

Draft: comments welcome  
please do not circulate  
© Susan Sauvé Meyer  
April 2013

## Affect and Impulse in the Stoic doctrine of the Passions

One of the most famous doctrines of the Ancient Stoics is that virtue requires the extirpation of the "passions" (*pathe*).<sup>1</sup> By *pathe* they have in mind such things as anger, fear, love, pity, spite, and hate, which they classify into four genera:<sup>2</sup>

- **Appetite** (*epithumia*) whose species include anger, yearning, love, hatred, etc.;
- **Fear** (*phobos*) whose species include anxiety, dread;
- **Delight** (*hedone*) whose species include spite and satisfaction;
- **Distress** (*lupe*) whose species include pity and envy.

It is now generally recognized that the doctrine of *apatheia* (freedom from passion) does not advocate a life without emotion or affect, for the Stoics allow that the wise person will experience certain preliminaries to passions (instinctive affective responses which, in their view, fall below the cognitive threshold to be classified as genuine passions),<sup>3</sup> as well as three kinds of

---

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *On Moral Ends* 3.35; DL 7.117

<sup>2</sup> Andronicus, *On the Passions*; Stobaeus, *Eclogae* 2.7.10-10d (Wachsmuth (=W) 2.88-92; Pomeroy 1999); Cicero *TD* 3.22-5, 4.11-22; DL 7.111-116. My citations of the epitome of stoic ethics in Stobaeus attributed to Arius Didymus will be by chapter in Wachsmuth (W), and by page and line number in Pomeroy's 1999 edition of the epitome (P).

<sup>3</sup> Seneca Ir. 2.1.4; Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 19.1; Cic *TD* 3.83. While it has been argued that this doctrine is a development by later Stoic writers (Sorabji 2000, pp. 70-75, cf. Inwood 1985, pp. 175-81), Graver 2007, pp. 85-108 makes an effective case for its origins in early Stoicism.

“good feelings” (*eupatheiai*) which are corrected versions of the passions: instead of appetite (*epithumia*) the sage will have “wish” (*boulesis*), instead of fear, “caution” (*eulabeia*), and instead of delight (*hedone*), “joy” (*chara*). Thus the category of emotion as we tend to understand it today includes a wide range of affective phenomena that the Stoics find unobjectionable (the *propathesai*) or even appropriate (the *eupatheiai*).

The question this paper addresses is whether all the phenomena encompassed by these three categories are affective (i.e. feelings). I will make this question more precise as I proceed, but to begin with, by “affective” I mean phenomenal states that are experienced as internal. For example, as Galen reports Chrysippus, we experience the *pathe* as movements of the mind occurring in the cardiac region:

People in general come to the view that our commanding-faculty is in the heart through their awareness, as it were, of the passions that affect the mind (τῶν κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν παθῶν) happening to them in the chest and especially in the region where the heart is placed. This is so particularly in the case of distress, fear, anger and above all excitement (ἐπὶ τῶν λυπῶν καὶ τῶν φόβων καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ὀργῆς καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ θυμοῦ).

(Galen, *Plac.* 3.1.25; trans. Long & Sedley 65H).

An affective response, so construed, may be understood as an internal activity of the soul, in contrast with behaviour whose manifestation is external (e.g. walking, running, signing a cheque). Thus the Stoic spokesperson in Cicero’s *De Finibus* contrasts fear, grief, and appetite (all of

them *pathe*) from treason, temple robbery, and domestic violence (*Fin* 3.32).<sup>4</sup>

The view I aim to resist is a tendency among contemporary interpreters to suppose that only passions in the genera delight and distress are affective responses, while those in the genus appetite and the genus fear are essentially impulses to action and only incidentally, if at all, affective responses. This is the view for example of Brad Inwood and Tad Brennan.<sup>5</sup> I follow Margaret Graver 2007 in rejecting it. My discussion complements Graver's by identifying the motivation for the restricted view, and displaying its problematic implications in the context of the Stoic theory of impulse (*hormê*).<sup>6</sup>

My focus will be on the psychological category that comprises the *pathe* and the *eupatheiai*. The Stoics define the *pathe* and *eupatheiai* as respectively, irrational (*alogon*) and reasonable (*eulogon*) instances of the following four kinds of psychic motion (*kineseis*) (**Text 7**):<sup>8</sup>

- Reaching (*orexis*) in response a prospective apparent good;
- Shrinking away (*ekklisis*) in response to a prospective apparent evil;
- Swelling (*eparsis*)<sup>9</sup> in response to a present apparent good;
- Contraction (*sustole*) in response to a present apparent evil.

