

Why Human Beings Become Bad. The Early Stoic Doctrine of Double Perversion

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Abstract

In this article I offer a reconstruction of the early Stoics' account of why human beings become bad, which they referred to as the doctrine of «double perversion», and place this doctrine in its Hellenistic context. I do so on the basis of the extant sources, going beyond the standard collections of evidence on the Stoics, and with particular emphasis on Calcidius' account, which I suggest is somewhat longer than often assumed. The two causes the early Stoics identified are each first set out within Stoic thought itself and subsequently placed against the background of the debate about human conduct among the different schools of thought that emerged in the Hellenistic period. With regard to the first cause, persuasiveness of external matters, I maintain that the early Stoics in fact attacked the Epicureans, arguing that humans should not be misled by the pleasurable nature of some things. With regard to the second cause, verbal influence by others, the early Stoics actually followed Socrates and the Cynics in emphasizing the importance of thinking against common opinion.

Keywords: perversion (Greek: διαστροφή, Latin: *perversio*), badness, early Stoa, Epicurus, Cynics, Socrates, Calcidius

Resumen

En este artículo ofrezco una reconstrucción de la explicación de los primeros estoicos de por qué los seres humanos se vuelven malos, conocida como la doctrina de la «doble perversión», y coloco esta doctrina en su contexto helenístico. Lo hago sobre la base de las fuentes existentes, yendo más allá de las colecciones estándares de testimonios sobre los estoicos, y con especial énfasis en el relato de Calcidio, probablemente algo más largo de lo que a menudo se supone. Las dos causas identificadas por los primeros estoicos se enuncian primero en el propio pensamiento estoico y, posteriormente, se colocan en el contexto del debate sobre la conducta humana entre las diferentes escuelas de pensamiento que surgieron durante el período helenístico. Con respecto a la primera causa, la persuasión de los asuntos externos, sostengo que los primeros estoicos de hecho atacaron a los epicúreos, argumentando que los humanos no deberían dejarse engañar por la naturaleza placentera de algunas cosas. Con respecto a la segunda causa, la influencia verbal de otros, los primeros estoicos en realidad siguieron a Sócrates y a los cínicos al enfatizar la importancia de pensar en contra de la opinión común.

Palabras clave: perversión (griego: διαστροφή, latín: *perversio*), maldad, antiguo Stoá, Epicuro, Cínicos, Sócrates, Calcidio

1. Introduction

The early Stoics explained how human beings become bad with their doctrine of double perversion, as they sometimes called it. They identified two causes of badness, which have rightly drawn the attention of modern scholars¹. In this contribution I offer a reconstruction of the doctrine on the basis of the few sources that have survived, placing the doctrine not only within the context of Stoics ethics itself, but also within the wider framework of the intense debate about human conduct among the different schools of thought that were founded in the Hellenistic period.

As for the structure, I start with the Stoics' broad conception of badness as the counterpart of their narrow understanding of goodness (section 2). I continue discussing where according to the Stoics the origins of badness can *not* be located: neither in the nature of the world (cosmic evil), nor in the nature of a human being (section 3). In section 4, I introduce the Stoic phrase «double perversion» (in 4.1) and set out two causes they *did* identify, and connect their first cause, persuasiveness of external matters, with their (especially Cleanthes') anti-Epicurean polemics (in 4.2) and their second cause, verbal influence by others, with the Socratic-Cynic approach of rethinking what is said by others (in 4.3). In the final section I propose that Calcidius' account of the early Stoic doctrine is even more informative on Stoicism than is often assumed.

2. The Stoic conception of badness

The Stoic conception of badness has a broad scope. First, the Stoics discuss badness in relation to human beings, but also in relation to their institutions. With regard to institutions, constitutions, laws, and other conventional arrangements, the early Stoics criticised them: they were all considered to be bad. According to the otherwise unknown thinker Diogenianus in Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-340 CE), *Preparation for the Gospel* VI 8, 14 (SVF III, 324), Chrysippus of Soli (c. 280-206 BCE), the third head of the Stoic school, would have stated that «all positive laws and constitutions are wrong»². With regard to human beings, they discussed badness as a disposition, that is a state of mind out of which the bad person acts badly. Here, and second, the Stoics went well beyond an ordinary conception of badness. Making a single erroneous judgment already implies a bad disposition, as can be inferred from Plutarch (c. 50-120 CE), *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1042c (SVF III, 760): «A bad disposition is something rational or rather reason gone astray»³.

Why would already one mistake make someone bad? The Stoics' broad conception of badness had its counterpart in their narrow conception of goodness: they only considered the virtuous disposition to be good, on the basis of which the

¹ LONG (1968); KERFERD (1977-1978), 492; INWOOD (1985), 158-161; TIELEMAN (2003), 108; GILL (2006), 257-258; BÉNATOUIL (2006), 113-119; GRAVER (2007), 151-163; GILL (2010), 207; GRAVER (2012).

² τοὺς κειμένους νόμους ἡμαρτῆσθαι φῆς [sc. Chrysippus] ἅπαντας καὶ τὰς πολιτείας.

³ ἡ δὲ κακία λογικὸν ἐστὶ, μᾶλλον δὲ λόγος ἡμαρτημένος. Cf. LONG (1968), 334.

virtuous being will always be able to act well (cf. LUSCHNAT, 1958, 209; LONG, 1968, 336). Someone who makes a mistake no longer has such a virtuous disposition, no longer «has all the numbers» in the often repeated phrase in the sources⁴. This perfect, virtuous disposition consists in a rational disposition that is in conformity with (or is an active part of) the reason that guides all (cf. BROUWER, 2014, 39-41).

