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THE THERAPY OF PATHOS / PASSION
IN THE STOIC CONCEPTION OF THE GOOD LIFE

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**STOACI İYİ YAŞAM ANLAYIŞI İÇİNDE
PATHOS / TUTKU TERAPİSİ**

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ABSTRACT

The “general” opinion about a Stoic may be characterized as “someone indifferent to pain and pleasure; i.e. emotionless”. The words emotion, and *passion* reflect an experience in which knowledge and mind are not involved, but if we examine what the Stoics understand from the word *pathos*, we can see the absolute involvement of the mind. In this study, the issues in the words emotion, *passion*, and even in the word *pathos* that may cause this “misinterpretation” will be addressed. The Stoics do not exclude all emotions but only of *pathos* (in the content and context of the Stoicism); on the other hand, emotion is a much wider concept and encompasses a much larger spectrum. Consequently, the aim of this thesis is to uncover that together with *pathos* there are three different types of “emotions” that exist in Stoicism, which we can think of today under the word emotion: *Propatheia* (initial automatic feeling), *Eupatheia* (good *passions* or “emotions”) and *Oikeiôsis* (“Affinity”).

After considering what we are attempting to cure and what to keep and reproduce, then the question arises: How to do this in practice? In this investigation, Stoic therapy techniques will be examined from the point of view mentioned above - i.e. these techniques are not designed to erase all emotions. From this perspective, this research will seek to demonstrate that Stoic methods of therapy may give very considerable benefits, significant relief, and positive, good results. With this background, this investigation concentrates on better comprehend Stoicism and to interrogate our current understanding of philosophy, mind, emotion, “will” and action in terms of a different conceptualization. By tackling the matter in this manner, this inquiry is intended that people become more familiar with Stoic philosophical discourse and practice concerning what a person’s way of life should be.

ÖZET

Bir Stoacı hakkındaki “genel” kanı, “acıya ve zevke kayıtsız kalan; başka bir deyişle, duygusuz biri” olarak karakterize edilebilir. Duygu ve tutku sözcükleri, bilginin ve aklın dahil olmadığı bir deneyimi yansıtır, ancak Stoacıların *pathos* kelimesinden ne anladığını incelersek, aklın mutlak katılımını görebiliriz. Bu çalışmada duygu, tutku ve hatta *pathos* kelimesindeki bu “yanlış yorumlamaya” neden olabilecek konular ele alınacaktır. Stoacılar tüm duyguları değil, sadece *pathos*’u (Stoacı içeriği ve bağlamı içinde) dışlar; öte yandan, duygu çok daha geniş bir kavramdır ve dolayısıyla çok daha geniş bir spektrumu kapsar. Sonuç olarak, bu tezin amacı, *pathos* ile birlikte, bugün duygu mefhumu altında düşünebileceğimiz, Stoacılıkta var olan üç farklı “duygu” türünün daha olduğunu ortaya koymaktır: *Propatheia* (ilkel otomatik his), *Eupatheia* (iyi tutkular veya “duygular”) ve *Oikeiôsis* (“Eğilim”).

Neyi tedavi etmeye ve neleri muhafaza edip çoğaltmaya çalıştığımızı tartıştıktan sonra, bu noktada, şu soruya cevap aranabilir: Bütün bunları nasıl uygulamaya geçirebiliriz? Bu tetkikte, Stoacı terapi teknikleri yukarıda belirtilen bakış açısıyla analiz edilecektir - diğer bir deyişle, bu teknikler tüm duyguları silmek için tasarlanmamıştır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, bu araştırma, Stoacı terapi yöntemlerinin çok önemli faydalar, iç rahatlığı, olumlu ve iyi sonuçlar verebileceğini göstermeye çalışacaktır. Bu arka planla, bu inceleme, Stoacılığı daha iyi kavramaya ve mevcut felsefe, akıl, duygu, “irade” ve eylem anlayışımızı farklı bir kavramsallaştırma yoluyla sorgulamaya odaklanmaktadır. Konuyu bu şekilde ele alarak, bu soruşturma, kişinin yaşam biçiminin ne olması gerektiği hakkındaki Stoacı felsefi söylem ve pratiğe daha fazla aşina olmamızı amaçlamaktadır.

INTRODUCTION

The Problem of Language in the Discourse of Stoicism

Are the Stoics not valuing emotions, trying to suppress them, or annihilate them all? Do they claim that we cannot achieve a good life without erasing our emotions? In his “Suffering and Ancient Therapy: Plato to Cicero” Dougal Blyth summarizes this uncertainty on the Stoic emotions in this regard as: *“The disagreement amongst scholars as to whether the Stoics mean us to remove all emotions or only excessive ones.”* (140) Is it possible to achieve this kind of ideal (erasing our emotions) or even if we assume that we have achieved such an ideal, is it possible for us to live well in this way? Dougal Blyth lists the various views on this issue:

“On the explanation of Michael Frede,³² since our emotions are qualitatively different from the sage’s, all our emotions are to be eradicated. But according to Tad Brennan the Stoics are not concerned with emotions such as ‘laughter and tears and whatever may underlie them’, but only those identifiable as ‘vicious motivations’.³³” (140)

Is the leading Stoic scholar Michael Frede saying that our emotions should be eliminated? According to Dougal Blyth, the distinguished classicalist and philosopher Michael Frede calls for that we must try to remove “all” emotions. This is a pretty deep subject and there are so many nuances so we must be very careful here about the way in which we answer these questions.

Dougal Blyth gives another example of this uncertainty about Stoic emotions:

“Annas (1992, pp. 114–115) is indicative of the confusion here, claiming that for the Stoics (1) emotions are not good, (2) we should not be affectless, and (3) appealing to the Stoic concept that the sage experiences eupatheiai, but not explaining how these can be affects without being emotions, on her view.” (140)

As can be understood from the name of Gitte Buch-Hansen’s article “The Contemporary Debate on the Stoic Emotion” (2010, pp. 97), seems to be that this issue is still alive in terms of academic debate. However, considering a resurgence of interest in Stoicism today, the discussion is not limited to academic circles.

In this respect, in their “The Stoic Week 2016 Handbook”¹, Stoicism Today group draw attention to another important element of the subject: *“In the popular imagination a Stoic is someone who denies or represses their emotions in a potentially unhealthy way, like a robot or Mister Spock from Star Trek. However, this is definitely a misconception, albeit a very widespread one.”* (Gill, et al.) The Stoics are portrayed as emotionless people in popular culture. Stoicism Today group explicitly assert that this kind of image of a stereotypical Stoic is wrong. This contributes to a false perception of the Stoics in society so there is a prejudice in the society that the Stoics are suppressing or rejecting their emotions.

In his “Stoicism and Emotions” John Sellars explains the assumptions behind these prejudices: *“It is that the Stoics think the emotions are not important for a good life. Indeed, not only are they not important, they are in fact an impediment to living a good life.”* (43) Emotions are obstacles to a good life. The good life is a life without any emotion. All emotions are a form of the disease and must be abolished. John Sellars turns to the source of the problem, the concept of “emotion”: *“The Stoics never spoke of an emotion but rather of a pathos (or in Latin, a passio). The English word ‘emotion’ isn’t quite the same either. Emotion in English is a much broader notion and covers a much wider range of things.”* (43-44) The difficulty arises from a confusion of concepts. The source of the problem is that the phenomenon that the Stoics want to get rid of is different from what we think they are trying to get rid of.

John Sellars addresses the issue with regard to philosophical language and translation:

“Traditionally, in the early modern period, the terms the Stoics used were translated not as ‘emotion’ but as ‘passion’, and I think this is closer to the mark, although it has fallen out of favour in some quarters because it sounds a bit archaic. But that is no bad thing and it helps to underline that we are dealing with a technical notion here and not a very general and loose notion like ‘emotion’. So, my first point: the Stoics do not reject emotions, they reject passions, and that is quite a different thing.” (44)

Philosophy should use its own technical terms rather than everyday language; otherwise, misunderstandings will inevitably arise. The notion of *passion* is more functional in solving the

¹ “The Stoic Week 2016 Handbook” prepared by a team of academic philosophers and cognitive therapists: “Stoicism Today” group; Christopher Gill, Patrick Ussher, John Sellars, Tim Lebon, Jules Evans, Gill Garratt, and Donald Robertson.

complexity of meaning created by the notion of “emotion”. The word *passion* has a narrower meaning than the word “emotion”, in this sense it is advantageous. Thus, it becomes more visible that a specific type of emotion is mentioned. However, the word *passion* may not be enough to solve these problems. I think even *pathos* can cause problems (These problems will be discussed extensively in the chapter called “The Stoic View on *Pathos* / *Passion*”). Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the problems in the word emotion, *passion*, and even in the word *pathos* that may cause this “misinterpretation” (emotionless Stoic self).

The Stoics advocate that we should conquer just *pathos* or *passion* as a “mental disturbance” (Sellars, pp.164) or “emotional disturbance” (Robertson, pp. 263) not all emotions. John Sellars makes this point:

“I have considered four different types of reaction that the ancient Stoics considered and that might fall under our usual thinking about emotions. As we have seen, the Stoics suggest we overcome just one of these four types. The other three they acknowledge as part of an ideal human life: care and concern for others, natural human responses to sudden events, and positive passions based on correct judgements about what is most important for human life.”
(47)

Following John Sellars’ position, this research also aimed to reveal that the Stoics do not propose to eradicate emotions altogether, and there are three other different types of “emotions” that prevail in Stoicism along with *pathos* (which we can think of today under the word emotion): *Propatheia* (initial automatic feeling), *Eupatheia* (good *passions* or “emotions”, as contrasted with *pathos*) and *Oikeiosis* (“Affinity”). Thusly, it will be evident that the Stoics are aiming to abolish not all emotions but only of *pathos* (in the content and context of the Stoicism). There will be a separate section for each type of these “Stoic emotions” and I will begin, in the next section called “Good, Bad and *Adiaphora* in Stoicism” to introduce some basics of Stoicism.

John Sellars states that the concept of emotion does not meet the phenomenon that the Stoics suggested we dismiss:

“What the Stoics propose we reject are not emotions in the English sense of the word at all, if emotions are defined as feelings that contrast with reasoning. Instead, what the Stoics propose we reject is faulty reasoning based on confused value judgements and the unpleasant consequences that this generates.” (48)

Emotion is not the experience that the Stoics try to exclude. What the Stoics exclude is occurs if a person gives assent to the value judgment that the impression represents something either good or bad (in fact, it is not good or bad). As a result of this, one forms a false belief and this false belief creates the phenomenon which the Stoics aim to throw out (i.e. *pathos* or *passion* or “emotion” or “mental disturbance” or “emotional disturbance”).

John Sellars writes how the Stoics try to stop and prevent this experience: “*They think that they can offer us arguments about what we should and should not value, and this is where what the Stoics offer becomes distinctively philosophical therapy.*” (46) According to the Stoics, we all should work on our *passions*, beliefs, value judgments in order to achieve to live according to Nature and to live a realistic, good, “happy” life. The Stoics help people with these areas by sharing their own philosophical arguments, perspectives, and employing their therapy techniques: “*exercise (askēsis) the second stage in learning an art, coming after the study of the relevant theoretical principles.*” (Stoicism, 2006, Sellars, pp. 164) At the end of each chapter, I will investigate these “spiritual exercises” (*exercices spirituels* - Pierre Hadot) or “technologies of the self” (*techniques de soi* - Michel Foucault) or *askesis* in the context of that chapter (the Stoic therapy techniques).

Spiritual Exercises or Technologies of the Self (Askesis)

The typical motif in the evaluation of philosophy as a way of life is the view that philosophy is a form of medicine or therapy for the mind. (Nussbaum, 1994) Like Socrates, the Stoics make analogies between philosophy and assorted arts and crafts, directing them to identify philosophy as the art of living and medicine for the soul. (Sellars, 2006) Epictetus stresses this medical analogy pretty openly: “*The philosopher’s school is a doctor’s clinic.*” (Discourses, 3.23.30) The duty of the philosopher is to enable us to scrutinize our judgment about what we assume is good and bad, what we think will benefit us and what we think we need to in order to have a good, happy life; thus, we require the support of a philosopher-doctor, who can suggest treatments to empower us to go in the right direction again. (Sellars, 2019, 11) A cognitive psychotherapist Donald Robertson states, the notion of philosophy as medicine for the soul, is the core meaning of “psychotherapy” and Stoicism is the one most clearly associated with modern psychotherapy in all ancient schools of philosophy; indeed, he suggests what Epictetus named the “discipline of desire and aversion” could also be labeled as a mainly self-applied,

“therapy of the *passions*” or “Stoic psychotherapy.” (374) Stoic psychotherapy is a mode of cognitive therapy - an attempt to concentrate on, then to fix the cognitive mistakes the underlying pathology. (Becker, 257) It is related to cognition, or judgments, and behaviour, namely, the “art of living” (Robertson, 58). Michel Foucault demonstrates his interest in this philosophical approach: “*No technique, no professional skill can be acquired without exercise; nor can the art of living, the *techne tou biou*, be learned without an *askesis* that should be understood as a training of the self by oneself.*” (208) Philosophy is an art of living, a way of life, a therapy or medicine, which includes theory (rational arguments, principles etc.) and practice (exercises, training etc.).

However, Stoicism is not “merely” a therapy designed to make people feel better; it is, in fact, philosophy and as a philosophy, it is obliged to attempt to comprehend the world, and it claims a series of “hard truths” about the world. (Sellars) The difference is very important; a therapy is planned as a short-term solution for people to overcome certain psychological disorders and it does not necessarily present an overall view or philosophy of life. (Pigliucci, 2017, 9) People who study Stoicism accept it as part of their life instead of seeing it as a set of coping techniques that they can forget later when they do not repeat their initial training; for this reason, its advantages may be more enduring than (CBT-based) resilience training, and in this regard, it generally has a more preventive direction than a therapy (CBT²). (Robertson and Codd, 49) Psychotherapist Tim LeBon suggests enhancements towards integration; an example of this includes: blending Stoicism with evidence-based approaches to produce meditations to help build specific virtues³. (180)

In their *Therapy and the Counter-tradition: The Edge of Philosophy*, psychotherapist Bazzano and Webb invite to consider psychotherapy, “philosophy as a way of life”, and Stoic “care of the self” together as follows:

“This book is an invitation to open the world of counseling and psychotherapy to philosophy and philosophical practice, i.e. not only to basic philosophical knowledge but also to philosophy as a way of life... So what would this philosophy as a way of life look like, and how might the philosophers presented in this collection be helpful to psychotherapy practice?...”

² Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

³ *Arete*: As excellence and excellence of character. See Pigliucci “Five Additional Crucial Words”; “Two More Crucial Words.”

Philosophy as a way of life is now inevitably associated with Stoic serenity and neo-Stoic ‘care of the self’, by all means a valid philosophical stance echoed throughout this book.” (3)

In this research, the Stoic therapy techniques will be inspected from the point of view mentioned above - i.e. these techniques are not performed to completely wipe out all emotions. From this angle, this investigation will try to show that Stoic methods of therapy may give very extensive benefits, great relief, and positive results. In this connection, this study will focus on better understand Stoicism and question our current understanding of philosophy, mind, emotion, “will” and action in respect of a different conceptualization. By addressing the topic in this way, this research is intended that people become more familiar with Stoic philosophical discourse and practice concerning what a person’s way of life should be.

FIRST CHAPTER

1. GOOD, BAD AND ADIAPHORA IN STOICISM

Stoic conclusions about what good and bad are far from our modern definition of “good and bad”. Likewise, their view of the universe, Nature, human mind, and emotions is quite different from our view of them. The position of Stoics as regard to fate and freedom is largely unique and distinct. In Stoic teaching, there is a particular emphasis on what is under our control and beyond our control. For the Stoics, this seems to be the most fundamental element that will guide our behavior and will allow to determine what is good and bad, what is important and unimportant, what we should desire, and what we should stay away from. The Stoics have defended that good and bad only can exist within our control, that is, our judgments, thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (in other words; “internals”). We should not consider things that are out of our control as good and bad. In the Stoic view, the concept of *adiaphora* has an important place in the understanding of what is beyond our control and how to approach them; so this concept is one of the most important aspects of their teachings. The subject of this thesis is how the Stoics have dealt with issues of freedom and fate, good and bad, Nature and the human mind, emotions and behavior in terms of *adiaphora*.

In her “Vice and Virtue, The Passions, *Apethia*” Marcía L. Colish disclose what the concept of *adiaphora* is and its relationship with good and bad:

“What is ethically relevant is what man can control. Through his logos man can control his subjective attitudes toward things. What lies outside man’s control is ethically irrelevant. Thus, all things fall into one of three categories: the good, defined as virtue, and sufficient unto itself; the evil, defined as vice and all things conductive to it; and the adiaphora, or everything.¹¹² The adiaphora are morally neutral, since they lie outside man’s rational control.” (44)

The concept of ethics is closely related to the concepts of freedom and responsibility. It is not reasonable to hold people responsible for things that are not under their control, but people are free to choose how they approach a situation that is not under their control. Regardless of the situation we are in, we have the opportunity to act virtuously as our approach to the situation is up to us. As a rational being, if we think, feel, and act in a virtuous manner, we do good to ourselves, to others and Nature;

otherwise, we do evil. Because we can control only our internals we cannot make any ethical judgments about anything other than these so we cannot be held responsible for the rest.

In his *The Enchiridion (Handbook)* Epictetus, one of the most important Stoics, summarizes what is and is not within our power: “*Within our power are opinion, motivation, desire, aversion, and, in a word, whatever is of our own doing; not within our power are our body, our property, reputation, office, and, in a word, whatever is not of our own doing.*” (287) Although the things within our power are quite limited, they are very powerful in respect of impacting our lives. Our ability to control our judgments gives us a choice in our attitude towards what is beyond our power. We cannot control our bodies, for example, even if we do not want our hearts to stop, it may stop at any moment. We can lose all of our wealth and possessions by the crisis in the market. We can get a bad reputation as a result of a slander thrown at us. No matter how hard we work, we may lose our position. But if we can control our judgments and behaviors all the time, we can always be virtuous in any given situation so we can do good and be “happy” to have a good life.

In his *The Discourses* Epictetus points out that the concepts of good and bad can be considered for which situations:

“Say to yourself, ‘Externals are not under my control; moral choice is under my control.’⁵ Where am I to look for the good and the evil? Within me, in that which is my own.’ But in that which is another’s never employ the words ‘good’ or ‘evil,’ or ‘benefit’ or ‘injury,’ or anything of the sort.” (qtd. in Stephens 50)

For us, the concepts of good and bad can only exist in matters that are in our power. Because we cannot change anything outside our power, it is pointless to label them as bad or good. If we think of situations that cannot be changed as bad and we fear and worry in vain, we do evil to ourselves. To say that some of these situations and things are good and some of them are bad will mean to connect our “happiness” to things that we cannot control.

