

DISPASSIONATE PASSIONS

I want to trace the Hellenistic origins and mediæval career of the idea that there can be emotions that do not have the disagreeable baggage with which ordinary emotions travel – emotions that are neither turbulent nor disruptive, emotions that lack any somatic component, emotions that are the product of reason rather than opposed to it: in a word, *dispassionate* passions of the soul. The mediæval motivation behind the idea of dispassionate passions is not far to seek. It is a fundamental article of faith that immaterial beings such as God and His angels, as well as postmortem human souls, enjoy bodiless bliss in Heaven as the highest state of which they are capable. Hence the transports of delight experienced there must be independent of the body; they are the final fulfillment of rational nature, not its annulment, and they contribute to a stable and settled state of eternal blessedness. Yet while the mediæval motivation for adopting dispassionate passions seems clear, such reasons of faith do not apply to the Stoics. More pressing, the doctrine itself stands in need of clarification. How could passions be dispassionate, emotions unemotional, feelings unfelt?

Our sources for early and middle Stoicism permit us to have a clear view of the main outlines of the doctrine of dispassionate passions in the Hellenistic period, though not about the motivation behind it, despite its being one of the aspects of Stoicism heavily criticized in Antiquity (§1). Mediæval philosophers tried to transplant the doctrine of dispassionate passions from its Stoic origins to different philosophical environments: Augustine into Platonism (§2), Aquinas into Aristotelianism (§3).

1. THE STOICS

The Stoic doctrine of dispassionate passions has three constituent parts: (a) the account of the passions, *πάθη*; (b) the view that the Sage is passionless, *ἀπαθής*; (c) the further view that the Sage experiences *εὐπάθειαι*, literally ‘goodpassions’. The paradox is apparent, since (b) should entail that (c) is impossible, or, if not impossible, then to the extent that the *εὐπάθειαι* of (c) fall under (a) they must be drained of their affective content by (b), rendering them no more than the passionless passions of the Sage. Yet the Stoics were

* All translations are mine.

not averse to couching their theories in paradoxes. A closer look at (a)–(c) should tell us whether the ‘paradox’ of dispassionate passions is real or merely apparent.

Unfortunately, a closer look at (a) is not straightforward, for our sources are fragmentary and they do not always clearly agree. Diogenes Laërtius introduces his discussion of the Stoic theory of the passions as follows:¹

Turmoil, extending to the rational faculty, arises from falsehoods; from it come many passions and causes of instability. According to Zeno, a passion is an irrational and unnatural motion of the soul, or an excessive impulse. . . They hold the passions to be judgments, as Chrysippus says.

The broad brushstrokes in this passage link the acceptance or endorsement of falsehoods to mental upheaval, disruptive to the point of affecting rational thought; passions are an effect of such an upheaval, if not the upheaval itself, and in their turn bring about instability – most likely unsteady or unreliable reasoning in the case of human beings, though that is not explicit. The causal connections described here, though their nature is not spelled out, are clear: human passions are produced by accepting falsehoods, and they contribute to psychological disequilibrium.² What passions themselves are, however, is unclear. Zeno seems to identify the passions with psychological ‘motion’ or turmoil, perhaps arising from or supervening upon falsehoods in some way, whereas Chrysippus explicitly declares passions to be judgments. Yet even whether there is disagreement is itself unclear. In his lost treatise *Περὶ πάθῶν*, Chrysippus is said to have offered an interpretation and analysis of Zeno’s remarks³ as merely “giving a sketch” (ὑπογράφει) of the pas-

¹ Diogenes Laërtius, *uit.* 7.110: ἐκ δὲ τῶν ψευδῶν ἐπιγίνεσθαι τὴν διαστροφὴν ἐπὶ τὴν διάνοιαν, ἀφ’ ἧς πολλὰ πάθη βλαστάνειν καὶ ἀκαταστασίας αἰτία. ἔστι δὲ αὐτὸ τὸ πάθος κατὰ Ζήνωνα ἢ ἄλογος καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ψυχῆς κίνησις ἢ ὁρμὴ πλεονάζουσα. . . δοκεῖ δ’ αὐτοῖς τὰ πάθη κρίσεις εἶναι, καθά φησι Χρύσιππος. Compare the parallel introductory remarks in Cicero, *tusc.* 4.6.11: Est igitur Zenonis haec definitio, ut perturbatio sit, quod πάθος ille dicit, auersa a recta ratione contra naturam animi commotio. Quidam brevius perturbationem esse appetitum uehementiorem. . . , slightly amplified at 4.21.47. See also Stobaeus, *ecl.* 2 (88.8–11), and Chrysippus *ap.* Galen, *plac.* 4.2.8.

² See B. Inwood and P. Donini, “Stoic ethics” in K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfeld, and M. Schofield (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press 1999 675–738): “What distinguishes the Stoic theory most clearly is the conviction that passions are causally dependent on intellectual mistakes about values, that in principle one eliminates passions and the underlying psychological instability by correcting one’s beliefs” (699).

³ Galen, *plac.* 4.2.8, 4.2.13, 4.2.19, and 4.7.2. For discussion see R. Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford University

sions – a sketch presumably capable of being further elaborated by providing a more thorough account, which is what Chrysippus did. For the next several centuries, the first and second founders of Stoicism were understood to offer complementary rather than competing views: passions involve on the one hand psychological ‘motion’ as emphasized by Zeno, and on the other hand a cognitive component as emphasized by Chrysippus. On the Zenonian psychological side, when experiencing passions the soul is said to undergo ‘contraction’ (συστολή = *contractio*) and ‘expansion’ (ἐπαρσις = *elatio*), as well as ‘swelling’, ‘stretching’, ‘shrinking’, and a variety of other related states.⁴ On the Chrysippean cognitive side, the agent holds that something good or evil is present or anticipated, and further that it is appropriate to react to the circumstances in a particular way – the former usually construed as a belief (δόξα = *opinio*) about something that appears good or evil,⁵ the latter a judgement (κρίσις = *iudicium*), either implicit or explicit. Their two approaches are reported together by Pseudo-Andronicus:⁶

Press 2000) 57–58, and T. Tieleman, *Chrysippus’ On Affections: Reconstruction and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill 2003) 94–102.

- ⁴ The Stoics held that the mind (really the ἡγεμονικόν) is material, so this Zenonian terminology may be more than metaphor: changes in mental states should be reflected in changes in material states, however the two may be correlated. Note that these changes are *not* the somatic changes usually associated with passions: the type of physiological responses characteristic of anger – faster respiration, increase in heartbeat, and so on – are not the ‘expansion’ or ‘swelling’ mentioned here, though presumably there is a causal link from the psychological state to the somatic effects. See Chrysippus *ap.* Galen, *plac.* 3.1.25 and 3.5.43–44.
- ⁵ There are complexities here that require delicate handling. The belief might be about a state of affairs or be an evaluation of a state of affairs; in either case it may involve or bring about assent, which is required for a judgment, though the assent need not take the form of a judgment: for various intricacies see B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford University Press 1985) 143–155; M. Frede, “The Stoic doctrine of the affections of the soul” in M. Schofield and G. Striker (Eds.), *The Norms of Nature* (Cambridge University Press 1986) 93–110; Sorabji, *Emotions and Peace of Mind* Part 1; T. Brennan, “Stoic moral psychology” in B. Inwood (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge University Press 2003) 257–294; M. Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (University of Chicago Press 2007).
- ⁶ Pseudo-Andronicus, *Περὶ παθῶν* (SVF 3.391): λύπη μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν ἄλογος συστολή· ἢ δόξα πρόσφατος κακοῦ παρουσίας, ἐφ’ ᾧ οἴονται δεῖν συστέλλεσθαι. φόβος δὲ ἄλογος ἔκκλισις· ἢ φυγὴ ἀπὸ προσδοκωμένου δεινοῦ. ἐπιθυμία δὲ ἄλογος ὄρεξις· ἢ διώξις προσδοκωμένου ἀγαθοῦ. ἡδονὴ δὲ ἄλογος ἐπαρσις· ἢ δόξα πρόσφατος ἀγαθοῦ παρουσίας, ἐφ’ ᾧ οἴονται δεῖν ἐπαίρεσθαι. See also Stobaeus, *ecl.* 2.90.7–18 (perhaps derived from Arius Didymus); Diogenes Laërtius, *uit.* 7.111–114; and especially Cicero, *tusc.* 4.7.14–15 (cfr. 3.11.24–25 and 4.6.11–12), the main source for Augustine, dis-

Distress is an irrational contraction, namely the fresh⁷ opinion of the presence of something evil about which people think they should undergo a contraction. Fear is an irrational shrinking away, namely avoidance of an anticipated danger. Desire is an irrational stretching forth, namely pursuit of an anticipated good. Delight is an irrational expansion, namely the fresh opinion of the presence of something good about which people think they should undergo an expansion.

