Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics in Ancient Thought

Themes from the work of Richard Sorabji

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The Presence of Socrates and Aristotle in the Stoic Account of *Akrasia*

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1. Introduction

The issue of incontinence has become a favourite theme of scholarly discussion in recent decades. Certainly it has been one of the philosophical topics that have contributed greatly to reintroduce ancient philosophers into contemporary philosophical discussion. While papers and books devoted to the issue of *akrasia* are, for the most part, focused on Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, those dedicated to the Stoics are much scantier. Any reader familiar with the Stoic fragments that have come

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1 Among the contemporary philosophers who dealt with this and other related topics taking as their departing point the Ancients deserve to be quoted E. Anscombe, *Intention* (Oxford, 1963), 14 (the claim that "there is point in speaking of knowledge only where a contrast exists between "he knows" and "he [merely] thinks he knows""); contains Socratic echoes), and 57–70; see also D. Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford, 1982), 21–42. Of course, I am not implying that the topic of Stoic incontinence has not been addressed by scholars; there is a considerable amount of scholarly discussion on Stoic emotions and related topics (including the issue of *akrasia*). See, among other studies, B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* [*Ethics*] (Oxford, 1985), ch. 5, at
down to us should not be surprised at this situation. In fact, whenever one says ‘the Stoics maintain that’ one is compelled to undertake a real task of reconstruction in order to establish, within an acceptable degree of reasonability, that a specific thesis effectively belongs to a doctrine asserted by the Stoic school as a whole or to a particular Stoic philosopher. The problem in the case I am concerned with is that in the existing evidence for early Stoicism there is not any systematic discussion of the issue of incontinence. The silence of the Stoics on the phenomenon of incontinence is significant for, although the word ‘acratie’ or ‘incontinent’ (akratēs) is used by Chrysippus to describe a movement of the soul which is disobedient to reason, there is neither a trace of a reference to a psychic conflict nor a systematic discussion about how it is possible that an agent be inclined to perform an action that, although he knows it to be incorrect, he performs anyway against his own better judgment.


1 I have done an exhaustive search for the terms akrasia, akrateia, akrateusia, and their cognates in Galen (De Placitis Hippocrates et Platonis, hereafter abbreviated PHP); I quote this work by book, chapter, page, and line of P. De Lacy, Galen. On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato, 3 vols. Corpus Medecorum Graecorum; Berlin 1796–85), Plutarch (De virtute morali [FM], De Stoicorum sophismatibus [SR], De communius notitia adversus Stoicos [CN], Diogenes Laertius 7 (DL), and Stobaeus, Eclogae (Ecl.), 2.57, 13–116, 18. In what follows I cite this work by chapter, page, and number line of C. Wachsmuth’s edition Eclogae physicae et ethicae (Berlin, 1884). The results of this search have shown that the cases in which some of the mentioned words appear are not included in the context of a systematic discussion of the topic.

2 See Inwood, Ethics, 137 and Galen, PHP 4.2, 246, 20–4. Galen describes the issue of continence and incontinence on the ground of a psychology implying the conflict between reasoning (logismos) and irrational desire (epithymia). Although Galen suggests that Chrysippus’ example of the runner (briefly commented on in the second section of this essay) also testifies to the conflict between reasoning and irrational desire, the point is not so clear. I think that the example can be interpreted in terms of a monistic psychology. In my view, this is the only way of being consistent with the Chrysippean thesis that vice is nothing other than the hegemonikon of the soul disposed in a certain manner, not the reason that has been overcome by irrational desire.
point is clarified as soon as the Stoic psychology is examined, since one of its foundations is the defence of a monism that removes from the very beginning the possibility of any conflict between two antagonistic parts of the soul. 4

In what follows I intend to show that, despite the fact that incontinence never is systematically discussed in the Stoic sources, an acceptable reconstruction and a coherent interpretation of it in early Stoicism can be presented. I shall suggest that, even though the Stoics hold an intellectualist position, an argumentative strategy might be developed to show that such a position does not lead to the impossibility of accounting for how an agent is capable of making a correct moral judgment and at the same time admitting that such an agent can act against it. In my view, it is relevant to take into account the cognitive state of the agent (episteme or doxa) when he or she assesses the state of affairs concerning what is really good for him or for her, and when he or she agrees to a proposition describing the appearance of what he or she takes to be good. The Stoic virtuous person (enaretos), whose cognitive state always is knowledge (episteme), not only has the theory of what should be done, but also practices it. 5 By contrast, the incontinent, whose cognitive state is always opinion (doxa), appears to have just the theory of what should be done, but he does not practice it. This is probably the case because, due to his weakness of character, he is not able to translate into action the content of the temperate propositions that describe the right course of action.

First, I shall present some details concerning the Stoic doctrine of the soul and the way in which the problem of incontinence emerges in it. Next I shall concentrate briefly on the Stoic account of the psychology of action and offer an interpretation of how the mechanism that produces the incontinent action works (or ‘should work’) for a Stoic according to that account. 6 My claim is that, although a Stoic incontinent is able to

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4 On the monistic Stoic position and other psychological matters see the helpful remarks by Brennan, ‘Old Stoic’, 23–6.


6 The fact that Posidonius has adopted a tripartite psychology (an interpretation that has been recently questioned by Cooper, Reason) makes his account similar to the Platonic one and hence different from the one given by the early Stoics. When speaking of ‘the Platonic account’ I mean the psychological doctrine as found in Plato’s Republic 4 (on this point see below n. 25). Cooper has noted that Posidonius ‘appears consistently in all our sources as one leading Stoic among others, and indeed, with almost the sole exception of Galen, he seems to have been universally regarded as a leading authority for orthodoxy Stoic moral theory in particular’ (see Reason, 450–1; the emphasis on ‘orthodox’ is mine). The point is that Galen’s testimony on Posidonius is crucial for the reconstruction of Posidonius’ as well as Chrysippus’ thought. What we know about Chrysippus’ psychology
notice, however weakly, that the temperate proposition (for instance, 'the appropriate thing is to act with moderation') is true and that the action derived from directing his impulse toward the predicate of that proposition would be correct, because he fails to direct his impulse to this predicate, he does not act correctly. This appears to show that he has not given a strong assent to that proposition. And he acts that way believing that he knows what he is doing, although his alleged knowledge is just opinion, a 'weak cognitive state'. Actually, what the evidence explicitly says is that weak assent—derived from the base person's cognitive state—is a changing assent (which is the same as ignorance), i.e. a vacillating assent that displays a bad or perverse judgment (see Stobaeus, Eel., 2.111, 20–1), which is an accurate description of what the psychological state of a passionate person is.

2. Stoic Akrasia and its Socratic Background

Let me briefly stress some links between Stoic and Socratic moral psychology and why I think such links are relevant for the correct understanding of Stoic developments. For the most part, the connections between Socrates and the early Stoics have not been questioned, although such connections have not yet been thoroughly clarified. Despite the fragmen

and about Posidonius' criticisms on Chrysippian psychology does not show Posidonius to be very orthodox. If Cicero must be trusted, the orthodox thesis was that Zeno (to whom Chrysippus seems to have followed) denied that desire and reason should be placed in different parts of the soul (Acad. 1.39). According to Cooper, no matter what Galen says, Posidonius does not reject the Chrysippian psychological monism (Reason, 451–5, 467–8). Cooper's thesis—which follows J. Fillon-Lahlile, Le de ira de Sénèque et la philosophie stoïcienne des passions (Paris, 1984), in some points—should be carefully considered; this task is beyond my focus here. Now Sorabji has even questioned the assumed orthodoxy of Chrysippus (see his Emotion, 101–2).

7 I am aware that an orthodox Stoic would not accept 'types of knowledge', such as I have suggested here. For just as there are wise (sophoi) and base (phauloi) people, there is knowledge (episteme) and ignorance (agnoia) too as the suitable cognitive states corresponding to each of them. However, there is a passage where two types of assent are suggested: the one belonging to the wise person (the assent to what is cataleptic), and the one belonging to the agent whose presentations are not correctly trained and falls into disorder and careless (see DL 7.48 = LS 31B; see also Stobaeus, Eel. 2.111, 18–114, 1–2, partially contained in LS 46G). This means that the base person usually gives his assent to the 'cataleptic' as a consequence of his cognitive state (see Sextus, Against the Mathematicians, [M] 7.247–8).

8 To my knowledge, one of the first contemporary scholars to stress the connections between Socrates and the Older Stoics is A. M. Ioppolo, Aristone di Chio e lo stoicismo antico (Naples, 1980), esp. 78–81, 86–9, and particularly A. A. Long, 'Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy', Classical Quarterly 38 (1988), 150–71 (reprinted in A. A. Long, Stoic Studies [Studies] (Cambridge, 1996), 1–34). Sedley has also made reference to the
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In the early period (Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus) and of the Roman period (Epictetus) considered themselves as disciples of Socrates, or at least regarded him as their model of a sage person. This has been widely recognized by prominent scholars and is strongly supported by the evidence. Despite the fact that it is generally acknowledged that Socrates’ influence upon the Hellenistic schools (and especially upon the Stoics) took place through the Cynics, and although it is still far from clear (to me) which Socrates should be regarded as a model for the Stoics (whether Xenophon’s or Plato’s), I tend to believe that, in the most theoretical issues of Stoic ethics, the Platonic Socrates is the best candidate. To be sure, we can find standard Socratic theses in early Stoic ethics: the concept of virtue (arete) as a form of knowledge (episteme), the thesis of the unity of virtues and that virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness.


