

“Every Perception is Accompanied by Pain!”:

Theophrastus’s criticism of Anaxagoras Reconsidered (penultimate draft)

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Abstract: Anaxagoras is notorious for his view that *every* perception is accompanied by pain but *not all* concurrent pains are distinctly felt by the perceiving subject. This thesis is reported and criticized by Aristotle’s heir Theophrastus in his *De Sensibus*.

Traditionally, scholars believe that he rejects Anaxagoras’s thesis of the ubiquity of pain as counterintuitive, with the appeal to unfelt pain looking like a desperate category mistake given that pain is nothing but a feeling. Contra the traditional view, this paper argues that Theophrastus neither aims to defend ordinary phenomenology nor is he bothered by the concept of unfelt pain; instead, he develops a series of new Aristotelian arguments to defend a controversial, optimistic picture about the distribution of affective qualities in animal life. More than a supplement to Aristotle’s psychology, his engagement with Anaxagoras reveals an important yet often ignored ethical concern behind the Peripatetic philosophy of perception.

Key Words: Theophrastus, Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Perception, Pain, Pleasure

## 1. Introduction

Theophrastus's *De sensibus* (hereafter *DS*),<sup>1</sup> as is well-known, is structured by the *dihairesis* of theories of perception into two major camps: likeness theories and unlikeness theories; whereas the former explain perception in terms of the similarity of the elements that constitute the perceptible object and the sense organ, the latter believe an unlike-to-unlike causation holds between the two relata in a perceptual process.

Although Theophrastus's treatment of Empedocles and Plato, as the representatives of the former camp, has been the subject of numerous scholarly discussions,<sup>2</sup> his account of Anaxagoras, the unique champion of the latter,<sup>3</sup> has not received comparable attention. It is only in recent years that two in-depth studies on the Anaxagoras-episode have been published. One tries to reconstruct his authentic theory of pleasure and pain

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, the Greek text of the *DS* and its numbering will follow Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 497–527. The translation of the *DS* is modified from George Malcolm Stratton, *Theophrastus*. While most changes are stylistic, clarifications will be added where my changes affect the interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> On Empedocles see Baltussen, *Theophrastus*, 156–69; Ierodiakonou, “Colour”; Kamtekar, “Likeness”; Sedley, “Vision”; Wolfsdorf, “Empedocles.” On Plato see Baltussen, *Theophrastus*, 95–139; Ierodiakonou, “Vision”; Long, “On Plato”; McDiarmid, “Plato”; Rudolph, “Authority.”

<sup>3</sup> Although Anaxagoras and Heraclitus are said to represent the unlikeness camp (*DS* 1), Heraclitus is not addressed in the following text. Theophrastus is not unaware of the limitations of this dividing framework and accommodates the existence of equivocal or borderline cases: Democritus, like Aristotle, seems to have integrated both models to explain different aspects of perception (*DS* 49–50), while Alcmaeon (*DS* 25) and Clidemus (*DS* 28) are not clearly classified.

from Theophrastus’s Aristotelianized reports;<sup>4</sup> the other argues that Anaxagoras’s idiosyncratic dictum—“every sense perception is accompanied by pain” (*DS* 29.1; cf. 17.2; Aëtius 4.9.16)—attested in the *DS* should not be confused with a similar view in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*: “animals are always toiling” (ἀεὶ γὰρ πονεῖ τὸ ζῷον [*EN* VII.14, 1154b7], my translation).<sup>5</sup> Both studies are mainly concerned with Anaxagoras’s view and its transformation in the later tradition and so touch on Theophrastus’s own voice only insofar as it can—positively or negatively—contribute to a better understanding of his critical target.

It is noteworthy, however, that while Aristotle offers a relatively detailed evaluation of the likeness theories of the soul, none of his extant works preserves a comparable engagement with the unlikeness camp on this issue.<sup>6</sup> But the latter seems indispensable for understanding his famous (or infamous) claim that perception, which involves some

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<sup>4</sup> Warren, “Anaxagoras.”

<sup>5</sup> Cheng, “Battle.”

<sup>6</sup> In *GC* 1.7, both the likeness- and unlikeness model are addressed, but with a view to *causation* rather than *perception*. In the *DA*, although only Empedocles and Plato are explicitly criticized as likeness theorists of cognition (I.2, 404b11–18; I.5, 410a9), many passages suggest that in Aristotle’s eyes this characterization applies almost to the entire early tradition, so that only the likeness model becomes the center of his attention (see *DA* I.2, 405b13–16; I.5, 409b26–28, 410a23–26; II.5, 416b35–417a20; III.3, 427a26–29). Aristotle does not deny that Anaxagoras might be an exception here, but at the same time he expresses his ignorance about how or by what cause Anaxagoras’s *nous* knows (I.2, 405b19–23). Of course, this does not prevent him from discussing Anaxagoras’s *nous* for other purposes.

sort of assimilation of the object and the sense organ, should not be identified with any ordinary alteration, that is, a transition between termini that are unlike (*DA* II.5; II.12). Given such an imbalance, Theophrastus's criticism of Anaxagoras, the only representative of the unlikeness model of perception, can be reasonably taken as a substitute for Aristotle's response to the unlikeness camp, an expected but missing part for his *De Anima* and related treatises. His diagnosis of Anaxagoras in the *DS* is thus a constitutive part of a joint research program, supplementing and even completing Aristotle's critical engagement with past thinkers on the problems of the soul.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this systematic reason, Theophrastus's unusual strategy adds another twist to his confrontation with Anaxagoras in the *DS*. As Warren has explained, Anaxagoras's view on perception crucially rests on his physics, especially his famous doctrine of everything in everything (DK 59B2, B4, B6, B11–12).<sup>8</sup> In the *DS*, however, Theophrastus is silent about this aspect but turns his criticism of Anaxagoras into a criticism of his view on pleasure and pain. This strategy appears unusual and in need of explanation given that affection and perception, though often connected, are usually

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<sup>7</sup> Theophrastus, as is well-known, does not always agree with Aristotle and sometimes even voices his criticism frankly. But here, on the subject of perception, as Johansen correctly remarks, "it is hard to find doctrinal differences between Theophrastus and Aristotle" ("Principle," 228). Given the thematic and doctrinal link of the two texts, "*DS* is best read as integral part of the same Peripatetic dialectic as the *DA*" (228). In agreement with this mainstream consensus, I believe that relevant passages from Theophrastus and Aristotle can illuminate each other unless there is positive evidence against their principled agreement.

<sup>8</sup> Warren, "Anaxagoras," 32–36.

taken to be quite different kinds of mental state. Why does Theophrastus here feel the need to raise the issues about pleasure and pain? More importantly, why does he seem to think that the refutation of Anaxagoras's general theory of perception can be carried out through a series of criticism of his view on pain? To be sure, pleasure and pain are also mentioned in the accounts of Empedocles (*DS* 16–17, 23), Diogenes of Apollonius (43), and Plato (84) in this treatise, yet only in passing. By contrast, such affects take centre stage in Theophrastus's confrontation with Anaxagoras, and the failure of Anaxagoras is even attributed crucially to his failure to explain them (*DS* 29, 31–33). But this is not because in Theophrastus's eyes Anaxagoras fails to offer a decent definition of pain or pleasure but because he thinks Anaxagoras distorts the affective profile of perceptual experiences. For the space of negative affects is unduly expanded by Anaxagoras's notorious claim that pain is an unavoidable concomitant or byproduct of *every* instance of perception (*DS* 29). Let me call it *the Thesis of Omnipresent Pain in Perception* (TOPP).

TOPP appears to clash with experience, because in everyday life we do not seem to feel pain with *every* act of perception. This conflict seems to have been anticipated by Anaxagoras, who tries to resolve it by appealing to the existence of *unfelt pain* (*DS* 29.3–6, 32.5–8). So according to his fuller doctrine, although perceptual experience is always accompanied by pain, not all co-current pains are distinctly felt by the perceiving subject.

It is quite reasonable to suspect that Anaxagoras's strategy is *ad hoc*; for if pain, as widely accepted today, is nothing but a felt quality, his response is more like exposing the "absurdity" of TOPP than reinforcing this exotic thesis. This is indeed a crucial reason why Anaxagoras was traditionally believed to have been refuted by Theophrastus in a simple manner (cf. §2 below). This consensus, however, has been recently

challenged by the illuminating study of Warren mentioned above, which defends both TOPP and unfelt pain by articulating their doctrinal connection to Anaxagoras's physics and revealing their philosophical cogency against a sophisticated doctrinal background. If TOPP is well supported by Anaxagoras's physical system and if unfelt pain is not conceptually self-defeating but coherent and even empirically verifiable, it seems premature to ascribe an easy victory to their critic Theophrastus. It is worth adding that nowadays not only are there no shortage of sympathizers with the belief in the ubiquity of pain or unpleasantness<sup>9</sup> but a growing number of scholars are inclined to hold that pain, given its complexity, can occur beneath the surface of our conscious experience.<sup>10</sup>

Does this trend thus solve or resolve Theophrastus's criticism of Anaxagoras? This question cannot be adequately answered before figuring out what kind of arguments he provided in his criticism. In contrast to the rehabilitation of Anaxagoras, however, Theophrastus's critical voice remains largely in the shadow. Even worse, as I shall show, his arguments or methods are often simplified, underrated, and sometimes

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<sup>9</sup> Recently, a version of the ubiquity of pain has been invoked by the philosopher Benatar to defend his pessimistic, anti-natalist thesis "better never to have been." According to him, even a healthy daily condition of human life is pervaded by "aches, pains, lethargy, and sometimes frustration from disability," so that suffering inevitably forms "an experiential backdrop for everything else" (*Better*, 72).