Pseudo-Andronicus does not choose these passions at random. For the Stoics these four passions – distress (λύπη = *aegritudo*), fear (φόβος = *metus*), desire (ἐπιθυμία = *libido* or alternatively *appetitus* or *cupiditas*), delight (ἡδονή = *laetitia*) – are the most generic kinds of passions, the categories under which all others may be ranged.⁸ They are traditionally presented in a table, based on the cross-cutting distinctions good/evil and present/future, as follows:

	present	future
good	<i>delight</i>	<i>desire</i>
evil	<i>distress</i>	<i>fear</i>

Traditional it may be, but the table does not include the psychological state (associated with Zeno) or the judgment of appropriateness (the second cognitive component associated with Chrysippus). A pity, for the most striking feature of the presentation of Pseudo-Andronicus is that the psychological state and the cognitive components are listed side-by-side without any apparent consciousness of tension: the psychological expansion of delight – think of feeling elated, or buoyant, or even ‘expansive’ – simply *is* the lively awareness of an apparent good to whose possession such a reaction is thought

cussed in §2.

⁷ ‘Fresh’ (πρόσφατος = *recens*): “not determined by the clock or the calendar” (Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action* 148), but a sign of its liveness to the agent – see Cicero, *tusc.* 3.31.75.

⁸ The Stoics deliberately pressed ordinary language into philosophical usages, and claimed to offer senses that were extensions of ordinary meanings but continuous with them. Such is the case here: λύπη and ἡδονή are the ordinary Greek words for pain and pleasure respectively, but the Stoics use them in extended ways so that these translations would be misleading. The sense of ‘pain’ is that in which you can be pained at the good fortunes of your rivals, which has nothing to do with the jabs and stabs beloved of contemporary philosophy. Likewise the ‘pleasure’ in question is like the pleasures of good conversation, not like a sensual massage. Better to use words that do not have such misleading connotations: ‘distress’ and ‘delight’.

proper.⁹ Mistakenly, of course; the passions are not rational responses to their circumstances,¹⁰ or at any rate their motivating powers are ‘excessive’ (ὀρμηὴ πλεονάζουσα). These formulae arguably amount to the same thing: passionate impulses exceed the control of reason, and so prompt behaviour that is not reasonable.

The delicate balance among the parts of the Stoic theory of passions was upset by Posidonius, who, it seems, wanted to adopt a platonic division of the soul into rational and irrational parts, ascribing passions to the latter; his criticism of the traditional Stoic account is rehashed with relish and at length by Galen, and to a lesser extent by Plutarch, who make use of it to reject Stoicism altogether. Yet while their purposes are clearly polemical, often setting Zeno against Chrysippus, and their reports untrustworthy, the philosophical points they raise are worth pressing. Is passion a psychological state? Is it cognitive? If so, is it a belief, or a judgment, or something compounded of these? What is the connection between psychological states and cognitive factors? Between either of these and somatic manifestations? How are these elements excessive, at variance with reason, constitutive of turmoil, the product of falsehood? Good questions all, to which the earlier Stoic confidence that the various parts of their theory all fit together might seem philosophically naïve. The later Stoics address these questions, usually in the form of what Zeno and Chrysippus ‘really’ said, or meant, in their writings, a dialectical strategy that need not countenance any real disagreement or philosophical problem. To the extent there was consensus, later Stoics maintained that Chrysippus explained and elaborated Zeno’s doctrines, which, after all, were

⁹ Stoic passions are therefore response-dependent evaluative concepts, much as some contemporary philosophers have argued about the emotions generally; see for example A. Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings* (Oxford University Press 1990); J. D’Arms and D. Jacobson, “Expressivism, morality, and the emotions” in *Ethics* 104: 739–763.

¹⁰ The sense in which a passion is ‘not rational’ (ἄλογος) is disputed, as indeed is whether there is a dispute here. Zeno is said to have held that passion does not conform (ἀπειθεῖς = *non obtemperans*) to reason, presumably keeping the agent from fulfilling the injunction to live in accordance with nature, τῆ φύσει ζῆν (Stobaeus *eccl.* 2.88.9 and Cicero *off.* 1.136). Chrysippus, perhaps by contrast, catalogues the kind of errors that could be made – reasoning badly, making a mistake, overlooking something, and the like (Galen *plac.* 4.2.12, 4.2.24, 4.4.21–23, 5.4.14). Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind* 55–61 holds there to be genuine and deep disagreement here. By contrast, Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action* 158–162 argues that an agent fails to conform to (right) reason precisely by the kinds of epistemic failures listed by Chrysippus.

often formulated orally rather than written down in detailed fashion.¹¹

Given the ancient controversy, it might seem presumptuous to try to settle now what wasn't settled then. Yet certain features of the Stoic theory are clear. First, the psychological states described by Zeno and elaborated by others, namely the expansions and contractions of the soul, are the (purely mental) 'feelings' associated with the passions. This fits with ordinary usage: we have sinking feelings, we may be expansive, we feel the bite of conscience. These states are to be sharply distinguished from the somatic manifestations associated with the passions: the queasy stomach and flop sweat associated with stage fright are distinct from the internal feeling of shrinking away from the spotlight. Second, for the Stoics the passions are, or at least essentially involve, cognitive components; they are more than mere feelings. Whether the cause of the passions or part of their definition, beliefs and judgments are central to the Stoic analysis. Hence it is wrong to identify the passions with visceral reactions, be they somatic or purely psychological.¹² Third, all Stoics agree in thinking that passions fail to conform to reason, whatever the explanation for the failure may be. (There may be different causes in different cases.) This is more than the claim that there are norms of propriety for the passions, criteria with which to assess the reasonableness of an emotional response to a given set of circumstances, which they might, in principle, fail to satisfy. To put it bluntly, for the Stoics there are *no* circumstances in which passions are rational. The passions are, instead, failures of reason.

This last point leads to another on which all Stoics seem to be united, namely that the only way to avoid the failings of the passions is to extirpate them altogether – the goal of passionlessness, ἀπάθεια.¹³ This deliberately

¹¹ Galen, *plac.* 4.7.2: τῶν παθῶν ὑπό τε Ζήνωνος εἰρημένους καὶ πρὸς τοῦ Χρυσίππου γεγραμμένοι.

¹² Such visceral reactions are taken into account by the (perhaps middle) Stoic theory of 'pre-passions' (προπαθειαι) clearly attested by Epictetus *ap.* Aulus Gellius, *noct.* 19.1.14–20 (there attributed to Zeno and Chrysippus as the founders, *conditores*), and by Seneca, *ep.* 113.18 and *de ira* 2.2.1–2.4.2; Cicero identifies them with Zenonian psychological states in the absence of the relevant Chrysippean judgment, *tusc.* 3.34.83: Hoc detracto [*sc. iudicio*], quod totum est uoluntarium, aegritudo erit sublata illa maerens, morsus tamen et contractiunculae quaedam animi relinquuntur. – The same analysis can be brought into play for non-human animals, who cannot, strictly speaking, have passions, a claim Posidonius strongly objected to: see Galen, *plac.* 5.1.10 and 5.6.37–38. At best, non-human animals are 'pre-emotional', capable of states that are merely analogous to human emotions, much the same way they have only rudimentary language or reasoning abilities.

¹³ Diogenes Laërtius, *vit.* 7.117: φασὶ δὲ καὶ ἀπαθῆ εἶναι τὸν σοφόν, διὰ τὸ ἀνέμπωτον εἶναι.

contrasts with the strategy of moderating the passions, μετριοπάθεια, endorsed by Platonists and Peripatetics. Seneca, at the start of one of his letters to Lucullus, expresses the Stoic position sharply:¹⁴

The question is often raised whether it is best to have moderate passions or no passions. We get rid of them; the Peripatetics regulate them. For my part, I do not see how any moderateness of a disease could be wholesome or useful.

A passion is literally a disease (νόσος).¹⁵ This is more than a rhetorical metaphor. The passions are excessive impulses contrary to nature, disorders of the whole human personality (ἡγεμονικόν); the condition they induce is – note the etymology – pathological. If so, Seneca is surely correct to see no ‘moderate’ amount of a disease to be healthy; health at a minimum demands the absence of disease. Likewise mental health.

The Stoics offer a variety of therapeutic techniques to assist in the quest to attain ἀπάθεια, ranging from slogans and sayings to repeat to oneself (in the vein of Epicurus), to behavioural modification, to moral training, to subtle argumentation.¹⁶ Some of the exercises are directed towards strengthening the mind, others to counteracting the passions directly, but the goal of all of the exercises is to become ‘passionless’.

Even in Antiquity there was confusion over the meaning of ἀπάθεια and whether it should be counted as a legitimate ideal.¹⁷ It was often (and not merely polemically) understood as a deliberate repression of emotions, or a

¹⁴ Seneca, *ep.* 116.1: Utrum satius sit modicos habere affectus an nullos saepe quae-situm est. Nostri illos expellunt, Peripatetici temperant. Ego non uideo quomodo salubris esse aut utilis possit ulla mediocritas morbi.