12 Indeed there is a strong presence of Socratic tradition apart from Plato’s in Stoicism (see Cicero, On the Nature of the Gods, 2.18; 3.27; Sextus M 9.98 and Xenophon, Memorabilia, i. 4, 5–18, quoted and commented on by Long, who has called attention on this passage in his 1996: 20–2). In fact this is one of the few passages which would allow us to think of Socrates as a forerunner of the Stoic thesis that principles of morality can be derived from laws governing the natural world (Plutarch, SR 1050A–B; on this point see DeFilippo and Mitsis, ‘Natural Law’, 253–5). It is certainly arguable that the Stoics did not have the ‘Problem of Socrates’ (Long, Studies, 4–5). As pointed out by Sedley (Chrysippus’, 314), they did not distinguish clearly between historically Socratic texts and Platonic texts, either. Galen, in commenting on Chrysippus’ account of the weakness of the soul, attributes the thesis that nobody fails willingly to Plato, not to Socrates (PHP 4.6, 272, 36–274, 1).

13 Indeed this is a simplification. The Socratic thesis that virtue is knowledge should be carefully examined. Some of the most influential interpretations emphasize that
To the best of my knowledge, there is no clear definition of the term *akrasia* in the Stoic remains, but the discussions found in the sources strongly suggest that what the Stoics had in mind was something close to the Socrates' picture (such as it is depicted in Plato's *Protagoras* 352b–357c and by Aristotle in his critical presentation of the issue in *Nicomachean Ethics* [NE] 7.4, 1147b24–8): an agent *X* is incontinent when he or she intentionally and knowingly performs an action *Y* against his or her better judgment, and when his or her psychological condition is weak with respect to the necessary or 'unavoidable' sources of pleasure, i.e. food, drinking, or sexual satisfaction. In the incontinence phenomenon itself a cognitive factor is involved. At least for the common sense (*hoi polloi*), it is evident that an agent can be overpowered or conquered by the pleasures of food, drink, and sex, and that what such an agent performs is performed on the basis of a certain knowledge that it is wrong, or at least, a belief that he knows what is bad or good for himself (Plato, *Protagoras*, 353c–d). These actions are wrong because they provide an immediate pleasure and, in doing so, the agents translate their action into a 'short-term belief about what is good/pleasant' and give it 'greater weight than a long-term, and better grounded, belief about this'. The cognitive point, according to both Plato's Socrates and the Stoics, is precisely what should be challenged. They contend that these agents do not know what they are doing, they think they know it, but in fact they don't. Consequently, what the majority of people think to be goods are not, and this is so because...
they are ignorant of what a real good is. These supposedly good things are actually bad due to the final result they produce, namely diseases, and diseases cause pain, which is precisely what the agent wanted to avoid. The things that were wrongly regarded as being goods turn out to be painful, and thus deprive people of other pleasures, the ones that are the real pleasures because they unconditionally benefit the agent (Plato, *Protagoras*, 353d4–354a).  

For the Platonic Socrates there is no psychological struggle understood in terms of *parts in conflict*. No one desires bad things, and the one who pursues bad things does so unwillingly. His choice is based upon ignorance. This is the so-called ‘Socratic intellectualism’, according to which if the agent *knows* that an action is bad, he does not perform it. If he performs it, he does not know that it is bad. In other words, virtue is knowledge and he who acts wrongly does so due to his ignorance and hence he performs a bad action unwillingly. This is equivalent to maintaining that there is no incontinence, that is to say no one does anything that is bad for himself *knowingly* (Plato, *Protagoras*, 358c2–3). If Socrates wishes to maintain that vices are ignorance, he needs to remove the possibility of incontinence and to reduce vices to mistaken judgments, a thesis clearly maintained by the Stoic Chrysippus (cf. Galen,

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16 This is clearly put in Plato’s *Gorgias*, 466b1–c5, where it is suggested that, although the agent cannot be mistaken in wishing what is best for himself, he can make a mistake in *believing* that this determined thing or course of action is the best for himself. So, even though the tyrant *thinks* or *believes* that what he is doing is good for himself and benefits him, he does not *know* that it is actually bad and harms him. The opposition in the context clearly is between the two basic cognitive states, recognized both by Socrates and by the Stoics: opinion (*doxa*) and knowledge (*episteme*).

17 This passage in Plato’s *Protagoras* should be compared with the one in *Euthydemus*, 278e–281e, where the character Socrates (or perhaps Socrates himself) emphasizes the fact that something is a real good if and only if it is an unconditional good, i.e. if it does not depend on another thing to be good. This is why Socrates can say that wisdom (*sophia*) is the only thing good alone by itself (281d–e), so it is *the* condition (or the unconditioned condition) of the other things that are assumed to be goods. On this point, see Santas, ‘*Goods*’, 42–4, whose analysis I follow.

18 For evidence see Plato, *Meno*, 77b–78b. *Gorgias*, 466b–d; 488a; 509e. *Protagoras*, 345c; 360d. See also *Phaedo*, 69b2–3: sometimes *X* is a true virtue if it is accompanied by wisdom. My formulation of the Socratic position is mostly based on the ‘sufficiency thesis’. Some influential interpretations stress that knowledge is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for moral virtue. The former implies that if an agent acts morally, he or she has moral knowledge (for discussion see Santas, ‘*Goods*’; Irwin, *Plato*, chs. 3–4). The best discussion of the ‘Socratic paradoxes’ continues to be, in my view, that of Santas, *Socrates*, 183–94. As noted by C. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Princeton, 1990), 225, the view that virtue is knowledge and that no one performs a bad action willingly are logically connected by the assumption that everyone pursues what is good. If an agent performs a bad action, it can only be due to an intellectual mistake. *Virtue* (*arete*) is nothing other than a correct recognition of what is good (see Plato, *Protagoras*, 352c4–7). This is the conclusion advanced by Socrates himself in the passage of Plato’s *Gorgias*, 460b.
But if this is effectively the case, how can the incontinent action be explained? The answer for Socrates seems to have been by denying the phenomenon of incontinence itself and, in doing so, removing the conflict and avoiding the concept that the mind is a battlefield between two opposing factors. In the dialogue, Protagoras, Socrates is shown making emphasis on the extreme case, that is, ignoring the emotional or affective components in human psychology or, rather, reinterpreting such components in terms of a judgment making reference to what is good or bad. Thus the denial of incontinence appears closely linked to the identity between virtue and knowledge as well as to the identity between vice and ignorance. Even taking for granted these fundamental issues of Socratic psychology, I still believe that the Stoics were willing to account for the acretic behaviour.

3. A Brief Exposition of the Stoic Psychology: Psychological Monism and the Psychology of Action

From Zeno of Citium (and up to Posidonius, in the first century BC) the Stoics defended a monist psychology and they did not recognize the distinction ‘rational part’–‘irrational part’ of the soul. Following Zeno, Chrysippus distinguished eight parts of the soul: the five senses, the faculty of speech (to phonetikon), the faculty of procreation (to spermatikon) and the ‘commanding’ of the soul (to hegemonikon). The passionate (to pathetikon) and the irrational (to alogon) are not separate from the rational, but the same part of the soul (tauto tēs psychēs meros), which they

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19 See Kuhn, Plato, 227.
20 See Plato, Protagoras, 355a–358a. For the Stoic version of this Socratic thesis, see Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.58, 9–11, 18–19 (cf. LS 69K).
21 As correctly indicated by Gosling (‘Akrasia’, 187), the Stoics did not regard the soul as a unified entity. What is a unified entity is the hegemonikon, not the soul or mind. In fact, the soul is divided into eight parts. By contrast, the ‘commanding part’ is a unity with different faculties at work. In commenting on Chrysippus’ thesis that the judgment that is identical with the passion is itself a pleonazousa horne, Nussbaum suggests that the sort of tumultuous movement this judgment is has its seat in the rational soul, and that the Stoics recognize only a single part of the soul: the rational part (Therapy, 373; italics are mine). Cooper’s assessment of the issue seems to me more accurate. He holds emotions (pathē) to be functions of the reasoning power or of the rational faculty (see Reason, 451–2, 455). As far as I can see, there is no textual support to speak of ‘the rational part of the soul’. The Old Stoics accepted four faculties or functions of the hegemonikon: reason or ‘reasoning’ (logos) is one of its functions or faculties among others (the other functions being phantasia, synkatathesis, and horne). For evidence see DL 7.159; Stobaeus, Ecl. 1.49, 369, 6–9. For the examination of the commanding of the soul from a physical point of view and of the soul as a physical entity, see L. Couloubaritis, ‘La psychologie chez Chrysippe’ (‘Psychologie’), Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique. Aspects de la philosophie hellénistique (Geneva, 1988), Tome 32, 99–142, at 107–15.
call 'thought' and 'commanding') becomes vice and virtue, and the soul contains nothing irrational in itself. When positing a monist psychological position, the Stoics remove the account of the inner irrationality in terms of conflict, since there are neither parts nor faculties at odds within the soul. As a result, to some extent they follow the Socratic position which avoids dealing with the problem of incontinence in terms of an inner psychological conflict. The Stoic monist psychology is in agreement with the Socratic psychology but the Stoics seem to have taken into account some criticisms made by Aristotle to the extreme intellectualist position (attributed to Socrates), for they make each agent responsible for his or her cognitive state.