It will be convenient in what follows to refer to this quartet of motions as the four *pathetic motions* of the soul ('pathetic' for the common root of *pathe*

---

<sup>4</sup> cited by Inwood 1985: 100 n 267 as evidence for a distinction between internal and external activities of the soul.

<sup>5</sup> see note 11.

<sup>6</sup> Brennan 2005: as impulses, *pathe* have to be causes of action. thus qua impulses they are not feelings but causes of behaviour.

<sup>8</sup> Arius, Epitome ch 10b/ W 2.90/ P 58.17-31; Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.12-14; DL 7.113; Andronicus, *Peri Path* 6 /SVF 3.432; Galen provides evidence that the terminology goes back to Chrysippus: SVF 3.463

<sup>9</sup> alt: *diachusis* (Plutarch, de Virt. Mor. 449d/ SVF 3.468)

and *eupatheiai*). I take all four pathetic motions to be kinds of affective response: feelings of pleasure, distress, attraction and revulsion directed at intentional objects (content).

Others, however, construe only the swellings and contractions as affective responses, and take "reaching" (*orexis*) and "shrinking away" (*ekklisis*) to be behavioural impulses. More precisely, they construe *orexis* as an impulse to behaviour that is aimed at securing the object of *orexis*, while *ekklisis* is an impulse to behaviour aimed at escaping the object of *ekklisis*. For example, the temple robber's *orexis* for wealth (*epithumia*) is the psychological cause of his breaking into the temple. In another example, the *ekklisis* of the soul that is my fear (*phobos*) of being bitten by a dog is essentially a cause of evasive action (in more Stoic terminology, it is an impulse to run away).

Let us call this the restricted view. While its proponents do not deny that *orexis* and *ekklisis* may in some instances have a definite affective colouring, the feature of their view that I am concerned to resist is the thesis that *orexis* and *ekklisis* are essentially impulses to behaviour distinct from, or in addition to, the psychic motions of reaching and shrinking.<sup>11 12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> That only the expansions and contractions are affective is articulated explicitly by Inwood 1985: 144-7. Brennan implicitly: e.g. Brennan 1998 who when mentioning the "affective" side of emotions, invokes only "elations" and "depressions" or "shocks, bites, frissons, ... internal thrilling and chilling..." (p. 30); Brennan too takes the *pathe* to be causes of behaviour (essentially); this is what calling them impulses involves; similarly Lloyd (1978) writes as if *sustole* and *eparsis* alone are affective. Cooper 2005 by contrast, emphasizes the affective nature of all four pathetic movements, although he too adheres to the view, which I shall argue underlies Inwood's, that *orexis* and *ekklisis* are impulses to bodily behavior, while *sustole* and *eparsis* are affective responses to the success or failure of those endeavors (e.g. 178, 16-7). Such a view might appear to be expressed by the Roman Stoic Epictetus (Diss. 3.2.14, which uses the term "pathos" for the contractions and expansions that result from achieving or frustrating the goals of *orexis* and *ekklisis*; but the older Stoics clearly considered *orexeis* and *ekkliseis* to be among the *pathe*).

The restricted view is hard to motivate by invoking the species of passions and good feelings identified by the Stoics, since the species of psychic *ekklisis* ("shrinking away") include anxiety and dread (both *pathe*) as well as shame and reverence (*eupatheiai*)<sup>13</sup> while the species of *orexis* include the anger<sup>14</sup>, yearning, love, hatred.<sup>15</sup> Nor does it sit well with the report in Stobaeus that every pathos is a "fluttering" (*ptoia*) (2.7.10; P56.5). However, it may seem to be supported by a distinction that the Stoics (or at least some Stoics) made between primary and secondary passions.

#### *Primary and secondary passions*

In chapter 10 of the Epitome of Stoic Ethics in Stobaeus we read:

##### **Text 5**

Some passions are primary (*prota*) and fundamental (archega), while others have reference to these. Appetite and fear lead the way (*prohegeisthai*), the former towards the apparently good (*pros ton phainomenon agathon*), the latter towards the apparently evil (*pros ton phainomenon kakon*). Delight and distress come after them (*epigignesthai*): delight whenever we obtain that for which we had an appetite or escape from that which we feared; distress whenever we fail to get that for which we had an appetite or encounter that which we feared. (Stob. 2.7.10/W2.88-89/ P56.7-18; trans Pomeroy, slightly altered)

Distress and Delight, we are told, "comes as a result of" *epigignesthai* upon Fear and Appetite respectively. (This is in keeping with the Stoics use of cognate terminology to reject Epicurean cradle argument: pleasure is not

---

<sup>12</sup> Inwood 1985: 297 n 85 (cf. 146-155) – although he concedes that Arius' report at Stob. Ecl. 2.90 does attribute an affective aspect to fear (for it says that fear involves the "freshness" (*to prosphaton*) which we are told, a page earlier in the same account by Arius, means "stimulative of an irrational contraction or expansion" 2.89.2-3). This is likely reflecting the influence of a later Stoic, Inwood proposes (n. 85).