¹⁵ Cicero even proposes *morbus* as a literal translation of πάθος, though in the end he adopts ‘disturbance’ (*perturbatio*), in which he is later followed by Augustine; *fn.* 3.10.35: Nec uero perturbationes animorum, quae uitam insipientium miseram acerbamque reddunt, quas Graeci πάθη appellant? poteram ego uerbum ipsum interpretans morbos appellare, sed non conueniret ad omnia. . . See also *tusc.* 3.4.7 and 4.5.10.

¹⁶ See M. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton University Press 1994) Chapters 8–12 (especially Chapter 10), Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind* Part 2; and Tieleman, *Chrysippus* Chapter 4 for a survey of Stoic therapies. Most notorious is Epictetus’s advice to say to yourself as you kiss your loved ones that one day they will die, in order to become sufficiently accustomed to the idea that you can bear its coming to pass: *ench.* 3.

¹⁷ Even among Stoics! Panaetius is reported to have rejected “insensibility and passionlessness” (Aulus Gellius, *noct.* 12.5.10: ἀναλγησία enim atque ἀπάθεια). The point is directly addressed in Diogenes Laërtius, *uit.* 7.117.

wooden insensitivity, or an inhuman denial.¹⁸ Yet it is none of these. It is neither repression nor denial, since in each of these cases the agent still has the passions but tries to avoid the fact. Nor is it insensitivity. An agent who becomes insensitive or ‘numb’ does not experience passions, it is true, but in a way that misses the mark. Passions are *irrational* responses to circumstances; the goal is not to get rid of all responses, which would throw out the baby with the bathwater, but to rid oneself of irrational responses and have instead only *rational* responses to circumstances – which by definition are not passions. Yet the Stoic goal is feasible only if rational responses are possible, so that the agent replaces the passions with the correct responses.

Are there such rational responses?

The Stoic doctrine of εὐπάθειαι (*constantia*) describes how the wise person ought to respond to circumstances that would, among the non-wise, elicit an emotional reaction.¹⁹ The responses of the wise person take three forms, we are told, each of which is εὐλογον rather than ἄλογον, rational rather than irrational, being the offspring of virtue:²⁰

[The Stoics] say that there are three εὐπάθειαι: elation, caution, wishing. They declare that the opposite of delight is elation, being a rational expansion; the opposite of fear is caution, being a rational shrinking away. For the wise man will not be afraid in any way, but he will be cautious. They declare that the opposite of desire is wishing, being a rational stretching

¹⁸ See T. Irwin, “Stoic inhumanity” in J. Sihvola and T. Engberg-Pedersen (Eds.), *The Emotions in Hellenistic Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 1998). Misreadings aside, ἀπάθεια was criticized for being unattainable by mere mortals, a claim given support by the Stoic insistence that in this regard the Sage is “godlike” (Θεϊοῦς, Diogenes Laërtius, *uit.* 7.119) – a theme taken up by Plotinus, *enn.* 6.7.35, and thereafter by Augustine, as described in §2.

¹⁹ I take the εὐπάθειαι to be central to Stoic thought from its origins. For its likely origins with Chrysippus, and scholarly disagreement with that claim, see the admirably succinct survey in Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action* 305 n. 207. Its centrality is downplayed in Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind* 47–51, who calls them “largely an ideal” – true enough, but so is the Stoic Sage, whose centrality and importance are undeniable. For their connection with passionlessness, Inwood offers the memorable slogan ‘ἀπάθεια is εὐπάθεια’ (173).

²⁰ Diogenes Laërtius, *uit.* 7.116: εἶναι δὲ εὐπαθείας φασὶ τρεῖς, χαράν, εὐλάβειαν, βούλησιν. καὶ τὴν μὲν χαράν ἐναντίαν φασὶν εἶναι τῇ ἡδονῇ, οὖσαν εὐλογον ἔπαρσιν· τὴν δ’ εὐλάβειαν τῷ φόβῳ, οὖσαν εὐλογον ἔκαλισιν. φοβηθήσεσθαι μὲν γὰρ τὸν σοφὸν οὐδαμῶς, εὐλαβηθήσεσθαι δέ. τῇ δ’ ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐναντίαν φασὶν εἶναι τὴν βούλησιν, οὖσαν εὐλογον ὄρεξιν. The same trio are given in Pseudo-Andronicus, *Περὶ παθῶν* §6 (SVF 3.432), and Cicero, *tusc.* 4.6.12–14. See the references in Inwood cited in the preceding note for other candidates for εὐπάθειαι. For the link to virtue, see Diogenes Laërtius, *uit.* 7.94.

forth.

Each of the three εὐπάθειαι is the counterpart to one of the basic passions, described in terms of its psychological states: elation (χαρά = *gaudium*) is the rational version of delight; caution (εὐλάβεια = *cautio*) the rational version of fear; wishing (βούλησις = *uoluntas*) the rational version of desire. Like the basic passions, they are the most generic forms under which subtypes are ranged, and they too may be presented in a table:

	present	future
good	<i>elation</i>	<i>wishing</i>
evil	•	<i>caution</i>

There is no counterpart to distress because the soul has no rational response to the presence of a genuine evil; the Stoic Sage accepts it as part of Fate and is not depressed by it – there is no rational ‘contraction’, much less ‘expansion’ or ‘shrinking’ or the like, of the soul.²¹ The Sage is neither pleased nor displeased at something evil, though of course preferring that it not be so.

The most striking fact about the Stoic εὐπάθειαι is not the absence of a counterpart to distress. It is rather that there is no discussion of an associated cognitive component, in this case inerrant judgment(s), unlike the case of the passions. The reason is not far to seek. To get things right, as the Stoic Sage does, is not a matter of any single judgment or cognitive attitude, but to have a life in which beliefs, judgments, dispositions, actions, *etc.* are all in accordance with nature: τῆ φύσει ζῆν.²² An automobile may have a single point of failure, so that it won’t run because of a faulty alternator. But to run smoothly, *all* its parts have to be in good working condition and mesh well with the rest. So too with the good life, the life of the Sage, in which the εὐπάθειαι have their proper place as concomitants of virtuous – which is to say rational – action.

²¹ J. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press 1969) 49–50: “It would have been unnecessarily paradoxical, not to say foolish, of the Stoics to argue that any [distress] is *per se* even a preferred state. . . . Nor, obviously, can [distress] be any kind of natural accompaniment of virtuous activity.”

²² A point made well by Seneca, *ep.* 95.57: Actio recta non erit nisi recta fuerit uoluntas; ab hac enim est actio. Rursus uoluntas non erit recta nisi habitus animi rectus fuerit; ab hoc enim est uoluntas. Habitus porro animi non erit in optimo nisi totius uitae leges perceperit et quid de quoque iudicandum sit exegerit, nisi res ad uerum redegerit. Non contingit tranquillitas nisi immutabile certumque iudicium adeptis: caeteri decidunt subinde et reponuntur et inter missa appetitaeque alternis fluctuantur.

We are now in a position to return to the question with which we began this section. Is the Stoic position on dispassionate passions paradoxical? More exactly: Are the Stoic εὐπάθειαι instances of dispassionate passions?

The Stoics deny that they are: εὐπάθειαι differ from passions precisely in not being irrational, which is why the Stoic goal can be described as ἀπάθεια.

We might be tempted to treat this as merely a verbal point. Surely the elation felt by the Sage is as much an emotion as the delight felt by the Fool; the Fool may make a mistake about whether something is good, but surely his (mistaken) emotion of delight is no different in kind from the Sage's (correct) emotion of elation. The psychological state involved in each is described in the same terms as an 'expansion' of the soul. From the point of view of 'feelings' delight and elation may be indistinguishable. For all the Stoic insistence that passions are irrational, their account of εὐπάθειαι shows that the difference is extrinsic to the emotion. False beliefs do not systematically differ from true beliefs; the same should hold for 'false' emotions (passions) and 'true' emotions (εὐπάθειαι).

This line of objection treats emotions as being largely a matter of the psychological states (the 'feelings') that the agent experiences. There is something to it, but it overstates the case. Emotions, as the Stoics insist, are more than mere feelings; they are bound up with cognition, sensitive to attitudes and beliefs, permeable by reasons and arguments. Likewise, Stoic passions are not merely engendered by or targeted at falsehoods: they are 'excessive', the sort of psychological state that results from rushing to judgment, leaping to conclusions, not taking the time to weigh and balance evidence, and so on. Above all they are hasty, rather than measured, responses to their circumstances. Indeed, delight and elation may differ by no more than this. But that is no small difference. The Fool who does not pause to consider alternatives may yet leap to the correct conclusion, which he hastily believes to be true; the Sage, who does consider the alternatives, arrives at the same result, and yet has knowledge rather than mere belief once he arrives. Passions are immoderate; εὐπάθειαι are not. The latter are 'dispassionate' precisely in not being passionately held or felt.