In his *Stoic Ethics: Epictetus and Happiness as Freedom* William O. Stephens discusses what we should call good and bad with reference to its benefits and damages:

“Early Stoa, maintained that only the virtues (aretai), prudence, justice, courage, moderation, etc. are strictly ‘good’ (agathon), since they and they alone under all conditions always benefit and never harm us (D.L. 7.101-3). Vice (kakia), foolishness, injustice, etc. were, conversely, considered the only truly ‘bad’ thing (kakon) (D.L. 7.101-3) since these things are the only

things harmful to us under all conditions, and therefore are necessarily productive of unhappiness (kakodaimonia).” (1)

Regardless of what we have, if we act in moderation and are satisfied with what we have, we will not lose our happiness⁴. No matter what happens, once we have these skills, no one can take them from us but if we continually ignore what we have and blame ourselves, others and Nature, we put ourselves in a victim position and we would be unhappy. It is unreasonable to aim at things that we cannot control and to blame ourselves for not reaching them. At this point, it seems very important to clarify what is outside our power. In this sense, Marcía L. Colish divulges what is included in the concept of *adiaphora*:

“The adiaphora include the vicissitudes of life – wealth or poverty, sickness or health, life or death, etc. Some of the adiaphora may be preferable to others; health, for instance, is preferable to illness. But strictly speaking, the sage maintains an attitude of equanimity in the face of the presence or absence of things indifferent. His happiness is not dependent on them, but on virtue alone.” (44)

If we bind our “happiness” to things that are beyond our control, we could be unhappy at any moment. No matter how much we do sports, eat healthily, we can catch cancer at any moment. No matter what we do, we will age and eventually die. Of course, being healthy carries value and is therefore preferred. We can strive to stay healthy and to survive but making them our ultimate goal will make us very fragile. On the other hand, if we attach our “happiness” to the things in our power, that is, if we always practice the good and act in a virtuous way, we can have a good life. External things cannot lead us to a good life so they cannot be good or bad. We just need to be virtuous to live well, and if so the only “good” is to live virtuously. There is also a value difference among things that we need to remain indifferent to.

In his *The Stoics* a biographer of the Greek philosophers Diogenes Laërtius indicates this value difference: *“There are things belonging to neither class; such are not preferred, neither are they rejected. Again, of things preferred some are preferred for their own sake, some for the sake of something else, and others again both for their own sake and for the sake of something else.” (25)* A few of our hair loss is neither the unpreferred indifferent nor the preferred indifferent. It has no effect

⁴ *Eudaimonia*: As a life worth living. See Pigliucci “Five Additional Crucial Words”; “Two More Crucial Words.”

on our lives. Money has no value in itself, but through it, we can indirectly help our community. Health has a “value” in itself and we can also spend the energy comes from it for virtuous behavior. Because the things we need to remain indifferent to have a “relative” value (*axia*) (Stoicism, 2006, Sellars, 164) within themselves the way we use them is important. In his *The Discourses* Epictetus advises how we should approach to what Stoics have gathered under the concept of *adiaphora*:

“They must be used carefully, because their use is not a matter of indifference, and at the same time with steadfastness and peace of mind, because the material is indifferent. For in whatever really concern us, there no man can either hinder or compel me. The attainment of those things in which I can be hindered or compelled is not under my control and is neither good nor bad, but the use which I make of them is either good or bad, and that is under my control.” (qtd. in Stephens 50)

We may try to earn money to contribute to our society, but aiming to be rich is a wrong approach because being rich or being poor is beyond our control. If the good life is possible only by making virtuous choices over what we can control, we cannot remain indifferent about the use of our money because we have control over how we will use it so we can talk about doing good and evil. But at the same time, we need to be indifferent to the money itself because at any moment a thief may come out and we could lose everything we have, so we cannot have a good life by living in fear of losing something that we cannot control. In addition, money is not an indispensable part of a good life so we should always be indifferent to it. In other words, we can cause a lot of harm if we use money unwisely or we can do a great deal of good with it if we use it wisely so money is not something inherently good. The goodness or the harm comes from our minds so it is our wisdom, character, virtue where the real value is found. Once we become wise, no one can take our wisdom from us. If living well is only possible by being wise and being wise is just in our hands, nothing or nobody can force us to live well or stop us from living well. We can never make life good with those gathered under the concept of *adiaphora*, but only our judgments and choices can lead us to this. Then, if circumstances require, we can choose death instead of life or poverty instead of wealth to live well.

William O. Stephens emphasizes that *adiaphora* is not absolutely necessary for a good life and sometimes it may be necessary to even choose unpreferred indifferent for a good life:

“Death, disease, poverty, ugliness, weakness, and the like were similarly seen to be indifferents which were ordinarily to be avoided. If, however, circumstances were such that selecting them

was necessary in order to preserve one's honor, dignity, and moral integrity, then they must be selected." (2)

If it is not wealth or health that will lead us to a good life, it will not be difficult to give up them. Because we know that we cannot have a good life without virtue, we will not act without virtue to become rich. But can we live well by choosing death? In his *The Encheiridion* Epictetus clearly gives out that this is possible: "*Men are disturbed not by the things which happen, but by the opinions about the things; for example, death is nothing terrible, for if it were it would have seemed so to Socrates; for the opinion about death that it is terrible, is the terrible thing.*" (381) Death itself cannot be "bad" for us because we cannot prevent it. It is illogical to be afraid of something we can never stop. Also, it is illogical to fear from death because we know nothing about it and after it. But fear of death is bad because it is our irrational judgments and thoughts that lead to our fear, so it is in our control to fear or not to fear death. We cannot live well with fear, so we in vain are hurting ourselves by fearing death due to our irrational beliefs. If our death is rationally necessary, it cannot be bad to choose death because death itself is not bad. Wherefore, death cannot be bad because it is not the externals that will bring us the good life, but our reaction to them and how we use them. Then, I can choose death and stay well until the very last moment of my life. In the example of Socrates⁵, he sacrifices his physical being to preserve his character, because he knows that his "inner", "rational", "virtuous" (excellent) character is the most "valuable", "good" thing that always "benefits" him. So, he "identifies" himself not only with his physical being (as an animal) but with his rational character. We will examine this issue in-depth in the section titled "*Oikeiôsis* in Stoic Thought". But in the Stoic view, I do not choose it just for my own good when it makes sense to choose death or poverty. At the same time, I am following the big plan of the universe I am part of. At this point, it is necessary to explain one of the most important Stoic concepts related to the Stoic physics; *Logos*.

In his "The Stoics: Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius" Douglas J. Soccio delineates what the Stoics understand from *Logos*: "*Logos (Stoic): According to Stoic doctrine, World Reason, also referred to as Cosmic Mind, God, Zeus, Nature, Providence, Cosmic Meaning, and Fate; force that governs the universe.*" (199) These words, which will be mentioned throughout an entire thesis,

⁵ Socrates was sentenced to death on charges of corrupting youth and disrespecting the gods and was forced to drink hemlock. While he could easily escape from prison, he accepted the sentence of the state. Socrates thought that he had benefited from the laws of Athens for the whole of his life and that his escape from the prison would be inconsistent for him, and therefore preferred to die instead of biologically surviving: in order not to compromise his principles.

actually refer to *Logos*. The Stoics used these words interchangeably. Accordingly, they have become open to different readings and worldviews, perspectives. In his “Stoic Physics” John Sellars also foregrounds this point: “*It is possible to give two quite different readings of Stoic physics.*” (91) Sellars summarizes these two positions as follows:

“On the one hand we might present the Stoics as thoroughly naturalistic materialists, on the other hand we might present them as deeply religious pantheists. This tension extends into Stoic discussions of fate and providence. On the one hand, the Stoics qua naturalists outline a theory of rigid causal determinism, but on the other hand, qua religious pantheists, they hold a doctrine of divine providence.” (99-100)

Discussing these two positions in full detail exceeds the scope of this thesis. So, it will be sufficient for us to touch upon some of the main points of Stoic physics that affect Stoic psychology and Stoic ethics. The Stoic philosophy offers philosophical arguments that allow the conceptualization of the “Stoic God” in different ways. But even within these two very different interpretations, there is an unchanging definition of “Stoic God”. John Sellars elucidates what the Stoics mean when they say “God”: “*No matter how we conceive the relationship between the two principles, the Stoic God is very much in Nature... For the Stoics God simply is Nature.*” (92-93) The “God” of the Stoics is not an “external Creator-God”. In any case, clearly “God” for the Stoics is Nature. This understanding of “God” is quite different from the conception of Muslim or Christian God. Sellars delineates the characteristics of the Stoic “God/Nature/cosmos”: “*Seemingly mechanical Stoic cosmos admits of no random or chance events, and thus no miracles and no acts of free will.*” (100) The Stoics do not believe a God that interfered in the world, with occasional miracles, or the God with supernatural influences on the universe from outside. This kind of understanding of God rejects “the freedom of God’s will” (in Muslim or Christian sense).

Sellars construes what fate means from the Stoic perspective: “*For the Stoics, ‘fate’ (heimarmenē) is simply a continuous string of causes, an inescapable order and connection between events (DL 7.149; Aetius 1.28.4).*” (100) The Stoics believed in universal causation. This is the opposite of a kind of superstition-based understanding. In his *Back to Darwin: The Scientific Case for Deistic Evolution* Michael Anthony Corey gives out this is simply *Logos*: “*Logos that generated the logical principle of cause - and - effect that is found throughout the natural world.*” (314) What the Stoics mean by “God” is the universal web of cause and effect and of course, science is based on cause

and effect so such a view actually is quite in line with modern science. John Sellars accentuates that the Stoic conception of Nature does not conflict with contemporary debates about Nature:

“The great virtue of the Stoic version of materialism is that it does not need to refer to anything outside Nature in order to account for Nature’s movement and order. While remaining naturalists, they conceive Nature as a living being that organizes and regulates itself. Their cosmology has thus been described as a ‘cosmobiology’ (Hahn 1977: 136). This ancient theory is echoed in some modern discussions of Nature, or ‘Gaia’, as a self-regulating biological system.” (95)

Such a materialism can give a more or less satisfactory explanation of Nature and matter without the need for a transcendent external force to explain the “movement”. The cosmos is envisioned as a self-organizing structure. In this case, the peculiar features of the Stoic theory of Nature still do not appear in a very clear contradiction with modern science.

However, John Sellars avers that the Stoics also thought that universal Nature was rational:

“Where the Stoics go further is to claim that Nature, conceived as a living organism, is also conscious. It is in so far as the cosmos is held to be conscious that one might call it ‘God’. But one might equally side with Plotinus and those later critics of Spinoza by saying that to a certain extent this is simply holding on to the label ‘God’ for the sake of appearances.” (95)

The Stoics believed in one God and that one God was the universe itself. So, “God” for the Stoics is a super-ordering power of the cosmos. They do not believe in a personal God. This is kind of like the God of Spinoza or Einstein so the Stoic God is like the pantheistic God of the physicists and actually many atheistic, agnostic scientists are using the word “God” in a metaphorical and poetic sense. Like them, the Stoics believed in God/Nature and the accessibility of Nature’s organization to the human mind. Like these scientists, they have “the religious Pantheist” view of the Universe (but of course, the claims of “ancient” Stoics are not limited to these). So, the Stoics are materialists and monist.

When discussing Stoicism in this context, we should mention another very important Stoic concept; *pneuma*. Sellars notifies what *pneuma* is: *“Pneuma as a force that, in various degrees of tension, forms the material objects of Nature.” (91)* Therefore, the Stoics thought that there is one fundamental stuff in the cosmos. *Pneuma* means breath. John Sellars also portrays *pneuma* in relation to this meaning of it: *“It is the soul of the cosmos, analogous to the soul of any other living being.”*

(97) In connection with these definitions, Sellars lists the pneumatic qualities found in a person as follows:

“A rational human being, then, will contain pneuma at all four levels of tension. She will have pneuma as hexis giving cohesion to her bones, for instance; pneuma as phusis by virtue of being alive in the most basic biological sense; pneuma as psuchē giving her the animal faculties of impression and impulse; and pneuma as logikē psuchē giving her the rational power of judgement that can intervene between receiving impressions and acting on impulses.” (105)

For the Stoics, there was one stuff but it manifested in different degrees. *Pneuma* is the force in inanimate objects that structures matter. The human mind is the final gradation of *pneuma*. In this way, we get the ability to reason about things and become rational beings so the qualities of *pneuma* are intelligence and reason. Therefore, at its highest level, *pneuma* forms the human soul, which is part of the *pneuma*, the “spirit” of God. Sellars formulates *pneuma* in this last form: *“Pneuma is identified with God and reason.”* (97) Above all levels, there is the divine mind or *pneuma*.

Douglas J. Soccio underscores this “kinship” which was established between the *Logos* and human beings: *“Everything that occurs is connected to everything else. Everything that exists is connected to the Logos. Our individual minds are ‘emanations’ or ‘sparks’ from the Logos... Our finite human reason is, thus, a small reflection of divine reason.”* (199) The Stoics thought that humanity is part of a single divine organism. Such a conceptualization gave them a deep “religious” feeling. We are all interconnected and we are all rational members of the Stoic “cosmopolis”. John Sellars associates this attitude with Stoic ethics: *“This close kinship between particular human beings and the cosmos as a whole is a distinctive feature of Stoic physics. It is also central to Stoic ethics.”* (107) The person “living in harmony with the reason (our own true nature) and Nature (which has the perfect mind)” is not alienated from anything. Since we all have reason, we have a sense of “kinship” with the rest of humanity and “the cosmos as a whole”. So, we should also live and act in harmony with our social nature to be good human beings and to live well. That means a good human life is only possible if we use our reason to improve society/world and ourselves. Douglas J. Soccio deals with the impact and reflection of this stoic mantra (living in accordance with Nature) on emotions: *“Stoics believed that serenity comes to that individual whose will is in accord with the World Reason, the Logos, for right thinking leads to a reduction of frustration and anxiety.”* (199) The world is organized by *Logos* (divine reason) according to rational principles that are understandable by the human mind. For the

Stoics, to be wise and “happy” means to understand how the universe works (what the divine organism is) and adjust our expectations and behaviors accordingly.

So far, we have seen that the Stoics as naturalist materialists are consistent with modern science. Indeed, the non-personal pantheist “God” of the Stoics may well be compared to that of an atheist or an agnostic physicist’s “poetic God/universe”. However, we said that the Stoics also argued that the universe was providentially ordered, and this seems to be a claim many atheists would not accept. Sellars tackles the Stoic conception of Providence and fate (as universal causality): “*There is a necessary and unalterable order of causes that we call fate; but this necessary order is providentially arranged by God to be the best possible order. The claim that this is ‘the best of all possible worlds.’*” (101) At this point, we seem to be far from modern science. At the end of this section, we will also mention the effect of abandoning the Stoic concept of Providence on Stoic ethics. However, now let us continue with the effect of the conception of Providence and rational universe that ancient Stoics claimed in Stoic physics, on Stoic ethics.

In his *The Stoics* Francis Henry Sandbach encapsulates “traditional” Stoic’s relationship with the universe: “*The man who ‘lives in accord with nature’, that is with the plan of the universe, does not do violence to his own nature. For that nature is rational and directs him sometimes to accept what is contrary to his primary, that is undisciplined, natural impulses.*” (40) For the Stoic, because the universe is perfectly rational, everything that happens is not random but takes place within a big plan. A stoic, whose rationality is given by this perfect rational Nature becomes a part of it by adhering to the grand plan that he cannot fully comprehend. F. H. Sandbach, referring to Seneca, enunciates the second characteristic of the universe in addition to being rational (again, which I mentioned briefly when introducing Stoic physics; Providence, but I did not elaborate): “*Seneca makes him our father, which suggests that he is benevolent.*” (119) Since the universe is perfectly rational, benign and it does not want our evil, there is no point in being upset about the things we cannot control. Everything we experience happens with the knowledge and permission of Nature. If there is an evil and irrationality it should be caused by us. It must be our irrational beliefs that create evil. Men the only living creature knowing their own death could dominate their own impulses and emotions by using their intellect that separates them from other living creatures and lives well. “The reason” is the greatest good that Nature gave human beings.

In his *Gandhi and the Stoics: Modern Experiments on Ancient Values* Richard Sorabji examines the relationship between reason, impulse, emotion, and behavior in connection with the concept of assent: “According to the fullest Stoic account,¹⁴ the emotion occurs when we give the assent of our reason to the appearance that harm or benefit is at hand and that it is appropriate to react accordingly.” (26) An animal moves completely with impulses. When a rabbit sees the carrot, it immediately runs and tries to catch that carrot. On the other hand, a man before developing an impulse, desire, and behavior, he must give assent to the probability of “there is a carrot” and “it is worth running after this carrot”. In this respect, it seems that all desires are the desires of reason. All the judgments, impulses, emotions, behaviors, and purposes are caused by reason. In his “Introduction” to the book *Rationality in Greek Thought* Michael Frede recaps the idea of the desires of the mind (as a belief) that the Stoics took from Socrates and the relationship they established with good and evil from this perspective:

“The view is that all emotion or desire is just belief of a certain kind, that it is invariably a matter of having some expectation that a good or an evil is coming one’s way or of having the thought that a good or an evil has come one’s way. Thus to be afraid is to think that an evil may overcome one.” (358d5-7). (7)

The source of all emotions is our beliefs. In this sense, our emotions are not a reaction we give to externals, but a reaction to our beliefs. If we can do away with our false beliefs and create in their place beliefs that are true, realistic, and compatible with Nature, we can also distinguish what is “really” good and bad, beneficial and harmful for us (i.e. virtue and vice). Frede highlights the crucial point of this concept of reason: “On this view, trivially, all desires, in being beliefs, are desires of reason.” (7) The conception of the desire of reason is a very radical view for today, but the Stoics declared if a man perfects his mind and eliminates his false beliefs, he could live well in accordance with Nature. The human mind tries to see the perfect reason in Nature and adopts it. The mind desires to be in harmony with the benevolent and perfectly rational Nature. A stoic accepts the plan of Nature unconditionally. Sandbach refers to the basis of this altruism in Stoicism:

“Man is part of the world and should co-operate to serve the world’s purposes against his own advantage. But this is not against his own good. His good is achieved by rational decision, and reason demands that he should co-operate. Illness is not to his advantage, but he cannot be

good unless he accepts his illness. (This does not imply that he should make no attempt to recover; a fated illness is not necessarily a fatal one).” (36)

Nature may not give us what we want, but the error is not in Nature, it is in us because we want the wrong thing. At first, we made a mistake by wanting for externals over which we never had control. If Nature is perfectly rational and benevolent, none of the things that seem bad to us can actually be bad. If we can perfect our minds, we can see this. If my illness is good within the big plan, it is my advantage even if it does not appear to me in this way, because I am part of that Good and that big plan. So, in order to be good, I need to accept that illness. Of course, at the same time, I should try to heal the illness by using my mind given by Nature and, again, in this manner, I act both in accordance with Nature and my human nature. Sandbach reports that Chrysippus, the third head of the Stoic school, expresses this fact as follows: *“If the foot had brains, it would be bent on getting muddy (quoted by Epictetus, Discourses II.6.9).”* (36) The foot is an inseparable part of the body. For this reason, the goodness of the body means its own good, so the foot is in the service of the body for its own good and the good of the body. Just like the foot is an inseparable part of the body, we are a part of Nature so the good of Nature means our goodness. We must be in the service of Nature for our own good and the good of Nature. Sandbach also includes Seneca’s view on this issue: *“Fate leads the willing, drags the recusant.”* (37) Because the disease is already occurring out of our control, objecting to the disease will only cause more harm to us. We will have unnecessarily suffered the misery of something we can never prevent. Can we say that this perspective leads us to “absolute” determinism? Sandbach reviews this question:

“What brings happiness is to have the right attitude, to choose the right actions, to aim correctly at the mark. This is in the man’s own power: success, in the popular meaning of the word, is not. Unforeseen and incalculable causes may prevent his hitting the target, his actions may be obstructed, his attitude disregarded; but so long as he does all he can and has nothing with which to reproach himself, all is well with him. Whether this is reconcilable with absolute determinism is a difficult question.” (37)

According to this understanding, it seems that benevolent and perfectly rational Nature has done the greatest good to humans by giving reason to them. In this fashion, a man can control his emotions and behaviors by changing his attitude towards what happened to him. To be virtuous is in man’s own hands who knows that he can be “happy” only by living virtuously. If in any case being “happy” is in

the man's own hands we cannot hold that he is doomed to his fate. In his *The Encheiridion* Epictetus underscores the relationship between freedom and happiness by implying *adiaphora*: "*Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle: Some things are within our control, and some things are not.*" (3) A human cannot control everything, but there is no need for man to control everything to be free and happy. In this sense, he is limited but he has unlimited freedom within his own limitations. It is enough for a person to be able to control his judgments, thoughts, and behaviors to be happy and free. Man is free because nothing can prevent him from thinking and acting as he wants or force him to think and behave that he does not want. Humans are happy because the human mind, the only thing they need to be happy, is given to them by rational and benevolent Nature. In this context, the basis of human happiness and freedom is to be able to notice the things that are gathered under the concept of *adiaphora* (things that are not under our control). In the Stoic view, our attitude towards these things and how we use them will bring us true freedom and happiness.

