

Seminar Chrysippus' *On Emotions* – Teun Tieleman:

B. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* IV, 10-33
(transl. M. Graver 2002).

PART II. STOIC TERMINOLOGY EXPLORED

A. Rational and Irrational Affect

The Twofold Division of Mind

Now, what the Greeks call the *pathē*, I prefer to translate as “emotions,” rather than “sicknesses.” In treating of these emotions, I shall preserve the familiar distinction made long ago by Pythagoras and later by Plato. They make a division of the mind into two parts, one of which has a share in reason, while the other does not. In the part which has a share in reason they put tranquillity (that is, a calm and quiet consistency); in the other, the turbulent motions of anger and desire, which are opposed to reason and inimical to it. 11 ✪ So let this be our point of departure. In describing these emotions, however, let us employ the definitions and classifications of the Stoics, who seem to me to proceed most acutely with this investigation.

The Four Generic Emotions and Their Objects

This, then, is Zeno's definition of an emotion (which he calls a *pathos*): “a movement of mind contrary to nature and turned away from right reason.” Others say, more briefly, that an emotion is “a too-vigorous impulse,” where “too vigorous” means “having deviated too far from the consistency of nature.” The different classes of emotions, they say, arise from two kinds of things thought to be good and two thought to be evil. Thus there are four possibilities: those arising from goods are desire and gladness, gladness being directed at present goods and desire at future goods; while those arising from evils are fear and distress, fear being directed at future evils and distress at present ones. For the things we fear when they are in prospect are the very things that bring distress when they are upon us. 12 ✪ Gladness and desire, on the other hand, are concerned with beliefs about what things are good: desire catches fire from its

attraction toward what seems good, while gladness is wildly excited at having obtained some longed-for object.

The Three Consistencies and Their Objects

By nature, all people pursue those things which they think to be good and avoid their opposites. Therefore, as soon as a person receives an impression of some thing which he thinks is good, nature itself urges him to reach out after it. When this is done prudently and in accordance with consistency, it is the sort of reaching which the Stoics call a *boulēsis*, and which I shall term a "volition." They think that a volition, which they define as "a wish for some object in accordance with reason," is found only in the wise person. But the sort of reaching which is aroused too vigorously and in a manner opposed to reason is called "desire" or "unbridled longing," and this is what is found in all who are foolish. 13 * Similarly there are two ways we may be moved as by the presence of something good. When the mind is moved quietly and consistently, in accordance with reason, this is termed "joy"; but when it pours forth with a hollow sort of uplift, that is called "wild or excessive gladness," which they define as "an unreasoning elevation of mind." And just as it is by nature that we reach out after the good, so also it is by nature that we withdraw from the bad. A withdrawing which is in accordance with reason is termed "caution," and this, as they understand it, is found only in the wise person; while the name "fear" is applied to a withdrawing that is apart from reason and that involves a lowly and effeminate swooning. Thus fear is caution that has turned away from reason.

14 * For present evil the wise person has no affective response, but the foolish person responds with distress. For those who do not obey reason lower and contract their minds in circumstances which they believe to be evil. Hence the first definition for distress is this: "a contraction of mind contrary to reason." Thus there are four emotions, but three consistencies, since there is no consistency which corresponds to distress.

B. The Definition and Classification of Emotions

More Precise Definitions for the Genus-Emotions

They hold, moreover, that all the emotions come about through judgment and opinion. For this reason they give more careful definitions for them, in order to convey not only how faulty they are but also how much they are in our power. Distress, then, is "a fresh opinion that an evil is present in which one thinks it right to lower and contract the mind." Gladness

is "a fresh opinion that a good is present in which one thinks it right to be elevated." Fear is "an opinion that an evil is impending which one thinks intolerable." Desire is "an opinion that a good is in prospect which it would be expedient to have present here and now." 15 * Further, they say that it is not only the emotions which consist in the judgments and opinions which I have mentioned, but also the effects of those emotions. For instance, distress brings about a kind of biting pain, fear a sort of withdrawing and fleeing of spirit, gladness an outpouring of hilarity, desire an unbridled reaching. But they say that "opining" (the word used in all the above definitions) means "a weak assent."