For all that, there is something of false advertisement about the Stoic claim that the Sage is passionless. For the Sage does have affective responses to situations, as does the Fool; to mark the difference between them as a matter of being passionate or passionless doesn't quite hit the target. It is a substantive thesis that in order to live rightly the Sage will have to keep ordinary emotional responses at arm's length, and to insist on the 'excessive' character of ordinary emotional responses only goes half the distance: we need an ar-

gument that Stoic rationality entails a form of emotional detachment,²³ which seems to fly in the face of the doctrine of ‘goodpassions’ (εὐπάθειαι). In most situations the Sage will not react as the Fool does. But that is not to say the Sage does not have emotions in a perfectly straightforward sense, only that his values have become systematically different from those of others.

The Stoic position, then, is philosophically suspect. Working through the detailed analyses of the passions, it is not clear that passionlessness is at all incompatible with what we would call emotion. (Above and beyond any disagreement with the Stoic cognitivist approach, that is.) Yet even if the Stoics did not in the end put forward a philosophically adequate account of dispassionate passions, they certainly were taken to have done so, and so bequeathed to philosophical posterity the not entirely compatible ideals of ἀπάθεια and εὐπάθειαι.

2. AUGUSTINE

Augustine discusses the Stoic theory of passions in his *De ciuitate Dei* twice, in Book 9.4–5 and throughout Book 14. He has a clear working knowledge of late Roman Stoicism, derived primarily from Cicero but also from Seneca, Aulus Gellius, and other Latin sources:²⁴ he sketches the general Stoic account of the passions (*ciu.* 9.4), the four basic passions (14.6), the goal of ἀπάθεια (14.9), and the εὐπάθειαι (14.8). Augustine’s knowledge of Stoicism is neither scholarly nor technical, but it is enough to convince him to reject their account of the passions – and as Augustine went, so went the Middle Ages.

Augustine begins by endorsing Cicero’s claim that the Stoic account of the good differs from the Platonist and Peripatetic accounts merely in their terminology of ‘goods’ and ‘indifferents’ and ‘preferred’ (*ciu.* 9.4).²⁵ He cites an anecdote about a Stoic reacting badly to dangers at sea to prove that even the Sage experiences passions.²⁶

²³ See J. Rist, “The Stoic concept of detachment” in J. Rist (Ed.), *The Stoics* (University of California Press 1978) 259–272.

²⁴ For Augustine’s knowledge and use of classical literature, see M. Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1958), and H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Goteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis 1967).

²⁵ Cicero, *fn.* 3.2.5 *et passim*; see also *tusc.* 4.5.10–11.

²⁶ Augustine takes the anecdote from Aulus Gellius, *noct.* 19.1, paraphrasing Epicetus; Augustine cites it again in *hept.* 1.30 to prove the same point. But Augustine is mistaken. The original anecdote seems to have concerned not the passions but the ‘prepassions’ and to have been garbled by Gellius in transmission: the details

More to the point, Augustine holds that the Stoics are wrong about the passions. Some of their views are objectionable: counting mercy as a passion to be extirpated (9.5), for instance, and the potential encouragement of insensitivity through the ideal of ἀπάθεια (14.9). But his disagreement runs deeper. For one thing, Scripture bids us to feel passions:²⁷ to love our enemies, to fear God, to be angry at sinners, to be distressed when faced with temptation. Even Jesus wept: *et lacrimatus est Iesus* (jn. 11:35). His emotion was not feigned, but a function of his assumption of human nature; as such, Jesus clearly felt emotion (particularly at the Passion), and as simultaneously divine it follows that His experience of the several emotions He felt was altogether fitting and appropriate.²⁸ These Biblical references clinch the point for Augustine. We might hope for argument.

We get it when Augustine carries his battle into the Stoic camp in *ciu.* 14. First, Augustine radically reduces the four basic Stoic passions to forms of willing (*uoluntas*):²⁹

What matters is what a man's willing is like. For if it is perverse, he is going to have perverse emotions; if on the other hand it is upright, they are going to be not only blameless but even praiseworthy. Willing is in them all – or rather, they are all nothing other than kinds of willing. What

are untangled in R. Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind* 375–384; see also S. Byers, “Augustine and the cognitive cause of Stoic ‘preliminary passions’ (*propatheiai*)” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41 (2003): 433–448.

²⁷ A claim initially made at *ciu.* 9.5 and reiterated with citations at 14.9.

²⁸ Augustine, *ciu.* 14.9: *Quam ob rem etiam ipse Dominus in forma serui agere uitam dignatus humanam, sed nullum habens omnino peccatum adhibuit eas, ubi adhibendas esse iudicauit. Neque enim, in quo uerum erat hominis corpus et uerus hominis animus, falsus erat humanus affectus.* – See also Augustine's discussion of Christ's fear of death in *in Ioh. eu.* 60.4–5, and the analysis in G. O'Daly and A. Zumkellar, “Affectus (passio, perturbatio)” in C. Meyer (Ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon* Vol. 1 (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co. A. G. 1986 166B–179B), especially 174A–175A.

²⁹ Augustine, *ciu.* 14.6: *Interest autem qualis sit uoluntas hominis; quia si peruersa est, peruersos habebit hos motus; si autem recta est, non solum inculpabiles, uerum etiam laudabiles erunt. Voluntas est quippe in omnibus; immo omnes nihil aliud quam uoluntates sunt. Nam quid est cupiditas et laetitia nisi uoluntas in eorum consensione quae uolumus? Et quid est metus atque tristitia nisi uoluntas in dissensione ab his quae nolumus? Sed cum consentimus appetendo ea quae uolumus, cupiditas; cum autem consentimus fruendo his quae uolumus, laetitia uocatur. Itemque cum dissentimus ab eo quod accidere nolumus, talis uoluntas metus est; cum autem dissentimus ab eo quod nolentibus accidit, talis uoluntas tristitia est. Et omnino pro uarietate rerum, quae appetuntur atque fugiuntur, sicut allicitur uel offenditur uoluntas hominis, ita in hos uel illos affectus mutatur et uertitur.*

is desire and delight but willing with consent the things we will for? What is fear and distress but willing in dissent from the things we will against? Rather, when we consent in pursuing the things we will for, it is called desire; when we consent in enjoying the things we will, it is called delight. And again, when we dissent from what we will against happening, such willing is called fear; when we dissent from what happens to us who will against it, such willing is distress. On the part of the things pursued or avoided, in every case just as a man's willing is attracted or repelled, so too it changes and turns into different affections.

The Stoics – especially Late Roman Stoics – made much of the mind's ability to assent, or to refrain from assenting, to impressions. Augustine wants to turn this thesis against them by arguing that it makes all emotions into forms of (free) assent, or the withholding of it.³⁰ He concludes that “what a man's willing is like” is what matters. To the Stoic condemnation of all passions, Augustine replies that it all depends: “an upright will is thus a good love, and a perverse will an evil love” (14.7: *recta itaque uoluntas est bonus amor et uoluntas peruersa malus amor*).³¹ The will's choice of object determines the moral value of an emotion; there is nothing objectionable in emotion *per se*.

Second, what holds for Stoic passions also holds for Stoic ‘goodpassions’, the εὐπαθειαι. In *ciu.* 14.8 Augustine argues from Scriptural and classical authority that ordinary people (not only Sages) experience elation, caution, and wishing [= willing]. He concludes:³²

Hence good men and evil men will, are cautious, are elated. To put the point another way, good men and evil men desire and fear and delight. But the former do so rightly and the latter wrongly, corresponding to each as the will is upright or perverse.

Even distress may occur in a good way, as when someone becomes distressed

³⁰ Augustine's thesis here is even more radical than it appears at first glance. He is not merely reducing the four basic passions to distinct types of volition, which would be radical enough; his claim is that each is a form of willing, that is, of *uoluntas* = βούλησις (rendered ‘wishing’ above), one of the εὐπαθειαι. This is part and parcel of his claim in 14.8 that the latter are not restricted to the wise but common to all, to be taken up shortly.

³¹ Augustine further reduces the four basic Stoic passions to forms of love (14.7): *Amor ergo inhians habere quod amatur, cupiditas est, id autem habens eoque fruens laetitia; fugiens quod ei aduersatur, timor est, idque si acciderit sentiens tristitia est. Proinde mala sunt ista, si malus amor est; bona, si bonus.*

³² Augustine, *ciu.* 14.8: *Proinde uolunt cauent gaudent et boni et mali; atque ut eadem aliis uerbis enuntiemus, cupiunt timent laetantur et boni et mali; sed illi bene, isti male, sicut hominibus seu recta seu peruersa uoluntas est.*

over his sins and repents of them.³³ The moral is clear: there is nothing special about the Stoic εὐπάθειαι. Augustine then poses a rhetorical question to put the nail in the Stoic coffin:³⁴

Yet since, when these affections are exhibited where they are appropriate, they are in accordance with right reason, who would then dare to declare that the passions are diseases, or full of vice?

The passions are “appropriate” and “in accordance with right reason” and therefore are not “diseases” – Stoic terminology used against the Stoics. Augustine then rehearses a long list of “appropriate” emotions: fear of God, distress at one’s sins, and so on.