After reviewing these "traditional" principles of Stoicism, the following question may come to our mind: Is it necessary to have the belief in "a rational and benevolent (Providence) Nature, or fate, or God; Father" to practice Stoic ethics? Is this an indispensable requirement for the Stoic way of life? In his "Providence or Atoms? Atoms! A Defence of Being a Modern Stoic Atheist", one of the founding members of the Modern Stoicism⁶ group the psychotherapist Donald Robertson deals with this question: "*This debate naturally interests modern Stoics, many of whom are agnostics or atheists themselves and seek to reconcile Stoic ethics and psychological practices with their own contemporary world-view.*" (242) Are the doors of Stoicism closed to atheist and agnostic people or can it not make a positive contribution to the lives of these people? If Stoicism will help improve the lives of these people, how will this be?

Donald Robertson points to *Meditations* for the answer to these questions: "*Recall once again this alternative: 'If not a wise Providence [God], then a mere jumble of atoms' (Meditations 5.30). Indeed, he alludes to these contrasting viewpoints around nine times in his Meditations.*" (242) It seems that Marcus Aurelius thought a lot about these two opposing worldviews. The fact that Marcus has thought so much about this issue hints also the importance of this subject for Stoicism. Robertson evaluates this situation as follows: "*Marcus gave himself to such questioning, that we can detect a basis for a form of Modern Stoicism which does not require a belief in God.*" (242) Then the answer

⁶ Modern Stoicism: The organization that runs Stoic Week and Stoicon.

can be found in one of the main texts of Stoicism. The fact that Marcus reviewed this alternative (atoms) nine times means that he has looked over the subject in many ways, which means that we have a rich reference. Donald Robertson makes the following conclusion after reviewing all the quotes mentioned in the *Meditation*:

“Whether there is a divine providence or not, we can still focus on virtue; we can still have an aim; we can still not be harassed by that which is outside of our control; we can still be part of a kinship with nature and also with all other citizens of the world and we can still face the fate of death with equanimity. Stoic ethics can be employed in a world without divine providence, therefore, and we do not need to read outside of the Stoic texts to see why.” (244)

In the citations mentioned, Marcus Aurelius basically touches on the following points (These “quotations” are at the end of this section). When we die, if Providence exists, we will all be accepted in it, if all things are made of atoms, we will all dissipate into atoms that swirl and both of these are out of our control. So, when it comes to death, we do not have to decide to do different things for both cases. In terms of consciousness of death, “Providence or atoms” are neither necessary nor obstacle to practice Stoic ethics. Also, there is no one to blame for those outside of our control (either Providence or random atoms). It is irrational to blame both. On that account, in either case, we should only focus on those within our control and accept⁷ things outside our control. Thanks to our mind, we can understand that in either way, the only good is virtue. What we need to have a good life is the same in either event; to lead a virtuous life by focusing on what is within our control. So, our goal is the same, whether “Providence” is or not, leading a virtuous life and this is absolutely in our control.

Another point is that if everything is made of atoms, we are again part of one cosmos. It means that inside us, there is a similarity with everything that is, whether (they are) human beings or Nature; that is, there is a “kinship” among all of “us”, and the universe must be considered as a whole. Consequently, it is possible to build Stoic ethics on the basis of “virtue” and “kinship”, whether there is “Providence” or not. Robertson claims that, in both instances, also Epictetus and Seneca believed that it

⁷ While a modern agnostic or atheist Stoic just “accepts” her illness, a traditional Stoic, besides accepting it, “wants” and “loves” her illness; because there is nothing random within the rational, perfect, and providential plan of the *Logos*. However, a modern Stoic can still use her illness to improve her character, and in this direction, her illness becomes an opportunity to improve her character. In other words, nothing can prevent a person -whether modern or traditional Stoic- from becoming a more virtuous person; everything can be used to become a more virtuous person.

is possible and necessary to apply the Stoic philosophy (244-245). After Donald Robertson reveals all this, he expounds the purpose of his article:

“The ancient Stoics, in general, obviously did believe that a divine principle was at play. Nature was ‘Reason’, understood as a divine principle, which permeated the entire material world. This, of course, I do not dispute, but neither is it the point. What I have merely wished to show in this article is that, despite this widespread view in antiquity, the ancient Stoics also clearly did believe that whether this divine principle existed or not, it was still possible to follow their philosophy, and, in fact, that this was the thing to do anyway.” (246)

“Traditionally” the Stoics believed that Providence rules the world and that the perfect rationality of Nature. Virtue (“happiness” is a by-product of virtue) is obtained by adapting one’s judgments, thoughts, beliefs, behaviors to the rationality of the universe. Considering an agnostic or atheist, all this can be seen as “adapting one’s judgments, thoughts, beliefs, behaviors to reality, to facts”. Death can still just be seen as part of the natural order of things. In this sense, with or without Providence, Stoicism does not lose its importance. Robertson concludes at the end of his article:

“From this, therefore, we can see how the ancient Stoics paved the way for the possibility of being both an atheist and a follower of Stoic ethics. You do not need a God to exist in order to find virtue helpful in facing hardship and overcoming it. The central principle of Stoicism can hold true whatever your world-view: the only true good is virtue. You don’t need God to be virtuous.” (246)

So, we can find our answer in the main texts of Stoicism. Using our minds well, with the help of Stoic philosophical arguments about the nature of existence we may still understand that virtue is the only good or, “at least”, we may understand the vital role of virtue in psychology. Under the guidance of Stoicism, (that is, in the light of Stoic philosophical arguments) seeking the truth, taking care of common goods and aiming for a good life rather than for a life does not require believing in or rejecting any God, Providence.

In conclusion, it is very clear that Stoicism is not a religion but a philosophy. There are a number of fundamental beliefs, but these beliefs are based on philosophical arguments. We can adopt the stoic principles we find right and refuse some that we do not think are correct. So, each of us should question these arguments and create our own opinion. Already, there are many internal disputes among the ancient Stoics. This questioning is one of the most important elements of Stoicism. Hence, all these

discussions are part of the Stoic tradition. The “modern” Stoics (agnostics, atheists, believers in God or Providence) continue the Stoic “tradition” in this regard. With its own conception of good life, principles, and philosophical arguments, Stoicism can help to improve our lives by contributing to our own understanding of good life in different dimensions for each of us. However, for this, we must first understand Stoicism correctly. I hope this thesis can serve this purpose.



(All quoted in Robertson, "Providence or Atoms? Atoms! A Defence of Being a Modern Stoic Atheist" pp. 242-246).

Marcus Aurelius:

1. Alexander of Macedon and his stable-boy were brought to the same state by death; for either they were received among the same creative principle of the universe [God], or they were alike dispersed into atoms (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 6.24).

2. If the choice for action is yours alone, then all actions are up to you. If another's, where are you to lay the blame for it? On the gods? On atoms? Either would be insanity. All thoughts of blame are out of place (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 8.17).

3. It may be that the World-Mind [God] wills each separate happening in succession; and, if so, then accept the consequences. Or, it may be there was but one primal act of will, of which all else is the sequel; every event being thus the germ of another. To put it another way, things are either isolated units [atoms], or they form one inseparable whole. If that whole be God, then all is well; but if aimless chance, at least you need not be aimless also (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 9.28).

4. Either things must have their origin in one single intelligent source [God], and all fall into place to compose, as it were, one single body - in which case no part ought to complain of what happens for the good of the whole - or else the world is nothing but atoms and their confused minglings and dispersions. So why be so harassed? (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 9.39).

5. No matter whether the universe is a confusion of atoms or a natural growth, let my first conviction be that I am part of a Whole which is under Nature's governance; and my second that a bond of kinship exists between myself and all other similar parts (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 10.6).

6. There must be either a predestined Necessity and inviolable plan, or a gracious Provident God, or a chaos without design or director. If then there be an inevitable Necessity, why kick against the pricks? If a Providence that is ready to be gracious, render thyself worthy of divine succour. But if a chaos without guide, congratulate thyself that amid such a surging sea thou hast in thyself a guiding rational faculty (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 12.14).

Epictetus:

What does it matter to me, says Epictetus, whether the universe is composed of atoms or uncompounded substances, or of fire and earth? Is it not sufficient to know the true nature of good and

evil, and the proper bounds of our desires and aversions, and also of our impulses to act and not to act; and by making use of these as rules to order the affairs of our life, to bid those things that are beyond us farewell? It may very well be that these latter things are not to be comprehended by the human mind, and even if one assumes that they are perfectly comprehensible, well what profit comes from comprehending them? And ought we not to say that those men trouble in vain who assign all this as necessary to the philosopher's system of thought? [...] What Nature is, and how she administers the universe, and whether she really exists or not, these are questions about which there is no need to go on to bother ourselves (In one of the fragments in Stobaeus attributed to Epictetus, fr. 1).

Seneca:

Perhaps someone will say: "How can philosophy help me, if Fate exists? Of what avail is philosophy, if God rules the universe? Of what avail is it, if Chance governs everything? For not only is it impossible to change things that are determined, but it is also impossible to plan beforehand against what is undetermined; either God has forestalled my plans, and decided what I am to do, or else Fortune gives no free play to my plans." Whether the truth, Lucilius, lies in one or in all of these views, we must be philosophers; whether Fate binds us down by an inexorable law, or whether God as arbiter of the universe has arranged everything, or whether Chance drives and tosses human affairs without method, philosophy ought to be our defence. She will encourage us to obey God cheerfully, but Fortune defiantly; she will teach us to follow God and endure Chance (Seneca, Letters 16).

SECOND CHAPTER

2. PROPATHEIA

2.1. The Stoic Doctrine of Propatheia / Proto-passions

It has been said that the Stoics do not allow any emotions, they have the ideal of being like a stone. This view is still accepted by many today, and it was a problem in the past too. In her *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature* Jessica Wolfe conveys the discussions taking place in relation to this view towards the Stoics: “*Fearful that Stoicism turn man into ‘blocks and stocks and senseless stones’ sixteenth-century writers ponder the question of how completely one must eliminate sense and feeling to fulfill Seneca’s paradoxical dictum that ‘to subdue passion is to be truly a man.’*”⁵⁵ (215) It seems that not turning into a stone and subduing *passion* express two discordant aspects. If one of these is realized, it is unlikely that the other be avoided. So, when Seneca says “to subdue *passion*” he perhaps did not use the word “*passion*” in the sense we understand the term. On that account, it is very important to understand what “*passion*” or “emotion” (general translation of the Greek term *pathos*) refers to as well as to understand what it does not refer to (from the Stoic perspective). In this section, the concept of “first movements” (corresponds to one of the phenomena we think today under the word “emotion”), which Stoics consider as an incipient *passion* (*propatheia*) but which is also completely different from the *passion* (*pathos*), will be discussed.

In this context, in his “The Problem with Emotions” John Sellars spotlights Seneca’s concept of “first movements” and affirms the naturalness of the following kinds of human experiences:

“All humans will experience what Seneca calls ‘first movements.’. These are when we are moved by some experience, and we might feel nervous, shocked, excited or scared, or we might even cry. All these are quite natural reactions; they are physiological responses of the body.”
(25)

All humans will occasionally show some reactions, such as shock and similar reactions, as a natural consequence of being human. This is because a person is a living organism, not a stone, having a living body. So due to the nature of people, some situations will inevitably create visible transformations in their bodies. In his “Rational Emotion in Stoicism and CBT” Donald Robertson underlines that even

the “best” Stoic is not exempt from these experiences: *“The sage will never rid himself by preventative means of the ‘raw affect’, which the body may generate as the precursor to certain unhealthy emotions.”* (98) Even the sage is vulnerable to such experiences. This refers not to an unhealthy feeling in the Stoic sense, but only to a healthy human condition. There is no evil in these experiences themselves, but how we respond to these experiences is very important for the Stoics.

In this respect, we can consider a storm story “The Reply of a Certain Philosopher, When He was Asked Why He Turned Pale in a Storm at Sea.” (NA 19.1.1-21) told by the Latin writer Aulus Gellius (2nd cent. ce). With a descriptive significance for our theme, this story contains a passage from a copy of the fifth book of Epictetus’ *Discourses* (now lost). Giving definitions of some Stoic concepts before moving on to the story will make it easier for us to understand what Epictetus is saying in this story. Epictetus speaks from within a philosophical tradition which is too difficult to understand for people who are outside of it. I want to use John Sellars’ (2006) definitions for some Stoic notions because he defines them simply and understandably for people who do not know that philosophical heritage. Also, Sellars interprets this story in the light of these definitions that are easy for everyone to understand. For this reason, his “Stoic Logic” will be my main source in this chapter.

John Sellars describes these concepts as follows:

- *“impression (phantasia) an imprint on the soul, usually the product of sensory experience but can also be the product of reasoning.”* (164) The representation of the outside world that is formed in our mind through our five senses; and the thoughts that appear suddenly and automatically can be considered as impression.
- *“assent (sunkatathesis) accepting an impression that has been presented to the soul.”* (Sellars, 163) We can evaluate the impressions and accept or reject them.
- *“adequate impression (phantasia katalēptikē) an impression the truth of which is immediately obvious and beyond doubt.”* (Sellars, 163) The characteristic of an adequate impression is that it imposes itself on reason in such a way that it cannot be put in doubt. In the middle of the midday, under the sun, by looking at the sun, we can try to assent to “it is night time”. Epictetus proclaims that if we sincerely try to do this, we will never succeed (see *Discourses*, Book 1, chapter 28).
- *“cognition (katalēpsis) an assent to an adequate impression; a building block for knowledge.”* (Sellars, 164) Looking at this definition, we see that every person has the potential to have cognitions.

Anyone can create a cognition by only assenting to adequate impressions. In the middle of the midday, under the sun, by looking at the sun, we can easily assent to “it is noontime”.

- “*knowledge (epistēmē) an organized and structured system of cognitions, akin to what would now be called scientific knowledge.*” (Sellars, 165) Considering the above example, it is not only having the cognition of daytime but also understanding how the solar system functions; this is one of the distinctive features that distinguishes the sage from everyone else (Sellars, 71). Keeping these definitions in our mind, let us go back to Aulus Gellius’ story. Gellius tells the story below.

He was once traveling by sea with a Stoic philosopher. They faced a severe storm during the sea voyage. As the storm intensified and other passengers began to fear, Gellius paid attention to how the Stoic philosopher behaved. Possibly having the same bias (the prejudice that Stoics lack all emotions and human bodily reactions) Gellius was surprised to see the philosopher scared like everyone else on the ship. After the storm passed, Gellius asked why he looked so scared. The philosopher pointed out to Gellius a passage (from a copy of the fifth book of Epictetus’ *Discourses*) associated with his ostensible fear.

In his “Stoic Logic” John Sellars clarifies what Epictetus said in this passage through a series of processes that take place step by step, with an emphasis on the relationship between “impression” (*phantasia*) and “act of assent” (*sunkatathesis*):

“First there is a perception of an external event or state of affairs, such as the man sitting under a tree or a wave above our heads. Secondly there is (in some instances) an almost involuntary and seemingly unconscious value judgement that is made about the content of the perception, such as ‘this is terrible’. Thirdly there is the presentation to the conscious mind of an impression in the form of a proposition that is composed of both the perceptual data received from outside and the unconscious value judgement. Finally, there is the act of assent or rejection of the impression.” (67)

We have no sanction and control over external perception. Unless we have a perceptual problem (and the causal history has not been interrupted, -see Frede 1987, pp. 157), these undeniable objects of perception impose themselves on the mind; “there is a wave above our heads”. Following the proposition “there is the man sitting under a tree”, there may not be a value judgment such as “this is terrible” mentioned here, but of course, when we consider Gellius’ example, this sudden, almost reflexive value judgment follows the proposition of “there is a wave above our heads”. At this point,

Sellars points the proposition “there is a wave above our heads and this is something terrible” in Gellius’ example, which is a combination of the first and second stages. The impression here, which is the subject of “the act of assent or rejection”, is not only the proposal in the first step but also the proposal that emerged in the second step.

John Sellars shows that the difference between the Stoic philosopher and other passengers on board appears in the context of how they respond to the second proposition:

“It is something like this second proposition that the terrified passengers have assented to, and it is something like this that the Stoic philosopher has been briefly overcome by, even if he will later refuse to assent to it. But of course the Stoic philosopher will happily assent to the former proposition ‘there is a wave above my head.’” (67)

The Stoic philosopher, like other passengers, may show signs of fear for a moment due to the “appearance” of this sudden event and involuntary value judgment. However, unlike other passengers, the philosopher does not blindly maintain his existing state without questioning this quick value judgment. But certainly, the proposition created by objects of perception imposing itself on the mind will be assented to by the Stoic philosopher. In his *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* Sellars notes that other passengers’ lack of awareness of their thought processes is an important part of the problem: “According to Aulus’ account, the foolish individual will not even be aware of the second stage and will assume that his impressions are an accurate reflection of external objects.” (157) Instead of seeing their impressions (when they first appear) as an event that takes place in their inner world, independent of the outside world, to think these impressions are an absolute reflection of external reality forms the basis of this problem.

Sellars exhibits that, unlike other passengers, the sage takes a completely different attitude towards his impressions:

“The sage, on the other hand, will subject his impressions to strict examination before giving or denying assent, analysing what is given and what is the product of his own involuntary judgement. By so doing, he will be able to overcome the emotions that are a product of these judgements.⁵¹In other words, the sage will use his conscious act of assent to reject his unconscious act of judgement.” (157)

The sage is aware of his own thinking process. He does not assume that his impressions are an absolute reflection of reality. Being aware of his own “first movements” and involuntary value judgments, he

observes his impressions. Through this examination, the sage will beat his sense of fear and anxiety (in the context of Stoic philosophy) by rejecting to assent to his own unconscious judgments and assenting to only the true impression of the object of perception. While the sage has no control over the sudden emergence of these involuntary value judgments, it is always in his own hands to try to be aware of and not to assent to them.

In his “Stoic First Movements in Christianity” Richard Sorabji uncovers the critical nature of the “appearance” (perception of an appearance - an impression) and “assent” distinction of Stoicism: *“Ordinary people not trained in Stoicism may give the assent of reason so automatically that they do not realize that assent is a separate operation of the mind from receiving an appearance.”* (97) A person with a Stoic education takes care not to be dragged by appearances. Stoicism encourages people to reflect on their appearances (impressions); which are perceptions, suddenly appearing thoughts and unconscious (sometimes implicit) value judgments. The way to do this is to always distinguish between “assent” and “appearance”.

In his “The Emergence of a Notion Will in Stoicism” Michael Frede also lists our other options before giving assent to an impression:

“What is up to us, what is a matter of our choice, is how we deal with our impressions. We can scrutinize them, reflect on them, try to deflate and dissolve them, dwell on them, and, of course, give assent to them. But giving assent is just one of the things which it is up to us to do, which we can choose to do.” (46)

How we manage our impressions is entirely under our control. We may ruminate about them for a long time, or we may decide that they are not important or true and direct our attention to another direction. The important thing is to be aware of this ability and our options, to practice this ability, to strengthen it more by this and other practices. Stoics try to develop this skill (and other skills) by doing “spiritual exercises” (see Hadot, 1995) such as exercises for building muscles.