<sup>10</sup> Literature worth adding to the references in Warren, "Anaxagoras," 45–51 are e.g. Bramble, "Feeling," 205–6; Chapman and Nakamura, "Pain"; Clark, "Painfulness"; Craig, "Homeostatic"; Gustafson, "Categorizing"; Pereplyotchik, "Pain." According to Reuter and Sytsma, unfelt pains are even more widely acknowledged than previously recognized in folk conception of pain ("Unfelt Pain.")

misunderstood (see §2 and §3). The underdeveloped situation invites us to go beyond merely exegetical or source-critical interests and to take more seriously Theophrastus's *philosophical message* in his confrontation with Anaxagoras.<sup>11</sup> This concern motivates the current study to rearticulate and reassess Theophrastus's argumentative strategies and methodological assumptions, as well as their theoretical implications (§4).<sup>12</sup> The result will not only broaden our understanding of the Peripatetic theory of perception but also draw attention to an important yet often ignored debate on the affective dimension of cognition in the ancient world.

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<sup>11</sup> A growing number of scholars have exhibited a strong interest in the *DS* itself—its form, scope, and purposes—bringing Theophrastus as an author and his dialectical method more into the light. However, few studies ask whether and to what extent Theophrastus has *philosophical* reasons for this or that view he supports or dialectically uses here.

<sup>12</sup> According to the traditional view, traced back to Aspasius (*In EN* 156.11–22), Theophrastus's criticism of TOPP is also attested in an alleged fragment from Theophrastus's *Ethics* (FHSG 555), which follows *verbatim* Aristotle's *EN* VII.14, 1154b13–15. Theophrastus and Aristotle are said to reject TOPP by insisting that pleasure, as the opposite of pain, can drive it out (Warren, "Anaxagoras," 20–22). As I have argued in "Battle," however, there are serious theoretical and philological difficulties in attributing FHSG 555 to Theophrastus as a reliable source. The current study will therefore focus only on the *DS*. For Aristotle's attitude to the similar view that "animals are always toiling" at *EN* VII.14, 1154b7–9, see Cheng, "Pain of Animals."

## 2. The Evidence and Its Context

Theophrastus's criticism of TOPP constitutes a major part of his criticism of Anaxagoras's theory of perception, the only representative of the unlikeness camp discussed in the *DS*. It is worth quoting the text in full:

[T1] (31) Now there is a certain reasonableness, as I have said, in explaining sense perception by the interplay of opposites; for alteration seems to be caused not by what is similar but by what is opposite. And yet it is also in need of proof if sense perception actually is an alteration, and whether an opposite is able to discern its opposite. As for the thesis that every act of perception is accompanied by pain, this gains no support from perceptual function, in as much as some objects are perceived with pleasure and most of them without pain. Nor is it reasonable. For perception is in accord with nature, and none of the things that are by nature is by force and with pain, but rather they are with pleasure—that this is what happens is manifest too. For often and in more cases we take pleasure in things, and we pursue perception itself apart from the desire for a particular [object perceived]. (32) Moreover, since pleasure and pain alike arise from perception, and yet perception, by nature, is directed at the better—as is the case for knowledge—it would be linked more intimately with pleasure than with pain. In a word, if thinking is not painful, then neither is sense perception; for they both stand in the same relation to the same function. Nor does the effect of excessively intense perceptibles and of the extended length of time indicate that perception is accompanied by pain, but rather that it consists in a certain proportion and a mixture suited to the perceptible. And perhaps this is why a deficient perceptible passes unperceived, but an excessive one causes pain and is destructive. (33) It



turns out, then, that he considers that which is according to nature based on what is contrary to nature. For excess is contrary to nature. For it is evident and agreed that we receive pain now and then from various sources, just as we enjoy pleasure too. Consequently, [perception] is no more connected with pain than with pleasure, but perhaps in truth is connected with neither. For, like thought, [perception] could discern nothing were it unceasingly attended by pleasure or by pain. Nevertheless he, starting from so slight a warrant, applies his notion to the whole of perception. (*DS* 31–33)

Despite its richness and complexity, [T1] has not received a systematic analysis.<sup>13</sup> Not only have some exegetic puzzles gone unnoticed or remain unsolved but Theophrastus's engagement as a whole is also often simplified as a critique built on everyday experience. In his widely-used commentary on the *DS*, for example, Stratton remarks: "With the idea that pain is somehow involved Theophrastus has *no patience*; such a doctrine is unreasonable, he holds, and *is refuted by the plain facts of observation*."<sup>14</sup> But even from a cursory glance, Theophrastus seems patient enough to unfold a long, seemingly tangled response. From a theoretical point of view, naïve observation also does not straightforwardly settle the issue about the affective profile of the performance of our cognition. Whereas Aristotle seems confident that an unimpeded exercise

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<sup>13</sup> Whereas the commentary of Philippson, *ΥΑΗ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΗ*, skips over *DS* 31–33, Stratton, *Theophrastus*, is piecemeal and outdated. The two most comprehensive monographs on pleasure/pain in ancient Greek philosophy are completely silent about this passage (Gosling and Taylor, *Pleasure*; Wolfsdorf, *Pleasure*).

<sup>14</sup> Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 48; italics mine.

(*energeia*) of cognitive capacities is purely pleasant (*EN* VII.13, 1153b14–15),<sup>15</sup> Plato, as Frede explains, must believe that under normal conditions, “the actualization of sense-perception is a neutral state, neither pleasant nor unpleasant, despite the fact that there is no impediment.”<sup>16</sup> Moreover, there are philosophers and psychologists, both in antiquity and today, who believe in the ubiquity of pain/unpleasantness or who deny that any perceptual experiences can be realized without being affectively modified to some degree.<sup>17</sup> With respect to the *DS*, Baltussen is the only scholar who pays due attention to the intricacy of [T1], suggesting that Theophrastus’s objection to Anaxagoras is not a simple argument from introspection, but *a series of arguments* with different, yet interrelated targets. Nevertheless, he rarely inquires into or evaluates the philosophical

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<sup>15</sup> Aristotle has no scruples about adducing the pleasantness of visual activities as decisive evidence for the affinity between pleasure and activity (*EN* X.3, 1173b16–19; X.4, 1174a14–19, 1174b26–30).

<sup>16</sup> Frede, “*Ethics* VIII. 11–12,” 203.

<sup>17</sup> For the former see e.g. Aristotle, *EN* VII.14, 1154b7–9 (“the *physiologi*”); Benatar (fn.9); Plato, *Republic* 407c (Herodicus); for the latter see e.g. Alexander, *P. Eth.* 134.29–136.13; Brentano, *Psychology*, 114; Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, 272; Plato, *Phlb.* 44b–46c (“Philebus’ enemies”). Horwicz claims that almost all psychologists of his time (sc. 1870s) agree that all perceptions are permeated by affective tones (*Analysen*, 230). This position has wide currency in contemporary psychology too (see Lebrecht *et al.*, “Micro-Valences”; Russell, “Affect,” 149.) Several philosophers have recently been attracted to similar views. The claim in Jacobson, “Valence,” is representative: affective “valence is *ubiquitous* within and across sense-modalities [and] pervades the entire perceptual phenomenal realm” (481).

reasons and implications behind each argument he has singled out; on closer reading, his analysis also seems to underestimate the cogency of Theophrastus's critical strategies as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

The brief review of the *status quaestionis* demonstrates that an in-depth investigation on Theophrastus's response to Anaxagoras is still a desideratum. But before embarking on this main endeavor, a sketch of the argumentative context of [T1] is needed to set the stage. As noted, the *DS* is framed by the distinction between two opposite camps of the theories of perception (*DS* 1–2). Theophrastus starts with the likeness camp, the dominant tradition in theorizing perception, criticizing all the theories under this model as unworkable due to what can be called *the start-up problem*. For if perception, intuitively, involves a process in which the perceptual object acts upon a corresponding sense organ to produce perceptual experiences, it can hardly be realized in, or even

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<sup>18</sup> Baltussen divides [T1] into three main arguments: [a] the argument from the basic principle (*DS* 31), [b] the argument against universality (*DS* 31), and [c] the argument from *kata phusin* (*DS* 32–33) (*Theophrastus*, 170–1). It seems unclear how, on this picture, each argument works and how they are interrelated. For all of the passages (31–33), rather than *DS* 31 alone, are intended to refute the *universality* of TOPP. It is especially in *DS* 33 that Theophrastus questions whether Anaxagoras is justified in making such a universal claim (cf. ἀπὸ μικρᾶς ἀρχῆς ἐφ' ὅλην μετήνεγκε [*DS* 33.7]). And if one talks of the argument from *kata phusin*, it must be *DS* 31.6–9 (cf. κατὰ φύσιν in *DS* 31.7) and perhaps a part of *DS* 33 (cf. κατὰ φύσιν in *DS* 33.2). But this label cannot cover *DS* 32, which is mainly an argument based on the analogy between *the nature of thinking* and that of perceiving (cf. φύσει in *DS* 32.1, which should not be confused with κατὰ φύσιν).

initiated by, things that are exactly like each other (*DS* 2.1–3, 19.6–7). One may expect that a symmetrical criticism will be launched against the unlikeness camp, given that the role of likeness, in perception or causation, should not be ignored either. Just as color, except merely accidentally, cannot affect sound, X will not be affected by Y unless they share something in common. Perception, the dialectic goes, since it is a *causal* process, also needs some kind of likeness in addition to the requirement of unlikeness, which, as Aristotle famously argues in *GC* 1.7, refers to the commonalities in genus or in matter.