Specific Emotions Belonging to Each Genus

16 * Moreover, for each emotion there are several others of the same kind which are classified under it. Classed under distress, for instance, are envying (for instructional purposes I use the less familiar word, since "envy" may refer to the object as well as the subject), rivalry, jealousy, pity, anxiety, grief, sorrow, weariness, anguish, mourning, worry, sadness, affliction, despair, and whatever else is of that kind. Under fear are classified indolence, shame, terror, fright, panic, petrification, agitation, and dread. Under pleasure come spite (that kind of spite which rejoices in another's ills), enchantment, vainglory, and the like, while under desire come anger, heat-edness, hatred, rancor, soreness of heart, need, yearning, and other things of this kind.

They define these as follows. Envying, they say, is "distress experienced because of the good fortune of another person," which does no harm to the one who envies. 17 * For if a person is annoyed at the good fortune of someone because it is injurious to himself—for instance, if Agamemnon is aggrieved at Hector—what he feels is not properly called envy. The person who truly envies is the one who is annoyed at another's gains even though they do no harm to himself at all. Rivalry is used in two senses, as a term of praise or as a term of blame. For the imitation of excellence is termed "rivalry" (although that is not what we are referring to here, since it is a term of praise), and rivalry may also be "distress that another has obtained what one desired for oneself but does not have." 18 * Jealousy (by which I mean *zēlotypia*) is "distress that another has likewise obtained what one desired for oneself." Pity is "distress over the misery of another who is suffering unjustly"—for no one is moved to pity by the punishment of a paricide or traitor. Anxiety is "oppressive distress." Grief is "distress at the untimely death of a person who had been held dear." Sorrow is "distress that is inclined to weep." Weariness is "toilsome distress." Anguish is

"distress that involves torture." Mourning is "distress accompanied by sobbing." Worry is "distress accompanied by thinking." Sadness is "lasting distress." Affliction is "distress accompanied by bodily ailment." Despair is "distress that has no expectation that things will improve."

The ones classified under fear they define as follows. Indolence is "fear of impending work." 19 * < . . . > Terror is "fear that strikes hard." Hence shame is accompanied by blushing, but terror by paleness, trembling, and chattering of teeth. Fright is "fear of imminent evil." Panic is "fear which unseats the mind," as in Ennius' line,

then panic drove all wisdom from my breast,
and I was petrified.

Petrification is "fear which follows upon panic"—panic's companion, as it were. Agitation is "fear which scatters one's thoughts." Dread is "long-lasting fear."

20 * The species of pleasure they describe as follows. Spite is "pleasure arising from misfortune to another that brings no benefit to oneself." Enchantment is "pleasure which charms the mind through sweetness of sound," and similar to this pleasure of the ears are those of the eyes, and those of touches, smells, and tastes, all of which are alike in that they pour over the mind like liquids. Vainglory is "pleasure which exults and makes a display of arrogance."

21 * The ones classified under desire are defined as follows. Anger is "desire to punish a person who is thought to have harmed one unjustly." Heatedness is "anger at its inception, when it has just come to be"; in Greek it is called *thumōsis*. Hatred is "inveterate anger." Rancor is "anger biding its time for revenge." Soreness of heart is "a more bitter anger which has its birth in the depths of mind and heart." Need is "desire which cannot be satisfied." Yearning is "desire to see someone who is not yet present."

A Grammatical Nicety

They also draw this distinction: "Desire" is directed at what is said about a certain thing or things (what dialecticians call *katēgorēmata*, "predicates"), for instance, to have riches or to receive honors; "need" is directed at the things themselves, the honors or the money.

How We Lose Control

22 * But the source of all the emotions, they say, is "loss of control," which is a rebellion in the mind as a whole against right reason. This rebel-

lion has turned away from what reason dictates to such an extent that there is no way the mind's impulses can be directed or restrained. Self-control soothes the impulses and makes them obey right reason, considering and maintaining the judgments of the mind; but loss of control is just the opposite: reason's enemy, it lays flame to every state of the mind, throwing it into disturbance and riot. Thus it is that all forms of distress, fear, and other emotions arise from loss of control.