Returning to the subject of “impressions”, Epictetus articulates the stance that we must adopt on them: *“What is your own, then? The use of impressions.”* (Handbook, 5) We need to remember that these are only impressions and we always have many options when responding to them (not responding is also an option). From this perspective, Richard Sorabji touches on the approach of Stoicism to appearances: *“Stoicism trains you to stand back from appearances and interrogate them without automatically giving them the assent of your reason.”* (97) Instead of seeing appearances as the reality

itself, it is always necessary to treat them first as if they were hypotheses. Instead of seeing his “self” as an entity that automatically assents to each appearance and that is located in the same area as them, the Stoic positions his “self” as a separate entity that is one step behind the appearances and capable of consciously evaluating them. Instead of a concept of “self” that is carried away by appearances, Stoicism developed a concept of “self” that is always stable and above appearances.

In his *How to Think Like a Roman Emperor: The Stoic Philosophy of Marcus Aurelius* Donald Robertson outlines this Stoic attitude as follows: “*He reminds himself to view the storm with Stoic indifference and to respond with wisdom and courage while accepting his initial nervous reaction as harmless and inevitable. What he does not do, though, is make things worse for himself by continuing to worry.*” (66) Because the Stoic sees his immediate physical reactions and panic as inevitable and harmless, he does not panic because of his immediate panic, so his first panic would not cause him to start another panic thus he can stop his panic. In other words, without intermingling with his initial sensations, feelings, thoughts, and value judgments the Stoic tries to develop the ability to evaluate them by looking at them from a higher point and to determine a strategy based on this evaluation. Robertson expounds the elements of this Stoic strategy: “*Once the pallor and anxious expression have left his face, the wise man’s anxiety tends to abate naturally, and he regains his composure before long. He reevaluates his initial anxious impressions, confidently asserting that they are both false and unhelpful.*” (66) In the light of the philosophical arguments of the Stoic teachings, the wise man evaluates the falsehoods and harms of his impression, (this is something terrible) which occurred for a moment and against his own will in the storm. He knows that by not assenting to this quick value judgment and only assenting to the impression of the object of perception, he will not maintain a sense of panic and anxiety.

At this point, some questions may come to our mind; why should the Stoic not give his assent to this value judgment? What are these philosophical arguments? In his “Marcus Aurelius and Embracing Discomfort” Patrick King articulates one of these arguments in connection with its relationship to judgment: “*They see external events not as good or bad but as indifferent. So it’s not these events, because they are ultimately indifferent, but your own judgment of these events that matters.*” (142) If no external event is good or bad, we automatically have a false impression when we add a value judgment (by saying good or bad) to external events. Once we have adopted this Stoic idea, we can reject to assent to every proposition that contains any value judgment on external events (without seeking long philosophical arguments for each proposition, for each time). So, what is “good” for

Stoics then? - *“virtue (aretē) an excellent disposition of the soul, the only thing held to be good.”* (Sellars, 166) In this context, in the chapter called “Good, Bad and *Adiaphora* in Stoicism” we tried to examine some of these Stoic arguments and related questions. In this section, allow us to continue our research within the framework of the relationship between “emotion” and “assent”.

In his “The Emotions as Value Judgements in Chrysippus” Richard Sorabji highlights the connection Stoics have established between the two: *“The initial appearance and the first movements or shocks do not have to lead on to emotion precisely because emotion requires acts of assent.”* (45) The sage is shocked, panicked, but this does not last long, because later he consciously does not assent to his unconscious judgments. As a result of this, although physical reactions occur for a moment, we cannot speak of fear (in Stoic terms). In her “Feelings without Assent” Margaret Graver punctuates the limited meaning that Stoicism attribute to the word *pathos* translated as “emotion” (or *passion*): *“The concept of ‘emotion’ (pathos), as understood by Stoics, is delimited by something other than changes of color, expression, and other observable signs of arousal.”* (86-87) These signs counted by Graver, which we may think of today under the word “emotion”, were not conceptualized by Stoics under the word *pathos*. Michael Frede makes it clear that Stoicism conceptualized such experiences not as *pathos* but as *propatheia*: *“Stoics will call an impression with such a coloring, and perhaps with the attendant bodily state, a propatheia, an incipient passion.”* (39-40) Such misleading impressions with the participation of the body precede *pathos* but must be considered differently than it.

In his “Stoic First Movements in Christianity” Richard Sorabji reveals the function and benefit of this distinction in a situation like crying, etc.: *“We need only say to ourselves, ‘these are just tears, in other words, first movements. So they are irrelevant. The only question that matters is whether I am really in a bad situation.’ The distinction of first movements can be genuinely calming.”* (99) Changes that occur in our body are not always a sign of danger. If we have decided that there is no danger, we can calmly observe the changes in our bodies and wait for them to pass. So, what is *pathos*? - *“emotion (pathos) a mental disturbance based on a rational judgement.”* (Sellars, 164) This seems to be a very interesting definition of “emotion”. We will cover this from various angles in the “The Stoic View on *Pathos / Passion*” section.

In his “Emotion as Evaluative Judgments” Robert C. Solomon makes clear the difference between *pathos* (often translated as emotion or *passion*) and “first movements” or *propatheia*:

“The passions should not be confused with their ‘first movements,’ the feelings of physiological upset and arousal that immediately follow one’s initial perception of a situation. The passion itself is what comes next, an ‘affirmation’ of those feelings as legitimate or illegitimate, as wise or foolish. Thus for the Stoics the passions are judgments, and judgments can be true or false, wise or foolish, warranted or unwarranted, and they are not just painful or pleasurable but definitive in ascertaining just how we live, how virtuous we are, how happy we can be.” (215-216)

The distinction between “first movements” and *passion* should always be considered. “First movements” is a phenomenon in which a person experiences involuntary physiological changes, sensations, feelings, and value judgments as a result of his initial perception of an event. Although these are the first signs of *passion*, they differ from it because they emerge suddenly and out of our control. On the other hand, *passion* is created by “us” and it involves the process of consciously evaluating these initial feelings and unconscious value judgments (as reasonable or nonsensical, etc.) so it is “based on a rational judgement”. It is an “affirmation” (assent) of these automatic and involuntary value judgments that creates the *passion*. Unlike other passengers, being aware of this process, the Stoic does not think that *passion* is uncontrollable like “first movements”. He does not think that he is passive in the face of *passion* and has to endure it. By not giving assent to these value judgments, he does not experience *passion*. Stoics aim to lead a virtuous, happy, and realistic life by eliminating distortions in their value judgments with philosophical arguments, assenting to only the adequate impressions, observing their “first movements” and transforming them with active and conscious participation of the mind.

2.1.1. Exercises in terms of First Impression or Adequate Impression

There are many spiritual exercises that Stoics practice in accordance with the theme of this section. We can examine several of these exercises by considering the bond between them. Let us first try to understand what Marcus Aurelius meant by saying “first impression”. In his “Exercises in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius” John Sellars elucidates what Marcus Aurelius means when he says “first impression”: “*First impressions are what is given by perception before any value-judgement has been made. The task for the aspiring philosopher is to train oneself to stop at these first impressions.*” (158) We have to throw away our own value judgments and only assent to impressions given by our perceptions. After perceiving the situation or object, we need not add anything from ourselves. To do this, we need constant practice. In his *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius advises himself as follows: “*I see that the little child is ill; this is what I see, but that he is in danger I do not see. In this way, then, abide always by first impressions and add nothing of your own from within.*” (*Meditations*, 8.49) One should only be content with what he sees and perceives precisely so one should not make a speculative inference from what he sees. The person should be constantly aware of his impressions and supervise himself.

In their “Week 36: Catch and Apply the Dichotomy of Control to Initial impressions” Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez inform that to be able to start working on our impressions, we must first notice them:

“In order to work on your judgments, you must first realize what your judgments are. This week’s exercise will help you improve your ability to catch your implicit impressions and value judgments in action. The second step, in particular, will help you begin to correct your value judgments of externals at every moment.” (217)

To make an assessment on our impressions, to develop a strategy in the light of this assessment (or to apply the strategy of not doing anything), we first need to recognize them. To do this always demands careful awareness of our impressions. Since nothing external (that is, things that are out of our control, we covered this in the chapter: “Good, Bad and *Adiaphora* in Stoicism”) is good or bad in itself, each impression containing a value judgment about the externals is always false.

In his “Practice 37 Avoid Rashness: Test Your Impressions (!)” Jonas Salzgeber notes that we should not react hastily to our impressions: “*We must distinguish between the facts and our added*

value judgments. *What's the fact? What did I add? The key to be able to do that is to postpone our reaction.*" (217) When our impressions first appear in our minds, we should not immediately consider them a true representation of reality. We must give ourselves time before we react to our impressions. Salzgeber quotes Epictetus who asserts this as: *"Be not swept off your feet by the vividness of the impression, but say: 'Wait for me a little, impression: allow me to see who you are, and what you are an impression of; allow me to put you to the test.'*" (216) No matter how realistic our impressions look, we should always be aware that they are only the impressions of our minds. We must separate our own sense of "self" from our impressions and evaluate the impressions that appear in our minds objectively.

In his "The Inner Citadel, or the Discipline of Assent" Pierre Hadot accents that this objectivity concern is what is meant in the term "adequate impression":

"These representations, which appear to be discourses which 'strike reality and penetrate it through and through,' correspond to 'objective' or 'adequate' representations, as these are conceived by Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. They do not add anything to reality; rather, they define it in its nudity, by separating it from the value-judgments which people feel obliged to add to it, whether by habit, under the influence of social prejudices, or out of passion." (105)

Epictetus' term "adequate impressions" are the same as Marcus' "first impressions", that is, initial impressions that are not added to any value judgment (Sellars, 162). If we add these value judgments because of habit, we need to look for ways to discard this bad habit. The best way to change a habit is to replace it with a new habit. Thence, we must make it a habit to give description "reality as it is" (objectively) and step away from our value judgments. Doing this requires working not only on our own value judgments but also on those that society imposes on us. Since our *passions*, which arise as a result of assent to these value judgments, also cause these value judgments to increase, we should also work on our *passions*. Again, one way of doing this includes not assenting to our value judgments. Hadot quotes Epictetus about this topic: *"(Arrian, Discourses, III, 8, 5): He was sent to jail. What happened? He was sent to jail. But 'He is unhappy' is added by oneself [i. e., subjectively]."* (104) It is objectively verifiable information that a person is sent to prison. However, when we say that he is unhappy, we are just speculating. This is a subjective interpretation we add to what we see. If possible, we should never do this, but if we do, as soon as we realize that we are doing this, we should not assent to such a proposition. Pierre Hadot recapitulates this stoic approach as follows:

“We can call this kind of definition ‘physical,’ since it frees our representations from every kind of subjective and anthropomorphic consideration, as well as from every relation to the human point of view, in order to define them, as it were, scientifically and physically.” (105)

For the Stoics, an effort to see and consider reality means an effort to consider it physically or scientifically. This exertion is to refuse to delineate the world with our habits, *passions*, and the value judgments of the society. This effort is that a conscious being, without human *passions*, describes something or state of affairs it has seen many times as if it was seeing them for the first time. However, this pure consciousness always depicts it “as it is” so everything is very familiar. Death is always the same. Our own death or the fact that the deceased is our own relative cannot change this. Death has no good or evil in itself. What makes death good or bad is our human value judgments -the word “value judgment” in the *Cambridge Dictionary* is defined as: “a statement about how good or bad you think something is, based on personal opinion rather than facts.” (“Value judgment”) Marcus Aurelius provides an example of this physical definition: “When we have meat before us and such eatables, we receive the impression that this is the dead body of a fish, and this is the dead body of a bird or of a pig.” (49) The versatile and objective definition of reality replaces a one-sided and distorted definition of it resulting from our own subjectivity. For the Stoics, it is necessary to illustrate the external reality without classifying it as good and evil because there is only one good (virtue) and only one evil (vice) for them. Accordingly, what really important is eating virtuously, eating for virtue (in moderation, by sharing it with others etc.).

John Sellars characterizes this kind of Stoic perception of the world: “For Marcus the ‘point of view of the cosmos’ is just like this, namely a perspective free from the first person perspective and its value-judgements (ὑπολήψεις).” (163) This may be called looking at the world through the eyes of the whole universe, so the external reality is described as neutral, not as good and evil. Sellars quotes Marcus Aurelius who affirms that people should position themselves in this manner in life: “Salvation in life depends on seeing everything in its entirety and its reality, in its matter (τούλικόν), and in its cause (τό αίτιώδες).⁸²” (163) We must grasp the law of cause and effect in the cosmos and ourselves. The liberation of ourselves and all mankind depends on this kind of understanding. Sellars indicates the fundamental position of this approach in stoic philosophy: “The stoic ideal of living in accordance with nature (ὁμολογουμένως τή φύσει ζήν) involves experiencing the world in precisely this way.” (163) One of the meanings of this Stoic motto (to live in accordance with Nature), which is the basis of Stoicism, involves comprehending the world in a scientific and physical way, free from value

judgments. Sellars sets out that an important way to figure out *The Meditations* and spiritual exercises in it is to grab this meaning of this Stoic maxim: “*The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius might best be understood as a collection of spiritual exercises directed towards the cultivation of this immanent non-individualistic perspective.*” (164) The basic function of the exercises is based on the fact that the person, who thinks of himself as an isolated entity that is detached from the Whole, makes sense of his own existence again in the Whole and acts accordingly. In these exercises, one is expected to grasp the reality in the framework of the integrity and cause/effect relation of the universe without distorting it with his own subjective judgments.

In *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius* edited by Marcel van Ackeren, by referring to Hadot, Jean-Baptiste Gourinat utters the importance of such exercises for Marcus Aurelius:

“The impression ‘declares’ something, as Marcus says, and we wrongly add something to this declaration – it may be a value judgment, but it may also be a speculative proposition. In the first case, a passion may occur if one gives assent to the ‘added’ judgment, and, in all cases, one has to stick to the first impression, which is the only one to describe reality adequately. To habituate oneself not to add anything to the first judgment is one of Marcus’ favorite exercises (see Hadot (1998) 101–105).” (427)

The source of the problem is that we add something to reality that does not exist itself. *Passions* are a product of our false beliefs that result from our assent to the value judgments that do not exist in reality. Hence, *passions* are bad because they are not compatible with reality, Nature, they are based on false judgments, they mislead us, and again and again, therefore, we have to obliterate them. So, with the exercises we do, we should make it a habit to stop at “the first impressions” that “describe reality adequately” and give our assent to them only if true. Only in this way can we live a realistic, happy, and good life, free from our *passions*, according to the Stoics.

THIRD CHAPTER

3. PATHOS

3.1. Introduction

Many of us believe that the Stoics try to suppress emotions or dispose of them all and they are emotionless as a stone. The general idea is that the Stoics profess that “good life” is a life free of emotions. In this sense, all emotions are the enemies of the good life. The objections to the idea of a “human being” completely free of emotions and “ideal life” are also quite reasonable; our emotions are one of the most valuable parts that make us human. Denying our feelings is to deny ourselves. Suppressing feelings is a harmful, painful, and impossible effort. Emotions are an indispensable part of a healthy life. Emotions are useful, they guide us, make us realize our needs. What is overlooked in the view which the Stoics are trying to get rid of emotions is that they have tried to get rid of *pathos* in Greek, not emotions; so they talked about *pathos*, not emotions (Sellars). In this respect, traditionally, *pathos* has been translated as *passion* rather than emotion, which reflects the word *passio* in Latin. Even though the word *passion* is more technical and narrower than the word emotion, I think it may also cause misunderstandings. It is ignored that there are also good *passions* (*eupatheia* in Greek) in Stoicism when it is told that the Stoics want to remove all the *passions*. Consequently, trying to understand what the Stoics mean when they say *pathos* will challenge the “emotionless Stoic” understanding. As I mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, John Sellars’ article (“Stoicism and Emotion”) will be my main source in this paper. As we can also clearly understand from his article “Rational Emotions in Stoicism and CBT”, Donald Robertson, who is a psychotherapist applying stoic therapy in a clinic setting, obviously has no goal of making a new emotionless life for his clients. In this matter, Robertson’s article will be my main second source. The subject of this article is to discuss the “emotionlessness” of the Stoics.

3.2. The Stoic View on Pathos / Passion

In her *Tranquility Parenting: A Guide to Staying Calm, Mindful, and Engaged* Brittany B. Polat accentuates this popular belief (emotionlessness) about the Stoics and the role of language in the formation of this assumption:

“Stoics in the past have been criticized for being ‘emotionless’ or for wanting to get rid of emotions. This is not true at all! However, there is a reason for this misunderstanding. It’s because the ancient Stoics always talked about eliminating ‘passions’. But they used the word ‘passion’ differently from the way we use it in English today.” (Polat, 2019, 7)

Polat explicitly pronounces that this false belief is not valid. The source of the problem is that the things that the Stoics refer to as *passion* and the things we understand from the word *passion* are different. What the Stoics want to throw away is something different from what we understand from the word “emotion” or *passion*. In his *The Philosophy of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: Stoic Philosophy as Rational and Cognitive Psychotherapy* Donald Robertson again marks the role of language in this misunderstanding of the Stoics:

“One of the greatest obstacles to a modern understanding of Stoicism is perhaps caused by the conventional use of the English Word ‘passion’ to translate the Greek word pathos. Stoicism is widely misinterpreted as a kind of cold intellectualism because translations of Stoic literature and academic discussion of it tend to talk about Stoic therapy as if it were about removing all passions.” (Robertson, 2010, 77-78)

The word *passion* is not sufficient to fully meet the word *pathos*. If these two are partly different things, trying to destroy one cannot mean that the other is to be destroyed. If all human *passions* are to be destroyed, it is a cold, boring, dry mind that remains for mankind and no one wants to live such a dull life. Robertson questions how this philosophical school, which was very popular in its time, attracted people by promising a life of “emotionless”:

“The notion of completely eradicating all emotion is so counterintuitive that we should at least pause for a moment to ask whether a practical philosophical therapy based upon common sense principles, shared by so many people, could feasibly have survived, for so many centuries, by promoting such a palpably absurd and unworkable goal.” (Robertson, 2010, 78)

A philosophical tradition practiced in every aspect of everyday life cannot survive by making such a nonsensical promise for centuries. If the Stoics had promised a life utterly devoid of emotions, what repels us reasonably from Stoicism today also would repel ancient people. Just like we do today, the

people who lived in the past would have rightly objected to this “good life” conception (Like the objections mentioned in the introduction paragraph, see Sellars, “Stoicism and Emotions”). Robertson denotes this translation challenge: *“Of course, this is categorically not what Stoicism recommends but a frustratingly common misconception, which, although it goes back to Graeco-Roman times, is reinforced in our own time by the difficulty of translating the Stoic word for ‘passion’.”* (Robertson, 2010, 78) Misunderstandings arise from the translation from Greek to English. The same difficulty was experienced in the translation from Greek to Latin. If we analyze what the Stoics understand from the word *pathos* in awareness of this translation difficulty, we will realize that the claim that the Stoics said, “we must throw out all emotions for a good life” does not reflect the truth. Looking at the meaning of the word “emotion” in the *Oxford Dictionary*, we see that it is considered as something completely separate from reason: *“Instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge.”* (“Emotion”) The word “emotion” reflects a situation in which knowledge and reason have never been involved but if we look at what the Stoics understand from the word *pathos*, we can see the decisive involvement of the mind. Looking at the meaning of the word “passion” in the *Oxford Dictionary*, we also see that the connection between “reason” and *passion* is lost: *“A state or outburst of strong emotion.”* (“Passion”) When the Stoics talk about good *passions* and insist that these *passions* are completely rational, it would be wrong to think of them as uncontrolled bursts of “emotion”. If the “emotion” is different from reasoning or knowledge, then *passion*, which is a “strong emotion”, is also different from reasoning and knowledge. Polat explicates what the Stoic *passion* encompasses: *“Often negative emotion, such as anger, fear, greed, and envy.”* (Polat, 2019, 8) The word *passion* for the Stoics represents a very limited sense of emotion. This means for the Stoics there are other emotions that they do not want to terminate. Robertson highlights Cicero’s choice when translating the word *passion* from Greek to Latin: *“In the third volume of his Tusculan Disputations, dealing with the emotions, Cicero proposed to translate pathos into Latin as morbus, meaning not ‘passion’ but ‘disease.’”* (Robertson, 2010, 79) To eradicate misunderstandings caused by the word *passion*, Cicero thought that the Stoics were referring to a kind of illness rather than a sense of emotion. Robertson also mentions that the word *passion* in English can be used not only for negative emotions but also for other emotions: *“The English word ‘passion’ has come to denote strong emotion in general, including healthy emotions like courage and love.”* (Robertson, 2010, 78) “Courage” is one of the most fundamental virtues of the Stoics. Also “love”, for the Stoics who are trying to live in harmony with

Nature and people is a very important doctrine. Robertson remarks on the difficulty of translating other words in which the word *passion* is involved:

“Seneca also wrestled with the problem of translating the Greek word apatheia into Latin as impatientia, its nearest equivalent, which carried slightly different connotations. He concluded that it would be preferable to explicitly emphasize that the term refers to a mind which is ‘invulnerable’, or ‘above all suffering.’ (Seneca, 2004, p. 48).” (Robertson, 2010, 79)

The word *apatheia* (freedom from *passion*) refers not to a state of indifference but it is equanimity of mind so it does not mean that we lack all emotions regardless of mind. Again, the word *passion* does not include the active role of the mind in this harmonious mental state.