Theophrastus is no doubt committed to this principle,<sup>19</sup> nevertheless in the *DS* he does *not* develop his criticism of Anaxagoras along this line. In this episode, as mentioned, the problem of causation gives way to Anaxagoras’s alleged failure to account for pleasure and pain. This move is in part understandable given Theophrastus’s conviction that Empedocles and many early Greek philosophers “make pleasure and pain kinds of perceptions or accompaniments of perceptions” (*DS* 16.6).<sup>20</sup> If such affections were traditionally treated either as *perceptions of a specific kind* or as

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<sup>19</sup> Johansen, “Principle,” 231.

<sup>20</sup> αἰσθήσεις γάρ τινος ἢ μετ’ αἰσθήσεως ποιοῦσι τὴν ἡδονὴν καὶ τὴν λύπην. The 3rd person plural is used here, at the end of Theophrastus’s criticism of Empedocles, in which a 3rd person singular is expected. Empedocles *and* Anaxagoras (Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 504; with a question mark in DK 31A86) or “those who hold views like Empedocles’s,” i.e., “the Italian and Sicilian medical school,” have been suggested as candidates (Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 170). Given that in addition to Empedocles and Anaxagoras, Theophrastus’s account of Diogenes (43) and Plato (84) also seem to fit this model well, I take it as widely applied to most (if not all) philosophers under discussions in the treatise (also cf. Warren, “Anaxagoras,” 28).

*products of the same mechanism* shared by other perceptions,<sup>21</sup> this at least gives Theophrastus dialectical reasons<sup>22</sup> to think that a proper theory of perception should also articulate an adequate account of pleasure and pain. Empedocles, the most prominent like-by-like theorist, has received criticism for failing to satisfy this requirement:

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<sup>21</sup> The preposition μετά—here (μετ’ αἰσθήσεως, *DS* 16.6) and elsewhere in the *DS*—refers to a dependence of pleasure/pain on perception, without specifying the precise way in which this relation should be cashed out (cf. Warren, “Anaxagoras,” 28). In commenting on Aëtius 4.9, Mansfeld and Runia suggest that Anaxagoras takes pleasure and pain as “unavoidable *ingredients* of perception,” whereas according to other philosophers pleasure or pain, as after-effects, “do *not inhere to* (sic) the sense objects, but are *supervenient upon* them.” (*Aëtiana V*, 1567, italics mine) This is an interesting proposal, but I doubt whether it works here. For if A is supervenient upon B, this does not necessarily entail that A is thus an after-effect of B. Perceptual awareness, for instance, may supervene upon perceptual process, but the former is not an after-effect of the latter. And as far as Anaxagoras’s TOPP is concerned, no evidence indicates that it treats pain as a *constitutive* part of the ongoing perception which it accompanies or that TOPP excludes that pain could be realized via a supervenience relation. For more on this issue see §4.3 below.

<sup>22</sup> Except in the expression ‘dialectical method,’ the term ‘dialectical’ here and later should be non-technically understood as referring to various ways of testing or refuting competitive views *without doctrinal commitment*. This should not be confused with Theophrastus’s specific method of collecting, arranging, and evaluating relevant *doxai* or *endoxai*.

[T2] [Empedocles] assigns the same causes for sense perception as for pleasure.

And yet when we are perceiving we *often* [πολλάκις] suffer pain in the very act of perception, or, as Anaxagoras declares, we *always* [ἀεί] do (*DS* 16.9–17.1–2, italics mine).

Theophrastus objects that Empedocles cannot explain the involvement of pain in perceptual experiences. Notably, he does not say that Empedocles fails to explain the possible *existence* of pain in perceptual experiences but that Empedocles neglects the *frequent involvement* of pain when perception is at work. The co-occurrence of pain with perception seems to be a well attested phenomenon in ordinary experiences, which points to a non-accidental relation between them, a relation any theorist of perception should respect. But because Empedocles thinks that perceiving and enjoying have the same causes, he is not only unable to account for such phenomena but also fails to appreciate a genuine link between perception and *pain*.

Interestingly, Theophrastus's diagnosis does not stop here; he goes further, invoking in support Anaxagoras's TOPP, a more radical thesis, to sharpen his criticism of Empedocles. For if perception is *constantly* (rather than only frequently) accompanied by pain, Empedocles' theory looks more ludicrous unless he abandons or restricts the application of the likeness model that Theophrastus believes underlies Empedocles' explanation of the *two types* of experience. One may wonder whether Theophrastus goes too far in resorting to Anaxagoras's TOPP, which seems no less radical than the constant involvement of pleasure in perception, a possible consequence of the crude likeness model. This appears worrying especially for the audience with Aristotelian background, given that TOPP seems to be at odds with Aristotle's conviction that living-

well consists *inter alia* in enjoying perceptual pleasure, which can arise without being accompanied by any pain (see *EN* X.3–5, especially *EN* X.3, 1173b16–19; X.4, 1174b20–75a2).

For experienced readers, it might be no surprise that TOPP, which is invoked in the earlier part of the *DS*, is soon criticized in the subsequent text, Theophrastus’s account of Anaxagoras (*DS* 31–33). But what is perhaps surprising is that this thesis is apparently treated as a major flaw of Anaxagoras’s theory of perception, with Theophrastus laying out a series of argument to demonstrate that perceptual experiences more often feel pleasant or at least painless. This shift, however, makes good sense from the Aristotelian point of view, especially in light of Aristotle’s deep concern with the normative profile of perception. For the frequent occurrence of pleasure in perception is significant for his commitment to the goodness of perceptual experiences and its contribution to the goodness of the animal life. By contrast, painlessness is not just a precondition for the realization of what he calls *pleasure without qualification* (ἀπλῶς), joy from the proper function of our cognition, which neither depends on nor is accompanied by any on-going pain (*EN* VII.12, 1152b31–a15, 1152a31–35; VII.14, 1154b14–19; X.3). But it is also an indispensable constituent of the algedonically neutral state, the realization of which Aristotle acknowledges in his tripartition of affective space, even if not as much as Plato and his followers appreciate.

Against this background, Anaxagoras’s TOPP, rather than Empedocles’ apparent inability to account for pain in perception, poses a *more serious* threat to the Aristotelian theory of mind and even his ethics. This suggests that Theophrastus’s earlier appeal to TOPP in criticizing Empedocles must be a dialectical appropriation, which, read in context, may have a proleptic function, foreshadowing his critical engagement with this thesis in the subsequent passage. It is thus understandable that Theophrastus does *not*

directly attack Anaxagoras's theory of perception for its failure to accommodate *the existence* of perceptual pleasure, which might be regarded as the counterpart of his criticism of Empedocles. Instead, as stressed, what Theophrastus targets is TOPP, with an accent placed on the distribution of the algedonic space of perception among pain, pleasure, and painlessness.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Experiencing Pains in Anaxagoras and Theophrastus

Anaxagoras's commitment to TOPP, according to Theophrastus, is a natural, yet absurd consequence of the unlikeness model that underlies his theory of perception:

[T3] All sense perception, he (sc. Anaxagoras) holds, is accompanied by pain [μετὰ λύπης], —which would seem in keeping with his general principle, for the unlike when brought in contact [with each other] always brings discomfort [πόνον παρέχει]. This is illustrated by [our experience when an impression] long persists

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<sup>23</sup> Warren says that “Theophrastus attempts to convict Anaxagoras of *giving a false account of pain* and of *failing to be able to give a satisfactory account of pleasure*” (“Anaxagoras,” 20, italics mine). It is true that, following Theophrastus's report, Anaxagoras seems to have difficulty in explaining the existence of pleasure (also cf. Cheng, “Battle,” 410–13). But unlike his criticism of Empedocles, Theophrastus does not seem to press Anaxagoras much on this issue. Instead, as I shall argue, he concentrates on the distribution of different algedonic experiences in life and their relation to perception. Therefore, it may perhaps be that Warren is overly concerned with showing that Anaxagoras's theory can well account for *the existence of pleasure* via some *independent* mechanism (36–45).



and when the exciting objects are present in excess. For dazzling colours and excessively loud sounds cause pain [λύπην ἐμποιεῖν] and we cannot long endure the same objects (*DS* 29).

The report looks bizarre given its combination of the generation of perception with the generation of pain via a simple unlikeness mechanism, which can be summed up in the following way:

(A1) Perception is generated by unlikes.

(A2) Unlikes cause discomfort (namely pain).

Hence:

(A3) Perception is always accompanied by pain.<sup>24</sup>

Anaxagoras could have denied that TOPP, given its counterintuitive outlook, *must* be a consequence of his theory of perception. The fact that affects can co-occur with perception does not entail that, in principle, the mechanisms that underpin the formation of these two kinds of experiences cannot be distinguished. But Anaxagoras does not choose responses along this line. At least according to the *DS*, he seems to bite the bullet by defending TOPP with an add-on clause in order to reconcile it with ordinary phenomenology (*DS* 29.3–6, 32.5–8):

(A4) In everyday life, we do not seem to feel pain with *every* act of perception.

Given (A3), therefore:

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<sup>24</sup> For this argument see Warren, “Anaxagoras,” 30–34.

(A5) Some pains are imperceptible.

Here we witness Anaxagoras’s application of his method of grasping the non-evident by inference from what is evident, encoded by his famous *dictum* “the appearance is a vision of things that are non-evident” (ὄψις ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα [DK 59B21a = Sextus, *M.* 7.140], my translation). Although the distinction between evident and non-evident pain seems useful to help Anaxagoras resolve the conflict between TOPP and daily experience, this move also gives his critics the opportunity to debunk the doctrinal package by rejecting the implication of unfelt pain as absurd or hopelessly self-defeating. But Theophrastus, who seems unconcerned by the existence of such a spooky entity in his response (*DS* 32), frustrates our expectation once again.