Not having such a perfect disposition does not imply that it is impossible to have insights or - in the Stoic neologism - «cognitions» (*katalepsis*). Also imperfectly rational beings can have cognitions. However, these cognitions are not embedded in a virtuous disposition, and hence considered to be weak. Cognitions are knowledge if and only if they are embedded in such a disposition. It is against the background of the distinction between cognition and knowledge that the Stoic conception of *akrasia*, usually translated with 'weakness of the will', is best understood (cf. GUCKES, 2004; GOURINAT, 2007). The translation is somewhat infelicitous, since it seems to imply that the Stoics acknowledged a faculty of will, which they did not (cf. BROUWER, 2020a). For the Stoics, *akrasia* is the weak state of mind, such that the weak person is not able to act upon an insight. According to the Stoics, then, someone can have a conception of the good, without being able to be good, without having the firm, immutable (strong) disposition of knowledge out of which the perfectly rational being will always be able to act well. The distinction between cognition and knowledge thus defuses Plutarch's criticism in *On Common Conceptions* 1071f (part in *SVF*III, 26): How can a bad person still desire to be good, if he has no conception of goodness? A Stoic would reply that whereas the imperfect human being may not have knowledge of the good, he or she can still have a conception of it, and can thus desire to be good.

Erroneous judgments are qualified by the Stoics as «emotions» (*pathē*) that need to be extirpated (see e.g. Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 446f, *SVF*III, 459, LS 6E). Such judgments can become integrated as a permanent disposition, especially when the mistakes occur early and frequently: the development towards goodness becomes even more difficult. With regard to the mistakes that have become permanent, the analogy with bodily illness is often used. The medical analogy works only to an extent, though: patients (with or without the help of doctors) may get healthy again; with regard to mental illness, only very few human beings will overcome it and become good or virtuous: according to the early Stoics, among human beings this may only have been the case with Socrates (469-399 BCE), whom they appeared to have considered a sage, if only towards the end of his life in prison (cf. BROUWER, 2014, 163-166).

3. *Origin in nature?*

Since badness is such a broad conception and applies to almost every human being, the question as to the origins of badness becomes even more pressing. According to the Stoics, badness is not to be found in nature, neither in the world at

⁴ See e.g. Stobaeus (5th century CE) II 7, 11^a > II, 93, ll. 14-15 Wachsmuth (*SVF*III, 500, LS 59K), Diogenes Laertius (3rd century CE) VII 100 (*SVF*III, 83), cf. LONG (1991).

large nor is it inborn in human nature. As for an early example of an account of badness in nature at large, Empedocles had stipulated Strife as its cause, operating next to Love as the cause for goodness: whereas Love brings together, the «hatred of Strife» carries apart⁵. The Stoics rejected this kind of dualism⁶. The Stoics stipulated one active principle of divine reason pervading the other passive principle of matter. Reason thus shapes the world and the beings therein. The world is hence considered to be good: accounts of justice, according to Chrysippus as quoted by Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1035c (SVFIII, 68, LS 60A), have their beginnings in Zeus or common nature (cf. LONG, 1968, 333; KERFERD, 1977-1978, 492).

Furthermore, as far as the nature of human beings is concerned, the Stoics did not consider badness to be inborn either. They did not hold that all human beings are born bad⁷, or that some human beings are born with bad character traits. In the 2nd century CE, Galen in his *Character Traits*, at 28 l. 15 KRAUS (1937)⁸, would defend the latter position, offering examples of conduct of children: e.g. if a child gets beaten up by another child, some join in the beating rather than help the child out (29 ll. 17-20)⁹. The Stoics also did not accept Plato's (or Aristotle's) account of the human soul as divided into two or three parts, irrational as well as rational. The division could lead to a struggle between the parts, with the irrational part dominating, and thus explain badness. Since we have explicit evidence that the early Stoics engaged themselves with Plato's account, whereas presumably they were not familiar with Aristotle's writings, let me briefly deal with Plato's account here. In his *Republic*, Plato had stipulated three parts of the soul, directed at knowledge, honour, and pleasure respectively. Whereas the other parts should follow the part directed at knowledge, they often do not, which results into a struggle within. According to Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1034e (SVFI, 260), Zeno of Citium (334-262 BCE), the founder of the Stoic school, severely criticised notably Plato's *Republic*. He argued against the division of the citizens into three groups in Plato's ideal city, instead proposing in his own *Republic* a city consisting of perfect human beings only¹⁰. While stipulating the parallel between city and soul (Zeno presumably followed the metaphor of the large and small print in Plato's *Republic* II 369a, see Plutarch,

⁵ Simplicius (6th century CE), *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* 158 l. 1 (fr. 17 ll. 7-8 DK, fr. D73 LM).

⁶ The Stoics' arguments against cosmic evil are conveniently assembled in LS 54Q-U, with brief commentary on 332.

⁷ A version of this position was developed in the 4th century CE by Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants* 19-12. Even though God did not create human beings with bad natures, Adam went against His will by eating the apple. God would have made Adam's descendants inherit his sin. For justification of this influential doctrine Augustine referred to the apostle Paul, according to whom, Romans 5, 12, in Adam «all have sinned». Cf. e.g. MANN (2001), 47.

⁸ The treatise survived in an abridged version in Arabic, which has been translated into English by MATTOCK (1972), and revised by DAVIES (2013).

⁹ See further WALZER (1949); GILL (2010), 271.

¹⁰ On Zeno's city of sages see Plutarch, *On the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander* 329a-b (SVFI, 262, LS 67A), cf. e.g. BROUWER (2006); VOGT (2008), 86-90.

Lycurgus 31, *SVFI*, 263), Zeno will thus have criticised Plato's tripartition of the soul, too, proposing a monistic account of the soul instead, consisting of reason only¹¹.

Holding that badness is neither in the world nor inborn in human nature, the Stoics have sometimes been characterised as «optimists» (see e.g. WALZER, 1949, 93). In the seventh book of his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, the fullest systematic account of Stoicism we still possess, Diogenes Laertius offers different formulations of this optimism, a negative as well as a positive one. At VII 89 (*SVF*III, 228) the point is made negatively, in Greek with the use of the negating alpha, *a-diastrōphos*, «unperverted» in English: «Nature provides unperverted starting points»¹². At VII 87 (*SVFI*, 552, LS 63C) a more positive formulation is given: already Zeno as well as his successor as head of the school, Cleanthes of Assos (331-262 BCE) - the latter in his book *On Pleasure* - had maintained that «nature leads us to virtue»¹³. The accounts by Diogenes Laertius can be supplemented by e.g. Galen, who in chapter 11 of his *Capacities of the Soul* (816 Kühn, 1822; 80 ll. 11-14, BAZOU, 2011, *SVF*III, 234) had stated: «The Stoics believe all human beings to be adapted for the acquisition of virtue»¹⁴ (tr. SINGER, 2013).