Galen notes that, if it is accepted that there is not an appetitive part in the soul nor parts that are in conflict (as the Stoics do), the same possibility of continence is removed, for if the possibility of desiring is removed there will be neither continence nor temperance. The same thing could be said of incontinence: if there is no room for the appetitive faculty (and because of this there is no desire struggling to control reason), there cannot be room for incontinence. Neither Zeno nor Chrysippus, however, conclude that there is no room for incontinence or that incontinent action cannot be explained (the vicious person is in fact an incontinent and we have some detailed accounts of what a Stoic vicious person is).

22 Plutarch, *VM* 441c (SVF 3.459; LS 61B). What becomes vice or virtue is the *hegemonikon* as a whole.

23 See *PHP*, 5.7, 342, 14–16. The terminology when talking about passion is a little confusing, because 'temperance' and 'continence', on the one hand, and 'interpension' and 'incontinence', on the other hand, would seem to be the very theoretical terms at issue (I am grateful to Brad Inwood for having drawn my attention to this point). This was envisaged, to some extent, both by Aristotle and by the Stoics. For Aristotle the fact that we are naturally more inclined toward pleasures explains that we are more prone toward incontinence (*akolasia*) than toward orderliness (*kosmioi*; see *NE* 1109a14–16). In the same vein, the Stoics speak of orderliness and continence as virtues subordinate to temperance, and of incontinence as a vice subordinate to incontinence (for textual references, see the next note).

24 Cf. DL 7.93, where incontinence (*akrasia*) is regarded as a vice subordinate to continence (*akolasia*). According to a Plutarch passage (who makes an apparently verbatim quotation of Chrysippus), that which is done in accordance with continence (*enkrateraia*) is a correct act (*kathorithosia; SR* 1041A–B; *SVF* 3.297). As is obvious, the Stoics do not distinguish, like Aristotle (*NE* 1146b19–24; 1150b29–31; 1151a11–14), incontinence from incontinence. Following Plato, for the Stoics any failure in being master of oneself counts as an instance of *akrasia*. For the issue of incontinence in Plato, see *Laws*, 635c7 and the paradigmatic passage in *Republic* 439e6–440a3 (analysed by Sorabji, *Emotion*, 365–8), where Leontius, after struggling with himself, fails to control his irrational desire and looks at the corpses lying in front of him. He did so, Plato says, because he was overcome by his appetite or irrational desire (*kratoumenos hypo ton epithymias, 440a1*). Note that the struggle in Leontius’ case is not between the rational and the appetitive part, but between the spirited and the appetitive parts. See A. W. Price, *Mental Conflict [Conflict]* (London and New York, 1995), 97–8. Plutarch, who can admit the analysis of the phenomenon of inner irrationality in Aristotelian and Platonic terms, complains about the way the Stoics
do they think that the only way to explain the inner irrationality should be in terms of conflict. Certainly the Stoic position on what the inner irrationality is disrupts our normal view of the topic, the 'normal view' being the Platonic one, which presupposes the model of parts in conflict. 25

However, the Stoic Cleanthes apparently put forward a psychological model based on the conflicting parts of the soul. In fact, Galen argues for the presence of such a partition model in Cleanthes when suggesting that the Stoic Cleanthes took the passionate to be different from reasoning. In a well-known passage, Galen quotes from Cleanthes' verses a dialogue between rage (thymos) and reasoning (logismos) in order to show that Cleanthes agrees with the divided-mind position that holds that there is a conflict within the soul. Galen puts in Posidonius' mouth the assertion that Cleanthes has made reasoning speak with rage, these being two different things. Galen contends that the psychological monism defended by Chrysippus not only disagrees with the evident facts, but also with Zeno and Cleanthes (PHP, 5.6, 332, 21–3; LS 651). Thus for Posidonius

deal with the theme. In accordance with Plutarch, the Stoics, while maintaining that it is the same part of the soul that we use to desire and to judge, confuse intertemperance with incontinence (VM 445B).

25 See the way David Hume puts forward the issue: 'Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and to assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates' (A Treatise of Human Nature, (Oxford, 1966), book II, part III, sect. III). It should be noted that the partition model is not present in Plato before Republic 4. The two components of Plato's dualism in Phaedo are the body and the soul, the soul not being divided into parts. The irrational desires are related to the body, not to the soul (Phaedo, 66b–d). At Phaedo the body is envisaged as a hindrance for acquiring truth and wisdom; it is nothing but a source of confusion and a real evil (Phaedo 66a5–b6). Since the body has need for nurture, Plato says, it fills us with wants, appetites, fears, and much nonsense. So our body prevents us from having a wise thought (phronesis) and its appetites (epithymiai) produce 'war' and 'civil war' (66b6–c7). Unlike what can be found in the Republic, 'war' (polemos) and 'civil war' (statia) are not used in Phaedo with reference to an agent who fights against himself; this himself being another part of the soul (see Republic, 470b5–470d, 550b9–560a and n. 34 below). By contrast, at Phaedo the soul as a whole is dragged (helketa) by the body (not by another part of the soul) toward things that are never identical (79c6–7). The model that the critics of the Stoics seem to have taken into consideration is the one of Republic 4, where three parts of the soul in conflict are clearly distinguished (Republic 435b9–441c). For details concerning Plato's psychology see T. M. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London, 1993), chs. 2–3 (on Plato's bipartition of character, see 41) and B. Inwood, 'Seneca, and Psychological Dualism' ['Seneca'], in J. Brunswig and M. C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Passions & Perceptions. Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind. Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Hellenisticum* (Cambridge, 1993), 150–83, at 156–61. I am aware that my account of the 'Socratic' psychology as different from the 'Platonic' psychology is controversial. For a contrasting view, see G. Carone, 'Akrasia in the Republic: Does Plato change his Mind?', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 21 (2001), 107–48, at 116–42.
(and Galen indeed approves of his position, which, in his view, displays Platonic doctrine), Cleanthes' opinion is much more reasonable than Chrysippus', who does not take the passionate part of the soul (to pathetikon) to be other than the rational (\textit{PHF}, 332, 31-334, 2). The evidence, it seems to me, is highly controversial, mainly because our source for Cleanthes is Galen, an antagonist of Chrysippus' monist model. I believe that, whether or not Chrysippus made significant modifications to the admittedly orthodox psychological doctrine of Zeno, it is hard to know that accurately based on Galen's testimony. The evidence provided by Galen should be taken with extreme caution, for his picture of Cleanthes' psychology can be a polemical interpretation. As Rist points out,\textsuperscript{26} even for Chrysippus reason and rage could arise in the soul, but this does not necessarily mean that what is at issue is a theory of opposing parts of the soul. To be sure, for the Stoics rage is a kind of passion subordinate to appetite (epithymia), one of the four basic or generic passions (Stobaeus, \textit{Ecl.}, 2.91, 11-12), and if passion is understood in terms of judgment (as Chrysippus thought), there is no need to believe that Cleanthes was positing a different psychology. We are fairly sure about the fact that Zeno and Chrysippus used to say that passion is something related to judgment or a type of judgment, respectively. In so far as judgment is one's reason disposed in a certain way (with no presence of struggle among opposing parts), this position might be interpreted in terms of a monistic psychology.\textsuperscript{27} Nevertheless, according to Galen (\textit{PHF}, 5.1, 292, 20-5), Posidonius disagreed with both Zeno and Chrysippus and he did so because he was willing to follow Plato's doctrine. Hence, for Posidonius passions are neither judgments (Chrysippus) nor certain things supervening on judgments (Zeno), but rather, certain motions of other irrational powers or faculties: the appetitive and the spirited. If we look into this passage and compare it to the previous one, we have to notice that Galen's testimony is at least tendentious, for Zeno and Chrysippus seem to have defended a similar 'intellectualist' view (passions are what supervenes on judgments or the same as judgments, that is to say, verbalized assertions maintaining that 'p is the case').\textsuperscript{28} If this is so, there is no room for thinking that Cleanthes' and Chrysippus' doctrines of the soul were substantially different. Passions are judgments,

\textsuperscript{27} DL 7.111 (\textit{SVF} 3.456). More detailed evidence is also supplied by Galen, \textit{PHF} 4.3, 246, 39-248, 5 (cf. LS 95K). See especially Galen, \textit{PHF} 5.1, 292, 17-20, where a subtle difference between Chrysippus' and Zeno's positions is pointed out: for Chrysippus passions are certain judgments of reasoning, while for Zeno passions are not the judgments themselves but contractions and expansions of the soul that supervene on judgment.
\textsuperscript{28} For a judgment as a verbalized assertion, see Clement, \textit{Strom.} 2.12.54, 5-55, 1 (ed. Stühlin-Früchtl).
but judgments perverse or corrupt, distortions of reason; however, they are not something different from reason but the reason itself in a different state.