As mentioned, Warren has defended Anaxagoras’s notion of unfelt pain by distinguishing between pain being unfelt and pain being unnoticed: Whereas the former is indeed self-contradictory, the latter—which should be what Anaxagoras has in mind—is not only conceivable, but also constitutes a solid part of our ordinary life.<sup>25</sup> Despite its ingenuity, Warren’s “apology” seems susceptible to equivocating on the meaning of ‘unfelt’ (ἀναίσθητον, *DS* 32.8). After all, there is arguably a substantial difference between being unfelt/unperceived and being unnoticed.<sup>26</sup> The notion of *unfelt* pain is

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<sup>25</sup> Warren, “Anaxagoras,” 50–51.

<sup>26</sup> Besides *DS* 32.8, Theophrastus also uses ἀναίσθητ-words in his reports of Democritus (63.5–7) and Plato (84.1–3), once each respectively. In the former, the ἀναίσθητον refers to the state in which changes in the body are so widely diffused as to not be intensive enough to produce perceptual experiences. In the latter the ἀναίσθητα characterizes the neutral state (τὰ μέσα) in which no pleasure or pain is generated either

deemed conceptually inconsistent only because pain is supposed to be nothing but, or even the paradigm case of, sensation or conscious feeling, whereas a lot of mental states can be *unnoticed* (in the sense of being unattended, rapidly forgotten, unreportable, or suchlike) to different degrees.<sup>27</sup> If the latter is what Anaxagoras has in mind, it appears otiose that he feels the pressure to make sense of it, let alone revealing its indistinct presence by appealing to its more distinct existence in prolonged or intense perception.

I think Theophrastus is not bothered by Anaxagoras's appeal to unfelt pain, either in the strong sense of being unperceived or merely unnoticed. For, as mentioned, the concept of unfelt pain is self-contradictory only if pain is taken to be a simple and basic form of sensation, so that *being in pain* is nothing over and above *the awareness of or experiencing pain*.<sup>28</sup> But if pain—referred to by *lupē* or *ponos* (29.3) in Theophrastus's account—encompasses experiences or states that are different from what the above (Cartesian) intuition implies, then this leaves enough *Spielraum* for its being unfelt in

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because there is no restoration or bodily disturbance involved or because they are not intense (ἄθρόον, βία) enough to affect the soul despite their presence. Both denote genuinely “unperceived” phenomena, namely bodily processes that are not accessed by the soul, rather than mental episodes that are accessed, yet not noticed.

<sup>27</sup> For these two senses of ‘unconscious’ see Michel, “Consciousness,” 781–9. The ‘unconscious’ in the sense of what we call inattentional blindness today is not unknown to Aristotle and some of his followers, see e.g. Arist. *Sens.* 7, 447a14–21; *EN* X.5, 1175b3–6; Strato F62 Sharples (I owe this reference to Han Baltussen). On this phenomenon in Aristotle, see Fieconi, “Attention”; Ierodiakonou, “Attention.”

<sup>28</sup> This is the orthodox view nowadays held by many philosophers (for a classical statement see Kripke, *Naming*, 152–3).

various ways.<sup>29</sup> Admittedly, it has been doubted whether Theophrastus confuses *ponos*, which might be Anaxagoras’s original, with *lupē*, which might be a Peripatetic paraphrase.<sup>30</sup> For it seems better to make sense of the notion of unfelt *ponos* than that of unfelt *lupē*, given that *ponos* can mean things like toil, labor, and suffering, which are much wider than what we typically call pain. However, since Theophrastus, as mentioned, never bases his criticism of Anaxagoras on debunking unfelt pain as conceptually unthinkable, even if a distinction between *ponos* and *lupē* could help us better appreciate Anaxagoras’s TOPP, this cannot leave him intact in the face of Theophrastus’s objections. In other words, Theophrastus’s critical strategies, as I shall

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<sup>29</sup> The intuition—pain is a simple sensation and the essence of pain is exhausted by its felt quality—has been recently challenged by a growing number of studies, see e.g. Coninx, *Experiencing*; Corns, *Complex*.

<sup>30</sup> According to Aëtius’ version—Ἀναξαγόρας πᾶσαν αἴσθησιν μετὰ πόνου (Aëtius 4.9.16 Mansfeld and Runia)—TOPP seems to only concern πόνος. Given that the meaning of πόνος is not limited to what we call *pain sensation* or *pain quality*, scholars have reasons to worry about whether the *DS* does justice to Anaxagoras here. As Warren has argued, however, Theophrastus “remains by far our best source for this element of Anaxagoras’s thought” (“Anaxagoras,” 31); the λύπη-version of TOPP not only fits well with Anaxagoras’s appeal to distinct pains perceived under extreme circumstances in Theophrastus’s own report (*DS* 29.3–6) but also is “consistent with other aspects of Anaxagoras’s thought” (*DS* 31–32). In fact, it is highly uncertain whether Aëtius 4.9.16 reflects a more authentic version of TOPP in which a well-defined notion of *ponos* is in operation, or—more likely in my view—it offers another instance of the loose usage of pain-vocabulary in the doxographical tradition.

argue, apply to both *ponos* and *lupē*, either or not Anaxagoras would distinguish one from the other (see §4 below).

If doubts remain about what Anaxagoras's considered view *is*, the same point can be made in terms of a Peripatetic understanding of pain. In fact, Aristotle's inclusive notion of *lupē*—ranging from affects that accompany and modify perceptual or cognitive activities (*energeiai*) to various negative emotions—will *not* permit him and his followers to dismiss the resort to unfelt pain easily as making *a category mistake*.<sup>31</sup> For nothing warrants that the affective tone of a hindered activity must be distinctly felt, just as I may not be aware that my contemplation has been disturbed by ongoing noises for a while, although the concurrent discomfort can be inferred through my behavior or through later reflection. In addition to the Aristotelian background, Theophrastus could have his own reason to be tolerant about the existence of unfelt pain, which can be seen in his explanation of the nature of fragrance (*De Odoribus* 3). The agreeable smell, in his view, depends on the omnipresence of bitter, unpleasant odor in all the things that have smell, even if it is not always distinctly accessed to the perceiver (cf. *De Causis Plantarum* VI.9.4, 16.8). This is of course not a general theory of perception as in

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<sup>31</sup> For pain as a whole range of negative affects in Aristotle see Cheng, “Vocabulary.” In *EN* VII, Aristotle explicitly suggests replacing the “*perceived* change” in the Platonic account of pleasure by his own “*unimpeded* [ἀνεμπόδιστον] activity” (*EN* VII.12, 1153a15). This move explains why Aristotle, in parallel with his *energeia*-based understanding of pleasure, closely associates its opposite pain with the dysfunction of an on-going activity (*EN* I.10, 1100b29–30; VII.13, 1153b1–3; X.5, 1175b2–24) rather than a simple sensation exhausted by its felt quality.

Anaxagoras, but it suffices to show that for Theophrastus too the concept of unfelt pain is not in itself necessarily a non-starter.

So far, two lessons can be drawn from the preliminary considerations above. First, an argument from ordinary phenomenology is far from sufficient to justify the resistance to TOPP. Not only do our intuitions on the affective profile of perceptual experiences diverge, but the possible existence of unfelt pain also gives Anaxagoras the resources to cope with challenges along this line. As such, unfelt pain can even be tolerated or maintained by Peripatetic psychology. Second, while Theophrastus is certainly uneasy about Anaxagoras's TOPP, what he does in response is more than to resort to the naïve observation according to which perception sometimes feel pleasant and other times feel painful. In fact, as I shall argue, he develops a (carefully constructed) series of arguments, with nuance and complexity, to reveal that Anaxagoras's mistake consists mainly in how to distribute algedonic space: his improper expansion of pain prevents the realization of (pure) pleasure and neutral state in perception so as to undermine the normative dimension of perception, one of our most fundamental and natural cognitive achievements. The debate, therefore, not only concerns the affective *qualities* of a concrete perceptual experience but also their overall *quantitative* distribution in animal life.

#### 4. Theophrastus's Objections Reconsidered

Now let us consider Theophrastus's objection to TOPP in detail, which, I suggest, should be divided into four parts, corresponding to four (or five) interrelated arguments: [1] *DS* 31.1–5 is an argument directed at the basic principles which Theophrastus believes underlie Anaxagoras's theory of perception. He objects that Anaxagoras neither sufficiently explained that perception is a qualitative change caused by interactions

between things that are unlike nor that such a process can account for perception as an activity of discrimination. Note, however, that this is more than a general criticism of the unlikeness model but one that also prepares the ground for the following arguments against Anaxagoras's view on pain. [2] *DS* 31.5–9 is the core objection to TOPP, which has two parts: while the former undermines TOPP from the normal function of perception, the latter is more conceptually guided and tests the coherency of this hypothesis from the widely shared belief in the naturalness of perceptual activities. Neither of them should be taken as an argument from naïve observation or from introspective judgement. [3] *DS* 32.1–4 is an analogical argument, which aims to reinforce the same conclusion as [2] by drawing a parallel characterization of thought based on the isomorphism between thinking and perceiving. [4] *DS* 32.5–33 is the final argument against TOPP, which proceeds mainly on a methodological level. It is here that Theophrastus appeals to common experience and opinion and thereby demonstrates that Anaxagoras's defense of TOPP via the existence of unfelt pain fails due to methodological flaws.