The Stoics referred to these starting points as seeds or sparks, which are a part or a fragment of the divine active principle. Like any being in the world human beings are the result of the active principle pervading matter. In inanimate things the principle manifests itself as the principle of 'holding together', in plants also as the principle of 'growing', in animals also as that of 'perceiving' and 'moving'. In human beings the active principle manifests itself in its highest form as fiery reason. The soul of the human being is or contains a special «part» (*meros*, Diogenes Laertius VII 156, *SVF* II, 774) of this active principle of fiery reason. Next to «part», the word *apospasma* (Diogenes Laertius VII 143, *SVF* II, 633, LS 53X) is used, from *apo-spaō*, «to detach», as «something that has been detached» or «fragment». At birth, then, this fragment of the active principle is but tiny: in the sources the terms used are seeds or sparks. The fragment needs to be developed towards virtue, both naturally as well as by one's own effort. The natural process towards developing a rational faculty is said to be completed at the age of seven in one source (Aëtius, c. 100 CE, IV 11, *SVFI*, 149), fourteen in another (Iamblichus, c. 250-325 CE, in Stobaeus I 48, 8 > I, 317 ll. 21-24 Wachsmuth, *SVFI*, 149); during that period the child will be even more vulnerable than later in life. In the beginning of the third book of his *Tusculan Disputations*, at 2 (not in *SVF*), Cicero (106-43 BCE) thus follows the Stoics, where he writes that «nature has given us only the tiniest sparks of understanding»¹⁵ and that the «seeds of virtue are inborn in our characters, and if they were allowed to mature,

¹¹ Diogenes Laertius VII 175 (*SVFI*, 135), cf. BROUWER (2014), 73-75.

¹² ἐπεὶ ἡ φύσις ἀφορμὰς δίδωσιν ἀδιαστρόφους.

¹³ ἄγει γὰρ πρὸς ταύτην [sc. ἀρετὴν] ἡμᾶς ἡ φύσις.

¹⁴ τῶν Στωϊκῶν ἅπαντας μὲν ἀνθρώπους εἰς ἀρετῆς κτῆσιον ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν οἰομένων.

¹⁵ «Parvulos nobis dedit [sc. natural] igniculos».

nature itself would lead us to the life of happiness»¹⁶ (tr. GRAVER, 2002, slightly adapted).

4. *The doctrine of double perversion*

4.1. *The phrase «double perversion»*

However, this optimistic account of the beginning of the life of the newborn is not as Panglossian as it may appear at first sight. As already noted in section 2, its follow up is far more pessimistic: according to the Stoics, almost all human beings develop for the worse. If the all-nature is good and if human nature is equipped for goodness, how can this badness be explained?

In the extant evidence, one of the crucial passages is Diogenes Laertius VII 89 (*SVF* III, 228). The context of the passage is the Stoics' account of happiness and virtue: «The rational being is perverted[,] in some instances by the persuasiveness of external matters, in others by verbal influence from those around him or her; since nature provides unperverted starting points»¹⁷ (tr. MENSCH, 2018, adapted). The modern translations are sometimes misleading: the Greek text bluntly states that the rational being is perverted, whereas Mensch's translation lacks a comma, which makes it appear as if the perversion only sometimes occurs. HICKS' (1925) Loeb translation presents the perversion as conditional: «When a rational being is perverted...». JÜRSS (2010) makes perversion an occasional affair, too («Bisweilen aber wird das vernunftbegabte Lebewesen etc.»)¹⁸.

A far longer account that deals with the Stoics on the causes of badness can be found in the *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* by the Platonist Calcidius (around 400 CE). Even though the treatise is late - at the beginning of 5th century CE, the Stoic school had long ago ceased to exist -, Calcidius appears to be remarkably well-informed about Stoic doctrine (cf. GRAVER, 2012, 24; REYDAMS-SCHILS, 2020, 151-152). In his account Calcidius speaks of the doctrine of «double perversion» (*duplex perversio*, 165). The phrase «double perversion» is attributed to the Stoics themselves: «There are numerous reasons for this error, the primary one that which the Stoics call the double perversion; and this arises both from things in themselves and from the promulgation of what people say»¹⁹ (tr. MAGEE, 2016). *Per-versio*, a hapax in Latin (cf. BAKHOUCHE, 2011, 763), must be Calcidius' translation of *diastrophē*.

¹⁶ «Sunt enim ingeniis nostris semina innata virtutum, quae si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret».

¹⁷ διαστρέφεσθαι δὲ τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον, ὅτε μὲν διὰ τὰς τῶν ἕξωθεν πραγμάτων [reading in F; pragmateion in other mss.] πιθανότητος, ὅτε δὲ διὰ τὴν κατήχησιν τῶν συνόντων· ἐπεὶ ἡ φύσις ἀφορμὰς δίδωσιν ἀδιαστρόφους.

¹⁸ Correct translations are given by GIGANTE (1998): «devia»; INWOOD-GERSON (2008): «is corrupted», and GOULET (1999): «est perverti».

¹⁹ «Est erroris causa multiplex: prima, quam Stoici duplicem perversionem vocant; haec autem nascitur tam ex rebus ipsis quam ex divulgatione famae».

The doctrine of double perversion goes back to at least Chrysippus, who in his *On Emotions*, presumably in book 2, dealt with the diagnosis of the emotions (cf. TIELEMAN, 2003, 132). Our main witness is Galen, *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates* V 5, 14 (SVF III, 229a): «There are two causes Chrysippus says of [children's] perversion: one arises in them from the verbal influence of the majority of men; the other from the very nature of the things around them»²⁰ (tr. DE LACY, 1981, adapted: for «verbal influence» I follow Graver).

