



ARISTOTLE AND THE PAIN OF ANIMALS: *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS* 1154B7–9*

ABSTRACT

This paper explains the motivation behind Aristotle's appeal in Nicomachean Ethics 1154b7–9 to the physiologi who notoriously declare that animals are constantly in pain. It argues that the physiologi are neither the critical target of this chapter nor invoked to verify Aristotle's commitment to the imperfection of the human condition. Rather, despite doctrinal disagreement, they help Aristotle develop a naturalistic story about how ordinary people easily indulge in sensory pleasures.

Keywords: Aristotle; *physiologi*; bodily pleasure; pain; medicine; nature

1

In *Nicomachean Ethics* 7,¹ after defending the value of pleasure by determining its genuine nature as an *energeia*, the unimpeded activity of the natural state (1153a12–15), Aristotle urges that in addition to the truth we should not ignore the cause of the error (1154a22–3). He is especially attracted to and puzzled by what is false appearing true and thus most attractive. This is a question concerning the seductive nature of bodily pleasures: why, in his view, they are enjoyable merely accidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός),² but in fact overpower many of us. While answering this question, Aristotle unexpectedly invokes a strange view held by some anonymous *physiologi*, according to whom life is neither hedonically neutral nor purely pleasant for animals (including humans), since living always involves some kind of pain (1154b7–9), what I will call the ‘Ubiquity of Pain Thesis’ (UPT) (1154b2–15):

Bodily pleasures are pursued by people who are incapable of enjoying other pleasures because they are intense. Indeed, some people (τινές) induce thirsts in themselves.³ What they do is not a matter for reproach whenever [pleasures] are harmless, but it is base whenever they [these pleasures] are harmful. For they enjoy nothing else, and the neutral state is painful for many on account of nature. **For the animal is always toiling, just as the *physiologi* also testify, since they maintain that seeing and hearing are painful. But we are already accustomed**

* I thank audiences at the Humboldt University, Berlin and at Renmin University for helpful discussion; Tianqin Ge, Frank de Jong, Wei Liu, Stephen Menn, David Merry, Philip van der Eijk, Katja Vogt and especially Christof Rapp for comments on a draft; Rhodes Pinto and Christine Baker for proofreading my original typescript; and *CQ*'s Editor and the anonymous reader for helpful suggestions. This research is supported by The Institute of Foreign Philosophy at PKU and by The National Social Science Fund of China No. 21BZX086.

¹ All references to Aristotle not preceded by the name of a work are to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. I use I. Bywater's edition (Oxford, 1894) and T. Irwin's translation (Indianapolis, 2019), with modifications where necessary.

² 7.12, 1152b34–5; 14.1154b1, 17–19.

³ Reading Richards's τινές for the manuscripts' τινός at 1154b4. This conjecture is accepted, for example by H. Rackham, *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics* (Cambridge, MA, 1926), 444; R.A. Gauthier and J.Y. Jolif, *L'Éthique à Nicomaque II*, 2 (Louvain, 2002), 812; and C. Natali, *Aristotele: Etica Nicomachea* (Rome and Bari, 2003), 306.

to this, as they say (ἀεὶ γὰρ πονεῖ τὸ ζῶον, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ φυσιολόγοι⁴ μαρτυροῦσι, τὸ ὄραν, τὸ ἀκούειν φάσκοντες εἶναι λυπηρόν· ἀλλ' ἤδη συνήθεις ἐσμέν, ὡς φασίν). The young, too, are in a condition similar to drunkenness because of their growth, for youth is pleasant (καὶ ἡδὺ ἢ νεότης).⁵ Naturally melancholic people, by contrast, are in constant need of a cure since their bodies are continually bitten because of their mixture, and they constantly have intense desires. A pain is driven out by its contrary pleasure, indeed by any pleasure at all that is strong enough; and this is why such people become indulgent and base.