The way in which Zeno and Chrysippus appear to have understood emotions has been a well-known puzzle in scholarship. In his new book on emotions, Professor Sorabji has contributed to the debate by presenting new arguments to show that the alleged divergence between Zeno and Chrysippus must be taken seriously. I do not intend to engage in Sorabji's detailed examination of this and other related issues; I shall just point out the problem and concentrate on aspects of disagreement. While I find Sorabji's argument challenging and appealing, I continue to be persuaded that the orthodox view on Stoic emotions, stating that the divergence between Zeno and Chrysippus is just a shift of emphasis on Zeno's view, should be followed. Sorabji argues that there is a crucial difference between considering an emotion as being a contraction and expansion which occur 'on occasion of' judgments about what is good or bad (Zeno), and taking emotion to be a form of false judgment and belief (Chrysippus). He also thinks that Zeno's non-identification of emotions with judgments as a significant divergence cannot be impugned by the fact that he makes reference to judgments in his characterizations of distress, for he usually defines emotions as contractions and expansions on the occasion of judgments of evil (distress) and good (pleasure). So, even though Zeno recognized judgments as the cause of emotion, he did not identify emotion with judgment: that was Chrysippus' move.

Indeed Zeno mostly refers to emotions as being contractions and expansions on the occasion of (fresh) judgments. However, the two classical passages quoted by Sorabji explicitly say that distress is a belief or opinion (opinio; doxa), not something (contraction) that only occurs on occasion of judgment. If this evidence is to be trusted, we have at least a reason for believing that Zeno also considered emotions as being judgments in his account. But there is also a systematic reason for thinking that this is coherent in Zeno’s account of emotions: both for Zeno (DL 7, 110; Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.39.5) and Chrysippus (Galen, PHP 4.4, 240, 36–242, 11 De Lacy) an emotion is a sort of impulse. If this is so, there would not be any problem with regarding Zeno’s and

29 Plutarch, *VM* 446F (SVF 3.459; LS 65G) and 449C (SVF 3.384). Zeno's disciples, says Themistius (*in de An.*, 107, 18 = SVF, 3.382), call passions distortions or erroneous judgments of reason (dstrrophas...lou kriseis hemartemenas). See also n. 43 below.
30 For a detailed presentation of Sorabji's reconstruction on Stoic emotions see Professor Gill's essay in this volume.
33 Cicero, *Tusc. 3.75* and Galen, *PHP 4.7 2–3, 280 De Lacy* (both texts included in *SVF I* 212), in his *Emotion*, 35 n. 27.
Chrysippus' views on emotions as related to each other, since every impulse is the result of having given assent to a judgment expressing the content of an impulsive appearance. If giving assent to a practical judgment can be considered a unique event, which translates into action the predicate contained in an evaluative proposition, such as 'I ought to do X' (on this issue, see below notes 40 and 50), it does not sound unreasonable that Chrysippus' identification of emotion with judgment is the same as or close to Zeno's conception of emotion as being a contraction or elation on occasion of judgment. On the other hand, there is a suggestive passage in Galen (PHP, 4.5, 334, 24–30. De Lacy) where he shows himself unsympathetic to Zeno's view on emotions, as though Galen were suggesting that the thesis that emotions supervene on judgments is almost the same as saying that emotions are judgments or they are close in meaning to them. In fact, Galen takes Zeno's thesis as being an intermediate between 'the worst view' (Chrysippus') and 'the best view' (Hippocrates' and Plato's). Thus, although Galen is not denying that Zeno's and Chrysippus' positions are identical, he probably is suggesting that they are close in meaning.

Now an emotion (pathos) is not different from reason (logos); when reason as a whole is understood in terms of passion, it is vice, a 'perverse' (poneros) and 'intemperate' (akolastos) reason. Between reason and passion there is no conflict (diaphora) or civil war (stasis); what happens is a sort of turning (trope) into one and the same reason in two distinct directions or states. According to the Stoics, we do not notice this change due to its sharpness and speed; so we do not realize that it is the same part of the soul (tauton esti psychēs) with which we desire (epithymēn) and feel regret (metaneōn), we are angry (orgizesthai) and afraid (dedienai; Plutarch. VM, 447A; SVF, 3.459; LS 65G). The soul is called

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34 See Plutarch, VM 441C; 446F–447A (SVF 3.459; cf. LS 61B). David Sedley has objected to me that it is not certain that this Plutarch passage is genuinely Stoic. However, even if this text is rejected as belonging to the Stoics, we can find the same conception attributed to the Stoics in Galen (PHP 4.5, 375; 14: 374, 1–3). Epictetus (Discourses, 1.28, 6–10), and Stobaeus (Ecl. 2.111, 20–1). In all these passages the weakness of the soul—proper of the Stoic passionate person—is described and particularly emphasized in terms of a 'vacillating mind'. For a detailed discussion of this topic (with special reference to Euripides' Medea, vv. 1078–80, an apparently favourite Chrysippus' example for the treatment of akrasia), see C. Gill, 'Did Chrysippus understand Medea?' ['Medea'], Phronesa 28 (1983), 136–49 at 140–2 and, more recently, Personality, 236–35. Cf. also Gosling, 'Akrasia', 180–7. For a discussion of the so-called 'model of oscillation', see Joyce, 'Akrasia', 327–8 and Price, Conflict, 3–7. In Plutarch's text the image of the inner conflict as a 'civil war' (stasis) is surely taken from Plato's Republic, where the term 'civil war' is applied to 'hostilities' with 'what is one's own and akin' (476b5–470d). This is especially spoken of the cases where Greeks fight with Greeks, but later the distinction between 'war' (polemos) and 'civil war' (stasis) is used with reference to a person who battles against himself (see 550e9–560a).
irrational’ when it is brought to something bad or contrary to reason, and this happens when an ‘excessive impulse’ (another expression to designate a passion or emotional state), which has acquired violence and strength, arises. The oscillation issue has been debated since antiquity and indeed it is not clear enough, especially if it is tackled from a Platonic or Aristotelian standpoint.

In suggesting that it is hard to believe that every emotion involves an oscillation too rapid to notice, a key point in the ‘turning’ (trope) theory, Professor Sorabji has revived the debate. He suggests that whereas a readiness to push and a readiness to pull can coexist in the same arm, perhaps for the same unitary reason we can simultaneously entertain the opposite judgments Chrysippar might have been postulating (italics are mine).\textsuperscript{35} The fact that the Stoic Posidonius avoided the need for oscillation between judgments does not seem to me particularly suggestive, since he appears to have abandoned the allegedly Stoic monist psychology for a psychology based on the existence of non-rational capacities and on the assumption that within the soul there are opposing powers at work (no matter whether Posidonius did only distinguish capacities—not parts—of the soul; the crucial issue is to admit the existence of powers motivationally opposed within the soul). In order that the Stoic oscillation between judgments makes sense, I consider crucial the fact that the turning of one and the same reason to both sides cannot be simultaneous. As noted by Sorabji, Plato had argued that opposed thoughts cannot be entertained in a unitary soul at the same time (\textit{Rep. 436b–439e}).\textsuperscript{36} Sorabji also recognizes that the idea of an oscillation too rapid to notice avoids the thoughts being entertained at the same time. The Stoic diachronic model of the turning of one and the same reason to both sides allows the Stoics to explain the psychological weakness without appealing to the synchronic model of the conflict between opposing parts. Certainly, in the Stoic model there is a conflict of opposing beliefs: the agent showing himself reluctant to give his assent to one proposition or to another—evaluative propositions describing a determined state of affairs, such as ‘the appropriate thing to do is X’, X being ‘to drink excessively’ or ‘to drink with moderation’, for instance—displays a certain conflict of beliefs. But that quarrel does not take place at the same time between opposing faculties or parts of the soul. That the oscillation involved in every emotion is too rapid to notice can be reasonably admitted, I think, if we focus on the fact that the only agent who eventually can undergo that oscillation of judgments is the passionate agent and, due to his psychological state, he is not able to realize his vacillating condition. In Stoic terms, such an oscillation is just present in the soul of an agent whose reason can be characterized as

\textsuperscript{35} Sorabji, \textit{Emotion}, 314. \textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 57, n. 15.
'changing', a person who is changing his mind all the time and whose cognitive abilities are weak. And he who cannot notice must be only the vicious person, the one who feels appetite, regret, anger, fear, and so on. The cognitive state of the wise person and his psychological disposition prevent him from having these emotions. The sage person's judgment must always be a correct judgment, so there is no room for oscillation of judgments in the wise.

At this point, I would like to explain when and why, according to the Stoics, impulse becomes excessive. As is well known, for the Stoics 'impulse' (horne) is not a synonym of 'reactive or instinctive conduct'. Unlike instincts, 'impulsive dispositions' can be modified.\(^{37}\) Plutarch, when citing Chrysippus, says: 'impulse is the reason of man prescribing him to act' (logos prostatikos autē toû poiein).\(^{38}\) If this is so, impulse is always 'practical', that is to say, it is a movement of the soul in which action is involved. In the sequence of Stoic psychology of action\(^{39}\) impulse is what is directed (or what can be directed, if nothing hinders it) intentionally toward action as a result of an assent to a presentation.\(^{40}\) Thus it

\(^{37}\) Cf. A. A. Long, 'The Early Stoic Concept of Moral Choice', in F. Bossié et al., Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought. Studies presented to G. Verbeke ['Early'] (Louvain, 1976), 77–92 at 80–1; Inwood, Ethics, 45; R. Salles, 'El problema del conocimiento práctico en la teoría estoica de la acción', Tópicos 14 (1998), 105–23 at 107–8. To be sure, an impulse is not one of the functions of the soul (pace Coulibaritsis, 'Psychology', 116), but one of the functions of the commanding of the soul. On the problems the rendering of horne by 'impulse' involves see Sorabji, Emotion, 42–3.