If the formulation «double perversion» indeed goes back to Chrysippus, this does not mean that he invented the doctrine himself. Lines 22-25 of the *Hymn to Zeus* (SVFI, 537, LS 54I), one of the very few extant texts from an early Stoic, written by Cleanthes, Chrysippus' predecessor as head of the school, may have inspired Chrysippus: «[Mortal men] devoid of intelligence rush into this evil or that, / some in their belligerent quest for fame, / others with an unbridled bent for material gain, / others for leisure and the pleasurable acts of the body»²¹ (tr. LS). The formulation of double perversion can thus be characterised as a clarification of Stoic doctrine (GRAVER, 2002, 206), a common method used by the Stoic heads of the school²².

Next to Diogenes Laertius, Calcidius, Galen, and the Stoic Cleanthes himself, other accounts of the doctrine of the double perversion can be found in Origen and Cicero. The account by the Christian author Origen (3rd century CE), *Against Celsus* III 69 (SVF III, 233), appears somewhat muddled: «We affirm that every rational soul is of the same nature, and deny that any wicked nature has been made by the Creator of the universe; but we think that many men have become evil by upbringing and by perversion and by environment, so that in some people evil has even become second nature»²³ (tr. CHADWICK, 1980). Origen places perversion on a par with the two causes upbringing and environment. He also uses the Greek word *periēchesis*, «environment», rather than *katēchesis*, «verbal influence», as we found it in Diogenes Laertius and in Galen's *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates*.

Cicero offers two further accounts in his *On Laws* I 31-32 (SVF III, 230), I 47 (SVF III, 229b) and in his *Tusculan Disputations* III 2 (not in SVF). As a self-proclaimed follower of the moderate scepticism of Philo of Larissa (head of Plato's Academy between 110-79 BCE), in each case Cicero chose what he considered the most probable position (cf. e.g. WOOLF, 2015, 10-33). Here, without mentioning the Stoics explicitly, it seems likely that he followed them in both accounts (cf. GRAVER,

²⁰ διττήν γὰρ εἶναι τῆς διαστροφῆς τὴν αἰτίαν, ἑτέραν μὲν ἐκ κατηχήσεως τῶν πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγγιγνομένην, ἑτέραν δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς φύσεως.

²¹ αὐτοὶ δ' αὐθ' ὀρῶσιν ἄνοι κακὸν ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλο, / οἱ μὲν ὑπὲρ δόξης σπουδὴν δυσέριστον ἔχοντες, / οἱ δ' ἐπὶ κερδοσύνας τετραμμένοι οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ, / ἄλλοι δ' εἰς ἀνεσιν καὶ σώματος ἡδέα ἔργα.

²² For other examples and discussion see SCHOFIELD (1999), 81 n. 29; GILL (2010), 59-63; BROUWER (2014), 46 n. 144.

²³ ἡμεῖς δέ, μίαν φύσιν ἐπιστάμενοι πάσης λογικῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μηδεμίαν φάσκοντες πονηρὰν ὑπὸ τοῦ κτίσαντος τὰ ὅλα δεδημιουργῆσθαι, γεγονέαι <δὲ> πολλοὺς κακοὺς παρὰ τὰς ἀνατροφὰς καὶ τὰς διαστροφὰς καὶ τὰς περιηγήσεις, ὥστε καὶ φυσιωθῆναι ἐν τισὶ τὴν κακίαν.

2012, 127-128). I will return to Cicero's accounts in more detail shortly, in relation to my discussion of each of the causes of badness, to which I will turn now.

4.2. *The first cause: persuasiveness of external matters*

According to Diogenes Laertius VII 89, in the passage already quoted in section 4.1, the first cause of perversion is «persuasiveness of external matters». Whereas, as we have also seen in section 4.1, in his *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates*, at V 5, 14, Galen had described the first cause as “the very nature of things”, a little bit later on in this treatise, at V 5, 19 (also in *SVF* III, 229a) he also uses the term persuasiveness, which he yet again ascribes to Chrysippus: «For when he says that perversion arises in inferior persons in regard to good and evil because of the persuasiveness of impressions and the verbal influence of men, we must ask him why it is that pleasure projects the persuasive impression that it is good, and pain that it is evil»²⁴ (tr. DE LACY, 1981, adapted). In his *Capacities of the Soul*, chapter 11, Galen appears to discuss the same cause again, stressing yet another aspect: rather than the nature of things or the impressions they bring about, he simply refers to pleasure and pain as the cause of perversion, which can thus be understood as a shorthand for the pleasurable impressions things around us can bring about: «The claim that some make, that we are perverted by pleasure and pain, the one dragging us towards it, the other, with its unpleasant quality, pushing us away, is also very foolish»²⁵ (tr. SINGER, 2013). It has to be noted that the cause is not explicitly attributed to the Stoics, but since the passage follows upon Galen's discussion of the second cause, «to be perverted by the human beings around us», where he had mentioned its origin with the Stoics²⁶, this description of the first cause will also go back to them.

Before returning to the formulation «persuasiveness of external matters» let us first have a closer look at the role attributed to pleasure in the accounts on perversion. Pleasure is brought up either in relation to human beings in general or more specifically in relation to newborn children. The focus on children is dealt with in detail by Calcidius, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 165:

«For the moment children separate from the mother's womb, the birth takes place accompanied by a certain amount of pain because of the fact that they move from a warm and moist environment to the cold and dryness of the ambient air. To counteract this pain and cold experienced by babies the specialized care provided by midwives is

²⁴ ἐπειδὴν γὰρ λέγη τὰς περὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν ἐγγίνεσθαι τοῖς φαύλοις διαστροφὰς διὰ τε τὴν πιθανότητα τῶν φαντασιῶν καὶ τὴν κατήχησιν, ἐρωτητέον αὐτὸν τὴν αἰτίαν δι' ἣν ἡδονὴ μὲν ὡς ἀγαθὸν ἀληθῶν δ' ὡς κακὸν πιθανὴν προβάλλουσι φαντασίαν.