In her “The Psychology of Compassion: Stoicism in *City of God*” Sarah Byers cites what the Stoics understand from the word *pathos*: “*Passion according to Zeno of Citium’s definition of pathos as it appears in Cicero: a movement of the rational soul or mind that is contrary to right reason.*” (Byers, 2012, 132) As it is understood from this definition, *pathos* is completely and directly related to reason. In this sense, *passion* is the result of an illusion of the mind. Robertson, by referring to Long, displays what *pathos* is:

“In Greek philosophy generally, but especially in Stoicism, the word pathos specifically denotes emotions which are irrational, unhealthy, and excessive Long emphasizes that the Stoic feels rational positive and negative emotions and defines the ‘passions’ from which he seeks to free himself as ‘faulty judgments manifested in ‘excessive’ or ‘irrational’ impulses”. (Long, 2002, pp. 244).” (Robertson, 2010, 78)

Pathos is the result of our false, misleading, and erroneous judgments. It is damaging because it is inaccurate. *Pathos* is exaggerated because it is not compatible with reality. It reveals itself in irrational impulses as a result of false beliefs. Human reason has an active role in its emergence and also the Stoic has rational emotions too. Robertson shows the etymology of the words *passion* and *pathos*, stating that the Stoics mean something opposite to the meaning of these words when they use them:

“The English word ‘passion’ derives from the Latin pati, ‘to suffer’... The word ‘passive’ derives from the same root and from the fact that pathos, or passion, originally denoted the kind of emotion that we suffer or are victims of, feeling passive in relation to it because it seems ‘out of control’. By contrast, for the Stoics, we become (cognitively) active in relation to our rational emotions in the sense that we have chosen to experience them and, therefore, perceive

ourselves as having more control of them, in so far as we can choose what to think.”
(Robertson, 2010, 79)

Pathos or *passion* (in its conventional meaning) happens to us beyond our ability to control and it makes us feel like we are a kind of victim. In this regard, it may be said that we are not responsible for *pathos* or *passion* as it is out of our control. On the contrary, according to the Stoics, the reason for our emotional pain is not external things that we cannot control. We are not victims, passively crushed under external factors. For the Stoics, *pathos* or *pathê*, (plural of *pathos*) *passions* are not the things that we have no control over. We can manage them by changing our thoughts. We always have the chance to choose how to think. Not to experience unhealthy and distorted *passions* is always possible with the active participation of our minds. Wherefore, the main reason why people think that the Stoics suggest a life free from emotions is that the Stoics used and thought the word *passion* or *pathos* in different content and context than its conventional meaning.

Dougal Blyth outlines what this word “actually” means to the Stoics:

“Now since the Stoics conceive of pathê as impulses originating in ourselves, the use of the term has lost its primary implication that a pathos is a passive reaction... Thus the operative element in the semantic range of the word is now just, and distinctively, ‘suffering’... For the Stoics, pathos denotes self-harm, as such.” (143)

Pathos or *passion* (for the Stoics) is generated by us so we are responsible for them. We can obliterate them by correcting our judgments. In this sense, John Sellars describes *pathos* as follows: “(*pathos*) a mental disturbance based on a rational judgement.” (Stoicism, 2006, Sellars, 164) As can be understood from this definition, *pathos* is a kind of disease (i.e. we suffer, “mental disturbance”) caused by our cognitive distortions.

In this respect, in his *Stoicism, Enkrasia and Happiness: How Stoic Philosophy Can Bring Happiness* John L. Bowman explicates why *passions* must be destroyed: “*The passions are unnatural, irrational, and a disease of the soul that must be expelled completely. They believed that we overcome the world when we overcome our passions.*” (Bowman, 2011, 18) *Passions* are not something that the Stoics do away with just because they do not like it. The Stoics stay away from *passions* because *passions* are not in harmony with Nature (i.e. facts). They are based on false and irrational beliefs. Sarah Byers calls attention to mental training and false judgment about the “external things” in the sense of Stoic *passion*: “*Failure to train one’s thoughts in the truth results in morally bad emotions*

caused by erroneous judgments that loss of a job, the death of relatives, winning the lottery, getting a promotion, and so on are important for happiness.” (Byers, 2012, 132) What makes us unhappy is our false value judgments about what makes us happy. We are anxious about losing our job because we believe we will be seriously affected by loss of income; we mistakenly believe that a certain level of material prosperity is necessary to be happy (Sellars). What makes us miserable is not to lose our job but “assent to” a proposition that “something very bad has happened”. Byers illuminates the relationship between *passion* and judgments, expectations in the Stoic theory:

“Fear is caused by the judgment that something bad will happen; grief, by the judgment that something bad has happened. Desire results from the belief that something good is to be attained in the future; joy is caused by the judgment that something good has happened.”
(Byers, 2012, 132)

I would not be sad if I could understand that losing my job was not a bad thing. The main reason for my fear is my belief that I will be broke and unhappy. What upsets me is not the loss of my job, but my way of interpreting this situation. Byers underlines the Stoic’s requirement of “truth” when they are classifying emotions: *“What makes emotions good or bad is the truth or falsity of the judgments.”* (Byers, 2012, 132) We should turn away from *passions* not only because they are painful but because they are philosophically wrong and thus they are bad (Sellars). That is, “emotions” are classified by the Stoics as good or bad, not in terms of pain or pleasure, but in terms of their relationship with the “truth”.

In his *Stoicism and the Art of Happiness: Practical Wisdom for Everyday Life* Robertson brings out the tight bond between wisdom and “happiness”:

“One of the most important philosophical arguments of the Stoics was that it is impossible to imagine someone who is on the one hand a wise and good man, having attained perfect eudaimonia, and, on the other hand, still plagued by emotional disturbance or pathological desires. The Stoics famously refer to these as the ‘passions’ (pathê); they believed them to be the root cause of all human suffering, and essentially toxic to eudaimonia.” (Robertson, 2013, 53)

It is impossible for a person to be both wise and unhappy. It is also nice to dispose of disturbing *passions*, but the Stoics do not except *passions* only for this reason. They are in the pursuit of true knowledge and truth but at the same time, they pronounce that the only way to achieve “happiness” is

to reach the truth with the right philosophical arguments and to avoid false judgments. *Passions* are obstacles that stand in front of reality and mislead us and surely, nobody wants their beliefs to be mistaken. Polat adds that *passions* are detrimental because they lead us to make more erroneous judgments: “*The Stoics said that you can’t ever be happy or peaceful if you allow these negative emotions to take you over. No one makes good decisions when they are angry or jealous or afraid. So we should work hard to root out the negative passions.*” (Polat, 2019, 8) Although *passions* are bad with regard to based on false judgments, they are also bad because they are the cause of more wrong judgments. No one can have false judgments and be “happy” at the same time. We all must work on our *passions*, beliefs, value judgments to live according to Nature and a good, happy life. By presenting their own philosophical arguments, the Stoics offer people a philosophical therapy (Sellars). They try to teach people how to distinguish right and wrong value judgments. If we continue with the example of losing my job, I am sad and frightened when I lost my job because of my value judgment that the indispensable condition of happiness was material prosperity; the Stoics assert that this value judgment is false by presenting counter-examples and philosophical arguments (Sellars).

In his *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* A. A. Long states why the Stoics advocate that material prosperity (and all external things) cannot be necessary for happiness:

“Everything that falls outside the individual’s volition, including family, status, country, the condition of one’s body, material prosperity – all of these are inessential to its perfection and the freedom or happiness that this perfection constitutes. Not only are these things inessential, but also attachment to them is a certain recipe for disappointment, anxiety, and unhappiness.”
(Long, 2007, 29)

Basing my happiness on things that are not in my control and to say “good” and “bad” to them would hurt me. I may lose my material prosperity at any time, it is not under my control. No matter how good an employee I am or will be, I can become unemployed because of a crisis in the market. Also, when we observe the people around us, we can see a lot of rich but unhappy, poor but happy people. I can be unhappy as the owner of wealth or I can be happy without wealth. This shows that being rich is not necessary to be happy. Besides, I am not my car or home. I should build my understanding of “good”, “evil” and “happiness” on the basis of things that are always under my control and always benefit me (“virtue” is the only good and is itself sufficient to create “happiness”, “vice” is the only evil) but on the other hand, wealth is not like that (and all the other things that are out of my control). In his

Stoicism John Sellars unravels the Stoic attitude towards things beyond our control: “*It is perfectly natural, they suggest, to prefer to be healthy rather than ill, or rich rather than poor. Health and wealth would be examples of ‘preferred indifferents’, with sickness and poverty being ‘non-preferred indifferents’.*” (Sellars, 2006, repr. 2014, 111-112) Of course, each one of us prefers to be rich rather than to poor but when we realize that being wealthy is not the sufficient and necessary condition to be happy, we will be free from unnecessary suffering when we lose our job. The Stoics want to annihilate *passions* not just because the *passions* themselves are unpleasant, but because they are based on wrong judgments. Free from the *passions*, happy and good life is only possible by correcting our false value judgments. According to the Stoics, the way to achieve this is to think about our value judgments with philosophical arguments.

3.3. Conclusion

Briefly, Stoicism is not merely to suppress emotions or refuse to complain. But because people do not know the difference between the capital (S) Stoicism and the lower case “s” stoicism, they think that the only goal of Stoicism is to suppress emotions. But if we look at the *Oxford Dictionary*, we see that there are big differences in the meanings of these two words. The lower case “s” stoicism is: “*The endurance of pain or hardship without the display of feelings and without complaint.*” (“stoicism”). On the other hand, capital (S) Stoicism is:

“An ancient Greek school of philosophy founded at Athens by Zeno of Citium. The school taught that virtue, the highest good, is based on knowledge; the wise live in harmony with the divine Reason (also identified with Fate and Providence) that governs nature, and are indifferent to the vicissitudes of fortune and to pleasure and pain.” (“Stoicism”)

(S)toicism cannot only be described as not showing emotions and it is not just about emotional endurance. (S)toicism transforms negative emotions based on false value judgments and beliefs into positive emotions by using rational arguments and emotional endurance just refers to a single aspect of the great philosophical structure of it. It is one of the great and well-established Ancient Greek school of philosophy. To avoid such misunderstandings, Robertson suggests another word as an alternative to the word *passion*:

“I would suggest that the term ‘emotional disturbance’ better and more accurately conveys the meaning to modern practitioners of psychotherapy than the conventional translation as ‘passion’. The false notion of the Stoic as a ‘cold fish’, someone ‘intellectualizing’ or ‘rationalizing’ things defensively, at the expense of feeling, has done more to deter modern readers than any other misconception.” (Robertson, 2010, 263)

When people are told that the Stoics want to discard all the *passions* (or emotions), modern listeners who do not know the place of “*passion*” in the entire Stoic system will inevitably have certain prejudices. Just as Cicero did when he translated the word *pathos* (morbus, meaning not “*passion*” but “disease”) from Greek to Latin, Robertson proposes a similar intervention. If dealt with in this manner, he designates that love, one of the most fundamental doctrines of Stoicism, cannot be overshadowed by prejudices caused by the understanding of “being away from *passion*”: *“Its theory of the ideal sage as being animated by a philosophical love of existence; free from passion, in the sense of emotional disturbance, but nevertheless full of love, as Marcus Aurelius put it.”* (Robertson, 2010, 263) A loveless life cannot be imagined for the ideal Stoic who sees herself and others as a part of this great and perfect structure (Divine Providence), committed to living in harmony with Nature and people (kinship of mankind). After all these explanations, instead of translating “*pathos*” as *passion* or emotion, we may argue that it would be better to translate it as “mental disturbance” or “emotional disturbance” (in a way that fits with what the Stoics really mean). Alternatively, we may avoid such prejudices against Stoicism by using the word *pathos* without translating it into any other language, and by explaining how the Stoics defined it in their systems (an “emotion” that we are “cognitively active” etc.), and also by emphasizing the importance they attach to love.

3.4.1. The Exercises of the Pathos / Passion

The Stoics designed many exercises on *pathos* as well as other types of emotion. In fact, it is rather incomplete to think of these exercises only around a certain type of emotion. In some ways, the same exercise can contribute to cultivating *eupatheiai* (good emotions) in addition to being a therapy of *pathos* or *passion*. In this regard, it can be misleading to consider these exercises only as the practice of a particular (Stoic) theory or to think of them under certain definite categories. Instead, it should be borne in mind that a complex exercise with many aspects is handled in respect of only its one aspect, and sometimes relatively the most noticeable one. In this sense, in this section, we will discuss the Stoic “point of view of the cosmos” in relation to *pathos*, which we discussed in the section called “Exercises in terms of First Impression or Adequate Impression”. Before we try to examine the “point of view of the cosmos” allow us to start with another exercise.

In his “The promise of Philosophy (‘Therapy of the Passions’)”, cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist Donald Robertson depicts an exercise (“Try it now: Two-column Control Appraisal”) designed for recognizing things not within our power and things within our power, one of the most fundamental propositions of the Stoic theory of *passions*:

“1. Pick a specific situation or problem that’s bothering you. 2. Draw two columns headed ‘control’ and ‘not control’. 3. Now try to list all the aspects of the situation that are under your direct control in the column headed ‘control’. 4. List all the aspects that are outside of your direct control in the other column (‘not control’). 5. Think about this carefully. Go back and review it if necessary. The Stoics would say that only things truly under our direct control (‘up to us’) are our voluntary thoughts and intentions to act. Everything else can potentially turn out against our wishes.” (Robertson)

This is such a simple exercise that its psychological potency can be underestimated. However, this simple awareness can open the door to a radical transformation of perceiving the world and directing our behavior. Regardless of the situation in which we ask (What is in my control? What is not in my control?), we realize that we get the same answer over and over again. The only things we can always control are our own “voluntary” thoughts, judgments, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. Everything else is outside of our total control. Trying to control and change something we cannot control, not to accept it, and to resist it is to create an irrational *pathos*. What makes sense is only to concentrate on the things

that we can control, to work on them, and to accept unconditionally the things that we cannot control. This formula takes on a special meaning in the Stoic system as the Stoics think it is completely in our control to accept the things that we cannot control. So being free of *passion* and being happy (“happiness” is a mere by-product of virtue in the Stoic context) is always under our control and cannot be prevented by anyone or anything.

In their “WEEK 15: Remind Yourself of Impermanence”, Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez exhibit another exercise for the radical acceptance of things that we cannot control: “*Suppose your favorite mug breaks. Instead of getting angry or upset, pause, look at it, and tell yourself: Well, it was a mug, I knew it could be broken, but I enjoyed many wonderful cups of coffee thanks to it! Then, slowly, tackle more difficult things.*” (100) Although we cannot change things that we cannot control in life, we can always change our perspective. This is not to deceive oneself and others, but to try to look at the existing reality from different angles and to explore it from all aspects, in different ways. It is to understand and remember the real nature of the mug, its fragility.

Epictetus offers a very extreme example of “more difficult things”: “*If you are fond of a jug, say you are fond of a jug; then you will not be disturbed if it be broken. If you kiss your child or your wife, say to yourself that you are kissing a human being, for then if death strikes it you will not be disturbed.*” (*Enchiridion*, 3). This quote of Epictetus is shocking for many modern readers, however, the sage must know the truth about the nature of man. The sage knows man is mortal. She cannot fight reality. She cannot win that war. She must live in harmony with it. So, does this radical cognition of death mean that we should never suffer or we will not suffer when our loved one dies?

Seneca gives a clear answer to this question: “*Am I advising you to be hard-hearted, desiring you to keep your countenance unmoved at the very funeral ceremony, and not allowing your soul even to feel the pinch of pain? By no means. That would mean lack of feeling rather than virtue.*” (*Letters to Lucilius*, 99.15) Of course, we will cry because we are a living organism, a social animal, not a stone. However; as the opposite of *pathos* this will be natural, moderate, real, sacred, and rich grief, which naturally decreases over a certain period of time. Even in this type of situation, Pigliucci and Lopez stress the importance of staying objective and looking at it in all its aspects. They also propose a method of doing this. What would I say to a loved one if he were going through the same thing?:

“We remind others that life isn’t always fair, that loss is natural, that they should think about the happy times they shared with the person who died, and that they should focus on the

future—on the many things they can still do and the people still here to care for. This is sound advice, and it works. The losses we suffer don't become trivial or unimportant, and we don't become uncaring or unfeeling. Putting things in perspective makes us more attentive to what we have and often don't appreciate, and more resilient in the face of tragedy.” (100)

There is nothing surprising in this. Everything is natural as it should be. Every person eventually dies. Life in this world is like entering through a door and getting out by another. Even if we do not know when the exit door will be opened for us, everything is normal because we know that it will be definitely opened for us on a certain day. Although we—and people we love—are here now, all of us will leave the room, too. Then an extreme and irrational sadness is out of place for the outgoing.

Pigliucci and Lopez explore this Stoic attitude in the framework of virtue and “indifference”:
“The point is not to become callous or indifferent in the modern sense of the word, but to become indifferent in the Stoic sense—you still have your virtue and your character, and they allow you to handle anything that the universe throws your way.” (100) We do not need to rush to leave the room while we still have other loved ones around; and because there is virtue, a happy and meaningful life is still possible. We can express our gratitude to the outgoing by realizing her values and adopting her virtues. The perspective change facilitates a more objective and realistic assessment of the existing situation. We still love the person who has gone. All of these are not things that will diminish our love even a bit. Pigliucci and Lopez disclose the function of this exercise:

“Think of this exercise as a vaccine against impermanence and loss—it inoculates and strengthens your psychological immune system to change. It isn't just about preventing negative passions from occurring; many who practice this exercise find that it also instills a sense of gratitude, allowing you to appreciate what you have while you have it.” (102)

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, it would be wrong to conceptualize an exercise with only one aspect of it. This exercise is not only a way to remove our *passions*, but in addition, it is also a way to increase our sense of appreciation. When evaluating these exercises under certain categories, it is important to keep this point in mind, in order not to overlook the richness of them. In this regard, Pigliucci and Lopez liken this exercise to another Stoic exercise, which “*is a kind of premeditatio malorum.*” (102) The benefits listed for *Premeditatio Malorum* (“the premeditation of adversity”), which we will discuss later, are also valid for this exercise.

