you'll easily see that there are only six: wonder love hatred desire joy sadness [*la tristesse*]⁴⁰.

Descartes' *tristesse* is closer, or so it seems, to Aquinas' (and Spinoza's) *tristitia* than to any other of the lexemes discussed in this paper. In Descartes pain (*douleur*) goes together with hunger and thirst (e.g. Art. 24, Art. 29) and is distinct, though not easily distinguishable, from sadness in the same way as titillation from joy:

Thus, titillation of the senses is followed so closely by joy that most people don't distinguish the two; similarly with pain [*douleur*] and sadness [*tristesse*]⁴¹.

Pain (*douleur*) is called by Descartes *sentiment* (see Art. 94 & Art. 137). It is different to sadness which is defined thus:

Sadness [*tristesse*] is an unpleasant listlessness that affects the soul when it suffers discomfort from an evil or defect that impressions in the brain represent to it as its own. There is also an intellectual sadness [*tristesse intellectuelle*] which isn't itself a passion but is almost always accompanied by the passion⁴².

Consequently, in Descartes pain (*douleur*) is not an emotion and its relation with the emotion of sadness is looser than it is in Aquinas.

vii) Spinoza

I end with Spinoza. For him pain (*dolor*) is one of two names given to sadness, the second being *melancholia*:

⁴⁰ Descartes, *Passions of the soul*, Art. 69, transl. Bennett.

⁴¹ Descartes, *Passions of the soul*, Art. 94, transl. Bennett.

⁴² Descartes, *Passions of the soul*, Art. 92, transl. Bennett. Sadness is explained by Descartes in a way similar to that of the Stoics and Aquinas, although a further qualification is added: "The thought of a present good arouses joy in us, and the thought of a present evil arouses sadness [*tristesse*], when the good or evil is one we regard as belonging to us." (*Passions of the soul*, Art. 61, transl. Bennett, I underline). As for the species [*espèce*] of sadness Descartes, in several articles in his treatise, speaks about envy and pity (see Art. 62, Art. 182 & Art. 185), regret (see Art. 67, Art. 209), remorse (see Art. 177), repentance (see Art. 191), shame (see Art. 205), and distaste (see Art. 208). But he speaks about them in an unsystematic manner so that it is hard to judge whether these seven species exhaust all existing species of sadness.

And by ‘unpleasure’ [*tristitiam*] I shall mean *the passion [passionem] by which it passes to a lesser perfection*. When the affect of pleasure is thought of in terms of the mind and body at once, I call it *titillatio* or ‘cheerfulness’, and when unpleasure is thought of in that way I call it ‘pain’ or ‘sadness’. [*tristitia autem dolorem vel melancholiam*] [*Titillatio* means, literally, the action of tickling someone.] But it should be noted that *titillatio* and pain [*dolorem*] are ascribed to a man when one part of him is affected more than the rest, whereas cheerfulness and sadness [*melancholiam*] are ascribed to him when all are equally affected⁴³.

Therefore, pain is clearly an aspect of emotion (*passio*) when regarded in its relation to the body and/or to one part of a man rather than affecting him generally. It seems that pain is a more or less localized unpleasure (to follow Bennett’s rendering⁴⁴), while sadness is a mental unpleasure, a general state of a man. Now, sadness is among basic emotions and this is all the more remarkable because Spinoza limits the number of them to three only:

[...] these three – pleasure, unpleasure, and desire [*laetitia, tristitia, cupiditas*] – are the only primary affects [*affectum primum*] that I acknowledge. For I shall show that the rest arise from these three⁴⁵.

If then sadness – and pain together with it – is on such a restricted list of emotions, the importance of Spinoza’s claim is worth considering⁴⁶.

Conclusion

What I have presented above are examples drawn from seven philosophers whose interest in philosophy of affectivity is demonstrated by their works or considerable parts of them devoted to emotions. This discussion could be developed in greater detail. But even the present overview already casts some

⁴³ Spinoza, *Ethica III*, Prop. 11, transl. J. Bennett.

⁴⁴ For the rationale of his choice: “The best choice seems to be ‘unpleasure’ – a good English word, which has been used in translating Freud’s *Unlust*; his *Lust/Unlust* dichotomy is not unlike Spinoza’s *laetitia/tristitia*, and is used for it in a standard German translation of the *Ethics*” (a note to: Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part III, Prop. 11, transl. Bennett).

⁴⁵ Spinoza, *Ethica III*, Prop. 11, transl. Bennett.