²⁵ 818-819 KÜHN (1822); 84 ll. 2-5 BAZOU (2011), *SVF* III, 234: πάνυ δ' εὐθήεις εἰσὶ καὶ οἱ διαστρέφεσθαι λέγοντες ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ τε τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ τοῦ ἄλγους, τῆς μὲν ἐλκούσης <πρὸς ἑαυτὴν>, τοῦ δ' ἀποτρεπτικοῦ τε καὶ τραχέος ὄντος.

²⁶ 816 Kühn (1822); 80 ll. 11-14 BAZOU (2011), *SVF* III, 234: τῶν Στωϊκῶν ἅπαντας μὲν ἀνθρώπους εἰς ἀρετῆς κτήσιν ἐπιτηδεύως ἔχειν οἰομένων, διαστρέφεσθαι <δ'> ὑπὸ τῶν συζώντων («The Stoics believe that all human beings are adapted for the acquisition of virtue, but diverted from it by those around them»), tr. SINGER, 2013).

enlisted in place of medicine, such that the newborns are warmed with warm water and changes in condition are applied, i.e., a simulation of the mother's womb through a warmth and heat conducive to the tender body's feeling pleasure and resting relaxedly. Thus from both sensations equally, pain and pleasure, a kind of natural opinion emerges to the effect that everything soothing and pleasurable is good and, conversely, that what causes pain is bad and to be avoided»²⁷ (tr. MAGEE, 2016).

As we know from other sources, the Stoics considered pleasure a by-product at best. According to them, the first impulse of the newborn is directed at preserving itself, as can be found in Chrysippus, *On Ends*, as Diogenes Laertius VII 85 (*SVF* III, 178, LS 57A) has it. Self-preservation is part of what in the modern literature is referred to as the process of «appropriation» (*oikeiōsis*), of becoming a perfectly rational being, who will be at «home» (*oikos*) in the world at large. Sometimes this impulse is accompanied by pleasure, as is stated in the continuation of Diogenes Laertius' account, at 86: «For pleasure, they say, if it does occur, is a by-product, which supervenes when nature itself seeks out and acquires what is suitable to the animal's constitution, just as animals frolic and plants bloom»²⁸ (tr. LS). In Calcidius' account the example is warm water, another would be food. Both warmth and food are needed to survive, but may be accompanied by pleasure: the warm water will avoid the pain of feeling cold, the food may well be tasty. A not so standard example of the first impulse to self-preservation, from mythology (not extant in the sources, as far as I know), is Hercules, strangling the snakes put in his cradle by Hera, who wanted to get rid of this illegitimate child of her husband Zeus. The Stoic position is that the newborn actually acts on the impulse of self-preservation, but erroneously thinks that it acts on what is only its by-product. It is thus the use of the impressions by the tiny sparks of reason within (cf. Calcidius' formulation «a kind of natural opinion»), even at this early stage, that already creates badness in children.

Even though the Stoics do not think that human beings are born bad (as Augustine would later maintain, see above n. 7), they thus *do* hold that it goes wrong with them almost immediately after birth. The Stoic account is hence also to be distinguished from Rousseau's well-known description of the newborn («homme naissant») in his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* from 1755, at the beginning of the second part. Whereas for Rousseau the newborn can still act on

²⁷ «Quippe mox natis exque materno viscere decidentibus provenit ortus cum aliquanto dolore, propterea quod ex calida atque humida sede ad frigus et siccitatem aeris circumfusi migrant; adversum quem dolorem frigus que puerorum opposita est medicinae loco artificiosa obstetricum prouisio, ut aqua calida confoveantur recens nati adhibeantur que vices et similitudo materni gremii ex calefactione atque fotu, quo laxatum corpus tenerum delectatur et quiescit. ergo ex utroque sensu tam doloris quam delectationis opinio quaedam naturalis exoritur omne suave ac delectabile bonum, contra que quod dolorem afferat malum esse atque vitandum».

²⁸ ἐπιγέννημα γὰρ φασιν, εἰ ἄρα ἔστιν, ἡδονὴν εἶναι ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν ἢ φύσις ἐπιζητήσασα τὰ ἐναρμόζοντα τῇ συστάσει ἀπολάβῃ· ὃν τρόπον ἀφιλαρύνεται τὰ ζῷα καὶ θάλλει τὰ φυτά.

«pures sensations», for the Stoics a newborn already makes use of its impressions with its tiny sparks of reason and can thus already easily go astray²⁹.

As already Galen's three characterisations of the first cause, discussed at the beginning of this section, seemed to suggest, the phrase «persuasiveness of external matters» can now indeed be understood as that the nature of some things gives rise to the «persuasive impression», that it is pleasure that is followed (cf. BÉNATOUÏL, 2006, 116). Persuasiveness, according to the account in Diogenes Laertius, at VII 75, induces to assent only, but is not necessarily true. The persuasive impression of the child that it follows pleasure thus has to be distinguished from the cognitive impression or true insight that it is driven by the impulse to self-preservation. Persuasiveness of external matters is thus just a short-hand for how our impressions of things may put us on the way towards badness (cf. KERFERD, 1977-1978, 492).

The Stoic focus on the newborn is understandable enough. With its rational faculty as of yet underdeveloped, it will be especially vulnerable. It is this Stoic line of thought that also Cicero appears to be following. In *On Laws*, at I 47 (*SVF* III, 229b), he explicitly refers to how easily human beings are perverted, when they are «tender and unformed» (*teneros et rudes*). In his *Tusculan Disputations*, at III 2, immediately following the passage about the tiniest sparks of understanding quoted at the end of section 3 above, he continues by stating that «we [human beings] quickly put them [these sparks] out again, corrupted as we are by our wrongful habits and beliefs. Then nowhere can our natural light be seen»³⁰ (tr. GRAVER, 2002).