\(^{38}\) Plutarch, SR 1037F (SYF 3.175; LS 53R). I shall get back to this Plutarch passage when commenting on the type of propositions—i.e. 'practical or evaluative propositions'—whose assent yields and action. See also Stobaeus, Ecl. 2 86, 17–18 (SYF 3.169; LS 53Q).

\(^{39}\) Presentation ('impression' or 'appearance', phantasia), assent (synkatathetēs), and impulse (horne); Cicero, Acad., 2.24–5; Plutarch, SR 1056F–1057A (cf. LS 41E; 52S).

\(^{40}\) According to Stobaeus' testimony, the Stoics hold that all impulses are assents (Ecl. 2.88, 1; see also 97, 15–98, 6), which may mean that impulse comes directly from assent. Some scholars suggest that giving assent to a presentation, whose content is 'I ought to do X', is the same thing as performing an impulse for doing X. In other words, there would not be two events (assent and impulse) but only one (see R. Salles, 'The Stoic Account of the Psychology of Responsible Actions and the Question of Determinism', Doctoral Dissertation (London, 1997), 94 n. 196 and p. 95; Brennan, 'Old Stoic', 28). What this view seems to imply is that, against Long's interpretation (in his 'Early', and LS, vol. 2, 209), just as every impulse is an act of assent, so too every assent to a presentation is an impulse. Some textual evidence, though—included in Stobaeus too—suggests that assent and impulse are two different things (which, eventually, can work together as a whole): we give assent to certain propositions or statements (axionata), and impulses are toward the predicates (kategoremata) (see Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.88, 2–6). I think there is a problem here that is not completely clear in the evidence; Ioppolo's view on the issue can be illuminating: assent and impulse can be considered as being two different events, since while assent is a sort of cognitive act implying the recognition of the truth of the proposition, impulse is a movement leading toward action (see A. M. Ioppolo, 'Le cause antecedenti in Cie. De fato 40' ['Cause'], in J. Barnes and M. Mignucci (eds.), Matter and Metaphysics. Fourth Symposium Hellenisticum (Naples, 1988), 397–424 at 410–11). At any rate, I accept that assent and
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seems to be possible to think that impulse becomes excessive as a result of the assent we have given to a proposition of a certain kind. Passions are 'excessive impulses', perverse opinions (doxai) and judgments (kriseis) that do not arise as a result of parts of the soul in conflict (as Platonists assume), but are inclinations (ropai) and yieldings (eixeis), assents (synkatastheses) and impulses (hornai) of the ruling part of the soul as a whole. Passions are certain states of one's reason that in a moment, due to a weakness and lack of stability in the agent, have changed suddenly from the correct disposition into the bad one.41

It seems to me that this fits quite well into what Stobaeus says when reporting the two types of assent supposedly recognized by the Stoics. In effect, a wise person never makes a false supposition nor does he assent to anything which is not comprehensible, because he neither holds opinions nor is ignorant. By contrast, the base person, due to his cognitive state (doxa), moves swiftly, and his assent, which is the same as ignorance, is changeable and weak. The cognitive state of the wise person guarantees that his beliefs are always safe and firm; this is why for the Stoics he holds no opinion at all. A base person, in giving his assent to what is not graspable, the 'acataleptic' (the first kind of opinion), and in making weak suppositions (the other kind of opinion), behaves precipitately and gives his assent before having a real understanding or apprehension (Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.111, 17–112, 8). So, I would suggest that in the Plutarch passage cited above42 to hold opinions and to assent precipitately, which is a yielding to what is present due to weakness, are the same thing. Yielding (eixeis), then, would be an assent (or rather 'weak assent'; Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.111, 20–112, 2; Cicero, Tusc., 3.71–2) to what is not graspable, the kind of assent that is done when the cognitive state of the agent is opinion. On the other hand, the wise person's assents must be those that arise after a critical acceptance of a presentation.43 If this approach is right, we should conclude that the meaning of the word eixeis

impulse are a unique totality insofar as impulse immediately translates into action the proposition's predicate (once that proposition has been recognized as being true). That is what I mean when I suggest that assent and impulse, in spite of being two different things, can work together as a whole in the performance of an action. I shall go back to this point later.

41 Plutarch, VM 441C, 446F–447A (cf. SVF 3.459 and LS 65G). For the Stoics, animals, in spite of the ill-intentioned complaints by Galen (PHP 1.68, 28–34; 2.1, 102, 8–10; 3.2, 190, 16–17), have no passions since these are deviations (diastrophai) or perversions of reason, and animals have no reason (Themistius, in de An. 107, 17–18; SVF 3.382).

42 See also Against Celotes, 1122B–C and Sextus, M. 7.225–6.

43 See Origen, De princ. 3.1.3, with Inwood's discussion in Ethics, 78–81. Actually, this is one of the senses of the word 'judgment' (kriseis) for the Stoics. The other one is the verbalized assertion affirming that 'p is the case'. This second sense of the word is suggested by Clement, Strom. 2.12.54, 5–55, 1 (ed. Stählin–Früchtel).
is not necessarily ‘the assent of the irrational’s’; it can also be the assent proper of the person whose conduct is irrational because such an assent is disobedient to right reason, that is, acting against right reason.\(^{45}\)

At this point, it is important to emphasize again the fact that Chrysippus does not think that the *hegemonikon* of the soul can be identified with ‘the rational part’, as suggested by Galen;\(^{46}\) since within the *hegemonikon* are listed impulses, presentations, and assents as its faculties in addition to reason as another faculty of one and the same *hegemonikon* (Stobaeus, *Ecl.*, 1.369, 6 ff.; *SYF* 1.143; Aetius, 4.21, 1–4; LS 43H). If passion is both a judgment and an opinion, a passionate agent not only believes that something bad (pain or distress; *lype*) or good (pleasure or delight; *hedone*) is present, but also that such a bad or good thing is something about which it would be correct to be upset or depressed, happy or exalted.\(^{47}\) When the akratic agent is giving his assent to a presentation, his assent involves a doxastic belief that something is good and that it is appropriate to act in accordance with that belief.\(^{48}\) By contrast, when the wise person gives assent to a presentation his assent involves knowledge that something is good, and that it is correct to act according to that knowledge. Once the agent has given assent to a practical or evaluative proposition of the form ‘I ought to do X’ or ‘the correct thing to do is X’ an impulse is produced. Such an impulse is his assent translated into an intentional movement toward what the agent

\(^{44}\) This is recognized by Inwood, *Ethics*, 77.

\(^{45}\) This is the standard interpretation of this puzzling issue, an approach that has been vigorously criticized by Sorabji (*Ethica*, 55–7). He thinks that the allegedly Stoic meaning of ‘irrational’ as ‘contrary to the dictates of reason’ (Plutarch, *VM* 441C–D) would imply a wholly *inconscius* mistake of reason, but ‘disobedience’ implies going against one’s better judgment (*Emotion*, 55 n. 2). The remark that ‘irrational’ as ‘what is contrary to the dictates of reason’ is an unconscious error of reason seems to fit well in the Stoic passionate person, who just believes he knows what is good. I think there is a textual support for the interpretation that the passionate state of a base person is ‘irrational’ in the sense of being contrary to the reason ‘virtuously disposed’. In a Stobaeus passage (*Ecl.* 2.89, 4–5; not quoted by Sorabji) we are told that the expressions ‘irrational’ and ‘contrary to nature’ are not used there in a general sense, but ‘irrational’ (*adologus*) is the same as ‘disobedient to reason’ (*aphethes toti logoi*). For further evidence, see Galen, *PHP* 4.4, 254, 13–19 and Plutarch, *VM* 450D.

\(^{46}\) *PHP*, 2.7, p. 156, 13–15. Apparently, Couloubaritsis was persuaded by Galen that the *hegemonikon* and the rational part are one and the same thing (see his ‘Psychologie’, 120). But the passage just quoted shows that that assumption is an assumption made by Galen, not by Chrysippus. What Galen cannot accept is that the commanding part is identified with thought but not with the rational part.