⁴⁶ Spinoza lists seven kinds of *tristitia*, i.e. hate (see Prop. 13 – with species envy (see Def. 23) and also, to some extent because it is combined with envy, jealousy (see Prop. 35)), aversion (see Def. 9), despair (see Def. 15), regret (see Def. 17), repentance (see Def. 27), and shame (see Def. 31). Although this is not done in a systematic way and it is hard to know whether this is an exhaustive list, in most cases he follows a uniform criterion of distinction which is to qualify species of *tristitia* by an idea that accompanies it [*concomitante idea*], e.g. “[s]hame is unpleasure accompanied by the idea of some action of ours that we imagine that others blame” (Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part III, Def. 31, transl. Bennett).

Table 1. Taxonomy of pain

	family	genus	species	sub-species
Plato	[<i>pathos</i> , <i>pathema</i>]*	<i>lupe</i> , <i>to luperon</i>	N/A	N/A
Aristotle	<i>pathos</i>	<i>lupe</i>	i) a constituent of <i>pathos</i> ii) <i>pathos</i>	N/A
Stoics	<i>pathos</i>	<i>lupe</i> (1 of 4 <i>pathē</i>)	pity, envy, jealousy, rivalry, heaviness, annoyance, dis- tress, anguish, distraction	N/A
Aquinas	<i>passio</i>	<i>tristitia</i> (1 of 11 <i>pas- siones</i>)	when exterior: <i>dolor</i> ; when interior: <i>tristitia</i> ; species of the latter: pity, envy, anxiety, torpor	N/A
Hobbes	passion	displeasure	regarding sense: pain regarding expectations: grief	of grief: dejection, shame, pity (= compassion, fel- low-feeling), a not named sub-species (grief over the success of a competitor) having two sub-sub-spe- cies: emulation and envy
Des- cartes	<i>passion</i>	<i>tristesse</i> (1 of 6 <i>pas- sions</i>)	sadness (an emotion) pain (<i>sentiment</i>) intellectual sadness (accom- panied by an emotion)	envy, pity, regret, remorse, repentance, shame, distaste
Spinoza	<i>affectus</i>	<i>tristitia</i> (1 of 3 <i>affectūs</i>)	<i>dolor</i> (partial) <i>melancholia</i> (integral)	hate (with sub-sub-species: envy and jealousy), aver- sion, despair, regret, re- pentance, shame

* It should be noted that Plato, unlike Aristotle, often avoids the label *emotions* when he offers what we may consider as a list of emotions. Most often he simply enumerates several of them and ends his list with *and the like* (e.g. *Philebus* 47e, 50c). Sometimes he calls them *aistheseis* (in *Theaetetus* 156b) and on another occasion *kineseis* (in *Laws* 896e). See R. Zaborowski, *On the Relevance of Plato's View on Affectivity to the Philosophy of Emotions*, "Journal of Ancient Philosophy" 2016, 10 (2), p. 70–91.

light on the way pain is considered to be an emotion. There are similarities as well as dissimilarities between the approaches to pain I have overviewed. For instance, although emotion is a different thing for the Stoics (i.e. an erroneous judgement), Aquinas (i.e. undergoing a change), and Spinoza (i.e. a state of the body which modifies its power of acting), *lupe* and *tristitia* are defined alike, i.e. a response to the presence of an evil. In four cases – the Stoics, Aquinas, Descartes, and Spinoza – pain is explicitly considered a basic emotion. And Aristotle's claim is even stronger, for in his opinion pain (or alternatively pleasure) is a mark of the affective. For two others, Plato and Hobbes, pain may be reasonably supposed to be a basic emotion. As for taxonomy the main

difference is that while in the Stoics and Aquinas the pain group taxonomy is two-levelled, in Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza it is three-levelled or even four-levelled in Hobbes and Spinoza because of the sub-sub-species, respectively, of grief over success (emulation and envy) and of hatred (envy and jealousy). A common feature is that in no authors distinction of species into species is drawn in a systematic way.