In his account, at 166 of his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (*SVF* III, 229), Calcidius continues with how pleasure keeps perverting in later life, when children grow up and become adults:

«[i] As they reach a more mature age, a similar, indeed identical, opinion is maintained with respect to need and satiety, their blandishments and rebukes, which is why once confirmed in that age they persist in an opinion formed earlier, thinking that everything pleasing is good, even if it is of no utility, and everything painful bad, even if it is advantageous. [ii] Consequently, they are excessively devoted to wealth, in which they perceive the primary means to pleasure, [iii] and embrace popularity instead of honour. To be sure, every human being is by nature desirous of praise and honour, for honour is evidence of virtue; but whereas wise men and those engaged in the study of wisdom know which kind of virtue they should cultivate, in its ignorance of things the inexperienced mob cultivate glory and popular esteem instead of honour and pursue a life drowning in pleasures instead of virtue, [iv] thinking that the power to do what they want is a kind of regal distinction. [v] And on the grounds that man is by nature a royal animal and power also accompanies kingship, they draw the further inference that kingship entails power, although kingship is just a form of guardianship of the obedient. [vi] At the same time, on the grounds that the happy man necessarily lives as he pleases,

²⁹ BROOKE (2006), 113: «The Stoics would not, for example, have considered *oikeiōsis* a principle 'prior to reason', but rather one involving judgement or mental assent, however instinctive it might seem to be».

³⁰ «Celeriter malis moribus opinionibusque depravati sic restinguimus, ut nusquam naturae lumen appareat».

they make the further supposition that those who live according to their pleasure are happy. Such, I suppose, is the experience-based error that takes hold of human minds»³¹ (tr. MAGEE, 2016, modified).

As indicated with the Roman numerals which I inserted in the text, a lot goes wrong as a result of taking pleasure seriously. Human beings erroneously [i] think that pleasure is good, [ii] become devoted to wealth as a means to pleasure, [iii] mix up popularity with honour, [iv] connect pleasure with kingship, thinking that a king lives a life of doing as one pleases, and hence [v] also connect pleasure with power, and [vi] think that pleasure brings about happiness.

The positive conception of pleasure as happiness, with which Calcidius' account ends, brings us to the context in which the early Stoics developed their negative conception of pleasure. This context is that of the emerging schools in the early Hellenistic period, when the role of pleasure was heavily debated³². Epicurus (341-272) and his followers had developed a conception of pleasure as happiness, the Stoics rejected this conception of pleasure (or of happiness, for that matter). Epicureans and Stoics debated the role of pleasure in the lives of newborn as well as grown-up human beings. With regard to the newborn, Epicurus had already used observations of their conduct and had done so in order to justify his conception of happiness, for which Diogenes Laertius X 137 (fr. 66 USENER, 1887) can be consulted: «As proof that pleasure is the goal, he [sc. Epicurus] points out that living creatures, as soon as they are born, are content with pleasure and averse to pain, by nature and without reason»³³ (tr. MENSCH, 2018). In the first book of his *On Ends*, at 30 (fr. 397 USENER, 1887), Cicero lets Lucius Manlius Torquatus (d. 48 BCE), his spokesman for the Epicurean cause, formulate it as follows:

³¹ «[i] Par atque eadem habetur sententia de indigentia quoque et exsaturatione, blanditiis et oburgationibus, cum aetatis fuerint auctioris, propterea que confirmata eadem aetate in anticipata sententia permanent omne blandum bonum, etiam si sit inutile, omne etiam laboriosum, etiam si commoditatem afferat, malum existimantes. [ii] consequenter divitias, quod praestantissimum sit in his instrumentum voluptatis, [iii] eximie diligunt gloriam que pro honore amplexantur. natura quippe omnis homo laudis atque honoris est appetens – est enim honor virtutis testimonium –, sed prudentes quidem versati que in sciscitatione sapientiae viri sciunt, quam et cuius modi debeant excolere virtutem, vulgus vero imperitum pro ignoratione rerum pro honore gloriam popularem que existimationem colunt, pro virtute vero vitam consecantur voluptatibus delibutam, [iv] potestatem faciendi quae velint regiam quandam esse eminentiam existimantes; [v] natura siquidem regium animal est homo et quia regnum semper comitatur potestas, potestati quoque regnum obsequi suspicatur, cum regnum iusta sit tutela parentium. [vi] simul quia beatum necesse est libenter vivere, putant etiam eos qui cum voluptate vivant beatos fore. talis error est, opinor, qui ex rebus ortus hominum animos possidet».

³² The central theme of RIST (1974).

³³ ἀποδείξει δὲ χρῆται τοῦ τέλος εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν τῶ τὰ ζῶα ἅμα τῶ γεννηθῆναι τῇ μὲν εὐαρεστῆσθαι, τῶ δὲ πόνῳ προσκρούειν φυσικῶς καὶ χωρὶς λόγου.

«Every animal as soon as it is born seeks pleasure and rejoices in it, while shunning pain as the highest evil and avoiding it as much as possible. This is behaviour that has not yet been corrupted, when nature's judgement is pure and whole»³⁴ (tr. WOOLF, 2001).

In modern scholarship observations about the first impulses of babies in cradles, for pleasure like the Epicurean one here or for self-preservation like the Stoic one we encountered earlier, have come to be referred to as cradle arguments (see especially BRUNSCHWIG, 1986). «Cradle» goes back at least as far as Antiochus of Ascalon (1st century BCE), under whose leadership the Academy would turn dogmatic and begin to develop systematic accounts of Plato's doctrines out of his writings now regarded as authoritative. Antiochus offered an account of the conduct of the newborn in terms of Plato's division of the material body and the immaterial soul, using the phrase «visiting the cradle»³⁵.

With regard to the role of pleasure later on in life, the debate between Epicureans and Stoics appears to have been especially fierce under the leadership of Cleanthes, «the most anti-hedonist of the Stoics» (SEDLEY, 2007, 217 n. 23). Cleanthes' anti-hedonism comes out well in two pieces of evidence. The first piece is Cicero, *On Ends* II 69 (*SVFI*, 553), which in the 4th century CE Augustine would take over in *On the City of God* V 20 (*SVFI*, 553). There Cleanthes offers a kind of thought experiment, in which he asked his audience to imagine what it would mean if pleasure were to be the end:

«He would ask his audience to imagine a painting of Pleasure, decked in gorgeous regal attire, sitting on a throne. By her side are the Virtues, depicted as servants who consider that their whole duty and function is to minister to Pleasure and whisper her warnings (if this can be conveyed pictorially) to take care not to do anything unwittingly which might offend public opinion, or bring her pain in any way. "We virtues", they cry, "were born to serve you. We have no other business"»³⁶ (tr. WOOLF, 2001).