#### 4.1. Argument against the Principles

[T1a] Now there is a certain reasonableness [ἔχει τινὰ λόγον], as I have said, in explaining perception by the interplay of opposites; for alteration [ἀλλοίωσις] seems to be caused not by what is similar but by what is opposite. And yet it is also in need of proof [δεῖται πίστεως] if sense perception actually is an alteration and whether an opposite is able to discern [κριτικόν] its opposite. (*DS* 31.1–5)

Theophrastus starts his criticism of Anaxagoras by making a small concession to his doctrine. As an unlikeness theory of perception, it looks intuitive because perception, as an affection, must involve some kind of change when in operation. The unlikeness model seems to satisfy a minimal causal requirement of its fulfillment insofar as change, by definition, is to make something different from what it currently is and thus *unlike* its initial state. But although Anaxagoras provides a generally viable framework in which perception, qua change, can be causally initiated, Theophrastus points out that it is not *specific* enough to account for perception as *a cognitive activity* in which something is *discriminated* by its opposite. In other words, to say that X can causally act upon its opposite Y neither amounts to nor provides a sufficient condition for X being perceptually cognized by Y. For this reason Theophrastus complains that Anaxagoras's theory "lacks *pistis*" (31.3), which I take to be a criticism of insufficiency.<sup>32</sup> It means that the two theses ascribed to Anaxagoras—(i) perception is a *qualitative change* (*alloiōsis*); (ii) perceiving amounts to discerning something by its opposite—need not be completely discarded but require further refinement and justification.

Note that both *alloiōsis* and *kritikon* are theoretically loaded terms coined by Aristotle. Since Anaxagoras takes perception as an affection of unlike by unlike, Theophrastus assumes, he must view perception as a qualitative undergoing, a particular kind of change called *alloiōsis* by Aristotle.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, since the perceptual faculty

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<sup>32</sup> See *DS* 91.9–10: δεῖται δὲ τινος λόγου καὶ πίστεως; also see *DS* 46.2, 79.7.

<sup>33</sup> For Aristotle's use of this term to characterize traditional approach to cognition see *DA* II.4, 415b24; II.5, 416b34–35; cf. Heidel, "Qualitative," 333–4, 367–72. For the inference from perception as affection and change to it as a kind of *alloiōsis*, see *DA* II.5, 416b33–35, 418a1–3.



is a capacity to perceptually cognize the world, an unlikeness theorist must recognize it as a discriminatory capacity (*kritikon*) of unlike by unlike.<sup>34</sup> Regardless of whether it does justice to Anaxagoras, Theophrastus's characterization is reminiscent of Aristotle's approach in the *De Anima* in which the tension between perception as cognitive discrimination and as a qualitative change takes pride of place. Conceding that perception involves alteration of some sort, Aristotle rejects *perceiving* a quality as *undergoing* or *having* that quality in any robust sense. Accordingly, he criticizes almost all of his predecessors for the same mistake: that is, construing cognition, either perception or thinking, *essentially* as a qualitative change in virtue of sense organs being affected by and thus taking on perceptual qualities. By contrast, he argues that in perceiving something, the soul qua the discriminative power, when it is activated, does not undergo any alteration or at least does not undergo the same kind of alteration as the relevant bodily parts do (*DA* I.3, 406a1–b15).<sup>35</sup> This fundamental antagonism sets the agenda for Aristotle's ambitious "new psychology," which aims to overcome the traditional pattern by demonstrating that sense perception, or cognition in general, cannot be merely an alteration or whatever kind of *kinēsis* but should be more properly framed in terms of his neologism *energeia*: the use, exercise, and accomplishment of the soul's natural power.<sup>36</sup> This schema, as we will see, profoundly stands behind

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<sup>34</sup> For this notion, see the classical paper of Ebert, "Perceiving." The same thought is also found in Theophrastus (*DS* 7.3, 15.8, 19.5, 20.3, 25.8, 28.2, 33.6, 34.5, 38.7, 41.4, 43.6, 45.4, 46.6–8).

<sup>35</sup> Menn, "Soul," 85–95, also cf. *DA* I.2, 403b28–31, 404a20–25.

<sup>36</sup> In context of the contemporary debate over Aristotle's psychology (for an overview see Caston, "Spirit." Johansen and Laks believe that Theophrastus is

Theophrastus's approach to Anaxagoras and is thus an indispensable background for an adequate understanding of the critical strategies he is going to deploy.

#### 4.2. The Core Argument

After the critical remark on the unlikeness principle, Theophrastus immediately shifts the focus of his criticism to Anaxagoras's view on pain (T2b–c). To better understand this, it is useful to recall Aristotle's doctrine, according to which perception involves a formal assimilation of the object and the sense organ to being *actually* like from being *actually* unlike yet *potentially* like (*DA* II 5; II.12). Following Aristotle, Theophrastus also holds that perception needs some sort of assimilation (ἐξομοίωσις/ ἐξομοιοῦσθαι [*De Causis Plantarum* IV.3.1; VI.6.1]) in which object and sense organ that are initially unlike become like in respect of forms and ratios (Priscian, *Metaphr.* 1.2–8 < FHSG 273).<sup>37</sup> Since according to the Peripatetics both likeness and unlikeness are necessarily involved in all perceptual processes, one might ask whether, following the argumentative pattern of the *DS*, every act of perceiving is accompanied by *both pleasure and pain at the same time* if pleasure and pain are either themselves perceptions or accompaniments of perception (*DS* 16–17, 23). This result, however, is

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committed to a version of spiritualism similar to the position of Burnyeat (Johansen, “Principle,” 233–5; Laks, “Lever”), whereas Caston disagrees (“Perceiving.”) However, it seems at least uncontroversial that Theophrastus rejects the crude forms of literalism and manifests himself closer to spiritualism by giving priority to formal explanations (Caston, “Perceiving,” 207–9).

<sup>37</sup> For Theophrastus's understanding of perception see Baltussen, *Theophrastus*, 72–86; Caston, “Perceiving”; Laks, “Lever”; Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 18–50.

unwelcome because both Theophrastus and Aristotle believe that the normal-proper function of cognition should be (if not more often) purely pleasant or algedonically neutral. With this notion in mind, let us consider how Theophrastus further responds to Anaxagoras:

[T1b] As for the thesis that every act of perception is accompanied by pain, this gains no support from perceptual function [οὐτ' ἐκ τῆς χρήσεως], in as much as some objects are perceived with pleasure and most of them without pain. Nor is it reasonable [οὐτ' ἐκ<sup>38</sup> τῶν εὐλόγων]. For perception is in accord with nature [κατὰ φύσιν], and none of the things that are by nature is by force and with pain [τῶν φύσει βία καὶ μετὰ λύπης] but rather they are with pleasure—that this is what happens is manifest too. For often and in more cases [πλείω καὶ πλεονάκις] we take pleasure in things, and we pursue perception itself apart from the desire for a particular [object perceived] [χωρὶς τῆς περὶ ἕκαστον ἐπιθυμίας]. (*DS* 31.5–9)

In [T1b], according to the standard interpretation, Theophrastus argues that Anaxagoras's position is counter-intuitive because everyday experience has verified that we perceive most things without any pain (and indeed some things with pleasure). This interpretation only gets it half right, however. As noted, the argument from introspection alone cannot meet the challenge from Anaxagoras's appeal to unfelt pain. The contention that sense perception is purely pleasant or without pain is nothing but what

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<sup>38</sup> Stratton adopts Usener's conjecture, changing the text from ἐκ (31.6) in MSS to ἔστι (*Theophrastus*, 92). This emendation is not only unnecessary but obscures the argumentative structure of [T1b].

the supporters of TOPP deny. Intuitions, after all, diverge with respect to the question of how the operation of our senses is affectively qualified (see §2 above).

Of course, Theophrastus respects ordinary experiences, but they do not play a crucial role in his refutation against Anaxagoras here. Passage [T1b] unambiguously signposts two sub-arguments: the one being an argument from perceptual function (ἐκ τῆς χρήσεως [DS 31.5]),<sup>39</sup> the other seems concerned with the theoretical coherence of TOPP (ἐκ τῶν εὐλόγων [DS 31.6]). Different from terms like *empeiria* or *phainomena*, *chrēsis* should not be simply identified with what we call ordinary *experience* or pre-theoretical, naïve observation.<sup>40</sup> Owing to the investigations of scholars like Werner Jaeger, John Rist, and Stephen Menn, it has become well-known that Aristotle’s concept of *energeia* originates from an analogy between activity and use, so that *chrēsis* and *energeia* are often interchangeably employed in his works when referring to the

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. “in experience” (Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 93); “in accordance with the facts” (Baltussen, *Theophrastus*, 169); “on the basis of experience” (Laks and Most, EGP VI, 155).

<sup>40</sup> Aristotle often combines κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν with κατὰ τὸν λόγον (or εὐλόγον) to highlight the failure of his predecessors both on empirical and theoretical grounds (*Ph.* 1.5, 188b33–34, 189a4–5; *Cael.* III.7, 306a3–4; *Juv.* 2, 468a22–23; *PA* III.4, 666a19–20; *Metaph.* A.5, 986b32; Δ.11, 1018b31–32). Although κατὰ τὸν λόγον is similar to the ἐκ τῶν εὐλόγων here (for the similar use of εὐλόγον see *DS* 15.2, 18.9, 35.3, 48.9), the κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν should not be confused with the ἐκ τῆς χρήσεως. Theophrastus does appeal to common experience and opinion later, in *DS* 33 (note the expression φανερόν καὶ ὁμολογούμενον in *DS* 33.4).

actualization of our natural or acquired capacities.<sup>41</sup> Following this analogy, perception, as the most characteristic activities of animals, should be captured in terms of the model of *technē* rather than the traditional model of alteration. When a craftsman is making his products, the most relevant part of his activity, namely the *technē*, is not changed by being exercised, even if some kind of material or bodily change has to be involved in the whole process.<sup>42</sup> This analogy illustrates why an act of perceiving, despite being realized in material organs, fundamentally differs from a process of changing quality such as being heated or cooled.