It appears puzzling why, in this context, Aristotle feels the argumentative need to adduce the *physiologi* and their UPT. If we believe, as some commentators did,⁶ that Aristotle actually endorses the doctrine of the *physiologi*, then he turns out to be an eliminativist of the neutral state.⁷ As Keele summarizes, according to Aristotle, 'for this [*sc.* sensation] to occur, pain or pleasure must intervene. These elements must accompany all forms of sensations.'⁸ This consequence, however, is in tension with *Eth. Nic.* 1154b6, the immediately antecedent text, where Aristotle criticizes those who cannot endure being in the neutral state (τὸ μηδέτερον).⁹ Even worse, the ascription precludes the possibility of mortal animals experiencing what Aristotle calls pleasure *simpliciter*, a kind of pleasure that involves no pain at all; yet as a central notion of *Eth. Nic.* 7.12–13, it also recurs in ch. 14 (1154b15–17). More generally, UPT defies Aristotle's in principle optimistic and friendly attitude to the normal operation of our natural or acquired faculties, according to which perceptual experiences are usually pleasant or at least not painful.¹⁰

Conversely, if we believe that Aristotle's appeal to the *physiologi* does not imply any commitment to UPT, but that he is dedicated to examining or criticizing this radical view,¹¹ then we have to explain why Aristotle, in this context, opts for such a digression.

⁴ This reading of *physiologi* follows Aspasius; it is adopted by Bywater (n. 1) and it is also transmitted by the Arabic tradition. Except for *physikoi* (K^b), by contrast, *physikoi logoi* are found in the manuscript tradition.

⁵ As opposed to the proposal of Ross, Festugière and Aubry, who replace the full stop after ἡ νεότης in 1154b11 with a comma—G. Aubry, 'Nicomachean Ethics 7.14 (1154a22–b34): the pain of the living and divine pleasure', in C. Natali (ed.), *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Book VII* (Oxford, 2009), 238–63, at 250—I keep the text of Bywater (n. 1) unchanged (thus also F. Susemihl, *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea* [Leipzig, 1887]).

⁶ S. Francis, 'Under the influence—the physiology and therapeutics of *akrasia* in Aristotle's ethics', *CQ* 61 (2011), 143–71, at 157, 162–3; Anonymous, *In Eth. Nic.* 458, 28–31; see also H. Joachim, *Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1955), 240; M. Leunissen, 'Aristotle on knowing natural science for the sake of living well', in D. Henry and K.M. Nielsen (edd.), *Bridging the Gap between Aristotle's Science and Ethics* (Cambridge, 2015), 214–31, at 226–7.

⁷ This characterization is espoused by some ancient scholars (Alexander, *P. Eth.* 134.29–135.13; Anonymous, *In Eth. Nic.* 458, 28–31) as well as by F. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (London, 1995), 114, albeit more cautiously.

⁸ K.D. Keele, *Anatomies of Pain* (Oxford, 1957), 37. 'Sensation' in Keele's account is equivalent to 'perception' used here.

⁹ The μηδέτερον includes, yet is broader than, what D. Frede, *Aristoteles. Nikomachische Ethik* (Berlin, 2020), 796 calls the 'neutral[e] Tätigkeiten'. In the concluding part of this chapter, Aristotle reaffirms the existence of the neutral state (1154b23–4).

¹⁰ For Aristotle's well-known belief that the actualization of natural capacities in the normal state should be—and actually is—pleasant (and not painful), see 1153a13–15, 1153b9–10, 1174b14–1175a3. Frede (n. 9), 796 realizes this tension but is silent on the question why Aristotle appeals to the *physiologi* here.

¹¹ ταῦτα δὲ οὐχ ὡς συγκατατιθέμενος λέγει ἀλλ' ἰστορῶν, Aspasius 156.15. Aspasius is followed by e.g. J. Burnet, *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London, 1990), 342; H. Diels (in 59A94 DK); R. Walzer, *Magna Moralia und Aristotelische Ethik* (Berlin, 1929), 79; F. Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles: Nikomachische Ethik* (Darmstadt, 1964), 506; Gauthier and Jolif (n. 3), 813; J. Warren, 'Anaxagoras on perception, pleasure, and pain', *OSAPh* 33 (2007), 19–54. For a critical assessment

Not only is no explicit criticism of the *physiologi* attested in the following passage;¹² in addition, the conjunction γάρ at 1154b7 suggests that UPT must be used to further justify, or at least to clarify, what has been said above, namely the falsity of some bodily pleasure. It is, however, obscure how a criticism of UPT can serve this purpose.