<sup>13</sup> Andronicus, *Peri Path* / SVF 3.41, DL 7.115.

<sup>14</sup> anger as boiling of cardiac heat (SVF 2.878)

<sup>15</sup> Brennan 2004: 92 notes the affective connotation of these the species *pathos* terms.

the object of our initial natural impulse, but a consequence (*epigennema*) of securing that object (DL 7.86). Similarly at DL 7.94 the *eupatheiai* joy (*chara*) and cheerfulness (*euphrosune*) are said to be “results” (*epigennemata*) of virtue.)

In particular, we are told that distress and delight are the consequences of getting (or missing out on) the objects of appetite and fear. These objects, here described in suspiciously Peripatetic vocabulary, as “the apparent good” and the “apparent evil” are what the Stoics typically classify as the preferred and dispreferred indifferents (health, wealth, etc. and their opposites). We may illustrate the dependence between primary and secondary passions in the case of the temple robber, who has an *epithumia* for wealth, and thus experiences delight upon securing it. However this construal falls short of establishing that the *epithumia* for wealth is (essentially) an impulse to action (e.g. temple robbing) whose goal is securing wealth—as opposed to being a feeling of attraction to or yearning for wealth. We may suppose the temple robber would be equally delighted to inherit the wealth, but in that case too the delight would be explained by and depend upon the appetite. The claim of priority here leaves it open that *epithumia* and *phobos* might simply be feelings of attraction and revulsion.

#### *The objective, content, and terminus of an impulse*

One might think the stronger, restrictive, interpretation is licensed by a different feature of this passage, the statement that appetite “leads the way” (*prohegeisthai*) towards (pros) the apparent good. Does this mean that

appetite issues in behaviour directed at securing the apparent good? Such is the conception of *horme* and *aphorme* in chapter 7 of the *Epitome*, where we are told that *horme* is *epi* a preferred indifferent and an *aphorme* is an impulse away from *apo* a dispreferred indifferent.<sup>16</sup>

They say that some of the indifferents are stimulative of impulse, others of repulsion, others of neither impulse nor repulsion. So whatever things we have said to be in accord with nature are stimulative of impulse; and whatever we have said to be contrary to nature are stimulative of repulsion. things which are neither are not stimulative of either impulse or repulsion, such as having an odd number of hairs on one's head (Ch. 7c; cf 7)

Those preferred indifferents are

**Text 1**

stimulative of an impulse towards themselves (*epi' heauta*) or toward the laying hold of themselves (*epi to antechesthai autôn*), such as health, good perception lack of pain, and the beauty of the body...(7e)

We may refer to these targeted preferred indifferent as an impulse's "objective" and ask whether, here in chapter 10, appetite's orientation *pros* the apparent good an instance of the generic relation between the impulse of ch. 7 and its objective. The answer might appear to be yes if we consider only the case of appetite, but is obviously inadequate as soon as we apply it to the case of fear, which is *pros to phainomenon kakon*. For that would make fear an impulse to pursue an apparent evil—but the hypothesis under consideration is that it is, quite the contrary, an impulse to avoid it!

The best way to make sense of the claim that fear is *pros to phainomenon kakon*, is to take apparent evil is its intentional object or content. "Lead the way" (*prohegeisthai*) here is to be understood as a claim

---

<sup>16</sup> Stob. 2.7.7 /P42.18); 2.7.7c /P46.20.

of explanatory priority (not a claim of behavioural direction towards an objective). Fear is directed at (pros) what one thinks bad and in prospect. It is a feeling of aversion to its object, and by parity of reasoning an appetite is a feeling of attraction to its object. So construed, *orexis* and *ekklisis* are feelings/ psychic motions in just the same way that *sustole* and *eparsis* are. Pros here introduces the content of the pathos, not its objective.

Thus this chapter provides no support for taking *epithumia* to be an impulse to bring about the object of desire, or fear to be an impulse to evasive action; rather it supports the construal of these pathos along the same lines as delight and distress: as affective states directed at certain contents.