Against this background, *chrēsis* in [T1b] should refer to the exercise/function of the *kritikon* in [T1a], perception as a discriminatory power. Its performance, from the Aristotelian perspective, not only enables animals to have a basic cognitive access to the world so as to help them navigate—usually successfully—the world. But perception is also itself a defining achievement of their nature insofar as perceiving is *what the*

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<sup>41</sup> Bradshaw, *Aristotle*, 2–7; Jaeger, “Rezension,” 634; Menn, “Origins”; Rist, *Mind*, Ch. 6. See Arist. *Protr.* B81, B83, B85 (Düring); *Top.* 124a31–34; *Ph.* 247b7–9; *EN* I.8, 1098b31–33; *Rh.* I.5, 1361a23–24; *MM* I.3, 1184b10–17; II.10, 1208a35–b2; cf. *Pl. Euthd.* 280b–e; *Tht.* 197b–199b; [*Clit.*] 407e–408b.

<sup>42</sup> Aristotle uses the example of building to illustrate this point in *DA* II 5, 417b7–9. Many philosophers in later generations employ the Aristotelian term *energeia*, but Theophrastus belongs to those few philosophers who believe something can be in *energeia* without undergoing *kinēsis* at all; see Thphr. *Met.* 5A7, 7B9–15 and FHSG 153A, 307D, 307A. For discussions thereof see Gutas, *Principles*, 272, 339; Huby, *Psychology*, 115–25; Menn, “Soul,” 93–94; Rudolph, “Energeia”; Sharples, *Sources*, 66–70.

*animal typically does* when awake and perception thus essentially embodies what the animal life *is* in contrast to the other living and non-living beings. If the *chrēsis* of the senses serves this purpose and does seem to work often in this way, this concept thus has both empirical and normative dimensions. In other words, if the functioning of perception is essentially a fulfillment of a goal-directed cognitive activity, which is characteristic of and indispensable for animals' existence and well-being, it is hard to conceive of a constant involvement of pain, which often aligns with violence, destruction, and indeterminacy. On the contrary, Aristotle claims bluntly, "pleasure occurs...when we use (χρωμένων) something" (*EN VII.10*, 1153a10–11). Anaxagoras, who advances TOPP, thus owes us an explanation for accepting his extraordinary hypothesis rather than taking ordinary phenomenal experiences at face value (in which most people appear to enjoy perception or at least do not loath it).

This criticism is further reinforced by the following, more theoretically-oriented argument explicitly resorting to the naturalness of perception (*DS 31.7–9*). The guiding idea is this:

(1) Pleasure is associated with activity in accordance with nature, and that pain is associated with activity that is by force and so is against nature.

(2) Perception is activity in accordance with nature.

Therefore:

(3) Perception needs to be associated with pleasure, not pain.

It was a widely shared view that while pleasure is characterized as appropriate to or in accordance with nature, pain, as its contrary, is associated with the violation or

destruction of nature.<sup>43</sup> Aristotle even begins *Nicomachean Ethics* X, the last book of his *opus magnum* on ethics, by what Dirlmeier calls the *Progamme-Satz*: “pleasure seems to be most intimately bound up with our kind” (*EN* X.1, 1172a19–20).<sup>44</sup> When perceiving under normal conditions, my perceptual capacity manifests and retains its nature as *kritikon* by its activation. If this is what happens in perceiving, it seems in conflict with—let alone is reducible to—a process of alteration in which the initial state is destroyed by its contrary, a mechanism which seems more likely to produce pain. As Caston points out, “in exercising a particular capacity C, I do not alter with respect to C in a way that destroys that capacity. On the contrary, exercising C generally preserves or even reinforces it.”<sup>45</sup> Of course, there is a complicated story about how this effect can be realized. However, both in the process of cognitive development and in ongoing cognitive activities, pleasure seems to play a significant role if the exercise of our cognitive faculties is maintained or improved. As Aristotle points out:

[T4a] Pleasures increase the activities by their own increase; what increases something by its own nature properly belongs to that thing. (*EN* X.5, 1175a36–b1, translated by C.D.C. Reeve, modified)

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<sup>43</sup> In Theophrastus’s report on Diogenes, pleasure has been associated with the state of *κατὰ φύσιν* (*DS* 43), whereas pain is caused by the blood that is *παρὰ φύσιν*. In his account of Plato, pleasure is likewise explained in terms of the process *εἰς φύσιν* (*DS* 84), while pain is characterized as *παρὰ φύσιν καὶ βία* (*DS* 84).

<sup>44</sup> Dirlmeier, *Ethik*, 568.

<sup>45</sup> Caston, “Spirit,” 269.

[T4b] Pleasure that properly belongs to an activity makes it more exact, longer lasting, and better. (*EN* X.5, 1175b14–15, translated by C.D.C. Reeve)

Likewise, Theophrastus argues that pleasure, rather than pain, should co-emerge more often with perceptual experiences, based on the asymmetrical relation of pleasure and pain to nature.<sup>46</sup> The more someone uses her perceptual faculty, the more she would take pleasure in such activities, at least within the limits of her cognitive competence. This argument preempts Anaxagoras's claim that long-term perception involves and reveals the persistent existence of pain (*DS* 29.3–4; 33). For it confuses the *natural limit* of one's use of cognitive faculties with a *hindrance* that might disturb or destroy their ordinary operation. Not all such limitations have to be realized in the form of pain.

Finally, Theophrastus does not forget to add that one can take pleasure in perception without the presence of the desire (cf. *χωρὶς τῆς περὶ ἕκαστον ἐπιθυμίας* [*DS* 31.9]). This not only points to the scene in which perception as a cognitive activity can be valued in its own right rather than as a means to other purposes (such as helping animals to pounce on prey). More importantly, it also seems to be levelled against a possible argument for TOPP according to which pleasure is always accompanied by pain on the grounds that every perception involves a desire for the perceptual object and desire presupposes and is accompanied by some sort of pain.<sup>47</sup> As Theophrastus here

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<sup>46</sup> In his criticism of Democritus, Theophrastus appeals to a similar argument, according to which the better and healthier are more natural (*κατὰ φύσιν... μᾶλλον*) than the worse and the sick (*DS* 70).

<sup>47</sup> *EN* III.11, 1119a4; VII.4, 1148a19–22; VII.7, 1150a18, 1150a26–27; VII.12, 1153a32–33; *EE* II.10, 1225b30–31; *Pol.* II.7, 1267a8–9; *Rh.* II.7, 1385a25.



indicates, if perception can be, and in fact often is, enjoyed by many people detached from the desire for a particular object, arguments for TOPP along this line cannot get off the ground. This characterization of perception, again, should be traced back to Aristotle, not only his famous emphasis on the cognitive interest inherent to the human nature (*Metaph.* A.1, 980a21–23),<sup>48</sup> but, more importantly, his attempt to distinguish pleasure *per se* as *energeia* (which is purely pleasant, independent of the satisfaction of desire) from pleasure *per accidens* as *kinēsis*, a restorative process from an unfulfilled state (*EN* VII.12, 1152b36–1153a2). It is only pleasure of the latter kind that involves desire and derives its pleasantness crucially from a contrasting pain involved in the whole restoration. The pain-involvement of desire, therefore, cannot be used to support TOPP, the ubiquity of pain in perception.

#### 4.3. Argument from the Affinity between Perceiving and Thinking

The third argument of Theophrastus proceeds in the same direction as [T1b], yet unfolds in terms of a close parallel between thinking and perceiving.

[T1c] Moreover, since pleasure and pain alike arise from perception, and yet perception, by nature, is directed at the better [πρὸς τὸ βέλτιόν]—as is the case for knowledge [ἐπιστήμη]—it would be linked more intimately with pleasure than with pain. In a word, if thinking is not painful, then neither is sense perception; for they both stand in the same relation to the same function [τὸν αὐτὸν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον ἑκάτερον πρὸς τὴν αὐτὴν χρεῖαν]. (*DS* 32.1–4)

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<sup>48</sup> Johansen, “Principle,” 243.

Theophrastus is arguing that if thinking usually is not accompanied by pain, then there is no reason to assume a substantial difference in the affective profile of perception. This argument depends on two assumptions. First, thinking is a more evident case or a less controversial one in which the exercise of an activity in accordance with nature is mostly painless. For the affective phenomenology of thinking does appear comparatively thin relative to that of perception.<sup>49</sup> A *prima facie* reason for this difference might be that pleasure and pain often count as *sensory* experiences, that is, as Theophrastus reports, they are either a special kind of perception or its accompaniments (*DS* 16.6).<sup>50</sup> The second assumption concerns the unity or the affinity of perception and thought. If perception and thinking cannot be grasped in terms of some unifying or

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<sup>49</sup> I thus disagree with Baltussen, who does not see the argumentative connection here, complaining that “the analogy between knowledge and sense perception (*DS* 33) appears rather suddenly” (*Theophrastus*, 171).

<sup>50</sup> As Aristotle emphasizes, “perceiving corresponds not to learning but to contemplating [τὸ θεωρεῖν]” (*Sens.* 4, 441b23). Theophrastus’s speaking of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) suggests that he does not have all kinds of intellectual activities in mind but rather a special kind: the exercise of our theoretical intellect, called contemplation in the Peripatetic tradition, so that the learning process, which seems often painful, is not included in the contrast under discussion. A similar analogy between perception and thinking is drawn by Aristotle in *DA* II.5, 417a21–b16, where thinking in the sense of exercising the acquired knowledge—indicated by the terms like ἐπιστήμη, θεωρεῖν, νοεῖν, φρονεῖν and their cognates—is explicitly distinguished from the learning process (cf. διὰ μαθήσεως in 417a32; μανθάνων in 417b12), which is never characterized as an *energeia* by Aristotle.

common principle, what is characteristic of one cannot easily apply to the other. But like Aristotle, Theophrastus believes that most of his predecessors, Anaxagoras included, are committed to a certain isomorphism between perception and thinking.<sup>51</sup> Therefore he at least has dialectical reasons to adduce the nature of thinking to elucidate what should be look like in the case of perception.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *DA* 404a27, 405a9, 410a23–26, 427a22–23. Following Aristotle, Theophrastus not only explicitly attributes this view to Parmenides (*DS* 4), Empedocles (*DS* 10, 23), and Democritus (*DS* 72) but also extends it to a belief endorsed by “all the ancients, either poets or sages” (*DS* 72.2–3).