Cicero's comment leaves no doubt as to what the response to this thought experiment should be: «You will be shamed, I tell you, by that scene which Cleanthes used to depict so skilfully in his writings»³⁷. The second piece of evidence survived in Stobaeus, at III 6, 66 = III, 304 ll. 1-2 Hense (*SVFI* 556). In it, Cleanthes makes the point that pleasure leads to badness in an even more explicit manner: «Cleanthes said

³⁴ «Omne animal, simul atque natum sit, voluptatem appetere eaque gaudere ut summo bono, dolorem aspernari ut summum malum et, quantum possit, a se repellere, idque facere nondum depravatam ipsa natura incorrupte atque integre iudicante».

³⁵ Cicero, *On Ends* V 55: *ad incunabula accedunt*. Cf. TSOUNI (2019), 133.

³⁶ «Iubebat [sc. Cleanthes] eos, qui audiebant, secum ipsos cogitare pictam in tabula Voluptatem pulcherrimo vestitu et ornatu regali in solio sedentem, praesto esse Virtutes ut ancillas, quae nihil aliud agerent, nullum suum officium ducerent, nisi ut Voluptati ministrarent et eam tantum ad aurem admonerent, si modo id pictura intellegi posset, ut caveret ne quid faceret imprudens, quod offenderet animos hominum, aut quicquam, e quo oriretur aliquis dolor. "nos quidem Virtutes sic natae sumus, ut tibi serviremus, aliud negotii nihil habemus"».

³⁷ «Pudebit te, inquam, illius tabulae, quam Cleanthes sane commode verbis depingere solebat».

that if pleasure is the end, intellect is given to human beings to their harm»³⁸. For Cleanthes - just as for the other Stoics -, pleasure is at best a cosmetic, as Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* XI 73 (SVF III, 155) has it: «Cleanthes holds that pleasure is neither natural nor has value in life, just as a cosmetic is not natural»³⁹ (tr. BETT, 1997). Whereas «cosmetic» did not gain currency, «by-product» did⁴⁰.

4.3. The second cause: verbal influence

Both in Diogenes Laertius, at VII 89, and in Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* V 5, the second cause is referred to with the Greek word *katēchesis*. The standard meaning of *katēchesis* is «instruction by word of mouth». Instruction fits the period of growing up best, since it suggests a formal relationship of authority between parent and child or teacher and pupil. The translation is perhaps less suitable for the period of adulthood thereafter: hence next to «verbal influence» used here, the translations «transmission» or «conversation» have also been proposed⁴¹. In his Latin *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, at 165 (SVF III, 229), Calcidius uses the phrase *divulgatione famae*. Unlike his translation of *diastrophē* into *perversio*, *divulgatio* cannot be a literal translation of *katechēsis*: *divulgatio* rather means «making public». DEN BOEFT (1970), 60-61 (followed by BAKHOUCHE, 2003, 733) proposed that Calcidius may have translated *periēchesis*, «resonance» (which as we saw above was used by Origen). Unlike instruction, however, resonance does not presume a relationship of authority of instructor to instructee. Combined with *fama*, «opinion of the multitude», the phrase surely already applies to the influence of public opinion later in life. In Magee's recent translation of Calcidius *divulgatione famae* thus becomes «promulgation of the talk of the multitude».

This cause of verbal influence manifests itself already in the earliest phases of childhood. In his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, at 167, Calcidius describes how mothers, nurses, but also poets, as well as - slightly more remarkable - painters and sculptors put young children on the wrong track. Mothers and nurses not only «whisper» their own incorrect opinions about the importance of money and popularity into the children's ears, they also frighten them with stories about bogeymen in order to make them behave well (cf. GRAVER, 2007, 158). Again, Cicero appears to be in line with the Stoics here, especially in his *Tusculan Disputations* III 2-3: «But as it is, no sooner are we born and received into the family than we are surrounded by all kinds of corrupting influences, and the most

³⁸ Κλεάνθης ἔλεγε, εἰ τέλος ἐστὶν ἡ ἡδονή, πρὸς κακοῦ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὴν φρόνησιν δίδοσθαι (ms.; Meineke: δεδόσθαι). Cf. GOURINAT (2008), 185. For a parallel formulation see Cicero, *On Old Age* 40: *huic divino muneri ac dono [sc. mens] nihil tam esse inimicum quam voluptatem* («there is nothing more hostile to this divine gift and boon [of intellect] than pleasure», tr. DAVIE, 2017), cf. PEARSON (1891), 311.

³⁹ Κλεάνθης μὲν μήτε κατὰ φύσιν αὐτὴν [sc. ἡδονήν] εἶναι μήτε ἀξίαν ἔχειν [αὐτὴν] ἐν τῷ βίῳ, καθάπερ δὲ τὸ κάλλυτρον κατὰ φύσιν μὴ εἶναι.

⁴⁰ For the translation of *κάλλυτρον* as «cosmetic» I follow RIST (1974), 176 and BETT (1997), 14.

⁴¹ For «transmission» see GRAVER (2007 and 2012); for «conversation» see DE LACY (1978) *ad loc.*

wrongheaded beliefs, so it seems almost as if we had drunk in error along with the milk of our wetnurses»⁴² (tr. GRAVER, 2002).