### *Orexis as Desire?*

It may seem, simply from the names for the four pathetic motions, that only "contraction" and "expansion" of the soul are affective.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, *orexis* is typically translated by 'desire' or 'pursuit' (for *orexis*) and *ekklisis* by 'avoidance'.<sup>22</sup> However, construed non-metaphorically, *orexis* means 'reaching' (from *orego*, to reach or stretch out, which has a metaphorical meaning of "yearning")<sup>23</sup> and *ekklisis* means 'leaning away' (from *ek-klino*). Thus there is no linguistic barrier to construing as an *orexis*, or "reaching" of the soul, my yearning for a walk on the beach even though it is a feeling, rather than an impulse to perambulate on the sand. Nor do linguistic

---

<sup>21</sup> As noted by Lloyd 1978, *eparsis* and *diachusis/ eparsis* are ordinary words for emotional arousal.

<sup>22</sup> e.g. Pomeroy 59. Inwood, Brennan.

<sup>23</sup> LSJ sv. II 2 b.



considerations forbid us to construe the soul's *ekklisis* (shrinking away from) the expected agony of a scheduled root canal as a feeling of aversion to undergoing the procedure.

To be sure, Aristotle uses the term *orexis* for the genus of which *epithumia* and *boulesis* are species, and, following the Platonic tripartition of the soul, he construes these *orexeis* as impulses that (unless impeded) issue in action or purposive bodily movement.<sup>24</sup> It is thus not unreasonable to translate *orexis* as 'desire' in Aristotelian texts. But we should be wary of supposing that this is what the Stoics mean by an *orexis* of the soul,<sup>25</sup> for they are emphatic that *orexis* is not the genus of the psychic impulses of a rational agent; rather, they say, it is one species of such impulse.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, and most significantly for the present question, all the *pathe* are (rational) impulse on the Stoic view (Stob. 2.7.9b; DL 7.110); thus distress and delight are no less impulses than *epithumia* and *phobos*. So the fact *orexis* and *ekklisis* are impulses cannot be a reason to suppose that they are causes of behaviour while *sustole* and *eparsis* are affective responses.

It is thus in the context of the Stoic doctrine of impulse that we must address our question about the affective status of the *pathe*.

### *The Stoic Doctrine of Impulse*<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Need to discuss/mention Pearson's new book on desire in Aristotle.

<sup>25</sup> As Inwood notes (1985: 113), the Stoics, in their doctrine of impulse, deliberately redefine familiar Aristotelian terms. *Orexis* is clearly one such term, although Inwood's analysis (as far as I can tell) takes it to be continuous with Aristotle's usage.

<sup>26</sup> Arius apud Stob ch 9, Pomeroy 52.32-53.10.

<sup>27</sup> Here I am greatly indebted to Inwood 1985, although disagreeing with him on several points.

Impulse (*hormê*) is the faculty that, along with sensation, distinguishes animals from plants (and soul strictly speaking from *phusis*).<sup>28</sup> It belongs to the soul's leading part (*hegemonikon*), which is located in the area around the heart (Galen HPP 3.1.25/ LS 65 H).

The first context in which impulse is invoked in the Epitome in Stobaeus is in the account of preferred and dispreferred indifferents that we have already considered:

*[quoted above]*

They say that some of the indifferents are stimulative of impulse, others of repulsion, others of neither impulse nor repulsion. So whatever things we have said to be in accord with nature are stimulative of impulse; and whatever we have said to be contrary to nature are stimulative of repulsion. (Stob. Ecl. 2.7.7c; trans Pomeroy; cf. ch 7)

Later, the genus and species of impulse are demarcated as follows in the section of the Epitome that explicitly addresses the topic of impulse:

**[Text 2]**

In genus, impulse is a motion (*phora*) of the soul towards something (*epi ti*)... You would rightly define rational impulse (*logike horme*) if you said it was a motion of the mind toward something in the field of action (ἐπί τι τῶν ἐν τῷ πράττειν). Opposed to this is repulsion (*aphorme*) a motion <of the mind away from something (ἀπό τινος )...> (Stob. 2.7.9 (P52.310-53.6); trans. & text by Pomeroy)

The contrast between *horme* and *aphorme* recalls ch 7 (discussed above).

One might therefore suppose that the "thing" (*ti*) that the impulse is "towards" (*epi*) is the preferred indifferent that "stimulates" the impulse as in ch. 7. However, a different construal of the object of "epi" is indicated

---

<sup>28</sup> Origin, *De Princ.* 3.1.2-3 (LS 53A), Hierocles (LS 53B), Philo, *Alleg.* 1.30 (LS 53P). On faculties vs. parts of the soul, see Inwood 1985 \_\_\_\_.

shortly afterwards in the exposition, where we are told that impulses are assents:

**Text 3:**

All impulses are assents and practical impulses also include that which is stimulative. At the same time there are assents “for” things (ἄλλων μὲν εἶναι συγκαταθέσεις) and impulses are “toward” something else (ἐπ’ ἄλλο); assents are “for” [*dative*] certain propositions, while impulses are “toward” (*epi*) predicates, included somehow in the propositions for which there is assent. (Ch. 9b)