<sup>52</sup> According to Aristotle (*EE* I.4, 1215b11–14), Anaxagoras believes that contemplation can render human life blessed (μακάριον) and painlessly (ἀλύπως). Thus it seems that Anaxagoras at least recognizes a particular kind of thought as not accompanied by pain. In the *DS*, however, Theophrastus does not thematize Anaxagoras’s *nous*, which is only mentioned passingly in his account of Clidemus (*DS* 38). He may not view *nous* as a kind of thought (τὸ διανοεῖσθαι) but treat them as different in kinds, so that it is not included in his account here. Or, it is more likely that he, following Plato and Aristotle, thinks that *nous* is unfortunately materialized by Anaxagoras so as to undermine the essential difference between it and the other modes of cognition. This would then sharpen the incoherence in holding the absence of pain in the activity of the *nous* and pain-involvement in every perception. Notably, Theophrastus does attack Anaxagoras on the grounds that the latter confuses the operation of *nous* with ordinary affection and change (FHS 307A and D). The *aporia* he raises is how the activity of *nous* is possible if it is taken to be a change/motion or if in thinking the soul seems to be somehow affected, given that the *nous*, which is in

Note, however, this analogical argument is more than a purely argumentative move. To illuminate this, we need first address two exegetic puzzles: (i) In what sense is perception said to be “by nature directed at the better [πρὸς τὸ βέλτιόν]” (32.1–2); (ii) how to interpret the last clause—“τὸν αὐτὸν γὰρ ἔχει λόγον ἑκάτερον πρὸς τὴν αὐτὴν χρείαν” (32.4)<sup>53</sup>—which I take to be giving the Peripatetic reason for the isomorphism between perceiving and thinking.

Let us begin with (ii), which I think provides important clues for making sense of (i). In accordance with the translation—“for they both stand in the same relation to the same *need*,” Stratton suggests that “acquaintance with truth or fact [is] a natural need” common to perception and thought.<sup>54</sup> However, this reading is unsupported by the text (no truth or fact is mentioned here) and, more importantly, it seems irrelevant to the gist of Theophrastus’s reasoning (the nature of perception can be revealed by the nature of thinking in terms of a certain affinity shared by them). By contrast, a different interpretation is canvassed by A. E. Taylor in his alternative translation: “each (sc. perception/ thought) bears the same relation to its own employment (or exercise).”<sup>55</sup>

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charge of the activity of thinking, is said to be impassible according to Anaxagoras. Consequently, Theophrastus urges, either *nous* cannot think or Anaxagoras needs to modify the meaning of passivity here (cf. Huby, *Psychology*, 115–25, esp. 124).

<sup>53</sup> I maintain the MSS reading “πρὸς τὴν αὐτὴν χρείαν” (32.4). It is unnecessary to amend the text to “πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ χρείαν” (Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 180) or “πρὸς τὴν χρείαν αὐτοῦ” (Diels).

<sup>54</sup> Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 179.

<sup>55</sup> *Apud* Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 180; cf. “with regard to the same usage” in Laks and Most, EGP VI, 157.

Stratton immediately rejects this option on the grounds that he cannot see “how craving for knowledge and craving for sense-stimulation can be called ‘the same craving’.”<sup>56</sup>

This objection, however, misses the point. For Taylor’s proposal, I submit, has nothing to do with the activity of craving for the truth regardless of being at intellectual or perceptual level. Rather, the term *chreia* here, in tune with the *chrēsis* in [T1b], points out that both are the natural activities of our cognitive faculties. Just as thinking is the expression and full realization of being a knower, perceiving is the expression and full realization of the subject as being a perceiver.

As the parallel between *pros to beltion* and *pros tēn autēn chreian* suggests, the puzzling opening of [T1c] should be construed in the same way. It cannot mean that perception by nature is directed at an *object* which is better than the perceptual activity itself. [T1b] has indicated that perceptual activity itself can be appreciated independently of the concrete object targeted by a concomitant, pain-involving desire. This is in a better state in part because its realization is mostly associated with pleasure and rarely disturbed by pain. In other words, perception—when functioning properly—has a natural tendency to maintain, reinforce, or prolong the activity itself. Pleasure or painlessness, in this context, serves not only as an indicator of the well-functioning of such activities but, as a component or accompaniment, also contributes to such a function and thus accounts for it. It is *energeia*, which is better instantiated by thinking, that provides a common ground for grasping the nature of all kinds of cognition including perception.

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<sup>56</sup> Stratton, *Theophrastus*, 180.

[T5] For whenever the one who has knowledge comes to contemplate, he is either not altered [ἀλλοιοῦσθαι], since this is a progression into the same state and into actuality, or his is a different kind of alteration [ἕτερον γένος ἀλλοιώσεως]. For this reason, it is inappropriate to say that one who thinks [τὸ φρονοῦν] is altered whenever he thinks (*DA* II.5, 417b5–9, translated by Christopher Shields, modified)

This fundamental notion of Aristotle is followed by Theophrastus, who not only criticizes many of his predecessors for taking cognition—perception or thinking—as identical with or reducible to a process of alteration,<sup>57</sup> but also, as the evidence from Themistius shows, emphasizes that *energeia* is the common principle underlying thinking and perceiving.<sup>58</sup>

But what could be the reason to claim that both cognitions are usually painless or pleasant insofar as they are *energeiai*? Or why is perception, in Theophrastus’s words, “linked more intimately with pleasure than with pain” (*DS* 32.2–3)? In the *DS* Theophrastus does not offer a straightforward answer, but Aristotle’s analysis of the structure of cognitive activity in *EN* IX adds useful clues:

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<sup>57</sup> In addition to Anaxagoras, the notion has been emphasized as he introduces the unlikeness camp at the beginning of the *DS*; it is also repeated in his account of Empedocles and Democritus. For the former see *DS* 23.3, 23.4; for the latter, see *DS* 49.2, 49.3, 63.3, 63.5–6, 72.2, 72.9.

<sup>58</sup> FHSG 307A, cf. εἰς ἐνέργειαν, Themistius, *In De an.* 108.2; ἐνεργεία, 108.15; ὡς ἐνέργειαν, 108.17.

[T6] [perceiving and thinking] that we are perceiving or thinking is the same as [perceiving and thinking] that we are, since we agreed that being is perceiving or thinking. Perceiving that we are alive is pleasant in itself. For life is by nature a good, and it is pleasant to perceive that something good is present in us. Living is also choiceworthy, for a good person most of all, since being is good and pleasant for him; for he is pleased to perceive something good in itself together [with his own being]. (*EN* IX.9, 1170a32–b4, translated by Terence Irwin, modified)

According to Aristotle, pleasure accompanies perception and thinking qua *energeia* because cognition, either perception or thinking, implies a cognition of the activity itself and thereby a cognition of our own existence on the meta-cognitive level.<sup>59</sup> This two-level structure intends not only to explain the function of our cognitive access to the world but also its intrinsic value—its goodness and pleasantness—by appealing to the recognition of the self inherent to the normal object perception. It is worth noting that Theophrastus’s first three arguments against Anaxagoras’s TOPP seem well embedded in, and can be enlightened by, this key Aristotelian passage. It tells us for an Aristotelian [i] why sense perception is essentially not an alternation, much less a process in which

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<sup>59</sup> The scope of the current study does not allow us to explicate *how* the reflexive and goal-immanent structure of cognition qua ἐνέργεια enables Aristotle to defend the intrinsic nature of life as good and pleasant by appealing to its self-intimating, self-affirming, and self-authorizing feature (cf. e.g. Caston, “Consciousness”). No extant text of Theophrastus addresses cognition from this perspective, but his understanding of perceptual awareness seems in principle to follow Aristotle, especially its two-level structure (see Caston, “Perceiving,” 210–13; Ierodiakonou, “Attention,” 188–9).

an opposite discerns its opposite (cf. [T1a]); [ii] why perception, as something in accordance with the nature, is mostly pleasant or painless ([T1b]); and [iii] in what sense there is an isomorphism between perceiving and thinking ([T1c]). This is the story, I think, which Theophrastus embraces and implicitly presupposes in his criticism of Anaxagoras's TOPP.

With this notion in mind, we can further speculate about Theophrastus's view on the relationship between states of pleasure/pain and perception, in particular about his attitude to his predecessors who, according to him, "make pleasure and pain kinds of perceptions or accompaniments of perceptions" (*DS* 16.6). Given that pleasure is realized as a kind of higher-order awareness immanent in a well-functioning cognition, for an Aristotelian such states cannot be subsumed under the class of perceptions, since they are realized on different levels. Moreover, although a self-referential awareness always accompanies our first-level cognition, the former does not always accompany the latter as distinctly pleasant or painful, because the perfection of our perceptual activities, even under natural conditions, comes in degrees. It thus allows normal-proper perception to feel delightful or algedonically neutral, depending on whether and to what extent the higher-order awareness, which affirms the existence of the subject via becoming aware of the on-going activity, is well realized and thus accessed by her.