\(^{48}\) The cause of appetite (*epithymia*) is to hold the opinion (*doxazein*) that a good thing is approaching; that of fear (*phobos*) is to hold the opinion that a bad thing is approaching (Stobaeus, *Ecl.*, 2.90, 8–12). The Stoic incontinent is a fool (*phaios*) and, accordingly, his cognitive state is opinion, which is the same thing as ignorance (see Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.111, 20–112, 5; cf. LS 41G and *SYF* 3.548; see also Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.71–2).
takes to be good and, accordingly, choiceworthy. An action is a type of causal activity, insofar as the subject produces an effect through his action. But the causal relation in practical contexts must be peculiar, since the kinds of propositions to which assent is given to stimulate action contain an evaluative operator, which compels us to consider the intention of the agent. The causal relation must be regarded from the point of view of its internal production, i.e. from the agent’s point of view, for the cause of an action is one’s assent (that is why Plutarch, in citing Chrysippus’ definition of impulse, says that a *horne* is the reason of the person prescribing him to act). If this approach is right, it follows that assent and impulse cannot refer to the same propositional content, since assent is nothing but a corroboration in a merely descriptive level, while impulse corroborates nothing in advance but intentionally aims at something that the agent believes should be done. So while assent is directed at the proposition as a whole, impulse deriving from it has as its intentional referent a predicate, an incomplete sayable (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.88, 1–6; LS 331). This accounts for the fact that not every presentation but the ‘impulsive’ one (whose linguistic expression corresponds to a proposition containing an evaluative operator; Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.86, 17–18; LS 53Q) activates the impulse. If this is so, the proposition accepted as true must be the evaluative one, the only type of proposition whose assent stimulates action. This mechanism of action works similarly both in the wise man and in the fool, but in the case of the former his cognitive state will allow him to distinguish what is really correct/good from what is apparently correct/good. This is not what happens to a Stoic fool: his cognitive state is not able to discern rightly and he cannot realize that pain, for example, is something that should not be feared, or that pleasure is something that should not cause delight, either. For neither pain nor pleasure are morally good or bad. They are just indifferent.


50 I am emphasizing the fact that assent and impulse are different things, and understanding assent as a sort of cognitive act implying the recognition that the proposition is true. I am also taking impulse to be a movement toward action. As said earlier, the issue is controversial, for it might be thought that assent and impulse are a unique whole insofar as impulse immediately translates into action the proposition’s predicate, and this occurs after the proposition has been recognized as true. For further discussion see Inwood, *Ethics*, 60–2; A. M. Ioppolo, ‘L’ *Horne Pleonazousa* nella dottrina stoica della passione’ (‘Horne’), *Elencos* 16/1 (1995), 25–55 at 27–8.

51 For the Stoics every impulse comes from assent but not every assent yields an impulse. When you give your assent to the proposition ‘there is a piece of cake there’, no impulse is followed. What activates impulse is the impulsive presentation, whose propositional content can be ‘this piece of cake is to be eaten by me’ (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.88, 2–6 = LS 331).

52 On indifferents see the passages collected in LS 58; for discussion see G. Lesses, ‘Content, Cause, and Stoic Impressions’ (‘Content’), *Phronesis* 43/1 (1998), 1–25 and N. P. White, ‘Stoic Values’, *The Monist* 73/1 (1990), 42–58.
In order to exemplify what the conduct of a person who acts in a passionate state is like, Chrysippus offers the famous simile of the runner and the walker, preserved by Galen (PHP 4.2, 240, 36–242, 11; see also PHP, 4.4, 256, 7–12). These passages clearly show that a ‘passionate conduct’ is not regarded in terms of inner conflict but as an agent’s personality as a whole (the hegemonikon) which is emotionally disposed. The walker controls his impulses and hence is able to stop his pace; this is not the case of the runner (as it is fairly clear in the simile, the walker is the continent person and the runner the incontinent one). Although this passage (whose content Galen attributes to Chrysippus himself) sounds quite Platonic in character—insofar as judgment is overcome by a factor over which reason has no control—it is clear enough that the walker and the runner are one and the same person in different states. The walker is not ‘the rational part’ but is the unified whole ‘rationally’ disposed. By contrast, the runner is the same unified whole but emotionally disposed. But who is not obedient to reason somehow must know (in a weak sense, since his cognitive state is doxa) the reason in respect of which he is not obedient. He should also know the judgments that are supposed to be correct or to fit in reason and from which he departs when asserting to the false propositions that mistakenly express the content of presentations. In this weak sense of ‘knowing’ the Stoic incontinent does something other than fail to follow reason: what he does is to act knowing (this ‘knowing’ understood in terms of doxa) that he is irrational insofar as he fails to make consistent his impulses with a hegemonikon virtuously disposed. The incontinent person is irrational, not because of lack of reason, but because of not being in line with the proper measure of the ‘natural impulse’.

Now if the soul is a rational unity, how is it possible that it judges irrationally? If passion is a state of the hegemonikon, why is it that states of passion (which, according to the Stoics, are real illnesses, pathological states) should be considered as ‘states of reason’? The Stoics, in spite of

54 A critical comment on Galen’s first passage can be found in J. Annas, Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1992), 115–16. As Ioppolo subtly points out (‘Horme’, 42, n. 67), although one might think that with the expression ‘those who move with reason as their guide’ Chrysippus is making reference to the wise people, the restriction ‘no matter what the nature of the reasoning is’ should make us consider that he does not refer to the perfect reason of the sophoi but to that of the man in general in terms of rational being.
55 The orthodox Stoic position appears to be this: if passions or emotional states (pathe) are illnesses of the hegemonikon of the soul, it is in one’s own interest to get rid of them. Actually this is just common sense: if you are sick, what you really want is to remove your sickness, not to improve your sickness state (for evidence, see Seneca, Ep. 116, 1 [SVF 3.443] and Lactantius, Div. Inst. 6.14: SVF 3.444). On passions as sick states of the soul, see the helpful remarks by Donini, ‘Struttura’, 314–15.
daring efforts by Plutarch to ridicule and reject their position, insist that what happens is not a struggle between conflicting parts. Actually, what is going on is rather a dispositional transformation of the soul that, as a whole, suddenly changes from having a good disposition to having a bad disposition. The psychological state of a passionate agent explains why those who are not trained in their presentations (phantasiai) have precipitancy (propeteia) in their assertions and veer into disorder (akosmia) and carelessness (eikaiotes).  

4. The Stoic Psychology of Action and How it Should Work in the Account of the Incontinent Action

The Stoic sage is the one who is in possession of prudence (phronesis), a knowledge of what should be done and of what should not be done, or a knowledge of good and bad things (DL 7.92; Stobaeus, Eel., 2.59, 4–5); the “fundamental features” (kephalaia) of prudence are the theoria and praxis of what should be done. The virtuous person, then, is both theoretical and practical about what should be done. Now if prudence is knowledge of what should be done and of what should not be done, and if the phronimos is theoretical and practical of what should be done, he will possess a theoretical and practical knowledge of what should be done (Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.63, 11–12; DL 7.126). The case of the incontinent must be that of the one who, even having a "weak or feeble knowledge", does not have the type of knowledge that guarantees that he will properly assess what should and what should not be done.

Let me briefly explain now how I think the mechanism for the production of the incontinent action works according to the Stoic account. As stated earlier, the Stoic psychology of action consists of the following steps: presentation (phantasia), the contents of which, in the case of humans, are expressed propositionally through articulated language (DL 7.49). Presentation is followed by an assent (synkatathesis), which is the act of accepting such a presentation, or rather the propositional

56 The difficulties this account raised in antiquity are well reflected in the polemic commentary by Plutarch on the Stoic thesis that passions are judgments (VM 449B–C).
57 DL 7.48 (LS 31B); to precipitate (propipein) and to give assent (propeipetein) in advance to apprehension is proper of the Stoic phausis (Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.112, 5–7; SVF 3.548; LS 4.1G). The wise person, by contrast, has aproptosis, "non-precipitancy", which is defined as "knowledge of when one should and should not assent." See DL 7.48. On the definition of aproptosis as "the disposition of not giving assent in advance of apprehension" (Papyrus Herc. 1020 = SVF 2.131) see W. Görler, "Asthenes sunkatathesis. Zur stoischen Erkenntnistheorie", Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft. neue Folge 3 (1977), 83–92 at 85–6.
expression of its contents, as true. Finally, when the agent gives assent to the practical proposition describing the content of an impulsive presentation, the assent becomes an impulse (horne) for action. Assent causes the impulse to perform the action described in the proposition's predicate. Human presentations, unlike non-rational animal presentations, are rational, i.e., they can be expressed propositionally, and what