Further detail from chapter 9 and from Seneca *Ep.* 113 indicate that the proposition assented to is of the form “\_\_\_\_\_ is appropriate” where the blank is filled by a predicate such as “walking”. The impulse “toward” (*epi*) walking is<sup>29</sup> the assent to the proposition that walking is appropriate (*kathekon*). Thus the predicate that the impulse is towards (*epi*) specifies a type of action or behaviour (walking, answering). We may call this object of ‘*epi*’ the “terminus” of the impulse, and call the preferred indifferent that impulse is *epi* in chapter 7 as the impulse’s “objective”. The terminus is an action, while the objective is a preferred indifferent that the action is directed at securing. The aroma of dinner may stimulate in me a *horme* that is towards the meal (its objective), but its terminus (specified in the predicate), is walking (or walking to the table).

It is tempting to construe the relation between the impulse (which is a motion of the soul) and its terminus (e.g. walking) as that of cause to effect. Thus Brennan and Inwood.<sup>30</sup> However it is not obvious that Chrysippus

---

<sup>29</sup> or is due to—in other contexts, as in ch 10, the causes of the *pathe* are the opinions, and hence the assents....

<sup>30</sup> As Brennan puts it, impulse is the mental event that immediately eventuates in intentional actions (2005:91). Similarly Inwood 1985, but with more nuance.

distinguishes the impulse from its terminus a such a way as to allow for this construal. To be sure, he does distinguish between the impulse, on the one hand, and the "motion (kinesis) of the legs", on the other, when he claims that the latter is proportionate the impulse in the case of walking, but exceeds it in the case of running

**Text 9**

When someone walks in accordance with his impulse, the movement of his legs is not excessive but commensurate with the impulse, so that he can stop or change whenever he wants to. But when people run in accordance with their impulse, this sort of thing no longer happens. The movement of their legs exceeds their impulse, so that they are carried away and unable to change obediently, as soon as they have started to do so. (Galen, Plac. 4.2.15-1 (LS 65J6-7; trans LS)

Thus we may distinguish between (a) the impulse narrowly construed (as the pneumatic motion that moves the non-pneumatic bodily parts), and (b) the bodily (non-pneumatic) motion that it causes. However, even in this crucial text, Chrysippus stops short of identifying the motion of the legs with *walking*. Indeed, as Seneca reports (Ep. 113.23), when Chrysippus is pressed to specify what walking is, he identifies it with the commanding faculty of the soul (*hegemonikon*):

**Text 10** Cleanthes and ... Chrysippus did not agree on what walking is. Cleanthes said it was breath extending [sc. diateinein] from the commanding faculty to the feet.<sup>31</sup> Chrysippus that it was the commanding faculty itself. Seneca Ep. 113.23; transl LS 53L)

---

<sup>31</sup> On the "spread" or "flow" of the soul from the hegemonikon in the cardiac region to the limbs (Calcidius/ LS 53G6); on sensation as a flow/stretching (diatenein) from the hegemonikon to the sense organs (Aetius LS 53H3; cf. 53G7; 53K, 53N

Both Cleanthes and Chrysippus are in agreement that walking is (or is a feature of) the *pneuma*, rather than of the bodily parts<sup>32</sup>. Thus it is clear that the Stoics took the action (walking) and the psychic/pneumatic motion to be intimately related.<sup>33</sup>

Thus we should not rule out an alternative hypothesis about the relation between the impulse and its terminus: that walking is not the result or effect of the impulse, but its intentional object. To say that an impulse is “epi” walking is not to say that the impulse causes or issues in walking, but rather that walking is its intentional object. So construed, walking and the impulse to walk are not related as effect to cause, but are two sides of the same coin.

This point is worth making because behind the restrictive interpretation is a tendency to assume that in calling *epithumia* an *orexis*, the Stoics are talking about the impulse side of the coin, rather than about the terminus side. On this view, *orexis* (or *ekklisis*) is a multi-purpose psychic movement or impulse whose terminus can be a wide range of actions specifiable by a wide range of predicates: walking, running, shaving, breaking and entering. For example, the temple robber’s *orexis* for the gold in the sanctuary is the cause of his burgling the temple; it is an *orexis* “to” (*epi*) burgle, analogous to an impulse to walk. But while it is evident that, on Stoic doctrine, the temple robber has an impulse to burgle (since he does in

---

<sup>32</sup> Following Long and Sedley, I take the issue to be whether walking is the activity of that portion of the psychic pneuma strictly identified with the hegemonikon (mind/dianoia) (Chrysippus), or with the activity of the psychic pneuma extending from the hegemonikon to the feet. Thus too Graver 27; by contrast, Brennan takes this passage to describe the *dunamis* of walking (as opposed to the action). cf. Inwood trans & comm. in Seneca: Letters; Strictly speaking, walking would be the *hegemonikon pos echon* (see Menn 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Brennan 2003 takes this to describe walking as a faculty, not an activity.

fact burgle), what reason do we have to suppose that they identify the robber's *orexis* is that impulse?