In his “The Point of View of the Cosmos” John Sellars unfolds another exercise that prevents us from looking from a one-sided and narrow perspective, the manifestation of the ideal of looking at reality from a wider perspective: *“Marcus writes that one should not hold on to the opinions of all men, but only to those of men who live in accordance with nature.¹² Only the Stoic sage experiences things as they are according to nature, that is, as they are in themselves.¹³”* (150) No matter how radical it seems to, a Stoic should not forget that her loved ones and herself are mortal, that is, she should always try to see the true nature of herself and everything. Such a view involves the unconditional acceptance of the world as it is, as a whole. Marcus Aurelius portrays human life from this radical perspective, this “cosmic point of view”:

“Of man’s life, his time is a point, his substance flowing, his perception faint, the constitution of his whole body decaying, his soul a spinning wheel, his fortune hard to predict, and his fame doubtful; that is to say, all the things of the body are a river, the things of the soul dream and delusion, life is a war and a journey in a foreign land, and afterwards oblivion.”¹⁴ (*Meditations*, 2.17, quoted in Sellars 2009, pp. 150)

This quote of Marcus Aurelius may appear pretty pessimistic to the modern reader. However, here Marcus wants to focus his attention on the fundamental point in life. Everything in life, including himself, is in a change, transformation, separation, and extinction. “Change” is such an obvious, ubiquitous, and irresistible fact that resisting it and sticking to something will certainly produce unnecessary mental suffering in man. John Sellars evaluates this exercise in connection with “change”:

“Marcus uses this perspective in order to devalue human anxieties and concerns. The suggestion is that by placing what appears to be stable within the broader context of a cosmos defined by constant flux, one can become aware of, and open to, the inevitable change of all things – change in circumstance, change in fortune, change in health, and, above all, the change from life to death.” (153)

This attitude is not an expression of pessimistic positioning, but rather it is an effort to evaluate everything related to human nature (and the world) objectively by considering the whole and reality. Unlike pessimism, such a view (this realistic approach) creates a therapeutic effect and establishes peace. Nothing is lost (even if a person dies) and “gain” (not to get carried away) in a continually changing and transforming universe. Accordingly, it is necessary to maintain the same emotional state (equanimity) in “loss” and “gain”.

Sellars tackles death and change at the same time: *“The fundamental law of the cosmos is the inevitability of continual transformation and it is within this context that Marcus wants to understand death. Death is not the end but merely an internal rearrangement in a much larger cosmic system.”* (153) According to Stoic “cosmobiology” (Sellars, 153), everything moves in perfect order, system, unison, harmony, causality. Neither birth nor death nor anything is a surprise. Everything flows and what Marcus actually is one component within this cosmos, movement, cycle, mystery, sacred cosmic order, reason, the whole universe. Marcus looks at his own death from every standpoint possible, from the standpoint of cosmos:

“I was composed of a formal and a material substance; and of these neither will pass away into nothingness, just as neither came to exist out of nothingness. Thus, every part of me will be assigned its place by change into some part of the cosmos, and that again into another part of the cosmos, and so on to infinity.” (Meditations, 5.13.)

Man is not a detached and isolated entity. Both human and everything changes constantly. So, it is necessary to make sense of life, death, and everything according to this ultimate truth underlying existence. If change is inevitable whether we want it or not, if this is a truth, as rational beings, we should organize our experiences (our judgments, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors) according to this truth. Sellars goes around the function of this exercise in connection with change:

“By overcoming the limited perspective of the individual with its assumption of stability, one will be able to escape the emotional disturbances (τάθη) that occur when the only ever apparently stable is inevitably transformed. Freeing oneself of this limited first person perspective will free one from the emotional turmoil that goes with it. From the cosmic perspective, everything is in a continual state of change and nothing is expected to remain stable for long. In this sense, the ‘point of view of the cosmos’ enables one to free oneself from attachment to particular external objects, to free oneself from the bad passions that accompany such attachments, and thus to cultivate well-being (εὐδαιμονία).” (154)

Resisting change is an unnatural (irrational) source of mental pain, as it is impossible to stop it. So, instead of resisting change, we must accept, “love”, and “want” everything that comes from it, everything that happens to us. The task of the rational person (that is what one should logically do), who is one of the essential components of this change, is to try to change what is under his control and to accept the rest. And for a Stoic accepting the rest is entirely under his control. In this sense,

recognizing what he can control (and change) and accepting the rest is vital to be able to good flow (live) in harmony with the change, universe, flux. One way for accepting the rest (externals) is to change one's point of view. One must look at the world from "the point of view of the cosmos" (*"physical or scientific approach"*, Sellars 153; also see chapter: "Exercises in terms of First Impression or Adequate Impression"). In the light of this cosmic perspective, neither death nor the loss of anything else produces "bad *passions*" in one.

In her *Stoic Spiritual Exercises* Elen Buzaré examines this exercise as regards to the "indifferents" that is a very important Stoic concept: "*When we look at things from the perspective of the Cosmos, those things which do not depend on us, and which Stoics call 'indifferents', are brought back to their true proportions.*" (58-59) Even from a limited first-person perspective, at the end of the day, we know that we will "lose" everything in life, including our own life. The real question is whether we will experience an irrational pain by resisting it, or whether we will accept it voluntarily. Concerning Stoicism, first of all, the "loss" of all these "externals" has ceased to be a loss for the Stoic who looks at all externals from a cosmic perspective (that is, free from value judgments, that is, a scientific, physical, objective view). Owing to this exercise, the Stoic realizes that good or evil lies not in the externals themselves, so he can stay "indifferent" to them.

The Stoics aim to see the truth as it is with philosophical arguments (in the strict sense). On the other hand, *pathos* is misleading, both because it depends upon false (value) judgments attributed to externals, and it also prevents us from seeing the truth; it is more likely to make false judgments when we are angry or upset. Thence, we need to dispose of *pathos*. By doing this exercise, we will be able to protect our mental health, so this exercise (this perspective) is not a pessimistic view of life but it is about "living well".

FOURTH CHAPTER

4. EUPATHEIAI

4.1. The Stoic Eupatheiai or Good Emotions

The most important step to show that the Stoics do not repudiate emotions will be to reveal that they are trying to have *eupatheiai* (good emotions). Since I think that dealing with the concept of *eupatheiai* independently of *pathe* (*passions*) and *apathe* (freedom from all *passions*) may lead to some misunderstanding, I will examine these three concepts in the context of their relationship. Hence, the subject of this section is to examine *eupatheiai* in its relationship with *pathe* and *apathe*. Let us recall the formation of the experience, which corresponds to the concept of *pathos* (*passion*). Gellius' storm story (the story of the Stoic philosopher caught in the storm at sea) we read while discussing the concept of *propatheia* (*proto-passions*) will make it easier for us to understand the process of the formation of this whole experience (*pathos* commonly translated as emotion or *passion*).

In his "Stoic Ethics" John Sellars throws light on the formation of this experience by referring to this storm story: "*For an emotion to be produced the impression assented to must contain some form of value judgement. As we have seen, these are usually unwarranted additions by the unconscious mind: 'there is a wave above my head and this is a terrible thing.'*" (119) In order for an emotion to occur, we need to add a value judgment to the proposition we generate from our perception data and assent to these two. What creates the emotion of fear (the fear of passengers) is that passengers caught in the storm have assented to the proposition that "this is a terrible thing". On the other hand, the Stoic philosopher only assents to proposition that "there is a wave above my head", and withhold his assent to the proposition that "this is a terrible thing" so he only experiences a sense of shock but does not experience fear (in the Stoic context). Then the Stoic philosopher will not experience fear and similar emotions. Does this mean that he will not have any emotions?

In her "Plotinus' Way of Defining 'Eudaimonia' in Ennead I 4 [46] 1–3" Alexandrine Schniewind asserts that this is not the case at all, for "*Good feelings, eupatheiai, are a central aspect of Stoic ethics. They are the kind of mental state that characterizes a happy person, whereas pathos as such, passion, is on the contrary a source of unhappiness and unsatisfactory experience.*" (216) Contrary to popular belief, *eupatheiai* (good emotions) have a central position in Stoicism and they are

important elements of the Stoic conception of the good life. So, the Stoics try not to throw away all emotions, but only from *pathos*. Then what emotions do the Stoics understand when they say *pathos*?

In his “Myth and the Therapy of Emotions” Ismo Dunderberg gives the following answer to this question and registers four types of (bad) *passion* or *pathos*, consistent with our beliefs about good and evil:

*“Stoic philosophers divided pathos into four main categories on the basis of the mistaken beliefs connected with them.”*⁹⁷

- 1. distress (lupe) involves the belief that there is something evil at hand.*
- 2. fear (phobos) involves the belief that there will be something evil in the future.*
- 3. delight (hedone) involves the belief that there is something good present.*
- 4. desire (epithumia) involves the belief that there is something good in the future that a person needs to have (but does not have yet).”* (109)

The critical point here is that we assent to a false impression/proposition (that is, a value judgment) and accordingly we form a false belief. These *passions* develop as a result of a false belief, that is, beliefs we create by actively, consciously assenting to a proposition. In line with these, in his “Stoic Inhumanity” Terence Irwin characterizes the Stoic sense of *passion* as something that “*requires a false belief in the goodness or badness of the object of the passion.*” (223) The source of the problem is that we call something that is not genuine “good” as “good” and something that is not genuine “evil” as “evil” and naturally, the beliefs (the act of believing, of assenting to the impression) formed in this way are false and irrational. Consequently, our *passions*, which are the products of these false beliefs, are also irrational, false, and bad.

John Sellars expresses this view with the concept of “assent” in the framework of “externals”: “*It is just as mistaken and potentially damaging to assent to the impression that an external state of affairs is good as it is to the impression that it is bad.*” (118) As a result of all this, we can say that the Stoics argue that people should not only eliminate the “negative” emotions – “distress” (*lupe*), “fear” (*phobos*) - that are the result of their “bad” understanding, but also the “positive” emotions - “delight” (*hedone*), “desire” (*epithumia*) - that arise from their “good” understanding. Sellars offers three reasons why this is the case:

“First it is simply an error in reasoning; impressions report states of affairs and any ascription of value, whether positive or negative, is an unwarranted addition. Secondly it claims that an external, that is, an indifferent, is good when in fact only virtue is good. Thirdly it is dangerous because it creates a situation in which a change in the external state of affairs could lead to even worse emotions.” (118)

As a reasoning error, we distort the truth by adding a value judgment (by calling externals “good” or “bad”) that is not found in the external situation itself. It is an assessment error we make about what the genuine “good” and “bad” are. When we connect our happiness to something that is not under our control, we always face the risk of being unhappy. We can experience great “delight” (*hedone*) with the news of an inheritance from a relative we never knew, but when it is understood that this is a misunderstanding, we taste of a much worse “distress” (*lupe*).

Ismo Dunderberg sums up these claims of the Stoics in the lights of some important Stoic concepts:

“The goal of the Stoic therapy of emotions as a human being remaining innerly calm and immovable in all circumstances; a wise person is apathe, ‘totally free from passion.’¹⁰⁰ To achieve this goal, a person should learn to replace irrational pathos with ‘good emotions’ (eupatheiai), which were rational assessments of what is really valuable and what is only contingent.” (109)

The Stoic concept of *apathe* is a very important Stoic ideal. This concept corresponds to an “ideal human” who is emotionally unaffected by whatever situation. This Stoic concept, which is about emotions, is also closely related to being wise. These two things, which we consider as two different phenomena today, can be combined in Stoicism. However, to be free of all *passions*, we need to replace irrational *passions* with rational emotions. If we are confused enough, now we can look at what these “rational good emotions” are, their meanings, and the differences from “irrational *passions*” that we have to exterminate. It seems that the most important point here will be to understand what makes *eupatheiai* rational. Thus, all of these will become more understandable.

Dunderberg clearly categorizes *eupatheiai* and *passions* together with their opposites:

“(notably, there is no rational counterpart for distress):

1. joy (chara) is the rational opposite of delight;

2. *prudent caution (eulabeia) is the opposite of fear;*

3. *rational wish (boulesis) is the opposite of desire.*"¹⁰² (109)

The Stoics characterize three *eupatheiai* standing opposite the four *passions*. And of course, there is a reason why there are three “good emotions”, not four. We will investigate this soon, but now let us look at the definitions of these “good emotions”.

In his “The Old Stoic Theory of Emotions” Tad Brennan reports these as follows:

“Volition is the knowledge that some future thing is a good of such a sort that we should reach out for it.

Caution is the knowledge that some future thing is an evil of a such a sort that we should avoid it.

Joy is the knowledge that some present thing is a good such a sort that we should be elated about it.” (34-35)

All these definitions almost look the same as the definitions for *pathos*, which is the result of a (false) belief a person has formed in relation to her/his understanding of good and bad. All these definitions may make us think that the Stoics are doing some kind of word game. After all, joy and delight are synonymous today. In his “Appropriate Actions and Feelings” A. A. Long also mentions subsets of these emotions: *“Under these headings they included such attitudes as cheerfulness, sociability, respectfulness, kindness, and affection.”* (244) Does all this mean more word games? Here again, the same question appears: What makes *eupatheiai* rational? What is the difference between *eupatheiai* and *pathos*?

According to John Sellars, *“An emotion may indeed be rational if, for instance, it is the product of an assent that is correct.”* (119) This answer raises another question: How is a correct assent possible to produce rational emotion? Sellars demonstrates this in the following way: *“Such an evaluation will be warranted, and so rational, when there is a genuine good present. As we know, the only genuine good is virtue. But virtue can be the basis for an emotion, a good emotion.”* (119) If we call something that is genuinely “good” as “good” (virtue) and something that is genuinely “evil” as “evil” (vice), the beliefs (the act of believing, of assenting to the impression) formed in this way will be right and rational (opposite of *pathos*). Thence, our “good emotions”, which are the products of these right beliefs, are also rational, right and “good”. In this regard, in his “Stoic Psychology 101:

Impressions, Assent, and Impulses” Massimo Pigliucci’s definitions of Stoic “joy” (*kahara*, a good emotion) and “pleasure” or “delight”, (*hedone*, a bad *passion*) which express two opposing emotions, contain a very small but vital difference:

“Pleasure (hedone), an impulse toward something present now that is considered good, but isn’t.

Joy (kahara), an impulse toward something present now that is considered good and is, in fact, good.” (Pigliucci)

Massimo Pigliucci defines Stoic “good emotions” and *passions* (one by one) by changing just one word, just as he did for “joy” and “pleasure” (Pigliucci). So, what makes our emotion rational and good is the accuracy of the belief we have about the true nature of good and evil and what makes our *passion* irrational and bad is the inaccuracy of the belief we have about the true nature of good and evil.

In this context, John Sellars illustrates how the emotion of “joy” is possible: *“The good emotion of joy will be the emotion experienced by the sage when he is fully aware of his own virtue.”* (119) Sage’s true knowledge that she has the genuine good, the virtue, gives her a sense of joy. Sellars specifies the reasons why “joy” is good:

“This will be a good emotion for three reasons, mirroring the three reasons why normal emotions are bad. First it will be rational rather than the product of an erroneous judgement. Secondly it will reflect the genuine goodness of virtue. Thirdly it will reflect an internal state of affairs and so not be vulnerable to changes of fortune.” (119)

In light of the arguments we put forward when discussing why *pathos* is irrational and bad, it will be more apparent why *eupatheiai* are rational and good. This “joy” is rational because it manifests a correct judgment about the existence of genuine good (virtue). Contrary to the emotion of “delight” that is dependent on external conditions, the emotion of “joy” is a rational and good emotion, since being virtuous is always under our direct control, regardless of external conditions. Thus “caution” is a rational emotion experienced due to the possibility of losing virtue in the future and “wishing” is a good emotion because it is a rational want for a genuine good (once more, virtue) in the future (Sellars, 119). Pigliucci points out why there is no any good (rational) emotion for opposite of “distress” in the table where he classifies “good emotions”: *“n/a (because the only present evil is bad judgment, which is under our control).”* (Pigliucci) If the only present evil is vice, we do not need the opposite of “distress” because we can always choose to act virtuously regardless of the external situations (at

present). Thus, in the present, there is only one “good emotion” for a virtuous man (“joy”) and concerning the future, there are two “good emotions” (“wishing” and “caution”). In her *Stoicism and Emotion* Margaret R. Graver exemplifies *eupatheiai*: “A generous action, for instance, would be an occasion for joy, and the proper object of the feeling would be the generosity itself.” (68) Unlike *pathos*, the object of feeling is virtue (generosity), it is not “anticipated inheritance” from a relative we never knew (“externals”). In the chapter called “*Oikeiôsis* in Practice”, we will see many everyday life situations in which individuals may experience *eupatheiai*.

In his “Reason and Desire from Socrates to the Stoics” Paul Crittenden makes the following conclusion based on these “good emotions” that an ideal Stoic has: “*The Stoic sage is not at all emotionless, for apatheia in this context goes together with eupatheia, the reason-based emotions that, in Stoic teaching, constitute emotional health, the proper health of the soul.*” (137) Then it is just a baseless prejudice that the Stoics are trying to dispose of all emotions. Evaluating the concept of *apatheia* separately from the concept of *eupatheia* often leads to this kinds of “misunderstanding”. In his “Eliminating Sexual Passion?” (by referring to David Winston) William Loader tries to sort out this “misunderstanding” by adding a third concept (*pathe*, plural of *pathos*) to these two concepts:

“Winston draws attention to the fact that ‘the Stoic doctrine of apatheia... has been widely misunderstood both in ancient and modern scholarship’.²⁶⁶ It ‘did not signify the elimination of all emotions, but rather only of the pathe, defined by Stoics as diseased and irrational emotions’. Accordingly ‘the sage, who is guided only by an orthos logos, experience only eupatheiai or rational emotions’.²⁶⁷ (85-86)

Again, *apatheia* cannot be understood separately from the concepts of *pathe* and *eupatheiai*. This “misinterpretation” is still a problem today as it was in the past. The Stoics only tried to dismiss the *pathe* which they saw as a disease of the soul, based on irrational, erroneous value judgments. The ideal Stoic life is a life in which “good emotions” based on rational, correct value judgments are lived. So, we have enough data to modestly claim that rational “good emotions” are central in the Stoic conception of the good life.

4.1.1. Exercises Regarding Eupatheiai / Good Emotions

“The Stoic Week 2016 Handbook” where the Stoic principles are demonstrated in an easy-to-apply manner (so that beginners can practice some Stoic exercises without difficulty) prepared by a team of academic philosophers and cognitive therapists⁸ will be our main source in this section. In their “Resilience and Preparation for Adversity” Stoicism Today group describe a few Stoic exercises under the frame of “good emotions” (*eupatheiai*): “*The Stoics believe that as we develop ethically so our emotional life will change accordingly. And gradually we will come to have what they call the ‘good emotions.’*” (Gill, et al.) The Stoics assert that people should lead an ethically correct life as a condition for them to control their emotions. Good emotions are both the cause and the result of an ethically correct life. Stoicism Today group instance this idea with an exercise: “*However, the Stoics recognise that getting to this point requires a good deal of training and reflection, and one of the exercises they propose for this is the premeditation of future adversity.*” (Gill, et al.) So, allow us to start our research with the examination of some exercises that will prepare us for *eupatheiai*. The necessity of (Stoic) reflection seems important when practicing this (*premeditatio malorum*) and all exercises.