58 Strictly speaking, assent is given to a propositional formula (logos), not to a presentation (see Sextus, M 7, 154, included in LS 41c).
59 For evidence see Antiochus of Ascalon, quoted by Cicero, Acad. 2. 24–5, supported by Plutarch, SR, 1056F–1057A (cf. LS 41E and 53S). Cicero, Fat. 41–2 (cf. LS 62C), along with Seneca, Ep. 113, 18, offers a different sequence: presentation, impulse, assent (a commentary on these two passages can be found in Ioppolo, 'Monismo' and 'Cause', 407–17). Against Ioppolo's interpretation that Zeno and Cleanthes held that impulse precedes assent, see Inwood's persuasive remarks in his 'Seneca', 166, n. 29. While trying to account for how anger is produced, Seneca seems to present the supposedly orthodox account. He argues that anger (ira) is set in motion by a presentation (species) received of a wrongful act (injuria) and suggests that anger does not follow immediately without the involvement of mind giving assent to the presentation (De ira, 2.1.3–5). Perhaps Seneca is referring to Greek synkatathesis with the expressions accedens animus or animus adprobans, and phantasia with species (for a detailed discussion of this passage see Inwood, 'Seneca', 173–4) — although he takes Seneca's account as a 'characteristically Senecan development' (165 — and more recently Sorabji, Emotion, 41: 66–75).
60 Or, as suggested above (n. 49), impulse immediately translates into action the proposition's predicate. Cf. Plutarch, SR 1056F, who suggests that, according to the Stoics, all acceptance of a presentation (paradochen phantasia) is the same as an act of assent (synkatathesis); see also Stobaeus, Ecl. 2. 86, 17–18. Actually at this passage what causes impulse to be in motion is the direct 'impulsive presentation' (phantasia hormetike) of that which is appropriate (kaihekon). The proposition 'the appropriate thing to do is X' expresses the content of the impulsive presentation, and in order to act in accordance with this proposition the agent must assent to it first. For a challenging analysis of Stobaeus, Ecl. 2.86, 17–18 see now Sorabji, Emotion, 33, n. 19; 42–3; 328–39. Sorabji is willing to suggest that 'not every appearance of what is appropriate motivates' (33, n. 19).
61 I do not intend to engage here in the discussion whether or not small children and animals have thoughts with propositional content. At this point I am following (with no argument) the traditional view according to which a presentation is a 'mental image' having a content which can be expressed in a propositional way. Among the holders of this position are J. Annas, 'Truth and Knowledge', in M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, and J. Barnes (eds.), Doubt and Dogmatism. Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology (Oxford, 1986), 84–104 at 88–9; M. Frede, 'Stoics and Skeptics on Clear and Distinct Impressions', in his Essays in Ancient Philosophy, (Oxford, 1987), 151–76; Inwood, Ethics, 72–5; LS 187, vol. 1, p. 293; J. L. Labarrière, 'De la "nature phantastique" des animaux chez les Stoiciens' (in Brunschwig and Nussbaum, eds. cited above), 225–49 at 228–29 and 232; and, more recently, Gill, 'Galén', 116. For the unorthodox interpretation that Stoics are not taken to hold that perceptual presentations of animals are completely devoid of propositional contents, see R. Sorabji, Animal Mind and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate (Ithaca and New York, 1993), 20–8. To put it briefly, Sorabji's interpretation holds that Chrysippus' hunting dog can have phantasia with propositional content, for insofar as a Stoic proposition is an axioma or a lekton and these are 'something assertible' and 'something sayable', respectively, but not something actually asserted or said by the dog's owner, it follows that irrationals can have appearances with propositional contents in this sense (Sorabji's argument is much more refined). Recently, Leses
is most important here, rational agents are capable of giving or of withholding assent to such propositions. If this is so, the rational agents are responsible for their cognitive states, and such agents are also responsible for the actions derived from the assents they have given to certain practical propositions indicating what should be done.

The oscillation model describes the psychological state of the incontinent, an agent that is swinging hesitantly from one course of action to another; the relevant point here is that, even though the acratic character seems to envisage the temperate as well as the intemperate propositions, he always assents to the intemperate one. Now what is taken for granted in this account is that the incontinent person somehow 'knows' that what he or she is about to do is bad for himself or herself but performs it anyway. This is explicitly suggested in a significant passage where the meaning of the expressions 'irrational' (alogon) and 'contrary to nature' (para physin) are being clarified (Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.89, 4–90, 6; see SVF, 3.389; LS 65A). Those who are in a state of passion (tous en tois pathesin ontas) frequently 'see' or 'notice' (horontas) that it is advantageous not to do anything, but are dragged by the violence of passion and are drawn into doing it. Even though they notice (kan mathosi) or are taught (metadidachthosin) to realize that they should not feel pain or fear (i.e. passions), they allow themselves to be drawn by passions.62 This being so, it might be suggested that the conduct of an agent supposedly willing to assent to the proposition 'the correct thing to do is X' (X being 'to act with temperance') but not doing X, is explained because such an agent has not given a full assent to this proposition or rather because he has given a weak assent to it.63 The case of the incontinent is that of someone who has

('Content'), in suggesting that the Stoics deny that there are psychological states completely devoid of cognitive content, has meditated in the conflict.

62 Inwood holds (Ethics, 142–3) that this Stobaeus passage is influenced by Posidonius or by a Platonizing philosopher (in fact, the comparison of the passionate state with a disobedient horse reminds us of Plato's Phaedrus, 246a–249b). But in the Stobaeus passage what is compared to a disobedient horse is not the irrational part of the soul but the passion itself or, to be more accurate, the hegemonikon of the soul which, as a whole, is emotionally disposed. Those who are in states of passion are carried away by the violence of passion as through by some disobedient horse. To be sure, in the picture of the horses in Plato's Phaedrus the disobedient horse depicts the irrational part of the soul and somehow it is that part. The Stobaeus simile, I think, looks like the one of the runner cited by Galen. On this point see Gill, Personality, 227, n. 196 and 230, n. 205. More recently Inwood has acknowledged how hard it is to argue that the Stobaeus passage uses the Platonic image of the horse deliberately and has also shown how difficult it is to decide whether or not a Platonic dualism is consistent with Stoic views (see 'Seneca', 158–60).

63 To be sure, we have no evidence of assent being given to propositions like 'the appropriate thing to do is to act with temperance'. This proposition, as Brad Inwood has pointed out to me, would be self-evident to anyone but a complete villain. My claim is that, according to the Stobaeus passage just quoted and commented on, even to the phaumpos (this phaumpos being a complete villain or Aristotle's incurable intemperate person; NE
changed his mind, or whose assent was not sincere. But whether or not he has changed his mind or his assent has not been sincere, his situation reflects the cognitive state of the non-virtuous person. The wise person does not change his mind, for the changing of mind is liable to false assent (cf. Stobaeus, *Ecl.*, 2. 113, 3–7).

Now if the incontinent is just able to recognize theoretically the truth value of the temperate proposition but is not capable of translating into action the predicate of such a proposition, and, accordingly, if he is not giving assent with his *hegemonikon* virtuously disposed, his eventual assent to the temperate proposition might not be a strong or ‘unshakeable’ assent, and his impulse will not agree with the truth contained in the temperate proposition. Insofar as the practical impulses contain a motive factor (Stobaeus, *Ecl.*, 2. 88, 2), they are causes of action. Thus, impulses are able to produce a change in something. But the change an incontinent person’s practical impulse produces will be in the wrong direction, for the incontinent does not direct his impulse toward the temperate predicate but probably toward the opposite predicate, i.e. the one describing an intemperate action. For the incontinent usually assents to non-cataleptic presentations, the presentations that take place in pathological or emotional states (Sextus, *M.*, 7. 247; LS 40E; cf. *SFF* 2. 65). He, as any individual, possesses certain cognitive elements. When he does what is against that which is appropriate, ‘knowing’ what he is doing, he does not perform that action because an outside force is dragging him, but because his whole psychological state is passion. That is the case of Medea, a Chrysippian example to illustrate delusion: she must have given her assent to a proposition such as ‘the correct thing is to take revenge on my husband’, and she did so due to her dispositional and cognitive state. When giving her assent she is able to analyse the consequences of her action since she is aware that she is about to do something wrong: in fact, in taking her revenge she will kill her own children.

1150a19–22) this proposition should be more or less obvious. For, although his cognitive state does not permit him to give a full or firm assent to the temperate proposition (even in the case of a proposition with more descriptive content), he would be at least able to recognize that he should not do what he is about to do. That is why, as Stobaeus reports (*Ecl.* 2. 89, 6–9; 2. 90, 2–6), a person in a state of passion is able to notice that he should not allow himself to be dragged along by passion.

64 As Inwood suggests (*Ethics*, 138).


66 See Euripides, *Medea*, v. 978, quoted by Chrysippus (reported by Galen, *PHP* 3. 3, 188, 27–8; 4. 6, 274, 10–17; see also Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1. 28. 7). The most illuminating discussion of this and other Euripidean passages (in Stoic contexts) continues to be Gill, ‘Medea’. Cf. also his *Personality*, 226–34 and ‘Galen’, 117–19: 121–2. It is well known that Chrysippus used to cite Euripides’ plays in order to illustrate different moral characters. According to DL 7. 180, Chrysippus quoted the whole text of Euripides’ *Medea*. 
5. Is There any Conflict in the Stoic Psychological Monism? Conclusion

In spite of what I have been arguing, my description of the incontinent action (Stoically considered) seems to involve a certain conflict.\(^6^7\) The conflict can be noted in the vacillating and hesitating attitude of the weak-minded agent. To put it in Professor Sorabji’s words, although reason is a single thing, ‘in emotional conflict it oscillates between rival judgments’.\(^6^8\) The cognitive state of a person in a state of passion compels him to be uncertain about what to do. What the Stoic account appears to describe is that he, by virtue of his psychological state, will always give his assent to the intemperate propositions. Of course presentations come up for assessment through the reason of the incontinent agent. But his assessment systematically fails to be a good assessment since his cognitive abilities are limited to and determined by opinion, and for a Stoic you must have *episteme* in order to get a correct understanding and hence to do a correct evaluation of the state of affairs. As the wise person, the fool will attempt to discern the evidence before giving assent to a presentation. But his evaluation of presentations will unavoidably be deficient and unsuccessful in its attempt to achieve the correct appreciation of things.\(^6^9\) Certainly there is a conflict here, but the Stoics would not accept that the conflict is between the dictates of reason, on the one hand, and desire or appetite, on the other hand. At best the conflict holds between different presentations (and their corresponding propositional formulations) of the form ‘the right thing to do is X’.