One might be tempted to reply that otherwise, there is no impulse we can identify as the cause of the burgling (or walking, or...). But this is to assume without warrant that *orexis*, *ekklisis*, *sustole* and *eparsis* are an exhaustive taxonomy of impulses. We have clear evidence that these psychic motions are impulses, but no evidence (I would submit) that any impulse must be an *orexis*, *ekklisis*, *sustole* or *eparsis*. Still, one might persist in asking, what kind of motion is the impulse to burgle (if it is not an *orexis*, *ekklisis*, *sustole* or *eparsis*)? But I don't think the Stoics are concerned to give an answer more precise or informative than to point to the impulse's terminus (burgling).<sup>34</sup> Indeed, on the view I am defending, that is all Chrysippus is doing when he defines the *pathe* in terms of the four pathetic motions. *Orexis*, *ekklisis*, *sustole* and *eparsis*—just like walking running and burgling—are the termini of impulse, rather than impulses for further termini.

We have direct textual warrant that this is how the Stoics construe the psychic expansions and contractions that they identify as distress and delight. The definitions of the *pathe* in the Epitome in Stob. 2.7.10b make it clear that "contracting" and "expanding" are the predicates assented-to as appropriate in the judgments identified with those passions:

---

<sup>34</sup> Inwood and Brennan suppose that *ekloge* is an all-purpose impulse of this sort, to be used by the sage when targeting indifferents for pursuit and avoidance. But on the view I am defending, there is no need to identify a particular kind of impulse to do the work, since the doctrine of impulse is not intended as a taxonomy of the psychological causes of action. The all-purpose/generic description is simply, '*horme*'.

**Text 7**

They say that APPETITE (*epithumia*) is an *orexis* that is disobedient to reason. The cause of this is forming an opinion that something good is approaching and that if that were present we would be getting away fine (*eu apallaxomen*), when the opinion has the unruly <fresh> stimulation <that it is really something *orekton*>.

FEAR (*phobos*) is an *ekklisis* which is disobedient to reason, its cause being forming an opinion that something bad is approaching, when the belief has the fresh stimulation that it is really something worth avoiding (*pheukton*).

DISTRESS (*lupe*) is a contraction (*sustole*) of the soul which is disobedient to reason. The cause of it is forming a fresh opinion that an evil is present, in the face of which it is appropriate <to contract.

DELIGHT (*hedone*) is an elation (*eparsis*) of the soul disobedient to reason. The cause of it is forming a fresh opinion that a good is present, in the face of which it is appropriate> to be elated.  
Stob. 2.7.10b (P 58.17-31); trans Pomeroy slightly modified.

The definitions of distress and delight show that the psychic motions of “swelling” and “contraction” (identified as delight and distress) are the termini of impulse. Like “walking” in the schema of Stob. 2.7.9b, they are activities we engage in because we assent to them as appropriate. They are kinds of intentional activity, not psychological causes of independently specifiable intentional activity.

Thus for two of the four kinds of pathetic motion (*sustole*, *eparsis*), there is relatively straightforward evidence that these pathetic motions are the termini of *horme*, not *hormai epi* further termini. Now is this also the case with *orexis* and *ekklisis*? The restrictive interpretation has to answer no, since it construes these as impulses that are *epe* termini such as running, walking, breaking and entering. That interpretation therefore has to give opposite answers to the question in the case of the two sets of generic

*pathe*: in the case of delight and distress (the admittedly affective impulses) the psychic motions (*sustole* and *eparsis*) are on the terminus side of the coin), while in the case of *epithumia* and *phobos* (the allegedly behavioural *pathe*) the psychic motions *orexis* and *ekklisis* are on the impulse side of the coin). The interpretation I am defending, by contrast, construes *orexis* and *ekklisis*, just like *eparsis* and *sustole*, to be the terminus of the impulse.