Yet despite Augustine’s complete rejection of Stoicism, he tries to retain their notion of dispassionate passions. After rehearsing his list of proper emotional responses, he then offers an unexpected observation:³⁵

Well, it has to be admitted that the affections we have, even when upright and in accordance with God, belong to *this* life, not to the one we hope for in the future, and that we often give in to them unwillingly.

This admission is meant to call to mind Augustine’s earlier discussion of the issue:³⁶

We can still properly raise the question whether affections of this sort, felt even while doing good works, belong to the weakness characteristic of our present life. Well, the holy angels should punish without anger those whom they receive to be punished by God’s eternal law; they should minister to the sorrowful without any shared feeling of sorrow; they should

³³ In *ciu.* 14.8 Augustine cites the story of Alcibiades from Cicero, *tusc.* 3.32.77. For a sense of just how radical Augustine’s claim is, see J. Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge University Press 1982) 109–111.

³⁴ Augustine, *ciu.* 14.9: Sed cum rectam rationem sequantur istae affectiones, quando ubi oportet adhibentur, quis eas tunc morbos seu uitiosas passiones audeat dicere?

³⁵ Augustine, *ciu.* 14.9: Proinde, quod fatendum est, etiam cum rectas et secundum Deum habemus has affectiones, huius uitae sunt, non illius, quam futuram speramus, et saepe illis etiam inuiti cedimus.

³⁶ Augustine, *ciu.* 9.5: Sed adhuc merito quaeri potest, utrum ad uitae praesentis pertineat infirmitatem etiam in quibusque bonis officiis huiusce modi perpeti affectus, sancti uero angeli et sine ira puniant, quos accipiunt aeterna Dei lege puniendos, et miseris sine miseriae compassione subueniant, et periclitantibus eis, quos diligunt, sine timore opitulentur; et tamen istarum nomina passionum consuetudine locutionis humanae etiam in eos usurpentur propter quandam operum similitudinem, non propter affectionum infirmitatem, sicut ipse Deus secundum scripturas irascitur, nec tamen ulla passione turbatur. Hoc enim uerbum uindictae usurpauit effectus, non illius turbulentus affectus. – Augustine makes much the same point in *en. Ps.* 2.4 and *ciu.* 15.25.

aid without fear those whom they love when the latter are in danger. Yet the names of those passions are taken over from ordinary human usage for them as well, not due to the weakness of the passions, but due to a certain likeness in the deeds. Likewise, God Himself is angered, according to Scripture, yet He is not disturbed by any passion; this word is taken over from the effects of His vengeance, not His turbulent affections.

So much for the evidence from ordinary usage Augustine appealed to earlier, we might say, but his point could hardly be more clear: God and His angels act dispassionately, unmoved by any emotions; even morally appropriate emotions have no place in Heaven.³⁷ This is the Stoic ideal of passionlessness reborn with a vengeance.³⁸

Augustine recognizes this explicitly: “Accordingly, if ἀπάθεια is understood. . . as a life without the affections that arise contrary to reason and upset the mind, it is clearly good and highly desirable, but it does not belong to this life.”³⁹ It seems that heavenly bliss is Stoic passionlessness, in which we are free from all emotions – even from morally praiseworthy emotions. This gets half the equation, the blessed life being dispassionate, but it seems to recommend mere insensitivity (to which we attribute emotional states on analogy with our own).

However, Augustine leaves himself a loophole. Notice that he declares ἀπάθεια worthwhile if it frees the mind not from all emotions, but from those that are “contrary to reason and upset the mind.” Similarly, the emotions he rules out of Heaven are the sorts of emotions we experience in this life. But there are other ‘passions’ that are unlike those we experience in this life, reserved for the blessed; they are Augustine’s own εὐπάθεια. He describes it thus:⁴⁰

³⁷ The Afterlife is not symmetric: sinners and devils feel passions deeply in Hell (*ciu.* 14.9).

³⁸ In his early writings, Augustine talks about ἀπάθεια using the Latin term *tranquillitas*, as for instance *ord.* 2.6.8 and 3.8.25, as well as *acad.* 1.4.11. M. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill 1985) 221–225 maintains that Augustine abandoned the ideal of passionlessness after this early period. I disagree, as will be evident shortly.

³⁹ Augustine, *ciu.* 14.9: Quocirca illa, quae ἀπάθεια Graece dicitur (quae si Latine posset *impassibilitas* diceretur), si ita intellegenda est (in animo quippe, non in corpore accipitur), ut sine his affectionibus uiuatur, quae contra rationem accidunt mentemque perturbant, bona plane et maxime optanda est, sed nec ipsa huius est uitae. – In *serm.* 348.3 Augustine declares that only saints can reach ἀπάθεια, and not in this life.

⁴⁰ Augustine, *ciu.* 14.9: Potest ergo non absurde dici perfectam beatitudinem sine stimulo timoris et sine ulla tristitia futuram; non ibi autem futurum amorem gaudi-

Therefore, it can be said, not absurdly, that complete blessedness will be without any pang of fear and without any grief; but who would claim that there will not be love and elation there, except someone wholly shut away from truth?

The difference between blessed love and elation on the one hand, and ordinary love and elation (which Augustine has said is open to ordinary mortals), seems to be largely a difference in their objects:⁴¹

For where there is the unchangeable love of the good that has been obtained, surely the fear of an evil to be avoided is carefree (if it can be so called). By ‘clean fear’⁴² is signified the will by which it shall be necessary that we will against sinning: not by anxiety over weakness, lest perhaps we sin, but to avoid sin by the tranquillity of love. . . . Furthermore, a blessed and eternal [life] will have love and elation that are not only upright but also assured, and no fear or distress.

The good that has been reached in Heaven is, of course, God; love for God, Who is eternal and unchangeable, is itself thereby eternal and unchangeable – a constant theme in Augustine’s writings. In Heaven there is no fear, strictly speaking; it would have to be ‘carefree’ and ‘clean’, involving no anxiousness. In short, it would not be fear at all. Instead, it would be an attitude based on ‘tranquillity’, Augustine’s earlier preferred rendering of ἀπάθεια. The ordinary passions of love and elation are transformed by their eternal certainty, and take the well-deserved place of temporal cares and worries, including beneficial emotions such as the fear of the Lord.

For Augustine, a final question remains. Are the ordinary passions natural to human beings? Or as he puts it, did Adam and Eve, in their prelapsarian condition, experience delight, distress, fear, and desire? Augustine explores this question at tedious length in *ciu.* 14.10–26, but his results can be summarized briefly. Fear and distress are *not* part of sinless human nature, which is presumably how they can be absent from us in Heaven (14.10); it is with Original Sin that humans became “disturbed by conflicting and fluctuating affections” (14.12), and in particular by the two uncontrollable emotions of

umque quis dixerit, nisi omni modo a ueritate seclusus?

⁴¹ *Ibidem.*: Ubi enim boni adepti amor inmutabilis est, profecto, si dici potest, mali cauendi timor securus est. Timoris quippe casti nomine ea uoluntas significata est, qua nos necesse erit nolle peccare, et non sollicitudine infirmitatis, ne forte peccemus, sed tranquillitate caritatis cauere peccatum. . . . Beata uero eademque aeterna amorem habebit et gaudium non solum rectum, uerum etiam certum; timorem autem ac dolorem nullum.

⁴² A reference to *ps.* 18:10, where Augustine has *castus* for the Vulgate’s *sanctus*.

anger and lust (14.19),⁴³ which operate largely independent of our will. In our prelapsarian state even these were under conscious control, so that sexual arousal, for instance, did not involve strong feelings, any more than farmers seeding their crops would (14.23). Blessedness will consist in a restoration of our sinless state and thus freedom from the unruly emotions to which we are now subject.

Take stock. Augustine rejects the Stoic account of the passions, but he retains their ideal of a state in which there are only dispassionate passions. But are there? Augustine maintains that (a) in Heaven there are no disorderly passions; (b) in Heaven there are emotional states unattainable in this life; (c) elation and love as found in Heaven are qualitatively different from elation and love in this life, due to the assured eternality of their object. From (a) we may infer that heavenly elation and heavenly love are not tumultuous, and from (c) that the assured eternality of their object makes them settled and tranquil rather than tumultuous as they are in this life. This conclusion, too, is authentically Augustinian: throughout his works he aligns emotional turmoil with the lack of a constant and reliable object. When in his youth an unnamed close friend died unexpectedly, Augustine describes how upset he was and concludes that the problem was in loving mortal, and hence transitory, things (*conf.* 4.4.7–4.12.19). The shock of loss, the anxiety over keeping possession of a good that can be lost against one's will, the successive attachments to different objects – all these make up the tumultuousness of ordinary emotional life. Augustine insists that the presence of an assured eternal loving relationship would in fact transform the emotions into something that is calm and settled, or, in a word, dispassionate; he is arguably correct.