I would like to finish this essay by stressing the similarities and dissimilarities (i) between Socrates and the Stoics, and (ii) between the Stoics and Aristotle. As suggested in the first section of this article, I think that the Stoics were strongly Socratic in maintaining the following theses: (a) virtue is a form of knowledge and vice a form of ignorance; (b) there is one virtue (knowledge) and one vice (ignorance); (c) there are no

\(^{6^7}\) According to Galen’s testimony, Chrysippus seems to have advanced cases in which there is a certain conflict between belief and passion, such as involuntary crying (Galen, *PHP* 4.7, 284, 3–19; 288, 22–4).

\(^{6^8}\) Sorabji, *Emotion*, 313. Once more, Medea is a good example of a vacillating person (see Euripides, *Medea*, 1042–4). In fact, her attitude exactly matches Chrysippus’ description of the weak-minded agent.

\(^{6^9}\) This interpretation can fail to explain how the weak-minded agent is anyway able to perform ‘due or appropriate actions’ (*kathekonta*). But such actions (honouring parents, serving embassies) are in a pre-moral level and, in not being based on a firm and unshakeable character, are not strictly virtuous actions. So although a fool can perform an action containing a ‘reasonable justification’ (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.85, 13 ff.; LS 59B), he will fail to do what is morally good.

\(^{7^0}\) Gosling, ‘Akrasia’, 198, suggests this account.
intermediate cognitive states. Although the Stoics identified virtue with knowledge, they did not draw the conclusion that there is no incontinence. For them incontinence is a vice subordinate to intemperance (DL 7.93, and note 24). Therefore, their notions of knowledge and ignorance must have been different from the Socratic ones, given that the Stoic incontinent, even being an agent in a state of passion and, accordingly, a person whose cognitive state is opinion or ignorance, appears to envisage that it is advantageous not to do what he is about to do (Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.89, 6-9; LS 65A). But this seems to be at odds with the assertion that between episteme and doxa there are no intermediate cognitive states. According to the standard Stoic characterization, 'ignorance is a changeable and weak assent' (Stobaeus, Ecl., 2.111, 20–1), and knowledge is 'an apprehension (katalepsis) which is secure and unchangeable through argument' (Stobaeus, Ecl., 73, 19–21). Such a characterization of ignorance matches well with the suggestion that the incontinent person 'envisages' both the temperate and the intemperate propositions but unavoidably gives his assent to the intemperate proposition. The definition of knowledge just quoted seems to remove the very possibility that the incontinent person 'knows' something when performing his act. Now to say that he 'envisages' or 'sees' the correct course of action (or, as Stobaeus' text says, 'what is advantageous not to do') is not the same as saying that he knows strictly what should be done.

I think that there is a plausible way to understand this issue: by suggesting that the Stoics were willing to defend a form of moderate intellectualism. As indicated above, the Stoics recognized the existence of the phenomenon of incontinence without renouncing their intellectualist position. If this suggestion is at least reasonable, it could be agreed that opinion, the standard cognitive state of the incontinent, is a form of 'feeble knowledge'. The Stoic intellectualism would coincide with that of those who, in accordance with Aristotle (NE, 1145b33–1146a4), claim that nothing is superior to knowledge, but do not agree that no one is able to act against what they think is best. The solution provided by this moderate intellectualism would be to say that the individual is mastered by pleasure because he does not have knowledge in the strict sense but only opinion. In this line of thought, the Stoics would have accepted that, despite the fact that there is nothing more powerful than knowledge, it is possible that someone acts against his better judgment, this judgment being opinion. This tenet does not necessarily introduce 'degrees' of

71 See Plutarch, SR, 1034C–E (LS 51C); DL 7.127 (LS 611); Galen, PHP 7.2, 434, 39–436, 33 (SVF, 3.256). See also above nn. 7 and 13.

72 What Aristotle takes to be the extreme intellectualist position is the one discussed in Plato's Protagoras (see NE 1145b21–31).
knowledge, but allows that the mere opinion is regarded as being a 'form of (weak) knowledge'.

It is tempting to compare the manner Aristotle accounts for the incontinent action to the way the Stoics do. Like Aristotle, the Stoics acknowledged that cognition is decisive in emotional response, and like Aristotle, they also recognized that emotions are not automatic reactions but the agent is acting according to his own judgment.73 For Aristotle, as for the Stoics, any emotional state involves a certain type of judgment or belief (as we have already seen, for the Chrysippean emotions not only involve a certain judgment but they are judgments): a person is angry at someone or is afraid of something because he believes that someone is despising him or something harmful is going to happen to him.74 Now the problem in explaining the incontinent action, both for Aristotle and the Stoics, continues to be the same: what does 'knowledge' mean when it is said that the incontinent 'knows' that what he is about to do is bad for himself? According to Aristotle, the cognitive mistake involved in the incontinent action happens as an effect of the influence of emotional states over the rational abilities (NE, 1147a10–b5). Aristotle's examples (a person asleep, mad, or drunk) show that the agent cannot consciously control his action, and such an action properly describes what Aristotle calls 'actions done in ignorance' (NE, 1110b24–7). If the agent is drunk or angry his actions are caused by drunkenness or anger, so the action is done having no knowledge, but in ignorance (NE, 1110b27). The cognitive faculties of the individual are momentarily undermined or deactivated. These actions, though, are not 'involuntary' without qualification, but the person is responsible for being in the state he is. So he is also responsible for the ignorance that such states produce. Unlike Socrates, who believed that the incontinent acts by ignorance (NE, 1145b27), Aristotle contends that the incontinent person acts in ignorance and, even though he is indirectly responsible for his actions, he is directly responsible for the emotional states that provoked his incontinent action.

The Aristotelian picture of the incontinent action, then, emerges as the consequence of an inner conflict between rational and irrational motivations belonging to two opposing parts of the soul. This is not what happens according to the Stoics, who defend a monistic psychology.


74 See Rhetoric, 1378a30–2; 1382a21–2. Aristotle's definition of anger, orge ('a desire accompanied by pain to vengeance due to a conspicuous belittling') clearly shows that the agent must know to some extent that he has been despised or dishonored (Rhetoric, 1378a30–2 and Fortenbaugh, 'Emotions', 142 and 147).
Nevertheless, they seem to share with Aristotle’s account of the cognitive state of the incontinent agent the fact that his cognitive faculties are weakened to some extent. In the Stoic view, this is not due to the fact that a part of the soul is overpowered by the other, but because the soul as a whole is emotionally disposed and the individual’s beliefs are based on error. Both Aristotle and the Stoics also think that the incontinent person regrets.\(^75\) At this point it might be helpful to comment briefly on the manner in which the Stoics regarded regret (metaneleia) and how it is related to the weak-minded agent. The base person (phaulos), in not having experience of the right use of things, does everything badly; he is prone to instability (eumetaphtotos) and liable to regret about each thing he does.\(^76\) Regret is a pain (lype), i.e. an emotional state, about what has been performed; it is as though the agent had the belief that the actions which have been performed were erroneous by the agency of himself (hos par autou hemartemenois). So the person having regret suffers sorrow and is angry at himself for having been responsible (aition) for the things that have happened (Stobaeus, \emph{Ecl.}, 2.102, 25–103, 4). Now if the base Stoic person (who can be identified with the incontinent) thinks that what has been done has been done wrongly by himself, and is angry at himself for having been responsible for what happened, he must have a certain knowledge of what is good and bad for himself. The Stoic thesis that the base person only has the theory of what ought to be done, not the \emph{praxis} (DL 7.126), sounds similar to what Aristotle says in comparing the incontinent to a city that votes for all that should be done and has excellent laws, but never makes use of them (\emph{NE}, 1152a20–1). In both cases the agent is thought to have his rational faculties deactivated so as not to be able to put into practice the knowledge he has.

I am aware that my account of Stoic incontinence is debatable (the evidence is very scanty and the Stoic argument is hard to reconstruct). However, if the foregoing arguments are at least plausible, it might be possible to conclude that, on the grounds of their moderate intellectualism, the Stoics developed an argumentative strategy that allowed them to show that their position did not lead necessarily to the impossibility of accounting for how an agent is capable of making a morally correct judgment and, at the same time, admitting that such an agent can act against his own better judgment.

\(^75\) Aristotle, \emph{NE} 1150b30–1. I did not find any Stoic passage where it is explicitly said that the incontinent regrets, but nonetheless the Stoic incontinent is a \emph{phaulos}, and is prone to regret and change his mind, it can be said that the Stoics would have accepted Aristotle’s view that the incontinent regrets (Stobaeus, \emph{Ecl.} 2.102, 22–5).

\(^76\) This lack of experience or ‘expertise’ (aperos; Stobaeus, \emph{Ecl.} 2.102, 22–3) with regard to life could explain why the incontinent only has the theory of what should be done, but is unable to practice it.
Finally, I believe that when one focuses on an ancient philosopher the aim is not only to offer a comprehensible account of what the author meant, but also to attempt to understand the image of the world such a philosopher had. This is probably because implicitly or explicitly we think the author at issue is offering a correct description of the state of affairs that can help us to understand our own world. The possibility of considering the past philosophically is one of the most important teachings Professor Sorabji's work has transmitted to me. Among the many things I owe to his influential books and papers is the fact that ancient philosophy can be an illuminating pursuit in itself, and also a fascinating way to understand contemporary philosophy.

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