In short, we are on the horns of a dilemma: either we cannot reconcile UPT with Aristotle's considered view on the hedonic profile of perceptual experiences, or we can hardly make sense of its argumentative relevance as far as the aim and the scope of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 are concerned.

2

To overcome the dilemma, we should first ask what, exactly, Aristotle's motive is behind his appeal to the *physiologi*. Read in context, Aristotle explains some people's (excessive) pursuit of bodily pleasures in terms of a set of causal mechanisms determined by the relevant objective and subjective conditions. According to this explanation, the corruption of people's psychophysical disposition renders them prone to being 'in flux', only responsive to intensive and excessive physical pleasure, so that the peaceful neutral state becomes unpleasant and even intolerable for them (1154a32–3, cf. *Part. an.* 648b15–17). Thus, like patients, such people, driven by the expansion of the pain, are inclined to pursue pleasure in order to compensate for the unpleasant experience they often or frequently endure. Sensory pleasures—immediate, short-lived, intense and prone to excess—seem especially suited to their needs and can help those 'patients' drive out pain promptly (1154a28–9). Yet pleasures of this kind, according to Aristotle, go hand in hand with pain as they originate from some defective bodily state and are accompanied by the corresponding appetite, which always involves pain.¹³ It is precisely because such pleasures involve such pain that those who indulge in them run the risk of replacing one pain with another, to be brought back to where they began on a 'hedonic treadmill'. Consequently, this circle leaves little room for the realization of the hedonically neutral condition in one's life, not to mention room for enjoying any painless pleasure.

Aristotle's characterization of the misrepresentation of the neutral state as painful may remind one of what Plato says about hedonic illusion in *Resp.* IX 583c–586c. But, unlike Plato who seems inclined to take the mismatch primarily as an epistemic failure (*Resp.* 586a–c),¹⁴ Aristotle is more interested in the aetiology of behaviour

of Aspasius' interpretation, see W. Cheng, 'A battle against pain? Aristotle, Theophrastus and the *physiologi* in Aspasius, *On Nicomachean Ethics* 156.14–20', *Phronesis* 62 (2017), 392–416.

¹² Warren (n. 11), 22 believes that the notion at 1154b12–15—pleasure, as the opposite of pain, is able to drive pain out—can be used, and was adopted by Theophrastus, to undermine UPT. Yet C. Mulvany, 'A supposed fragment of Theophrastus', *CR* 33 (1919), 18–19 and W.W. Fortenbaugh, *Theophrastus of Eresus. Commentary Volume 6.1: Sources on Ethics* (Leiden, 2011), 655–6 have doubted whether this is relevant for this purpose. I have further argued (n. 11 above) that neither 1154b12–15 nor the other passages of 7.14 seem levelled against UPT.

¹³ 1152b31–2, 1153a4–7, 1153a32–3, 1154a28–b1, 1173b13–15.

¹⁴ According to Socrates, people commit this mistake because they do not know what true and pure pleasure is, but misunderstand the transition from pain to the neutral state as being from the neutral state to pleasure (*Resp.* 586a–c). For this argument in Plato, see e.g. M. Erginel, 'Inconsistency and ambiguity in *Republic* IX', *CQ* 61 (2011), 493–520; J. Warren, 'Socrates and the patients: *Republic* IX 583c–585a', *Phronesis* 56 (2011), 113–37; D. Wolfsdorf, 'Pleasure and truth in *Republic* 9', *CQ* 63 (2013), 110–38.

disposition. According to his diagnosis, it is a flawed nature¹⁵ rather than intellectual incompetence that is chiefly responsible for the vicious circle of persistent oscillation between (bodily) pleasure and pain in those who are eager to enjoy pleasure. This mechanism is felicitously described by Aubry as ‘the quest for genesis for genesis’ sake, or intensity for intensity’s sake, proceed[ing] from an inability to enjoy other pleasures’.¹⁶