Proponents of the restricted interpretation (e.g Inwood) find it significant that it is only in the case of *sustole* and *eparsis* that the psychic motion itself is identified as the terminus of the impulse.<sup>35</sup> That is, we find “it is appropriate to contract” and “it is appropriate to expand” as objects of assent in the definitions of distress and delight, but we do not find “it is appropriate to reach” or “it is appropriate to shrink away from” specified in the definitions of appetite and fear. A defender of the restrictive interpretation might charge that in insisting that the same must be the case for *epithumia* and *phobos*, I am trying to force consistency across the four types, against the clear evidence of the text that these two types of cases are to be construed differently.<sup>36</sup> However, let me note, first of all, that there is no presumption in favour of the restrictive view (that has been the burden of the paper so far); and so far we have seen no evidence in favour of it. While it is clear that the Stoics treat *epithumia* and *phobos* differently from *lupe* and *hedone* (e.g. the former are primary and the latter secondary); the

---

<sup>35</sup> Thus Inwood \_\_\_\_\_. Also “of the soul” is attached to *eparsis* and *sustole*, not to *orexis* and *ekklisis* at least in the definitions in Stob. [check others]

<sup>36</sup> Thus Inwood in correspondence.



question before us is whether they are different in the way the restrictive view supposes.

Let us look at the relevant passage more carefully (ch 10b): What is striking here about the definitions of *epithumia* and *phobos*, in contrast with the definitions of *lupe* and *hedone* that follow immediately, is there is no mention of any *kathekon* judgment. Whereas in the case of the secondary *pathe* we have identified two (false) normative judgments: that the object of the impulse is good (or bad), and that it is appropriate to respond to it by contracting or expanding, here in the case of the primary *pathe* only the first normative judgment is identified, and indeed dwelt upon: that the object of *orexis* is good (and that we would be doing well to have it—*eu apalloxomen*).<sup>37</sup>

But the Stoics are committed to holding that there is a *kathekon*-judgment involved, or expressed, in these primary passions, since they maintain that all the passions are impulses, and that all impulses are assents to impressions about what is *kathekon* (ch 9, 9b). Still, they do not explicitly identify the *kathekon* judgment here (or elsewhere in the parallel passages).<sup>38</sup> Perhaps the connection between judging something good and having *orexis* for it is so close and intimate on the Stoic account that assenting to the one inevitably involves the other. Thus we might construe Cicero's report, in a parallel passage, that "as soon as a person receives an impression of some thing that which he thinks is good, nature itself urges

---

<sup>37</sup> On the two judgments, see Cic. TD 4 (chrysippus vs Cleanthes on therapy); discussion by Graver 2007.

<sup>38</sup> Cic. TD 4.14, Ps.-Andronicus, *Pass.* 1; Galen, *Plac.* 4.2.5-6.

him to reach out after it (*ad id adipiscendum impellit ipsa natura*)" (Cic. TD 4.12, trans. Graver).

Wachsmuth's text (adopted by Pomeroy) does supply us with something quasi-gerundive that could play the role of the *kathekon* judgment (judging that the object of orexis really is *orekton*)—"worthy of orexis". Thus Graver.<sup>39</sup> While I am skeptical that there is in fact a lacuna to be filled here, the soundness of the doctrine behind the textual supplement is supported by chapter 11f which indicates that *orexis* is an attitude towards what is good—so believing X is good and believing it worthy of orexis (*orekton*) go hand in hand:

### **Text 8**

They say that just as what is worth choosing and what must be chosen differ, so too do what is worth reaching for (*orekton*) and what must be reached for (*orekteon*), what is worth wanting and what must be wanted... For good things are worth choosing, and wanting, and reaching for (*orekta*)... They say that we choose what must be chosen, wish for what must be wanted, and reach for what must be reached for (*orektea*)—for choices, reachings (*orexeis*) and wishes are for predicates, as with the impulses. However, we choose, want, and likewise reach to have good things (hence good things are worth choosing, worth wanting and worth reaching for (*orekta*). We choose to have intelligence (*phronesis*)... not by Zeus, to have "being intelligent" (*to phronein*) and "being temperate" (*to sophronein*) which are incorporeals and predicates. (Stob. 2.7.11f/ trans. Pomeroy, slightly altered)

The passage makes a distinction between the *orekton* – a good – and the *orekteon* (a predicate, viz: having the good); for example *phronesis* is an *orekton*, while the articular infinitive "*to phronein*" is *orekteon*. What is salient for our purposes is that neither the *orekton* nor the *orekteon* is the

---

<sup>39</sup> Even Brennan's formalization of the four pathos descriptions in 2005 agrees that oregein is what is assented to as appropriate, although he construes orexis as a cause of behaviour. He must be construing oregein as standing in for pursuit.

behaviour that the restricted view supposes is the terminus of *orexis*. The object of *orexis* is either the good (*the orekton*), or “having the good” (the predicate that is *orekteon*). Thus the temple robber’s *orexis* is directed at wealth (the *orekton*), and may also be said to be “of” (genitive) “having wealth”. The predicate mentioned here (having the good) does not specify a terminus of impulse (unlike the case of Ch. 9b/Text 3), for the predicate does not specify any action or behaviour at all, but rather the condition of having the good. The *orekton* here, what *orexis* is of (genitive), coincides with the *phainomenon agathon* that, in chapter 10, is what *epithumia* is “pros”—it is the content of the passion. This chapter gives no support for the restrictive hypothesis that *orexis* is an impulse *epi* a terminus that is distinct from the psychic motion of *oregein*.