We might of course reject Augustine's thesis that the only cure for desire is something eternal. If we do reject it, the possibility of mundane blessedness, or of emotional turmoil even in Heaven, become live possibilities. Yet even if we accept his thesis, it is unclear how 'dispassionate' heavenly love and elation are. For Augustine wants them to do the job of explicating the reward of the Beatific Vision, to justify suffering in this life, and to make Heaven a plausible ethical ideal. He can't easily do that if the saints are never more than quietly pleased about their lot in the afterlife.

Assessing the degree to which Augustine is successful in forging a theory of dispassionate passions isn't easy, since he does not usually give precise accounts or technical details. Whether we find it philosophically adequate or not – I for one would like a lot more detail first – Augustine was taken to

⁴³ Augustine takes these two passions, anger (*ira*) and lust (*libido* or *concupiscentia*) to be paradigmatic of two parts of the soul distinct from and often opposed to reason, in good Platonic fashion (*ciu.* 14.9).

be authoritative on these points in the Middle Ages. No need to engage the Stoic arguments; Augustine has disposed of them. And it became a part of Christian dogma that human nature, prior to Original Sin, is free of desire and fear; that in Heaven there are dispassionate passions, which, even more paradoxically than anything the Stoics came up with, are passionately felt there; that human emotions have to be situated between love and will. Such was Augustine's legacy.

3. THOMAS AQUINAS

The Augustinian view of dispassionate passions is part of the philosophical/theological inheritance of the Middle Ages. As such, it is assumed more often than argued for, and generally treated as one of the many background truths that helped define the mediæval intellectual landscape. But that landscape underwent a seismic shift with the recovery and gradual assimilation of Aristotle; old wine had to be poured into new bottles, including the Augustinian heritage. Thomas Aquinas is one of the few who directly address dispassionate passions, trying to fit Augustine's conclusions into his adopted Aristotelian framework.

Begin with Aquinas's general account of the passions. Once he has established that there are passions in the soul, the first order of business to which Aquinas turns is whether the passions are appetitive or cognitive (*uer.* 26.1 and *sum. theol.* 1^a2^æ 22.2). Citing Augustine's remarks in *ciu.* 9.4 as precedent, Aquinas argues that the passions can only motivate action – as they unquestionably do – if representations of their objects occur in a context in which they move the agent (as in the appetite) rather than one in which such representations are merely assessed for their informational content (as in cognition). Hence the passions belong to the appetitive part of the soul.

Given the division between parts of the soul, Aquinas's conclusion about dispassionate passions is foregone. But in the course of replying to an objection, he offers a radical departure from Augustine and the Stoics. There are two ways in which bodily organs used by the soul may undergo change (*sum. theol.* 1^a 78.3): immaterially, when it receives the representation (*intentionio*) of the object in the organ, and materially, when the organ itself undergoes a physical change. In visual perception the immaterial reception of the representation is essential, whereas any change in the eye is merely incidental (the eye does not itself become coloured). Matters are different with the passions:⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Aquinas, *sum. theol.* 1^a2^æ 22.2 *ad* 3: Sed ad actum appetitus sensitiui per se ordinatur huiusmodi transmutatio: unde in definitione motuum appetitiuae partis

The actualization of the sensitive appetite is essentially an instance of the second sort of change. Accordingly, in the definition of the movements of the appetitive part, some natural change in an organ is materially given.

Anger, for example, is said to be the boiling of blood around the heart.

For Aquinas, the somatic manifestations of a passion are an essential part of the passion. Or, to put the point another way, only an embodied person can have emotions. This contrasts sharply with Augustine, who was careful to insist in his discussion of the passions that he was concerned with them primarily as mental events.⁴⁵ The Stoics were committed to thinking that all psychological events have material explanations in the end, but they are clear that the Zenonian psychological states of expansion, contraction, and so on, are not essentially somatic but rather mental. Aquinas breaks with tradition in holding that both immaterial and material changes are essential to the passions.

Aquinas begs the question, though. His claims are directed to the sensitive appetite, but at this point he has argued only that the passions belong to the appetitive part of the soul; whether they belong to intellectual or sensitive appetite has not yet been settled, and it is in fact the next question he takes up (*sum. theol.* 1^a2^{ae} 22.3). Passions do have a somatic component, but for all we yet know this could be no more than a contingent causal effect of their being an intellectual appetite; Aquinas owes us an argument for his radical conclusion, but we do not get one. If anything, he makes matters worse by relying on his question-begging reply to argue that the passions belong to the sensitive appetite:⁴⁶

As we have remarked, a passion is strictly found where there is a physiological change. This is found in actualizations of the sensitive appetite: it is not only immaterial, as it is in the case of sensitive apprehension, but also natural. Yet in actualizations of the intellectual appetite a physiolog-

materialiter ponitur aliqua naturalis transmutation organi: sicut dicitur, quod ira est accensio sanguinis circa cor [*De an.* 1.1 403^b1].

⁴⁵ The burden of *ciu.* 14.5 is to establish that the Platonists are mistaken in thinking that emotions are due solely to the soul's entanglement with the body; part of Augustine's argument is that the four basic types of passion are not intrinsically connected to the body, and can be experienced purely as mental phenomena.

⁴⁶ Aquinas, *sum. theol.* 1^a2^{ae} 22.3: Dicendum quod, sicut iam dictum est, passio proprie inuenitur ubi est transmutatio corporalis. Quae quidem inuenitur in actibus appetitus sensitui; et non solum spiritualis, sicut est in apprehensione sensitua, sed etiam naturalis. In actu autem appetitus intellectui non requiritur aliqua transmutatio corporalis, quia huiusmodi appetitus non est uirtus alicuius organi. Unde patet quod ratio passionis magis proprie inuenitur in actu appetitus sensitui quam intellectui.

ical change is not required, since this kind of appetite is not the faculty associated with an organ. Accordingly, it is clear that the passions are more strictly found in the actualization of the sensitive, rather than the intellectual, appetite.

Why are the passions not phenomena of intellectual appetite, that is, of the will? Aquinas's reply boils down to the claim that the passions necessarily involve somatic changes. That is to travel in a small circle indeed; no wonder his reasoning was challenged in short order.⁴⁷

Aquinas does not hesitate to draw the consequences of his view, question-begging or not. If the passions are restricted to the sensitive appetite, then they can only exist in beings that have sensitive appetite, namely animals and human beings. By the same token, there can be no passions in beings that lack sensitive appetite: God, angels, and discorporate human souls. There is no mistaking Aquinas's clear language. Passions are essentially physiological phenomena, and thus are not possible for bodiless beings.⁴⁸ Indeed, Aquinas explicitly declares that when a human being dies, the hope or the fear he may have had regarding his postmortem existence do not remain in his soul, dependent as the passions are upon the body (*uer.* 25.3 *ad* 7 and 26.3 *ad* 14). Given the strict separation of psychological faculties and the requirement that passions have a somatic component, there seems little prospect for dispassionate passions. In particular, Aquinas cannot adopt Augustine's strategy of finding a pure delight that is qualitatively transformed in Heaven by dint of being directed to an eternal object. There are no grounds in Aquinas for any kind of delight, or other passion, in a bodiless state, no matter the object or the surrounding circumstances. Yet Aquinas is just as committed as Augustine – in no small measure *because* of Augustine – to heavenly happiness and to God's love for all of creation. These must be dispassionate; the question is how they can be 'passionate' at all.

Aquinas's strategy is to identify something that is analogous to the passions which can be attributed to bodiless beings, a line he finds support for in

⁴⁷ For example, when Duns Scotus takes up in his *ord.* 3 d. 33 q. 1 the question whether moral virtues have their seat in the will, he recites Aquinas's argument that they do not, because they regulate the passions which are restricted to the sensitive appetite (n. 13), and replies that there are passions in the will strictly speaking (nn. 33–36) – citing Augustine's reduction of the four basic passions to the will in *ciu.* 14.5 (described above) as support. There is a parallel discussion in Scotus's *Reportatio*, in which Scotus declares that the will is prone to "take delight along with" (*condelectandum*) the sensitive appetite.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, *uer.* 25.3 and 26.3; *sum. theol.* 1^a 20.1 *ad* 1, 59.4 *ad* 2, 64.3; *sum. theol.* 1^a 2^{ae} 22.3 *ad* 3, 31.4 *ad* 2; *c. gent.* 1.89. There are many other passages to the same effect.

Augustine's remarks in *ciu.* 9.5 about how we attribute emotions to God and angels based on "a certain likeness" in the deeds they perform (cited above). While Augustine's intent was deflationary, meant to explain how God and angels do not really have passions, Aquinas draws instead the moral that there is a likeness between the passions and something in God and angels that licenses talk of 'passions' in their case.