In Aristotle’s account, the neutral state—which, by definition, is deprived of any hedonic value—can be paradoxically regarded as painful by many people owing to their flawed constitution (διὰ τὴν φύσιν). Obviously, he is speaking of an *abnormal* situation, which is *not* the situation addressed by the *physiologoi*, the proponents of UPT. For they argue that animals feel pain even in their *natural* state—the ordinary disposition of a living being (or one of its organs) in which its proper function can be freely realized when required. Still, both Aristotle and the *physiologoi* seem to hold that being in a particular state for a long time can lead to an effect of habituation, which causes the experience of that state to be felt differently—in this case, with a decreased hedonic intensity. Just as the neutral state, according to Aristotle, can be experienced as painful by those who have become accustomed to sensual pleasures, people, for the *physiologoi*, are not always aware of being in pain because they have habituated themselves to its persistent presence. From this perspective, Aristotle needs their concept of ‘hedonic adaptation’ because both agree that habituation alters our subjective feeling of the pleasure/pain spectrum. Nevertheless, his ensuing discussion of the emergence of indulgent people shows that the same process can, or even more often does, lead to an oversensitive state rather than diminished sensitivity (1154b10–16).

As Aubry (n. 5), 247 points out, from the beginning of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 and until the *physiologoi* testimony, the subjects in question change from ‘some people’ (τινές, 1154b4) via ‘many people’ (πολλοίς, 1154b6) to ‘animals in general’ (τὸ ζῷον, 1154b7). In light of the reasoning of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 as a whole, UPT must lend reinforcement to Aristotle’s naturalistic story about hedonic error. For if all living states are invariably penetrated by pain (as the *physiologoi* hold, cf. **ἀεὶ** γὰρ πονεῖ τὸ ζῷον, 1154b7), then pain must be inevitably experienced by those who have been in the unnatural state, a pathological condition characterized by oversensitivity to internal or external stimuli.¹⁷ This is an argument a fortiori by which Aristotle strengthens his moderate thesis through a dialectical use of UPT, an extreme doctrine held by the *physiologoi*. According to this interpretation, Aristotle reminds his audience that the thesis—that an animal is constantly toiling—is *also* claimed by the *physiologoi* not because it is a slogan Aristotle himself endorses¹⁸ but because the thesis of the *physiologoi* bolsters the weaker thesis that pain can be involved in the experience of those who are actually in the neutral state.

3

If my interpretation is on the right track, one might ask whether Aristotle’s argument is hazardous given that he seems to use a more controversial thesis to support a less

¹⁵ The ‘nature’ here should be broadly understood, as the opening of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 tells us (1154a32–4), as comprising inborn constitutions (ἐκ γένετης) and dispositions from habituation (δι’ ἔθος).

¹⁶ Aubry (n. 5), 247.

¹⁷ οἱ δὲ μελαγχολικοὶ τὴν φύσιν δεόνται **ἀεὶ** ἰατρείας, 1154b11–12; καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα δακνόμενον **διατελεῖ** διὰ τὴν κράσιν, καὶ **ἀεὶ** ἐν ὀρέξει σφοδρᾶ εἰσίν, 1154b12–13.

¹⁸ No matter whether it means that the animal is *always* in pain or in toil, I cannot find any evidence in Aristotle’s extant works which indicates that he would espouse this description.

controversial one. Formally considered, I concede that his reasoning is of this type, but I do not find its substance intolerable, especially if we pay attention to the very context in which this episode is embedded. For although Aristotle here wants to gain further support from the *physiologoi*, his explanation of the hedonic mistake is not built on their theory. Moreover, as mentioned, the central issue of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 is the nature of bodily pleasures (1154a8). The doctor Eryximachus in Plato's *Symposium* already assigns a key function to the art of medicine: guiding humans to live a good life by controlling bodily pleasure and desire (*Symp.* 187e1–6). Since the *physiologoi* were traditionally believed to be experts on the body,¹⁹ and since Aristotle himself here tries to naturalize the way in which the hedonic mistakes take place, it is understandable for him to address the view of the *physiologoi* and even to adduce them as 'assistants' under this circumstance to his advantage. It thus cannot be coincidental that in *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 the *physiologoi*, the experts of physical constitutions and temperament, are invoked as witnesses (1154b7–9) immediately after Aristotle underlines the role of the flawed constitution (διὰ τὴν φύσιν) for the generation of hedonic error (1154b6).²⁰