#### 4.4. Argument from Methodology

In the final argument, Theophrastus shifts his critique from the content of TOPP to its method, the "logic" behind Anaxagoras's justification of TOPP.

[T1d] Nor does the effect of excessively intense perceptibles and of the extended length of time indicate that perception is accompanied by pain, but rather that it



consists in a certain proportion and a mixture suited [μᾶλλον ὡς ἐν συμμετρία τινὶ καὶ κράσει] to the perceptible. And perhaps this is why a deficient perceptible passes unperceived, but an excessive one causes pain and is destructive. (33) It turns out, then, that he considers that which is according to nature based on what is contrary to nature. For excess is contrary to nature. For it is evident and agreed [φανερὸν καὶ ὁμολογούμενον] that we receive pain now and then from various sources, just as we enjoy pleasure too. Consequently, [perception] is no more connected with pain than with pleasure, but perhaps in truth is connected with neither. For, like thought, [perception] could discern nothing were it unceasingly attended by pleasure or by pain. Nevertheless he, starting from so slight a warrant, applies his notion to the whole of perception [ἀπὸ μικρᾶς ἀρχῆς ἐφ' ὅλην μετήνεγκε τὴν αἴσθησιν]. (DS 32.5–33.8)

To do justice to our phenomenological experience, Anaxagoras reminds us that pains can be sometimes unfelt because affective qualities may escape our perceptual power while they are occurring. Just as our sight cannot always discriminate the gradual changes of colour (DK 59B21 = Sextus *M.* 7.90), we may not be able to discern gradual changes of affects that constantly “tint” our experiences and affects in low intensity or small quantities. The unintuitive claim—there are tiny, imperceptible pains that permeate perceptual experiences, according to Anaxagoras, can gain support from the “easy cases” in which the affective aspects of perceptual experiences are more salient. It is the reason why Anaxagoras appeals to the facts that “we cannot focus on the same objects for a long time,” and “dazzling colours and excessively loud sounds cause (distinct) pain” (DS 29). They are the evidences for cumulative pain, from which one can *infer* the persistent existence of some past pains, which range in magnitude but are

not always accessible to conscious experience. This is a reasonable move in view of Anaxagoras's physical theory. For it seems to provide a simple, unified story about—and perhaps in his eyes the best explanation for—both affective and sensory-discriminative components of perceptual experience. According to this, the affective qualities, like sensory qualities (such as black and white), start in very small amounts and then become “visible” to the subject either by accumulating slowly over time or by rapidly increasing in an instant.

In response, Theophrastus does not deny the reality of the scenarios mentioned by Anaxagoras. But he reminds the reader here that, according to ordinary phenomenology and common sense (cf. φανερόν καὶ ὁμολογούμενον [DS 33.4]), *both* pleasure and pain are what we *at times* experience (33.3). This suggests not only that pain does not, as TOPP indicates, enjoy a privileged status compared to pleasure but also that there must be conditions under which no pleasure or pain is involved in perceptual activities. Even if the claim that perception is no less connected with pleasure than with pain (33.4–5) can be compatible with TOPP, it is impossible for Anaxagoras to swallow the existence of the neutral state without undermining TOPP. This must be the reason why Theophrastus goes on to stress that perception, like thinking, can in fact take place in an algedonically neutral way (33.5–6). This is because affective qualities, as higher-order properties or a dimension of cognitive activities, are not a species of ordinary perceptual qualities, qualities that register the physical properties of the objects perceived.

Although there is an Aristotelian story to be told about how pleasure and pain co-occur with perception or thought in different occasions, it seems sufficient here for Theophrastus to make sure that perceptual qualities are in essence distinct, and thus in principle separable, from affective qualities. Regardless of the optimization of perception being purely pleasant (as Aristotle believes) or algedonically neutral (as

Plato is more inclined to say), neither contradicts the common belief that perception, in its normal function, is in accordance with nature.<sup>60</sup> Anaxagoras's view, by contrast, is in trouble in this respect. By reiterating the distinction between the naturalness and the unnaturalness of the experience, Theophrastus is not repeating the argument in [T1b] but raising a new objection from a methodological perspective. He grants that excessively intense perceptibles and protracted exposure do produce pain.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, he points out that this fact does not entail the persistence of pain in all perceptual experiences, given that the occurrence of pain here can be explained by the *intensity* or *duration* of the perception rather than by any shared mechanism of perception and pain.

Just as Aristotle warns against the fallacy of inferring from something accidental to something in general (*SE* 5, 166b37–167a20), Theophrastus here denies that the radical cases invoked by Anaxagoras can function as evidence supporting TOPP. For it is not justified to extrapolate from something abnormal (ἐκ τοῦ παρὰ φύσιν [*DS* 33.2]) to something normal (τὸ κατὰ φύσιν [*DS* 33.2]) or from slight basis (ἀπὸ μικρᾶς ἀρχῆς, [*DS* 33.7]) to a general thesis (ἐφ' ὅλην [*DS* 33.7]). Instead, Theophrastus turns the

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<sup>60</sup> There is a shift of focus from (pure) pleasure (*DS* 31–2) to the neutral state (*DS* 33) in Theophrastus's criticism of Anaxagoras. They each attack TOPP from different angles. Since it is here that Theophrastus appeals to the common opinion (33.4) rather than the Aristotelian understanding of the proper function of a cognitive faculty, he exhibits a more inclusive stance on the algedonic profile of our cognition.

<sup>61</sup> He follows Aristotle here, see *DA* II.12, 424a28–32; III.2, 426a28–b8; III.13, 435b7–15. Theophrastus's indebtedness to *DA* II.12 can be clearly seen from Priscian, *Metaphr.* 1.3–8 + 3.27–29 (= FHSB 273) and 20.5–8 (< FHSB 282).

evidence of Anaxagoras to his advantage, using it to confirm the Aristotelian conclusion that sense perception needs a certain fit between the activity and its object (ὡς ἐν συμμετρίας τινὶ καὶ κράσει πρὸς τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἢ αἴσθησις [*DS* 32.6–7]). Or, put more precisely, “[a]n organ would then be sensitive to a particular type of perceptible if the organ’s constitution was such as to take on the ratio exemplified in the perceptible itself.”<sup>62</sup> The harmony required in normal-proper function of perception further bolsters Theophrastus’s endeavor to make room for realizing pain-free states in perceptual activities. For there was a well-established tradition in which pain was defined as or associated with the destruction of the harmonious nature (see §4.2 above). According to Theophrastus, it is a connection which Anaxagoras, a natural philosopher, could hardly reject.

## 5. Conclusion

To conclude, I have argued that Theophrastus’s treatment of Anaxagoras in the *DS* reveals that the affective aspect of perceptual experiences is an indispensable dimension for an adequate understanding of the contours of Peripatetic psychology. Given the normative role and complexity of perceptual experience, it also offers insight any theorist of perception should not ignore. Because Theophrastus realizes that pain is not only a possible experience to be respected but also a parameter that can be applied to measure whether a theory of perception has sufficient explanatory power, he does not hesitate to utilize Anaxagoras’s TOPP as a dialectical weapon to attack Empedocles. In the same treatise, however, since he is well aware that TOPP poses a more serious threat to the epistemic and practical significance that the Peripatetics ascribe to perception, he

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<sup>62</sup> Caston, “Perceiving,” 207.

tries hard to demonstrate why Anaxagoras is mistaken on empirical, conceptual, and methodological grounds.

To be sure, for most people perceptions may feel pleasant, painful, mixed, or neither; during a certain period, an individual may be in one state more than in the other states. Theophrastus would not deny all possible scenarios. As his critical engagement with Anaxagoras shows, however, what he wants to achieve is more than to save these everyday phenomena but to justify a more optimistic distribution of affective qualities in perceptual experiences and in normal animal life. His aim and arguments make good sense in light of Aristotle's notion of cognition (perception and thinking), especially Aristotle's rosy view about the importance of perception. Animals, according to Aristotle, do not just perceive things as they are but also perceive them as to be pursued or avoided. It means that in addition to the cognitive role of perception as a response to the external world, it has an affective dimension which enables the perceiving animals to act in conformity with what they perceive. In the case of human beings, more importantly, perception also provides indispensable access to various forms of knowledge, valuable in itself, and a means conducive to higher-level cognitions. For this reason, it is the foundation and a crucial part of knowledge which Aristotle claims everyone desires *by nature*. Given that everyone is inclined to pursue knowledge, and given that knowledge, perceptual knowledge included, is highly coherent and is usually a reliable guide to practice, it seems highly implausible to assume that it is invariably accompanied by pain, which is closely associated with imbalance, violence, and destruction.

All this explains well why, in the Aristotelian tradition, perception and its affective profile also have ethical relevance. In fact, Aristotle even emphasized in the opening of the *Eudemian Ethics* that if one's life is penetrated by pain (περιωδυνίας [EE I.5,

1215b20]), one might have chosen not to have been born (I.5, 1215b20–21). By no accident, his words echo the notorious, pessimistic “wisdom” of Silenus,<sup>63</sup> pointing to the question of whether and under what condition a life deserves to be lived. Since the hedonic criterion for Aristotle plays a pivotal role in responding to this question, he is naturally concerned with the affective profiles not only of ethically good practices but also of the normal-proper function of perception, which, as a defining marker of animal life, are essential for the realization of their well-being. Theophrastus, as the current study indicates, defends this Aristotelian legacy with new arguments in a different context, which goes far beyond historical or purely dialectical concern. His attempt tells us that to do justice to the nature, range, and role of affects is also an important motivation behind the Peripatetics’ theoretical engagement with perception.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Fr. 44 Rose<sup>3</sup>: “not to be born is best of all, and to be dead better than to be alive.”

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