Now Aquinas holds that cognitive and affective psychology differ in virtue of their distinct primary objects: the former is concerned with *the true*, while the latter is concerned with *the good* (*sum. theol.* 1^a 80.1 *ad* 2).⁴⁹ This intensional difference reflects the fact that on the one hand the cognitive powers assimilate and process information, while on the other hand the appetitive powers move the agent – toward the good and away from evil, whether at the level of sensitive appetite (the passions) as passive powers, or at the level of intellectual appetite (the will) as an active power. This 'motive' aspect is what characterizes affective psychology generally, making it a distinct branch of inquiry apart from cognitive psychology. When he wants to speak of an action of the appetitive power generally, Aquinas uses the term 'affection' (*affectio*).⁵⁰ Passions and volitions are equally affections, since they are appetitive acts that move their subject to action. Some volitions might therefore be analogous to passions. This is in fact the line of thought Aquinas pursues: "when love or elation or the like are attributed to God or angels, or even to human beings with respect to the intellectual appetite, they signify a simple act of the will with similar effects but free of passion."⁵¹ The dispassionate analogue to passion, then, is a simple act of the will.

The faculty of intellectual appetite, the will, is not in general similar to the sensitive appetite, domain of the passions. For one thing, it is not divided into concupiscible and irascible parts – the burden of *sum. theol.* 1^a 2^{ae} 1.82.5. The will is a single psychological faculty. Like its cognitive counterpart, the

⁴⁹ See P. King, "The Inner Cathedral" in *Vivarium* 46 (2008), 253–274, for Aquinas's account of the distinction between cognitive and affective psychology (especially §2).

⁵⁰ See R. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions* (Cambridge University Press 2009), 35–37 for Aquinas's use of *affectio* and §2.3 for the sense in which affections have motive power.

⁵¹ Aquinas, *sum. theol.* 1^a 2^{ae} 22.3 *ad* 3: *Amor et gaudium et alia huiusmodi, cum attribuuntur Deo uel angelis, aut hominibus secundum appetitum intellectuum, significant simplicem actum uoluntatis cum similitudine effectus, absque passione.* – The same suggestion is offered in *sum. theol.* 1^a 2^{ae} 31.4, where Aquinas describes pleasure occurring in the intellectual appetite as "a simple act of will" and declares (*ad* 2) that it is not a passion strictly speaking, but is rather a simple movement (*simplex motum*), "just as it is in the case of God and angels."

intellect, the will is not essentially bound to the physiology of its subject. It can therefore be possessed by bodiless beings, and, like the intellect, is retained by the human soul even when the soul becomes separated from the body. Unlike the sensitive appetite, however, the will is an active potency. It is the intellectual principle of motion in the agent, directed to the good in general as its object, and its particular acts are volitions, each of which ‘moves’ the agent in some way.

At a minimum, simple acts of will are analogous to passions in that they are principles of movement within the agent, that is, in that each is an affection. But that seems too thin a basis to claim any genuine similarity between passions and (simple) volitions. At the least, Aquinas owes us an account of which volitions are properly analogous to the passions. He admits as much when discussing what affections are present in the postmortem human soul: “Elation and fear, which are passions, do not remain in the separated soul, since they are involved with physiological change; but there do remain acts of the will that are similar to these passions” (*uer. 25.3 ad 7*).⁵² But what is it for an act of will to be ‘similar’ to the passion of fear (say)? Aquinas proposes the following account:⁵³

Love, desire, and so on are taken in two ways: (*a*) in that they are certain passions, that is, occurring along with some mental commotion, and taken generally in this way they exist only in the sensitive appetite; (*b*) they signify a simple affection free of passion or mental commotion, and in this way they are acts of the will, and also are attributed to angels and to God.

These affections, act of will that are not associated with “mental commotion” (*animi concitatio*), are not passions by definition. They are dispassionate passions, the volitional correlate to passions – call them ‘pseudopassions’.⁵⁴

Were Aquinas to leave matters at that, his notion of dispassionate passions would hardly be compelling; it is not very enlightening to be told that dispassionate fear is just like passionate fear except that it is an act of will which does

⁵² See also *uer. 26.3 ad 14*.

⁵³ Aquinas, *sum. theol. 1^a 82.5 ad 1*: Dicendum est quod amor, concupiscentia, et huiusmodi dupliciter accipiuntur. Quandoque quidem secundum quod sunt quaedam passionnes, cum quadam scilicet concitatione animi provenientes. Et sic communiter accipiuntur, et hoc modo sunt solum in appetitu sensitivo. Alio modo significant simplicem affectum, absque passione vel animi concitatione. Et sic sunt actus voluntatis. Et hoc etiam modo attribuuntur angelis et Deo.

⁵⁴ See the discussions in P. King, “Aquinas on the Passions” in S. MacDonald and E. Stump (eds.), *Aquinas’s Moral Theory* 101–132 (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press 1999); R. Miner, *Aquinas on the Passions* §2.3.

not involve mental commotion. How is fear a choice, or at least relevantly like a choice? What is fear if there is no commotion, turmoil, upset? Fortunately, Aquinas does not leave matters at that. His considered response has three parts: an account of how dispassionate passions are possible; the ground on which they are legitimately the analogues to passions; and the grounds for attributing them to various bodiless beings.

In *sum. theol.* 1^a 1.20.1 Aquinas takes up the question whether there is love in God. In replying to an objection, Aquinas points out that “in the passions of the sensitive appetite there may be distinguished something quasi-material, namely the physiological change, and something quasi-formal, which is on the side of the appetite” (*ad 2*). Anger, for instance, involves blood boiling around the heart as its material element, and the desire for revenge (*appetitus uindictae*) as its formal element; each is essential to the nature of fear *qua* passion. In the case of dispassionate passions the material element is left out, of course. It is rather the formal element that provides the ground for the analogous dispassionate passion. Very roughly, in the analogue to a passion, the will adopts the object of the passion. So, for example, Aquinas argues that God experiences elation (*c. gent.* 1.90) and love (*c. gent.* 1.91), in their dispassionate form, expanding on his earlier abbreviated reference to “simple acts of the will”.⁵⁵

Now the operations of the appetite are classified into kinds according to their objects. Hence in the intellective appetite, the will, we find operations that are similar in respect of their kind to the operations of the sensitive appetite; but they differ in that they are passions in the sensitive appetite, due to its connection with a bodily organ, whereas in the intellective appetite they are simple operations. For just as someone avoids a future evil through the passion of fear, which is in the sensitive appetite, so too the intellective appetite does the same thing but without passion.

The volitional analogue to love is targeted at the same object as passionate love, “without passion” (and certainly without a somatic component). But what is love without passion? It is “to wish another well” (*uolle bonum alium*) in a simple act of the will (*sum. theol.* 1^a 59.4 *ad 2*), such as God or angels

⁵⁵ Aquinas, *c. gent.* 1.90: Sed operationes appetitus speciem ex obiectis sortiuntur. Inueniuntur igitur in appetitu intellectiuo, qui est uoluntas, similes operationes secundum rationem speciei operationibus appetitus sensitui, in hoc differentes quod in appetitu sensituo sunt passiones, propter coniunctionem eius ad organum corporale, in intellectiuo autem sunt operationes simplices: sicut enim per passionem timoris, quae est in appetitu sensituo, refugit quis malum futurum, ita sine passione intellectiuus appetitus idem operatur. — N. Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism* (Oxford University Press 1997) 235–236 has an insightful discussion of this passage, and of ‘dispassionate passions’ generally.

might have. So too for the pseudopassion of elation, which is a simple act of the will reposing (*quiescere*) in some possessed good, a point he reiterates in *c. gent.* 1.90. By contrast, the pseudopassion of distress is experienced by demons or the damned as a simple act of “the will’s resistance (*renisus uoluntatis*) to what is or to what is not” (*sum. theol.* 1^a 64.3).⁵⁶ The basis for calling pseudopassions similar to passions is thus twofold. On the one hand, like any affection, passions and pseudopassions are principles of movement within the agent. On the other hand, they share the same object, although that object is the target of different faculties. Hence these pseudopassions are genuinely analogous to the passions, while systematically differing from them.⁵⁷ Human beings are perfectly capable of having dispassionate passions in this life, since they are simple acts of will, alongside ordinary passions; it is only after death, in the absence of the body, that human souls are limited to the pseudopassions.

As the example of distress suggests, Aquinas, unlike Augustine or the Stoics, holds that *all* passions have dispassionate analogues. The whole panoply of the passions found in the sensitive appetite is replicated at the level of the intellectual appetite. This means that Aquinas has to find some way to differentiate between dispassionate passions that can occur in God or angels, and those that cannot but may occur in us. He sketches his account briefly in *sum. theol.* 1^a 20.1 *ad* 2, and presents it at greater length in *c. gent.* 1.89, where he takes up the question whether there are affective passions (*passiones affectuum*) in God. As we should expect, Aquinas is careful to note that there cannot literally be passions in God, since passions are necessarily accompanied by physiological changes, as well as being passive potencies. But now Aquinas draws a distinction. Some passions must be absent from God not only because of the kind of thing they are, namely physiological, but because

⁵⁶ Aquinas devotes *uer.* 26.1 to the question how a separated human soul can be said to suffer, and in particular how the damned suffer in Hell if they have no bodies. The solution he finds most plausible, though as a matter of faith rather than proof, is that disincorporate human souls are (unnaturally) united to physical fire as their substantial form, and so are imbued with its heat. It is not clear that the same view can be applied to fallen angels, though; human souls are fit by nature to be the substantial form of an associated body, though not the fire to which they are joined, whereas the fallen angels, like all angels, are purely immaterial beings.