C. The Character of Individuals

Sicknesses and Infirmities of the Mind

23 * Just as sicknesses and infirmities of the body come into being when the blood is impure or when there is an excess of phlegm or bile, so also the confusion of crooked opinions and the conflict of one with another robs the mind of health and disturbs it with sicknesses. These disturbances or emotions produce, first, the conditions which the Stoics call *nosēmata*, "sicknesses," together with their contraries, each of which involves a wrongful aversion to some specific object—that is, a distaste. Next come infirmities, which they call *arrōstēmata*, and again the aversions which are their contraries.

At this point the Stoics, especially Chrysippus, expend a great deal of effort working out the analogy between the sicknesses of the body and those of the mind. But all that talk is not really necessary. Let us pass it by and devote our detailed discussion to the essentials of the matter. 24 * The point to be grasped, then, is that although emotion itself is turbulent and inconsistent, constantly in movement through shifts in belief, it sometimes happens that this simmering and agitation of mind becomes habitual, settling into the veins and marrow, as it were. It is then that the sicknesses and infirmities come into being, and also the aversions which are their contraries.

The conditions I have mentioned differ from each other in theory, but in reality they are closely linked. They arise from desire and from gladness. When a person has conceived a desire for money, and when there has been no immediate application of reason—the Socratic medicine, as it were, which might have cured that desire—then the evil works its way into the veins, and settles in the vital organs, and comes to be a sickness and an infirmity. Once it has become habitual, the sickness cannot be removed, and its name is "greed." 25 * It is the same with the other sicknesses, such as desire for glory or liking for women (if I may so translate the Greek *philogunia*), and the other sicknesses and infirmities, which arise in the same way.

The contraries of these are thought to arise out of fear. Examples include hatred of women, such as we see in the *Misogyne* of Atilius, and hatred

of the whole human race, such as we have heard of in the case of Timon, who is called "the Misanthrope"; also hostility to guests. All these infirmities of mind arise from some kind of fear of those objects which the persons in question dislike and avoid.

26 * They define an infirmity of mind as "a vigorous opining that some object is worthy of pursuit which is in fact not worthy of pursuit, that opinion being deeply attached and rooted in the mind." The state arising from aversion they define as "a vigorous opinion, deeply attached and rooted, that some object is worthy of avoidance which is in fact not worthy of avoidance." "Opining" is when a person judges that he knows something which he does not in fact know.

Classified under infirmities are such things as greed, ambition, liking for women, stubbornness, gluttony, fondness for wine, covetousness, and so forth. "Greed" is "a vigorous opining, deeply attached and rooted, that money is very much to be pursued," and a similar definition is given for each of the others. 27 * Definitions for the aversions are like this: "hostility to guests," for instance, is "a vigorous opinion, deeply attached and rooted, that company is very much to be avoided." Similar definitions are given for "hatred of women," like that of Hippolytus, and for "hatred of the human race," like that of Timon.

Proclivities

But let me make some use of the analogy with bodily illness—more sparingly, though, than the Stoics do. Some people are more prone than others to contract certain sicknesses; for instance, we say that certain people "suffer from sinus" or "suffer from colic," meaning not that they are suffering from it now but that they often do. In the same way, some people are more prone to fear and others to other emotions. It is thus that we speak of "anxiety" in some people—that is, a tendency to become anxious—and "irascibility" in others. Irascibility is different from anger: it is one thing to be angry, another to be irascible. Similarly there is a difference between suffering from anxiety and feeling anxious. For not everyone who feels anxious now and then suffers from anxiety, nor are those who suffer from anxiety anxious all the time. It is like the difference between drunkenness and fondness for drink, or between being amorously inclined and being in love. The proneness of different persons to different sicknesses is used extensively, for it has application to each of the emotions and manifests itself also in many of the faults, 28 * although in that case there is no separate term for it. Hence people are "envious" or "spiteful" or "desirous" or

"timid" or "pitying" not because they experience those emotions all the time, but because they are exceptionally prone to them.