Table 2. Description of pain

	family	genus	description	synonymous /replaced with
Plato	<i>pathos, pathema</i>	<i>lupe, to luperon</i>	N/A	<i>to algeinon</i>
Aristotle	<i>pathos</i>	<i>lupe</i>	N/A	N/A
Stoics	<i>pathos</i> (a judgment)	<i>lupe</i>	by its object: (what is mistakenly taken as) a present evil	N/A
Aquinas	<i>passio</i>	<i>tristitia</i>	by its object: a present evil	<i>dolor vel tristitia, dolore et tristitia, tristitia seu dolor, dolor seu tristitia</i>
Hobbes	passion	displeasure	N/A	various, e.g. grief, ‘grief’
Descartes	<i>passion</i>	<i>tristesse</i>	by condition: an evil represented as one’s own	close to pain
Spinoza	<i>affectus</i>	<i>tristitia</i>	by its essence: moving into a lesser perfection	<i>dolor vel melancholia</i>

At face value the principle of division of one genus (pain) into two species – one for physical pain and another for mental pain – is broadly the same in Aquinas, Hobbes, Descartes, and Spinoza. In Spinoza, however, the distinction corresponds to the way pain engulfs the subject, i.e. unequally versus equally (“one part of him being affected more than the rest versus all being equally affected”).

Now, given we have in front of us several accounts produced in various tongues, we may consider that the intricacies of pain are not peculiar to a specific language. They are reflected in Greek, Latin English and French⁴⁷. If this is so, it

⁴⁷ Compare a fine observation by S. Magrin, [a review of:] Plotinus, *The Enneads*, ed. L.P. Gerson, transl. G. Boys-Stones, J.M. Dillon, L.P. Gerson, R.A.H. King, A. Smith & J. Wilberding. Cambridge 2018 in: *Notre Dame Philosophical Review* 2018.11.15 [on line, retrieved on Dec. 1, 2018]:

seems that we come across a kind of conceptual ambiguity which goes beyond a particular philosopher or tongue. And even more striking is that the ambiguity is double if not triple:

- i) pain is used both as a genus term and as a species term (call it vertical ambiguity), and
- ii) pain is used at the species level both as a physical pain (sensation of pain, in the sense of *Empfindung*) and a mental pain (an emotion of pain, in the sense of *Gefühl*) (call it horizontal ambiguity).
- iii) Finally – and solely in Aristotle – pain is both a constituent of an emotion and an emotion proper⁴⁸.

This amounts to the following polysemy:

(i) a constituent of an emotion	(ii) pain as genus	
	(iii) pain as (sensual) species	(iv) pain as (mental) species

With this in mind it is easier to answer whether pain is an emotion. In (i) it is an emotion *in the sense* it is a part of an emotion. In (ii) it is an emotion *provided that* (ii) is understood as (iv). In (iii) it *is not* an emotion, while in (iv) it *is* an emotion. This shows that there is no univocal answer to such a question conceived in such a general way and involving polysemous words and it is not different if we replace pain with suffering, ache or grief. Moreover, this conclusion fits the modern conclusion surprisingly well:

[...] With the benefit of the past two centuries of scientific work and thought, can one define pain? Considering the evidence, it seems reasonable to propose pain to be both a specific sensation and an emotion [...] ⁴⁹.

In this sense my conclusion differs from Konstan's⁵⁰. Whereas for him „perhaps we should be wary of ascribing to the Greeks a distinction between mental and physical agony that may seem natural to us”, I would rather opt

“In Armstrong’s translation [of Plotinus’ *Enneads*], the first two lines of the treatise read as follows: “Pleasures and sadnesses (*lupai*), fears and assurances, desires and aversions and pain (*to algein*) – whose are they?” The plural “sadnesses” might strike the reader as odd, but this translation conveys Plotinus’ distinction here between *lupai* on the one hand, and *to algein* on the other. *Lupai*, in this context, are feelings of mental distress as opposed to the physical pain signified by *to algein* (cf., e.g., *Enn.*, 4.7.7.1–2, and the team’s translation of those lines). The team, at first, seems to just invert the meanings as it renders *lupai* by “pain” and *to algein* by “feelings of distress”.”

⁴⁸ This leads to a remark that pain as a constituent of pain is a part of pain as an emotion proper. And this is true: pain is (either) painful (or pleasant).

⁴⁹ E.R. Perl, *Ideas about pain, a historical view* [in:] *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* 8, 2007, p. 78.

⁵⁰ See D. Konstan, *On Grief and Pain* in: *Pain and Pleasure in Classical Times*, (ed.) W. V. Harris, Leiden & Boston 2018, p. 202.

– after a comparison with other-than-Greek-writing-philosophers has been completed – for saying that ambiguity of words related to pain exhibits the ambiguity or, at the very least, a not-so-clear-cut distinction between physical pain and mental pain, pain as genus and as species, and pain as constituent of an emotion and as an emotion simpliciter. If so, the metacategory pain is quite a comprehensive umbrella.

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