If we recall our previous discussions, the Stoics adduce virtue is the only good and vice the only evil. Everything else was considered “indifferent” by them, including “externals” such as health and illness. The “preferred indifferents” include life, health, wealth, etc. The “dispreferred indifferents” include death, disease, poverty, etc. In their “Week 6: Premeditation of Future Adversity” Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez simplify this Stoic perspective with an example: “*Forfeiting the job, it becomes what the Stoics would call dispreferred, or something we’d rather not do or happen.*” (43) In other words, losing our job is not “bad”, it is just something we do not prefer. In his “Lecture 17” Musonius Rufus stresses the importance of understanding this Stoic doctrine; a person must learn: “*how to calmly accept the things that happen which are not really bad but which seem to be.*” (70) We can say that the purpose of this exercise (Premeditation of Future Adversity) is to realize the things that are assumed to be “bad” but are not really “bad” and thereby reducing anxiety.

In his “*Premeditatio Malorum and Mental Rehearsal*” psychotherapist Donald Robertson indicates the similarity of this Stoic exercise to a current method of therapy: “*By patiently and systematically confronting our fears, and accepting the situation, anxiety and other negative feelings*

⁸ “Stoicism Today” group: Christopher Gill, Patrick Ussher, John Sellars, Tim Lebon, Jules Evans, Gill Garratt, and Donald Robertson.

will usually recede. The mere act of confronting fears in reality or in imagination is usually known as ‘*exposure therapy*.’” (217) Evidence-based psychotherapy approaches also show that *premeditatio malorum* works but it is very crucial to do this exercise methodically and in accordance with its nature. It is necessary to clarify clearly what we should do and what we should not do before starting the exercise. How will we face and accept our situation? How will we reduce anxiety in this fashion and then deal with the situation?

“Stoicism Today” group decodes the most important points of *premeditatio malorum* step by step:

“Try to picture the worst-case scenario patiently and wait for your emotions to abate naturally. Remind yourself of the Stoic principles you’ve learned, in particular, the maxim that people are upset not by external events but by their own judgements about them, particularly value-judgements that place too much importance on things that are not under your direct control. Try to spend at least 20–30 minutes doing this each day.” (Gill, et al.)

We should experience our emotions with the awareness that the feelings we are experiencing are temporary. While we are imagining this “bad” situation, we should be aware of our value-judgments, assumptions, beliefs that cause us to call this situation “bad” because it is not the event (in other words; “externals”: things outside our control) itself that upset and worried us, but our wrong value-judgments, thoughts, thinking styles, assumptions, and beliefs (in other words; “internals”: things within our control) about this event so we should only focus on what is under our control, and to remain “indifferent” to things outside our control. Even though propositions, thoughts, presumptions that contain (sometimes implicit) value judgments about externals appear in our minds despite our will, it is always in our control not to create false beliefs and therefore *passions* by consciously noticing value judgments first and then by not assenting to them.

Since this whole process is very difficult, requires training and experience, Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez offer a beginner-friendly approach to this exercise: “*We do not recommend starting with a serious situation.*” (48) In his “31. Why is Life so Hard?” Stephen Law provides an example that complies with Pigliucci’s and Lopez’s advice:

“Suppose you are the owner of a shiny new bicycle. The Stoics suggest you should remind yourself that bikes are often stolen or damaged, that shiny new things soon tarnish, and so on. That way, if and when something bad happens to your bike, you won’t be nearly so deflated and

will be better prepared for the loss. Focusing on the potential loss of your bike brings another benefit too: you're more likely to appreciate your lovely bike while you still have it." (Law)

It is advantageous to apply this Stoic technique starting from very small things and in this way, to understand the logic behind it. In this fashion, we can look at the situation in a logical way, under the domination of our mind, without being dragged into the depths of intense *passions*. Two aspects of this technique stand out in this example: preparation for loss and greater appreciation. By reason of *premeditatio malorum*, we will not be upset if something bad has happened to our bike or if it is lost. While we have it, we will be happier with its existence and we are no longer afraid of losing it. In other words, since we are not afraid of losing it anymore, we will be more happy to have it because we can only really be glad to have what we are willing to lose. Pigliucci and Lopez write the reason why this exercise is done: "*Aim at one objective: to train yourself to cope when things outside of your complete control don't go how you want them to.*" (52) The point that needs to be understood is not to be upset about external things that are not under our control and to remain "indifferent" to them.

"Stoicism Today" group mark the possibility of performing "premeditation of future adversity" for more serious situations:

"There are numerous references in the surviving Stoic writings to this strategy of anticipating future catastrophes and preparing to face them by imagining them in advance. Typical examples include bereavement, poverty, exile, illness, and, perhaps most importantly of all, one's own death." (Gill, et al.)

After internalizing this technique in relatively easy situations, we can also apply it in more difficult situations such as disease and quarantine. But to remain indifferent to one's own death is an extreme point of this technique. In his "Letter LXXXII – On the Natural Fear of Death" Seneca articulates that being indifferent to death will occur through the relationship established with the notion of virtue: "*Death is honorable when related to that which is honorable; by this I mean virtue and a soul that despises the worst hardships.*" (181) If the purpose is to live virtuously, death cannot be an obstacle to this aim. What really matters is not living long or just surviving at all costs. What truly matters is to live and die virtuously, that is, to live well and to die well.

In his "Practice 5 Contemplate Your Own Death" Jonas Salzgeber sets forth to the function of the (Stoic) principle of living from the perspective of death:

“It focuses your mind on the truly important—on who you want to be in this world. It helps you live with arete, no matter what you’ve missed to this day. Life is now and you want to make the best of it by expressing your highest self in every moment. The old Romans had a name for this: Memento mori (remember you are mortal). Keep that in front of your eyes and you’ll not only appreciate your life and loved ones more, but you’ll also get much more out of your days.”
(124)

The thought of death prevents us from getting caught up in trivial details and clears our minds. Thinking about death challenges us to think about our own values and why we should live. The awareness that life can end at any moment connects us to the moment, mobilizes us for what really matters (virtue). Considering that we will definitely die one day and that our loved ones will die will help us understand the value of what we have. Such an approach allows us to grasp the sacredness of every moment and it makes us productive.

“Stoicism Today” group state that we can combine *premeditatio malorum* with another Stoic exercise:

“What do you think a Stoic like Seneca, Epictetus, or Marcus Aurelius would make of the same situation? How might you view it differently if you had made more progress towards developing the virtues of wisdom, justice, courage, and self-control? Take time to note down what you can learn from this experience.” (Gill, et al.)

We can move away from our own distorted subjective perspective by putting ourselves in the place of the people we take as role models and so we can look at the situation from the outside, in a calm, logical way; and also by putting ourselves in the place of the best version of ourselves, we can strive to cultivate, to reveal and polish the virtues we have for that situation. Again, writing stands out as a very important Stoic exercise.

In his “The Role of Role Models” Massimo Pigliucci mentions the importance of role modeling in improving our virtues:

“While Stoics of course put forth ethical principles for how to conduct ourselves and live the eudaimonic life, their emphasis was on how real people behave, not just how they talk. Observing and imitating role models, then, is one powerful way to work on our own virtue.”
(132)

As a practical form of philosophy, Stoicism advises that we should learn lessons by looking at the lives of the men and women who have lived a good and virtuous life with good emotions. For example, we can remind ourselves of Marcus Aurelius' attitude towards an epidemic when we find ourselves in a similar situation. In such a situation, how was he able to continue his duty calmly, gladly and willingly, or with "joy"? In his "The Stoic System" John Sellars underscores this practical aspect of Stoicism with the example of the Stoic sage: *"Concern with the sage in Stoicism emphasizes its primarily practical orientation. The fundamental philosophical task for Stoicism is to transform one's way of life into the life of a sage."* (41) Every effort the Stoics make to understand the sage's life is an expression of an effort to realize the Stoic theoretical knowledge in practice. The ideal of internalizing and realizing the life of the sage is a way of life for the Stoics, which will only end when they die. The aim is to live a (virtuous) good life like sage, who always has (Stoic) "good emotions", including the moment of death. As we can see, the Stoics have developed a lot of exercises to achieve "good emotions" and have implemented them for this purpose.

FIFTH CHAPTER

5. OIKEIOSIS

5.1. Oikeiōsis in Stoic Thought

Many scholars uphold that the concept of *oikeiōsis* is very decisive for Stoicism. However, some academics do not agree with this view. In her “*The Role of oikeiōsis in Stoic Ethics*” Gisela Striker summarizes this issue as follows:

“If one turns to the experts for some guidance as to its importance, one finds that some seem to place great weight on it - Pohlenz says it was the foundation of Stoic ethics, Pembroke even claims that ‘if there had been no oikeiosis, there would have been no Stoa’ - while others tend to play it down, saying that it is just one way of arguing for the fundamental axiom of Stoic ethics, as Brink does, or that Zeno needed it to introduce some differentiation into the field of things declared to be totally indifferent by the Cynics (Rist).³” (281)

It seems that this concept is important for Stoicism in one way or another, and at the same time, it is quite open to debate. Moreover, it is not just a Stoic notion. There are also academic and peripatetic versions of this doctrine. Addressing *oikeiōsis* in all aspects goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Here, it will be examined especially with respect to emotion and psychology. In this regard, in his “How to Feel at Home in the World: Stoicism, Oikeiōsis, and Cosmopolitanism” Massimo Pigliucci professes that Hierocles offers a kind of early form of cognitive-behavioral therapy, while examining the text (Fragments, How We Ought to Conduct Ourselves Towards Our Kindred) that Hierocles discussed *oikeiōsis* (Pigliucci). Wherefore, Massimo Pigliucci’s article will be our main source in this section. So, in what context is *oikeiōsis* particularly important in Stoic ethics?

In his “Cosmopolitanism” Daniel S. Richter gives the following answer to this question: “*The theoretical basis for Stoic cosmopolitanism is the idea of oikeiōsis.*” (84) In parallel with this idea, Porphyry comes to the following conclusion about the importance of it: “*Those who followed Zeno stated that oikeiōsis is the beginning of justice.*” (Porphyry, quoted in Richter, 2011, p. 74) Looking at the etymology of *oikeiōsis*, we can get an idea of the reasons for these inferences. In her “The Stoics on Other-Concern and Impartiality” Julia Annas analyzes etymology of the term:

“Oikeion in turn comes from oikos, the house or household. People are oikeioi if they are related to you, or in some other way attached to your household; so oikeion comes to mean both ‘akin to’ and ‘what belongs to you or is on your side’, as opposed to what is allotrion, alien, not belonging.” (262)

When we look at the etymology of the word, the first thing that catches the eye is the richness of it and the issue of how it can be translated into another language. Also, from this explanation, we may more or less sense the process developing towards the idea of cosmopolitanism. *Oikeiôsis* refers to such a phenomenon that it is the opposite of “alien”.

In his “*Oikeiôsis* in Stoicism, Antiochus and Arius Didymus” Christopher Gill lists possible translations of this notion: *“The term, variously rendered in English as ‘appropriation’, ‘familiarisation’, ‘endearment’ or suchlike, is generally regarded as having no satisfactory modern equivalent and is simply transliterated here.”* (101) It is also translated as “affinity” (Robertson). It seems that while each of these translations conveys the meaning of the concept in some ways, they are inadequate in other ways. In his “Self-Knowledge, Self-Perception, and Perception of One’s Body in Stoicism” Jean-Baptiste Gourinat places *oikeiôsis* at the beginning of all Stoic ethics: *“In Stoic ethics, the first argument is based on self-perception and on the animal’s instinct of self-preservation and its ‘appropriation’ resulting from self-perception.”* (196) It is quite striking to start the debate about human ethical life with this kind of argument. In his “Theory of Appropriation” William O. Stephens also notes the results of this process performed by “Nature”: *“The organism is impelled to preserve itself by pursuing things that promote its own well-being and by avoiding things harmful to it.”* (Stephens) An animal first perceives itself and its constitution so that it belongs to itself and loves itself. Thus, it tries to protect itself. While the organism turns towards the things that benefit itself, it avoids the things that harm itself.

In his “The Stoic Argument from *Oikeiôsis*” Jacob Klein explores one of the most practical consequences of “self-appropriation”:

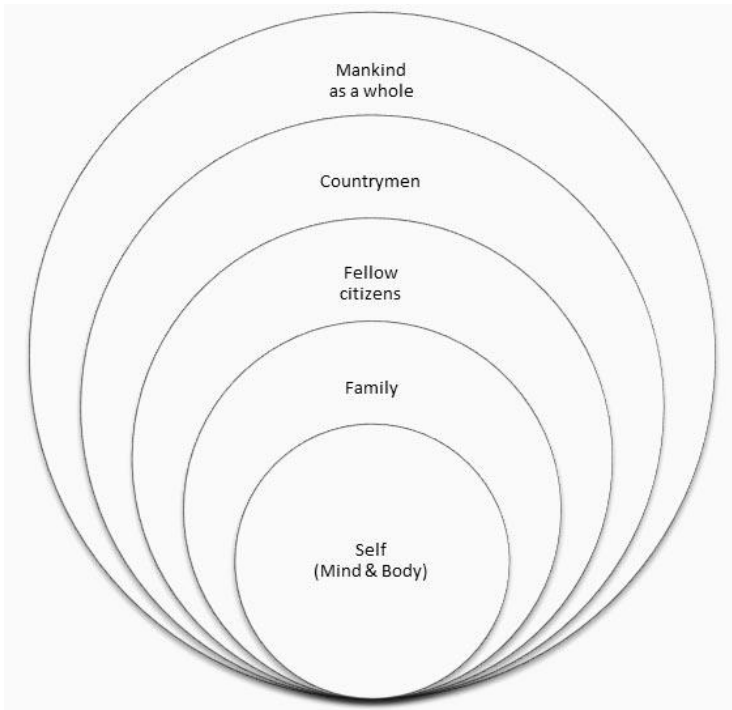
“Though self-appropriation gives rise to behaviours associated with self-preservation in the ordinary sense, it also explains a broader range of teleologically appropriate activities. These include, most saliently, an animal’s care and concern for its own offspring and, in some cases, its co-operation with other animals both within and across species.” (193)

If an animal protects itself by its very nature, it will also protect its offspring that resemble it. In this case, it is natural that it takes care of its offspring and helps them. Here, the action that is appropriate for it is to perform the action that is suitable for its nature, i.e. its constitution. In his “Grotius, Stoicism and *Oikeiosis*” Christopher Brooke affirms that this process is also present in humans: *“If the primal instinct that gets things going in the earlier narrative is the infant’s concern for its own self-preservation, social oikiosis is similarly grounded (psychologically, at least) in the concern that a parent has for its own offspring.”* (44) Just as it is natural for a baby to turn to his mother’s chest when hungry, it is also natural for a mother to breastfeed her baby with compassion. By her very nature, the mother takes care of her baby. She will then protect her baby at the expense of her life. So how does a baby go beyond just protecting itself?

In his “How to Feel at Home in the World: Stoicism, *Oikeiôsis*, and Cosmopolitanism” Massimo Pigliucci narrates the progress step by step: *“As the human animal grows up, though, it becomes familiar with other people surrounding it, especially its own caregivers, like parents or other close relatives. Gradually, and naturally, oikiosis then leads us to extend our concern to the wellbeing of those people.”* (Pigliucci) The baby naturally feels close to his mother, father, and relatives as a requirement of his development so in the development process as a “human animal”, he no longer cares only himself, but also with his caregivers. Massimo Pigliucci continues to explain the progress of social *oikiosis*, highlighting the key element that places man beyond the animal:

“When we reach the age of reason, around 7 to 8 years old, and continuously thereafter, we begin to apply our reflective thinking to further extend the process, realizing that other people, who are not related or otherwise close to us, are essentially like us, with similar wants, needs, worries, and so forth. The wise person, extrapolating the process of oikiosis to its logical outer limit, would then feel ‘at home’ not just with relatives, friends, and fellow townspeople, but with humanity at large.” (Pigliucci)

This natural constitution, which is common with animals up to a point, has the potential to take a radical form with another feature appearing in human nature: “reason”. Owing to our minds, we can identify with people other than our relatives, and we can feel a sense of closeness to them. So, if we develop our mind and use it correctly, we can develop this natural ability, perfect it by doing a series of exercises. The ultimate goal is to embrace all humanity (see figure below).



Hierocles' concept of concentric circles of concern.

Pigliucci gives an example of one of these exercises with reference to Hierocles:

“The final bit even provides some advice on how to do this in practice, an approach that is actually in use in a number of cultures: start referring to people you don't know as brothers or sisters, uncles or aunts (depending, says Hierocles, on what's appropriate to their age), to constantly remind yourself that you should treat them as if they really were relatives.”
(Pigliucci)

Again, an exercise for the practical application of theoretical knowledge, which is one of the defining features of Stoicism, is described. In fact, this exercise is suitable for Turkish culture. For example, street vendors, in particular, call people they do not know (in accordance with their age) brother, uncle, father, sister, aunt, mother, etc. It is easier to remember that we have a lot of humanitarian commonalities with people we just met through this and similar exercises. Pigliucci draws the following conclusion from Hierocles' concept of concentric circles of concern and this exercise he proposed:

“This is an early example of cognitive behavioral therapy, if you will: the first step is cognitive (reflect on the issue, and realize that you should care about other people), the second one

behavioral (implement strategies that will gradually habituate you to feel the way you think you should).” (Pigliucci)

Such an observation becomes more meaningful, given that the founders of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy refer to Stoicism in many important aspects of their systems (see Robertson, 2010). And the interesting thing is that today, while interest in Stoicism, which forms the basis of the second CBT wave, has increased tremendously, we do not find any reference to Stoicism in third-wave CBT, which has a lot in common with the second wave CBT and so Stoicism.

Returning to Stoic ethics: What does this concept mean as regard to “egoism” and “altruism”? Philip Merlan replies to this question in his “The Stoic *Oikeiôsis* and Sartre’s ‘Situation’”: “By assuming that a self is naturally a social self, they have been able to reconcile egoism and altruism, and thus to justify a social ethics.” (2) The fact that the “self” is in the center is about the nature of the relationship “the self” establishes with itself, not that it considers itself more valuable than others. In his “Stoicism and Emotion” John Sellars depicts the attitude of the “self” towards the “other” in this respect: “When we take an interest and concern in the well being of others we are acting according to a perfectly natural instinct.” (Sellars) By nature, man is not only rational but also social. Thus, the Stoic definition of human nature can be summarized as follows: Man is a social rational animal. By referring to Cicero and Hierocles, Pigliucci instantiates a few of the most important doctrines of Stoicism in the context of Nature: “Cicero writes that ‘all duties derive from principles of nature,’ and Hierocles’ theory considers ‘appropriate acts’ those that are in ‘accordance to nature.’” (Pigliucci) It is clear that adapting to Nature (i.e., facts) rather than fighting Nature is a more rational strategy. In this sense, it is rational to organize our judgments, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors according to this fact. So, are all natural things “good” things? Pigliucci gives a clear answer to this question:

“For the Stoics to work together to improve society is ‘in accordance to nature,’ because we are social animals. But anger is also a natural human reaction, and yet the Stoics, and Seneca in particular, wrote abundantly about why anger is bad for us. How do we separate natural/bad from natural/good, then? By exercising the highest faculty that nature itself has given us: reason.” (Pigliucci)

When we evaluate the idea that we should work together to make better the society, we find it quite reasonable. Using our logic and reasoning skills, we can realize that “human” life can only be created collectively. With our reasoning ability, we can comprehend that the only and inevitable way to

survive⁹, to thrive, and to realize our full potentials is through the relationship we have established with our community. So, this natural social instinct is in harmony with our intellect thus is good. William O. Stephens emphasizes this understanding: *“For human beings, ‘living in agreement with nature’ means living in agreement with our special, innate endowment—the ability to reason.”* (Stephens) It is clear that not every natural thing is good for us but Nature has given us reason to distinguish good and evil. If we can perfect our mind to a high degree, we can live the best possible life. Stephens makes clear this point with another crucial Stoic term: *“The perfected nature of a rational being is precisely the perfection of reason, and the perfection of reason is virtue.”* (Stephens) The human animal who does not yet have full rational capacities just wants self-preservation (that the things that are good for him or her physically - shelter, warmth, food, etc.) and is worried for survival. However, once we become adults, we realize that the most important, “valuable”, “good” thing (that always benefits us) is our rational, consistent (virtuous / excellent) character. Now, as a rational adult, we identify ourselves not only by our physical existence as an animal but by this rational character and we have the chance to perfect our minds. In this way, we can have virtue, and on account of it, we can have a good life. At this point, rationality is the defining characteristic of the human species so human animal wants to preserve oneself as a rational, consistent agent and he or she should feel “kinship” with all other people.