It is permissible, then, to continue the analogy with the body and use the term "infirmity" to refer to these various proclivities, provided we understand it to mean "a proclivity to become infirm." Meanwhile, a tendency toward what is good may be termed a "facility." For one person is more inclined to one good quality, another to another. But a tendency toward the bad should be called a "proclivity," to suggest falling into error, while a tendency toward things neither good nor bad may be called by the former term.

Mere Faults

In the mind, as in the body, a sickness is one thing, an infirmity another, and a fault yet another. The Stoics use the term "sickness" for an infection of the body as a whole, "infirmity" for a sickness accompanied by weakness, and "fault" 29 * when the parts of the body are at odds with one another, so that the limbs are crooked, twisted, or misshapen. Thus the first two, sickness and infirmity, come into being through some unsettling or disturbance in the health of the body as a whole; but a fault may be exhibited independently, even when the person's health is unaffected.

In the case of the mind, however, the distinction between "sickness" and "infirmity" is only theoretical, while "faultiness" is a condition or state of being inconsistent and out of agreement with oneself over one's whole life. There are, then, two sorts of infection in the beliefs, one of which gives rise to sickness or infirmity, the other to inconsistency and self-contradiction. For not every fault involves the same level of discrepancy. For instance, those who are drawing near to wisdom are in a condition which, as long as it falls short of wisdom, is indeed out of agreement with itself, yet not twisted or perverted.

Sicknesses and infirmities are species of faultiness, but whether the emotions are also species of it is open to question. 30 * For faults are conditions that last, but emotions are in movement; hence they can hardly be species of lasting conditions.

Non-intellectual Virtues

The mind is analogous to the body in good qualities as well as bad. For there are in the body certain preferable traits—among them beauty, strength, wellness, toughness, quickness—and the same is true of the mind. When the body is in a balanced condition, with all its elements fitting properly together, it is called "health"; and there is also a "health" of the mind, when its judg-

ments and beliefs are in harmony. Some say that this virtue of mind is just self-control itself, others that it is obedient to the dictates of self-control and that it follows upon it and has no independent aspect. Either way, it is found only in the wise person. But there is also another sort of “health” of mind which can be found also in the non-wise person, when some mental disturbance is removed by medication and the care of doctors.

31 • When used of the body, the word “beauty” refers to a nice configuration of the limbs together with a pleasant coloring, and similarly “beauty” of mind means an evenness and consistency in the opinions and judgments, together with a certain toughness and stability, either following upon virtue or identical with it.

Likewise, the quality which is analogous to muscular strength and power in the body is called “strength” of mind, and equivalent to rapidity or “quickness” of body is a laudable “quickness” of intellect. For the mind can travel through many things in a short time.

Further Observations on the Theory of Character

One difference between minds and bodies is that when minds are well, they cannot be assailed by any sickness; but bodies can. Also, bodily aversions do not necessarily incur blame, but it is not so with those of the mind. For the mind’s sicknesses and emotions do not come about except through some spurning of reason. Thus they occur only in humans: animals do not have emotions, though they do have similar behavior.

32 • Moreover, there is a difference between clever people and slow-witted people. Just as Corinthian bronze tarnishes slowly and is restored quickly, so there are some persons whose natural endowments make them slow to submit to sicknesses and quick to recover, while with the slow-witted it is the reverse. Nor is the mind of such a person subject to every emotional sickness. For it is not subject to any that are savage and bestial. But some emotions have an initial semblance of humaneness—pity, for instance, and distress, and fear.

Also, the infirmities and sicknesses of the mind are considered more difficult to eradicate than those extreme faults which are the contraries of the virtues. For the faults can be eradicated and the sicknesses remain, since removing the one is quicker than curing the other.

An End to Exposition in the Stoic Manner

33 • You have now heard the meticulous disputations of the Stoics on emotion, which they call *logika*, “rational disquisitions,” because the dis-

tinctions are so finely drawn. Now that my speech has moved out of these waters—away from the reefs of precision, as it were—let us proceed on our way with the remainder of the discussion. That is, provided my treatment of these difficult topics was sufficiently clear.

“Very clear indeed. But we will inquire into the points requiring more careful study at some other time. Right now I am waiting for those sails you mentioned a while ago, and for the sailing.”