Still, we don’t have direct evidence as to what predicate is assented to as *kathekon* in the assent that is expressed in *orexis*.<sup>40</sup> For more direct evidence as to that predicate, we may return to our original context. In chapter 10a, the section immediately preceding the definitions of the generic passions in Stobaeus (10b), we are given an explanation of how the passions are *alogon* (even though they issue from reason—sc. since they are assents), we are told:

**Text 6**

Those in the grips of passion, even if they know or have been taught that they need not feel pain or be afraid or be involved at all in the passions of the soul, nevertheless do not abandon them...

The picture presented is roughly this: One assents to the appropriateness of having a passion, and thereby has that passion. But if you change your

---

<sup>40</sup> Having-the-good (the specified predicate) is not *kathekon* or para to *kathekon*; it is in the category of value (*axia*) rather than *kathekon*)

assent and thus cease to judge the passion appropriate, you may well continue to experience the passion you originally assented to (in much the same way Chrysippus says the motion of the runner's limbs exceeds the scope of her impulse, so to the impulse that is the passion exceeds the scope of her assent). This is explicitly applied to the case of *phobos*. One who later judges that "*ou dei phobeisthai*" is presumably one who earlier assented to the proposition "*dei phobeisthai*". Thus we have something pretty close to what we are seeking: evidence that the Stoics take the *fear itself to be what is assented to as appropriate* in the assent that is expressed in the impulse (rather than avoidance behaviour, such as running away).<sup>41</sup> The reference to "being involved at all in the passions of the soul" (*holos en tois pathesin einai tes psuches* P 58.13) implies that the same point can be made about *epithumia*: one experiences *epithumia* in virtue of assenting to it as appropriate. Thus we have evidence that, for both of the primary generic passions, *epithumia* and *phobos*, the predicate in the proposition about the appropriate specifies the passion itself; rather than some further unspecified terminus of that impulse.

#### Appendix:

To construe orexis as an affective response to an object perceived as good/desirable, but not an impulse to take steps to secure that desirable object, might appear to run afoul of the Stoics' embrace of the Socratic paradox. (Thus Inwood objects). But once we distinguish between the two

---

<sup>41</sup> on "dei" as an alternative to "kathekei" see Graver 2007.

evaluative propositions assented to in a *pathos* (that X is good, and that it would be appropriate to  $\Phi$ ),<sup>42</sup> we can see that this is not a consequence. Akrasia would be assenting to "it is appropriate to  $\Phi$ " and then failing to  $\phi$ . It is quite another thing to assent to the desirability of X (*wouldn't it be nice to spend the afternoon at the beach?*) but still find inappropriate all available courses of actions that would achieve in X. One might even be in a position where there are no available means to that end. It is an unfortunate position to be in, and one that a Stoic sage would not be in, but it is not akrasia.

---

<sup>42</sup> See Graver 2007 for detailed discussion.

## Bibliography

- Brennan, T. (1998). The Old Stoic Theory of the Emotions. *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy*. J. Sihvola and T. Engberg-Pederson. Dordrecht, Kluwer: 21-70.
- Brennan, T. (2000). "Reservation in Stoic Ethics." *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 82: 149-177.
- Brennan, T. (2005). *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Cooper, J. (2005). "The Emotional Life of the Wise." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 43(Suppl): 176-218.
- Graver, M. (2007). *Stoicism and Emotion*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Inwood, B. (1985). *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Kamtekar, R. (1998). "Aidôs in Epictetus." *Classical Philology* 93: 136-60.
- Kamtekar, R. (2005). "Good Feelings and Motivation: Comments on John Cooper, "The Emotional Life of the Wise"." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 43 (Suppl): 219-229.
- Lloyd, A. C. (1978). "Emotion and Decision in Stoic Psychology" in Rist ed. *The Stoics*. Berkeley: U of California Press, 233-246.
- Meyer, S. S. (2008). *Ancient Ethics*. Routledge.
- Nussbaum, M. (1994). *The Therapy of Desire*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Sorabji, R. (2000). *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Tielman T. (2003) Chrysippus' On Affections: a reconstruction and interpretation. Leiden: Brill.
- Vogt, K. M. (2008). *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City*. Oxford UP.