Pigliucci refers to another basic Stoic doctrine associated with this context, cosmopolitanism:

“To live according to nature, for the Stoics, simply meant to exercise reason in order to improve the human cosmopolis. And it is precisely the natural process of oikeiôsis, which begins at the level of instinct and is then expanded by the application of reason, that allows us to feel at home in the world.” (Pigliucci)

We can cultivate our natural social instinct even more with some exercises we carry out with the active participation of the mind. The ultimate goal of this effort is to realize that we actually mean or signify “ourselves” when we say “the other”. The aim is to understand that all humanity is part of our own constitution. In the light of *oikeiosis*, John Sellars reveals the invalidity of some accusations against Stoicism:

⁹ “Virtue” is itself sufficient to create “happiness” so if the sage practices them, “virtues” produce “happiness”; the sage is “self-sufficient” in this respect.

“The Stoics of course suggest that we ought to live a life in harmony with nature and so these sorts of natural instincts will be part of the ideal Stoic life. Indeed the Stoic ideal is not to close ourselves off from caring for others; on the contrary it is to expand our circle of concern so that we care for not just those who happen to be nearest to us but for everyone, everywhere. The claim that Stoics are indifferent to the wellbeing others is false.” (Sellars)

The stoic sage is compassionate to all people on the planet as a requirement of her social drive and rational nature. If so, the claim that the Stoics are devoid of love and compassion or trying to annihilate them is wrong. This is not just a simple mistake; it is also the distortion and reversal of the existing situation because the Stoics have developed many exercises to increase these emotions. We will cover some of these exercises in this chapter, as we do in every chapter of this study.

5.1.1. Oikeiôsis in Practice

Many exercises are designed to cultivate (“Stoic”) *oikeiôsis* to a certain degree. Allow us to consider some of these exercises, as described by some authors who deal with Stoicism more practically and towards its implementation. Also, the concept of *oikeiôsis* is not a category of emotions (it is much broader than that), so I will examine it in relation to *eupatheiai* (good emotions) since the focus of the thesis is “emotions”. In their “Week 34: Care About More People (and Other Beings)” Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez elucidate one of these exercises by referring to Hierocles’ concept of concentric circles of concern (see figure above): “*This week, treat someone in an ‘outer circle’ as if they were one level in.*” (200) They make this assignment clearer with an example: “*How do you treat distant relatives in a less caring way than closer relatives? Write a few differences down.*” (201) They epitomize the rest of the exercise with further practical suggestions:

“If you chose neighbors, perhaps make an effort to start friendly conversations with them. You can also try changing the way you speak, as Hierocles suggests, by calling friends ‘brothers’ or ‘sisters,’ or acquaintances ‘friends’ for the week. Once you have an idea of how to act in a more kindly manner, write it down in the form of an implementation intention. Revisit this implementation intention daily to remind yourself of how to be more kind.” (201)

Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez draw a road map for us, as it would be impossible to identify with the people in an “outer circle” suddenly. We need to work on ourselves patiently. This requires time and “wise” effort. “Writing”, which is very important in Stoicism, is also obviously a critical element in this exercise (see Foucault, 2005, pp. 500). It is perhaps one of the only possible means of working on ourselves. It makes “the self” visible to itself. The writing gives “the self” the distance necessary for “the self” to work on itself. While Pigliucci and Lopez recount a behavioral exercise for Hierocles’ concept of concentric circles of concern, in his “Try it now: The ‘circles’ of Hierocles” psychotherapist Donald Robertson defines a meditative exercise for it (for instructions see Robertson, 2018).

In this context, in his “Practice 39 We Are All Limbs of the Same Body” Jonas Salzgeber invites to look at the “self” through a more holistic conceptualization: “*Working for each other is necessary if we want to live the best life possible. That means for you as a limb of the whole. Help others. Direct your actions for the common welfare. That’s the only way you’ll have a good life.*” (225)

Instead of seeing ourselves as part of a whole, seeing ourselves as a limb of the whole is a much more impressive depiction. If a hand breaks off from the whole, that hand can no longer be a hand. The hand can measure its own well-being only through the good of its whole. Jonas Salzgeber spells out the consequences of not reaching this awareness: *“If we fail to recognize this interconnectedness, and if we fail to direct our actions to these social ends, then we tear our lives apart, says Marcus. This will create a separation and disharmony. And we won’t be able to live good lives.”* (225) A whole who is sick cannot have a healthy hand. The hand must act in the service of the whole for its own good. If it does not serve the whole, either it will eventually become infected with the disease or it will disappear with the disappearance of the whole.

In his *Meditations* Marcus Aurelius illustrates this relationship in the following analogy: *“What brings no benefit to the hive brings none to the bee.”* (6.54) One has to identify his one’s well-being with the well-being of the whole world. As part of this understanding, in his *Discourses* Epictetus declares how people should position themselves in the world: *“Do as Socrates did, never replying to the question of where he was from with, ‘I am Athenian,’ or ‘I am from Corinth,’ but always, ‘I am a citizen of the world.’”* (*Discourses* I, 9.1) We have to acknowledge all the people of the world and ourselves as members of the great brotherhood of humanity. To confine ourselves only to our own nationality means to separate ourselves from the whole.

In his “Try it now: Socrates’ Love Charm (Empathize Like a Stoic)” Donald Robertson outlines another exercise under the frame of *oikeiôsis* and loving other people, even our “enemies”:

“Stoics believed that it is more important to love than to be loved. We’re naturally social animals and so the goal of ‘living in agreement with Nature’ involves living harmoniously with the rest of mankind, even vicious people who treat us as their enemies. However, being loved by friends and family is highly preferable to being surrounded by enemies, fate permitting.”
(Robertson)

If we are naturally social creatures, loving all people is compatible with our own nature. We have to love people to live in accordance with our own nature, to be “happy” and to have a good life. Loving others is within our control but to be loved by them is not. We “prefer” to be loved by other people because we are social rational animals but if they do not like us, this cannot upset us because this is beyond our control, so we are “indifferent” in this sense.

In his “Stoic Ethics” William O. Stephens discusses this Stoic understanding of friendship in the context of *eupatheiai* (“wish”):

“The virtuous person wishes to see his friend only if in the course of events it is good to happen. His wish is thus made with reservation (hupexhairesis): ‘I wish to see my friend if it is fated, if Zeus wills it.’ If the event does not occur, then the virtuous person is not thwarted, and as a result he is not disappointed or unhappy. His wish is rational and in agreement with nature, both in the sense of being obedient to reason (which is distinctive of our human constitution) and in the sense of harmonizing with the series of events in the world.” (Stephens)

The virtuous person “wishes” (and tries) to meet with his friend only under reasonable conditions; for example, when there is no contagious disease or when he does not have to behave in an unvirtuous manner. He always considers what he can and cannot control while “wishing” something.

Here, we can think of “fate” as an attitude that we must take towards what we cannot change, that is an absolute/reasonable acceptance. Thanks to this attitude, we will not be upset if our wish is not fulfilled because we have done what is appropriate, virtuously, rationally, and consistently, i.e., what really matters. Being sad is irrational in this case because we did what really matters so there is nothing to be sad about (we still have virtue) and certainly being sad will not change anything. Such a “wish” is not irrational, excessive, and unhealthy so it is not a kind of disease like *pathos* or *passion* (“desire”). It is a rational, moderate, natural, healthy, and “good emotion”.

In his “Five Additional Crucial Words” Massimo Pigliucci exemplifies this “good emotion” by depicting a social situation: *“Wishing for justice, say in response to an instance of police brutality, or a terrorist attack, is a positive passion, since it stems from the cultivation of one of the four virtues, namely justice.”* (Pigliucci) Serving society, wishing justice (virtue, the only good) for the world is in line with the social and rational character of human nature so that kind of “wishing” is a “good emotion”. In this respect, Seneca manifests Stoic values:

“No school has more goodness and gentleness; none has more love for human beings, nor more attention to the common good. The goal which it assigns to us is to be useful, to help others, and to take care, not only of ourselves, but of everyone in general and of each one in particular.” (Seneca, On Clemency, III, 3., quoted in Hadot, 1998, p. 231)

Every Stoic “wishes” and prefers justice, strives for it, does his part by knowing that all of these are within his control. However, the realization of justice in the world, that is, the result is not within his control, so he is “indifferent” in this sense. He focuses on the process, not the result.

In this regard, in his “Try it now: The ‘circles’ of Hierocles” Donald Robertson encapsulates the Stoic conception of love: *“The Sage is not infatuated with anyone. He loves everyone as much as he is able, while accepting that they are changeable and that one day they will die.”* (Robertson) Although sage prefers to be loved, she does not need to be loved. She loves all humanity without expecting anything in return. In his “The Seeds of Wisdom in Everyone” Robertson portrays an exercise that will make it easier for us to love people, improve our relationships, and turn ourselves into a more virtuous person:

“Even if some among his friends, family and teachers were not very wise he could nevertheless identify their strengths and learn to imitate them. The first step to doing so, however, is putting them into words. By naming and describing the ‘virtues’ of others, Marcus helps himself to memorize and rehearse them throughout the rest of the exercises in the Meditations.”
(Robertson)

Since every person has a mind, each of us has the potential for virtue or to be virtuous. Even our “enemies” have virtues that we can imitate. Again, in this Stoic exercise, writing has a central function. We can put ourselves in a Stoic mood by writing. As soon as we need it, we can read what we wrote earlier to take on this mood. We can maintain this Stoic state and make it more permanent by writing and reading repeatedly and repeatedly. Robertson evaluates this exercise with reference to “good emotions” (“joy”): *“Nothing brings such a healthy sense of rational joy as this simple contemplation.”* (Robertson) Seeing “the only good” (i.e. virtue) in other people and therefore feeling “joy” is in harmony with our rational and social nature.

In his “Stoic Psychology 101” Massimo Pigliucci examines this rational emotion from the point of friendship: *“‘Joy’ is the sort of thing I experience, say, in the presence of a gesture of friendship or love between two people I know.”* (Pigliucci) With the awareness that I cannot control my friend’s gesture of friendship, I can respond to her with the “joy” of socializing. William O. Stephens tackles this attitude in terms of virtue: *“The virtuous person experiences joy in the company of a friend, but recognizes that the presence of the friend is not itself a real good as virtue is, but only preferred.”* (Stephens) If the sage has to do “non-virtuous” deeds to meet with her friend, she cannot feel “joy”

from this meeting. Being with her friend at the expense of virtue cannot be “joy” for the sage. In this respect, it is “preferred” to be with a friend, but it is not a must. So, what should we do when people do not value friendship?

Donald Robertson sums up the attitude we should take: *“Following Socrates, they advise us to put ourselves in other people’s shoes, and understand they have a reason for what they do, at some level (mistakenly) assuming their actions are appropriate and in their own interests.”* (Robertson) People do what they assume is good for them. Any person, who does not care about friendship, perhaps thinks that it will be in his own interest to separate himself from the society. If he could grasp that his socialization would actually benefit him, he would have acted in this direction. Maybe there is another reason behind his attitude. If we understand the motivation and beliefs behind people’s judgments, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, it will be easier for us to tolerate and love them.

Donald Robertson also states the Stoic stance we can take against “enemies”: *“Remember that they act like enemies because they fail to recognise it’s in their own interest to be wise and just, and remain enslaved by attachment to the illusion of external ‘goods.’”* (Robertson) A thief does not know that *“The only thing that can always benefit us is virtue and the only thing that can genuinely hurt us is the lack of virtue.”* (Platonic dialogue *Euthydemus*, from the name of a Sophist with whom Socrates is talking, quoted in Pigliucci and Lopez, 2019, p. 66) On that account, the solution is not to cut his hand but to help him and to understand his motivation, beliefs, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and also to develop a dialogue with him by presenting philosophical arguments.

Robertson indicates the place of emotions such as love and friendship in Stoicism: *“Love and friendship are natural and healthy emotions that bridge the gap between the Stoic theory of irrational ‘passions’ and appropriate action, or between psychological therapy and ethical conduct.”* (Robertson) Our aim is not only to obliterate irrational *passions* with psychological therapy techniques but also to serve humanity on the ethical ground of love and friendship. By referring to Marcus Aurelius, Robertson considers the *passion* and ‘natural affection’ together: *“Marcus Aurelius tells himself repeatedly to ‘love mankind’ and praises his Stoic tutor Sextus of Chaeronea for being ‘free from passion and yet full of love’ or ‘natural affection’ for others (Meditations, 1.9).”* (Robertson) For the Stoics, being free from *passion* does not mean being emotionless so the myth of “emotionless Stoic” may not reflect the truth. It is understood from the concept of *oikeiôsis* that the Stoics does not exclude all emotions, on the contrary, their aim is living a very rich emotional life. If we try to

scrutinize the notions of *passion* and emotion in the context and content of Stoicism, again I think this may be more evident.



CONCLUSION

There were other things in *oikeiôsis* (that is a complex and multivalent concept for the Stoics, a word notoriously difficult to translate) that could be looked at as regards to emotion, but were outside the scope of this paper. For example, I have not handled the human mind's "affinity" to Nature (the cosmic mind that guides the cosmos). Maybe we could get a different result after a thorough analysis of *oikeiôsis*. This may be a shortcoming for subsequent research to remedy. I examined only *pathos*, *propatheia*, *eupatheia*, and *oikeiosis* from the perspective of psychology but in Stoicism, there are a few other "technical terms" that may be scrutinized in terms of psychology and it needs further study (for example, *eudaimonia*, *arete*, and *apatheiai* - in detail).

In his "Five Additional Crucial Words" Massimo Pigliucci accentuates the key point to consider when dealing with these notions: *"I'm going to conclude this week's series of essays on the importance of looking at the meaning of crucial words in Greek philosophy (as opposed to their approximate, often inadequate or misleading English translation)." (Pigliucci)* The tendency to use these terms in a reductive manner prevents us from seeing their true meaning. When translating a word into another language, one should be alert to any loss of meaning that can lead to misunderstandings. Massimo Pigliucci gives an example of this approach: *"Amathia, essentially meaning lack of wisdom, though most unfortunately translated as ignorance."* (Pigliucci) Incorrect translation of a term causes misinterpretation of all the texts in which that term is used. Pigliucci refers to *apatheia* misinterpreted because of the English "apathy": *"Apatheia actually meant something closer to equanimity, or serenity of mind, especially in the face of situations that would cause distress in normal (i.e., non Stoically trained) people."* (Pigliucci) "Apathy" with all its negative connotations is actually something undesirable in Stoicism. In practice, these two different meanings (apathy vs equanimity, or serenity of mind) create very important differences.

Massimo Pigliucci continues his discussion with two other words that are related to the subject of our investigation: *"The eudaimonia / arete pair, approximately rendered respectively as happiness and virtue, but that are better understood as a life worth living and excellence (which may be moral, but not only)." (Pigliucci)* Philosophical implications of the meaning of "a life worth living" in *eudaimonia*, which has a critical importance for Stoic ethics, take us far beyond the "happiness". In his "Two More Crucial Words" Massimo Pigliucci explicates what he meant when he wrote the word "excellence": *"Arete came to describe excellence of character, one reason why a better term than*

'virtue ethics' actually is 'character ethics,' the idea that what is important is to develop one's character in life." (Pigliucci) As can be seen, translation of the same word differently causes many different philosophical implications and consequences. This type of translation, without "a religious and moral tone (virtue)", opens the way for different possibilities without limiting the notion.

Pigliucci looks at the meaning of two other words: "*Proēgmena vs apoproēgmena, which respectively mean preferred and dispreferred indifferents.*" (Pigliucci) We discussed these two concepts in the section called "Good, Bad and *Adiaphora* in Stoicism". Pigliucci approaches these words in relation to *eudaimonia*: "*The 'indifferents' are irrelevant to eudaimonia, if the latter is defined (as I did in my previous essay) as a life that one can look back on one's deathbed and say that it was worthy of admiration.*" (Pigliucci) *Proēgmena vs apoproēgmena*, ("indifferents") can only be meaningful if *eudaimonia* (a life worth living) is correctly described. The misidentification of *eudaimonia* can cause misunderstanding in the other two. Pigliucci makes the following conclusion from the debate on this matter: "*While it may not be practical to re-introduce the Greek vocabulary in every conversation, we ought to keep the original terms in mind, and perhaps paraphrase, rather than translate, them, if we want Stoicism to be understood rather than belittled.*" (Pigliucci) Due to such an approach (perspective of *eudaimonia* as happiness), "preferred and dispreferred indifferent" can be seen as absurd without in-depth research on the topic. Translating words or even translating them incorrectly can have results that Stoicism does not deserve at all.

In his *De Finibus* Cicero addresses this language problem:

"Even artisans would be unable to preserve the tradition of their crafts if they did not make use of words unknown to us though familiar to themselves... All the more is the philosopher compelled to do likewise; for philosophy is the Science of Life, and cannot treat its subject in language taken from the street." (Cicero)

Considering what Cicero wrote about the theme, the semantic possibilities of the Greek words in ancient Greek philosophical discourse was among the main difficulties in the past, as it is today. This is such a fundamental subject that we need to pay attention to it every time we talk and write about philosophy. Massimo Pigliucci reveals the complication that may occur if we do not pay enough attention to the philosophical language we use:

"— amathia, eudaimonia, arete, pathē, eupatheiai, apatheia, proēgmena, and apoproēgmena — when taken together and properly understood in their original meaning, rather than through

their approximate English translations, really encapsulate a lot of what is worth understanding about Stoicism. So by all means let us talk about ‘ignorance,’ ‘flourishing,’ ‘virtue,’ ‘emotions,’ and ‘indifferents’ in a colloquial setting. But let us always remember that these words have meanings that, if not properly understood or explained, lead to confusion and misconceptions.”
(Pigliucci)

When trying to grasp a concept belonging to a philosophical system, it is important to try to understand it, regardless of its conventional meaning. It is also problematic to detach a notion from the theoretical corpus to which it belongs and to try to understand it in isolation. This inquiry may help to illustrate why these theoretical terms need to be considered in relation to each other, and why it is insufficient to study them separately.

Based on the translation issue, Massimo Pigliucci makes a general comment on the evaluation of Stoicism:

“One doesn’t have to buy into Stoicism, nor is the philosophy written in stone anyway, so that a modern Stoic certainly is not compelled to do things ‘by the book,’ regardless of whether such book was written by Zeno, Chrysippus, Seneca or Epictetus. But even when we are critical of Stoicism we owe it to our own intellectual honesty and integrity to be critical of it for good reasons, not because of what we may have lost in translation.” (Pigliucci)

Misunderstanding a word can lead to a misunderstanding of all words with which it is related. For example, the misconception of *pathê* also may bring about the misconception of *apatheia*. When we consider the unity of the Stoic philosophy, which combines logic, physics, and ethics, the importance of this topic becomes even greater. Those who are interested in this subject may take this issue into consideration. In parallel with all this, the main purpose of this study has been to enable us to criticize Stoicism for “good reasons”.

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