This dialectical usage of the *physiologoi* is not exceptional in Aristotle. In discussing the akratic person—a type whose reason is temporarily driven out by the appetite for pleasure—he does not hesitate in declaring that we should consult the *physiologoi* for curing such a character flaw, just as we consult them when people are drunk or asleep (7.3, 1147b6–9).²¹ What we encounter in *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 is a similar scenario, though the subject matter shifts from the shaping of *akrasia* to the shaping of a more serious character flaw: indulgence (cf. ἀκόλαστοι, 1154b15). Aristotle points out that the young (ἐν μὲν τῇ νεότητι) and the melancholic (1154b11) are more disposed to pursue intense (physical) pleasure because their constitutions—either owing to their nature or owing to their pathological condition—are so sensitive to pain that they are naturally driven to seek to get rid of such disturbance (1154b9–15). Yet since pain must follow (or is necessarily blended with) pleasure of this kind, they would enter a vicious circle and eventually experience even more pain. As a well-established analogy in the Aristotelian tradition, being young is here compared to the state of being drunk. Both states experience excessive bodily heat, which leads people in either state to being easily subjected to intense desire.²² The melancholic face a similar problem.²³ Owing to the defective *mixture* (διὰ τὴν κρᾶσιν, 1154b12–13) in their bodies²⁴—specifically, an

¹⁹ Aristotle does not deny their expertise, even if he thinks that many of their concrete explanations are mistaken or insufficient: *Ph.* 213b1–2; *Cael.* 298b29–32; *Part. an.* 641a7–8; *Gen. an.* 763b31–2, 769a5–8; *Metaph.* 988b27–30; *Eth. Nic.* 1147b9.

²⁰ Aristotle takes the mastery of medical art to be a part of natural research (*Sen.* 436a17–21; *Resp.* 480b21–30); P.J. van der Eijk, 'Aristotle on "distinguished physicians" and on the medical significance of dreams', in H.F.J. Horstmanshoff et al. (edd.), *Ancient Medicine in its Socio-Cultural Context* (Leiden, 1995), 447–59. It is interesting to see that the author of [Pr.] 30.1 also appeals to medical doctors, a kind of *physiologoi*, in his explanation of the nature of melancholics (953b24–5).

²¹ For the role of the *physiologoi* in Aristotle's account of *akrasia*, see Francis (n. 6); P.J. van der Eijk and S. Francis, 'Aristoteles, Aristotelismus, und antike Medizin', in C. Brockmann et al. (edd.), *Antike Medizin im Schnittpunkt von Geistes- und Naturwissenschaften* (Berlin, 2009), 226–33.

²² Arist. *Rh.* 1389a4–9; [Pr.] 953b21–3, 954b35–955a22; cf. Pl. *Leg.* 653d, 664e.

²³ For the close affinity between being drunk and the melancholic, see [Pr.] 953b27 ὁμοια ὁ τε οἶνος καὶ ἡ κρᾶσις [sc. the melancholic mixture], 953b30–3 καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὁ τε οἶνος ἀφροδισιαστικοὺς ἀπεργάζεται, καὶ ὀρθῶς Διόνυσος καὶ Ἀφροδίτη λέγονται μετ' ἀλλήλων εἶναι, καὶ οἱ μελαγχολικοὶ οἱ πλεῖστοι λάγνοι εἰσὶν; also 953a34–b14, 953b36–8, 954a4–6, 955a30–5; *Insomn.* 461a23–5.