⁵⁷ To the best of my knowledge Aquinas does not use the term ‘analogy’ in any of his discussions of dispassionate passions. His technical theory of analogy seems quite well-suited to clarify and illuminate his account, however, despite his avoidance of its terminology. The precise details of Aquinas’s theory of analogy have been a matter of controversy since the Middle Ages. For a recent account, see R. McNerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Catholic University of America 1996).

their objects are unsuitable. Distress, for example, by its very nature cannot be present in God, since it is directed at an evil that one possesses – but God cannot have evil present in Himself in any form.⁵⁸ Similar reasoning applies to hope (*spes*): the eventual transformation of Stoic βούλησις is inappropriate for God, since there is no good that He lacks. Likewise for desire, fear, and anger. But the Augustinian ἐπάθειαι, elation and love, are not ruled out by their objects or by the relation in which the subject stands to their objects. As Aquinas remarks, these pseudopassions “can be properly predicated of God though without attributing passion to Him” (*sum. theol.* 1^a 20.1 *ad* 2). Other attributions of passions to God, even analogously, are improper or in some way metaphorical, as when God is described as angry (not literally or analogously possible but so-called in light of the effects of His actions: *sum. theol.* 1^a 59.4 *ad* 1). The upshot is that, as Aquinas puts it, human beings have elation in common with brute animals and with angels (*sum. theol.* 1^a 2^a 31.4 *ad* 3). Even more: elation in its ‘intellectual’ (dispassionate) form is more intense and far greater than any mere bodily pleasure, as Aquinas goes on to argue (*sum. theol.* 1^a 2^a 31.5).

Aquinas takes his account of dispassionate passions to improve on the Stoics (*sum. theol.* 1^a 2^a 59.2). While arguing for Aristotelian moderation, rather than Stoic extirpation, of the passions, Aquinas approvingly cites Augustine’s view that the Stoics differ only verbally from Aristotle, as can be seen from their endorsement of dispassionate passions. Proof that the difference is merely verbal is found in calling only inordinate affections ‘passions’: then Aristotle also holds that they are not to be found in the virtuous person. The Stoics, Aquinas charges, failed to distinguish the passions from other human affections, and so conflated pseudopassions with passions, not keeping the sensitive appetite distinct from the intellective appetite.

While Aquinas’s criticism has some justice to it, his own account of dispassionate passions might fall victim to a similar charge of verbal trickery. It is all well and good for Aquinas to claim that the human experience of elation is common to animals and to angels, but strictly speaking his claim is false, since it equivocally conflates passions with pseudopassions: humans have passions (acts of the sensitive appetite) literally in common with other animals, and humans may also have pseudopassions (acts of the intellective appetite) literally in common with angels, but the two kinds of acts are distinct, even if they are analogous to one another. We could as well say that the human experience

⁵⁸ Aquinas, *c. gent.* 1.89: Quaedam autem passiones remouentura Deo non solum ratione sui generis, sed etiam ratione speciei. Omnis enim passio ex obiecto speciem recipit. Cuius igitur obiectum omnino est Deo incompetens, talis passio a Deo remouetur etiam secundum rationem propriae speciei.

of cognition is ‘common’ to animals and angels, on the grounds that human beings have sense-perception (like animals) and also reasoning (like angels).

Philosophical doubts raised about the accounts of dispassionate passions offered by the Stoics and Augustine had to do with whether the approved emotions, the Stoic or Augustinian ἐπάθειαι, were properly dispassionate. For Aquinas the difficulty is rather in seeing how the pseudopassions are emotions at all, rather than merely being volitional directives to the same ends to which the passions move us. Consider his prized dispassionate passions, namely elation and love. Elation, Aquinas declares, is a matter of “the will’s resting in its object” (*c. gent.* 1.90: *quaedam quietatio uoluntatis in suo uolito*). There is, arguably, an appropriate intellectual attitude to have toward a good in one’s possession – not an occurrent feeling, but more like the satisfaction one might take in a job well done. It is even harder to map out a volitional equivalent to love. We might see it as an extension of the intellectual attitude of benevolence, that is, of wishing another well for his or her own sake; more difficult is to understand the unifying and binding aspects of love on a pure volitional level (*c. gent.* 1.91).⁵⁹ The difficulty is whether such intellectualized volitional responses should count as emotions. They seem to leave out the feeling that is essential to emotion. A well-programmed android could likewise evaluate situations are likely to cause damage and therefore take action to avoid them without having any feelings about it. We can recognize that the android evaluates and responds to its circumstances in an appropriate way, but then, so does a well-designed thermostat. The philosophical question at issue here is whether Aquinas’s pseudopassions have enough of the features we might associate with emotions to be deserving of the name in their own right. Clearly Aquinas’s pseudopassions provide their subject with motivational force, though of a different character and order from that provided by the passions – namely to motivate dispassionately – and hence are analogous to the passions in being affections, in Aquinas’s technical sense. But this may not be enough. At best, we might think, Aquinas can only offer a pale volitional counterfeit of the real thing. No matter how he tries to disguise the fact, holding the view that it would be a good thing for Adam to prosper seems a far cry from loving Adam.⁶⁰ Yet Aquinas is committed not only to this, but

⁵⁹ See Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism* 238–250, for an analysis of Aquinas’s account of God’s love.

⁶⁰ Aquinas may have a loophole. The conclusions of the *Summa theologiae* and the *Summa contra gentiles* include only results established by natural reason. Therefore, Aquinas could maintain that the supernal delights of Heaven are a matter of faith rather than reason, and this might be true even if to us it seems simply impossible. It need not be any more impossible or contrary to reason than the doctrine of

to the further claim that his immaterial pseudopassions are better than their material counterparts. It is hard to see why we should think so. Intellectual benevolence is a fine thing, but hardly to be confounded with passionate love, and no match for the latter's intensity.

CONCLUSION

We have now seen what two mediæval philosophers have done with the paradoxical notion of 'dispassionate passions' inherited from the Stoics. In each case the results are mixed, as indeed they are in the case of the Stoics themselves; none of the three accounts examined here is philosophically satisfying. That may be no more than the best a paradoxical doctrine can hope for. The alternative is to give up the paradox entirely. This road was taken by a distinct tradition stemming from Augustine, one that starts with the notion Aquinas has so arduously laboured to devise: the 'affections of the will'.⁶¹ Anselm of Canterbury picks up on Augustine's claim that the passions are all forms of willing, and, in his *De casu Diaboli*, postulates two fundamental affections: (a) willing justice; (b) willing advantage. These are not two distinct faculties in each agent, but two orientations or directions in which the agent's single faculty of will is pulled; indeed, it is constitutive of individual moral agency. Anselm himself does not try to align (a)–(b) with the passions of the soul, but as his work came to be read during the period of High Scholasticism, particularly by Franciscan philosophers, there came to be a distinct 'augustinian' strain in the philosophy of psychology in which the passions were not narrowly confined to the sensitive appetite, as Aquinas would have it, but are themselves ways of willing – that is, *affections* of the will. Scotus and Ockham, for example, talk about (ordinary) passions as being in the will: not in Aquinas's pickwickian sense, but such that anger (say) has a physiological and a volitional component. To take this approach, however, is to discard the need for dispassionate passions. The passions can be only materially and accidentally connected with their somatic manifestations, and be capable of existing in full-blooded form as passions in the intellective appetite alone. Spelling out how this is possible is not easy; it is very close to Aquinas's task of constructing volitional counterparts of the sensitive passions. But with a difference, for on this alternate 'anselmian' approach there can be

the Trinity. The rapturous delights of Heaven are part of revealed theology, not natural theology.

⁶¹ For a further discussion of this tradition, as well as an attempt to summarize the several trends of thought about the emotions in the course of the Middle Ages, see P. King, "Emotions in Medieval Thought" in P. Goldie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* 167–187 (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010).

phenomenal qualities associated with acts of volition, and these feelings (the mediæval reinvention of Zenonian psychological states) might provide the joy in heavenly joyfulness.

For all that, this anselmian tradition could not avoid the doctrine of dispassionate passions, with its paradoxical character. For after Augustine the doctrine passed into the framework of Christian thought, becoming standard and part of the intellectual furniture of the untidy warehouse that was the mediæval mind. Aquinas's attempt to underwrite the doctrine, however successful we might find it, certainly added further legitimacy to dispassionate passions. How the doctrine passed from its unlicensed ubiquity in the Middle Ages into early modern philosophy, if indeed that is the route the idea traveled on its way to Spinoza and others, remains to be explored.

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