²⁴ Cf. [Pr.] 953a29–30, 954a12–13, 954b33–4.

excess of black bile—their constitution is unstable (διὰ τὸ μεταβλητικόν, *Div. somn.* 464a33–b1), being imbued with violent and quick motions.²⁵ Their imperfect temperament makes them sensitive (or oversensitive) to the series of motions in their bodies so that their behaviour is easily often driven or—in Aristotle’s term—‘bitten’ (δακνόμενον, 1154b12) by the stubborn desires stimulated by these motions.²⁶ From this perspective, they can be regarded as being in a state of constant suffering and pain, so that—as Aristotle claims—they constantly need medical treatment (ιατρείας, 1154b12, cf. 1152a28). It is clear that by adducing these two medically coloured examples, Aristotle does not deviate from his initial concern with the puzzle of physical pleasures—the issue raised at the beginning of, and going through, *Eth. Nic.* 7.14. The ethical implication of his naturalistic analysis is made explicit at the end of this passage, where Aristotle establishes a causal connection between the indulgent on the one hand and the young and the melancholic on the other (also see 1148a20–2). This cannot lead to the conclusion that all indulgent people come to be indulgent in this way, but is sufficient to show that an ethical flaw can be generated from a physiological defect through a process of habituation by fixing and internalizing such a constitution.²⁷

The prevalence of medical elements in this account suggests that the whole passage (1154b9–20) is probably inspired by, and responding to, natural philosophers and medical writers who theorized on the nature of the body.²⁸ That likely includes the group he had just mentioned, namely the *physiologoi*, who espouse UPT. If so, Aristotle’s appeal to them not only aims to explain many people’s paradoxical experience of feeling pain in the neutral state but also helps develop his own naturalistic account for the formation of the indulgent type.²⁹ The distinction between the *physiologoi* and Aristotle lies in that the former would take pain-involvement as inevitable for experiencing pleasure, while for the latter this phenomenon merely touches upon pleasures of the accidental type.

4

According to the *physiologoi*, pain is always involved in animals’ lives, including the pleasure they enjoy. Despite a disturbing element, it seems well suited to help construct a unified account for two distinctive features of animal life: (a) Why do animals seem by nature always disposed to pursue bodily pleasure? (b) Why can animals not enjoy the activity they are enjoying forever? The reason, in accordance with their UPT, is that animals are always—whether they are aware of it or not—in pain, even in a potential or slight form, so that they are driven to seek a cure in counterbalancing the pain by means of pleasure (cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1154b9–30). But the co-occurring pain, whether it is

²⁵ *Div. Somn.* 464a32, 464b1, 464b4, cf. also 463b17.

²⁶ For the melancholic in Aristotle, see P.J. van der Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2005), chs. 5, 8; M. Leunissen, *From Natural Character to Moral Virtue in Aristotle* (Oxford, 2017), 39–48.

²⁷ διὰ ταῦτα ἀκόλαστοι καὶ φαῦλοι γίνονται, 1154b14–15. A similar shift—from the melancholic to various character traits—is described in [*Pr.*] 30.1, 954a28–34. In particular, we see that some of the melancholic become ‘erotic and easily moved to anger and desire’ (954a32–3, my translation).

²⁸ τὰ ἰατρῶντα, ἰατρῶεσθαί, 1154b18; ὑγιούς, 1154b19.

²⁹ This, on my interpretation, supplements Leunissen’s systematic reconstruction of the physiological roots of Aristotle’s ethics (n. 26 above), in which *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 is almost completely neglected.

distinct or in the background, is not just motivational but also destructive, so that the overall experience can easily exceed the limits, and thus urges for cessation or shift. Whether or not the *physiologi* themselves develop their conviction in this direction, it easily fits into the main concern and the train of thought of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14. Although in Aristotle's eyes what the *physiologi* say confuses the bad case with the normal case, their story helps explain the power of bodily pleasures, especially for those whose natural constitution or acquired disposition is defective. Their insight is thus adopted by Aristotle to account for how moral flaws can be generated from natural flaws if the latter fail to be rectified by good habituation.

For the reasons mentioned, *contra* Aspasius and his followers, the *physiologi* cannot be invoked as Aristotle's target of criticism here. More importantly, it is also misguided to think that at *Eth. Nic.* 1154b5–15 'Aristotle directly acknowledges the evidence of the *physiologi*' (Francis [n. 6], 157) and 'makes it clear that all living beings undergo internal movements, not just those who suffer by some extreme' (162). Nor should the agenda of *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 be characterized as the 'pain of the living', proposed by the title of Aubry's excellent commentary on this chapter. Although she reasonably doubts whether Aristotle is wholeheartedly committed to the view of the *physiologi*, she still attributes to Aristotle an overly pessimistic picture of human existence according to which 'in man, *the normal is pathological*, and that human nature is constitutionally unbalanced' (Aubry [n. 5], 238, emphasis mine).

But since UPT for Aristotle cannot be generalized but applies only to abnormal yet widely attested cases, *Eth. Nic.* 7.14 is mainly concerned neither with the Heraclitean-flux nature of the animal body (*contra* Francis [n. 6]) nor with a 'tragic conception of sense' (*contra* Romeyer-Dherbey)³⁰ or with the tragedy of mortal life (*contra* Aubry [n. 5]). To an extent, Aristotle would agree with the *physiologi* that a living animal cannot always live its life spontaneously. Animals are self-movers only in a limited sense, susceptible to various external or material constraints (*Ph.* 253a7–21, 259b1–20). They must *actively* use their faculties, and, of course, these activities cannot go on ceaselessly.³¹ However, this is far from saying that suffering or pain is thus always latent in the normal activities of living animals. No matter whether the *physiologi* actually draw any pessimistic conclusion on animal life, in Aristotle's eyes they confuse the *limitation* of the living with the *misfortune* of the living, thus threatening the hedonic value he integrates into good as well as ordinary life.

It is not unusual for Aristotle to utilize his theoretical opponents to his own advantage in his dialogues with his predecessors and contemporaries. Just as in *Eth. Nic.* 7.12–13, his *energeia*-based account takes in rather than replaces the traditional *genesis*-based accounts, which still preserve a certain explanatory power for what Aristotle calls pleasure *per accidens*. In *Eth. Nic.* 7.14, his approach indicates that, although the *physiologi* succumb to the temptation of overgeneralizing their conviction, there are some elements of truth in it that are instructive for understanding the bad case—namely, why many people tend to indulge easily in bodily pleasures. A close parallel can also be attested in Theophrastus' treatment of Anaxagoras, who holds a similar view to UPT, yet limits its scope to sense perception (*DS* 29 = 59A92 DK; Aët. 4.9.16).³² Despite substantial

³⁰ G. Romeyer-Dherbey, 'Une conception tragique du sentir: Anaxagore, fragments A 92, 94 DK', in G. Romeyer-Dherbey, *La parole archaïque* (Paris, 1999), 14–39.

³¹ 1175a3–5, *Somn.* 454a25–34.

³² In Cheng (n. 11), I have argued that Anaxagoras cannot be the person behind the *physiologi* in *Eth. Nic.* 7.14. For a detailed discussion of Theophrastus' criticism of Anaxagoras, see W. Cheng,

disagreement with this thesis, Theophrastus does not hesitate about invoking it in criticizing Empedocles' failure to do justice to pain experiences that are possibly involved in sense perception:

[W]hen we are perceiving, we *often* (πολλάκις) suffer pain in the very act of perception—indeed, Anaxagoras declares, we *always* (ἀεί) do (DS 17.1–2).³³

Just as Aristotle tries to substantiate a moderate thesis (that is, those whose natures are corrupted take the neutral state as painful) via the radical UPT of the *physiologoi*, Theophrastus, in the same manner, finds fault with Empedocles by appealing to the frequent involvement of pain in perception in terms of Anaxagoras' radical thesis that pain is *constantly* involved in perception. But, as in the case of Aristotle, a dialectical adoption should not be confused with a doctrinal commitment.

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“‘Every perception is accompanied by pain!’: Theophrastus’ criticism of Anaxagoras’, *JHP* (forthcoming).

³³ Translated by G.M. Stratton, *Theophrastus and the Greek Physiological Psychology before Aristotle* (London and New York, 1917).