In adulthood it does not get any better. An example of the perverting verbal influence of others given by Chrysippus survived in Galen, *On the Doctrines of Plato and Hippocrates* V 5, 20 (SVFIII, 229a): «When we hear the majority of men praise and glorify victory at Olympia and the erection of one's statute as good things, and when we hear them speak of defeat and disgrace as evil, why is it that we are readily persuaded?»⁴³ (tr. DE LACY, 1981). Of course, since for a Stoic like Chrysippus only the disposition of virtue is good, popularity is not. As with the doctrine of double perversion itself, here yet again Chrysippus may have been inspired by Cleanthes: as we know from Cleanthes' list of writings (preserved at Diogenes Laertius VII 175, SVFI, 481), he wrote two treatises which in the list are presented after each other: *On Popularity (doxa)* and *On Honour (timē)*. According to standard Stoic doctrine (see e.g. Stobaeus II 7, 11^h > II, 103 ll. 6-7 Wachsmuth, SVFIII, 563), honour is the counterpart of popularity: «Honour comes with the exercise of virtue, the only thing that is worthy of a reward»⁴⁴.

Again Cicero appears to endorse the Stoic position in his *On Laws* I 47 (SVFIII, 229b), stating that people hold mistaken opinions about pleasure and pain, life and death, honour and popularity, as well as in the *Tusculan Disputations* III 2-3: «But it is when we meet with society at large [...] that we become thoroughly infected with corrupt beliefs and secede from nature absolutely»⁴⁵ (tr. GRAVER, 2002). The examples Cicero provides, e.g. about the high esteem of «military command» (*imperium*), are geared towards his Roman public.

It is obviously not the traditional (if not reactionary) Roman context, in which the early Stoics elaborated their thoughts about the second cause (if only for chronological reasons; later Stoics who presented themselves in the late Republican Rome would hence develop these thoughts in a less confrontational manner, see BROUWER, 2021b). Unlike the first cause, which - if my reconstruction above is correct - the Stoics developed arguing against the Epicureans' positive conception of pleasure, with regard to this second cause it seems rather likely that they would have done so by following the Cynics, as MOLES (1983) suggested, and above all Socrates. The Cynics were the undeniable champions of thinking against common opinion, but also Socrates made his fellow-citizens rethink their conventional convictions about virtue and the good life.

⁴² «Nunc autem, simul atque editi in lucem et suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate et in summa opinionum perversitate versamur, ut paene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur».

⁴³ οὕτως δὲ καὶ διὰ τί τὴν μὲν νίκην τὴν [ἐν] Ὀλυμπίαισι καὶ τὴν τῶν ἀνδριάντων ἀνάθεισι ἐπαινούμενά τε καὶ μακαρίζόμενα πρὸς τῶν πολλῶν ἀκούοντες ὡς ἀγαθὰ, περὶ δὲ τῆς ἥττης τε καὶ τῆς ἀτιμίας ὡς κακῶν, ἑτοίμως πειθόμεθα;

⁴⁴ τὴν γὰρ τιμὴν εἶναι γέρωσ ἀξίωσις, τὸ δὲ γέρας ἄθλον ἀρετῆς εὐεργετικῆς. Cf. GRAVER (2007), 160.

⁴⁵ «Cum vero eodem quasi maxumus quidam magister populus accessit atque omnis undique ad vitia consentiens multitudo, tum plane inficimur opinionum pravitate a naturaque desciscimus».

Even though the reliability of the extant evidence has sometimes been put into doubt, we find the Stoics characterised as followers of both the Cynics as well as Socrates. One piece of (surely stylized) evidence is the anecdote preserved by Diogenes Laertius, at VII 3. Zeno, upon his arrival from Cyprus around 312, is said to have become interested in pursuing wisdom by hearing about Socrates: «After having heard the bookseller reading about Socrates and Zeno having expressed his interest in Socrates, Crates of Thebes passed by, whereupon the bookseller suggested to Zeno that he should “follow that man!”» Crates of Thebes (c. 360-280 BCE) had been a pupil of Diogenes of Sinope, the first self-proclaimed Cynic. Zeno thus became a student of Crates, a Cynic, who like Socrates and his own teacher, Diogenes of Sinope, propagated the simple life of disregarding conventions.

As for the Cynics, in their confrontational and sometimes even shocking manner, they argued against conventional opinion, such as that life should be comfortable, and propagated a simple lifestyle instead: Diogenes wore a simple double cloak, lived in tub, and begged for his food. They argued against the traditional inequality between the sexes, in favour of same-sex clothing and free marriage. They rejected conventional communities or citizenship, declaring themselves citizens of the world⁴⁶.

As for the Stoics, already Zeno, in his *Republic*, the book that made him famous, criticised conventional communities, arguing against traditional marriage, currency, temples, law courts⁴⁷. Such anti-conventional opinions were not confined to Zeno or to his early *Republic* for that matter (as some embarrassed later Stoics would argue, especially those that became active in conservative Rome), they were also held by Chrysippus. Not only could Chrysippus' language be rude and indecent in Cynic fashion, «more suitable to prostitutes»⁴⁸, he is also said to have allowed incest and the eating of the corpses of the dead (see Diogenes Laertius VII 187-188), and to have argued against the need for weapons or currency, and against conventional religion⁴⁹.

Whereas Cynic anti-conventionalism was thus part and parcel of early Stoicism⁵⁰, the role these Cynic doctrines played in their thought has been assessed differently, such as that the early Stoics would advocate it outright or that they would do so with regard to specific circumstances only. In the context of the Hellenistic polemics, the Epicureans, who as we have seen had been severely attacked by Cleanthes, struck back. They were prepared to exploit Stoic anti-conventionalism to the full, presenting the Stoics' Cynicising doctrines in a particularly ugly fashion, even up to distorting them «in bad faith» (GOULET-CAZÉ, 2017, 605). An example thereof is Philodemus

⁴⁶ For a fuller account see DESMOND (2008), 77-131, with reference to the relevant sources. HARD (2012) provides a collection of the sources on early Cynicism in English translation.

⁴⁷ See esp. Diogenes Laertius VII 33-34, other evidence is presented and discussed by BALDRY (1959); SCHOFIELD (1999), 3-21; VOGT (2008), 20-64.

⁴⁸ Diogenes Laertius VII 188: χαμαιτύπαις μάλλον πρόπουσαν.

⁴⁹ See Philodemus, *Against the Stoics* XVI-XVII Dorandi (fr. 216 GIANNANTONI, 1990). For an English translation see HARD (2012), 49-50.

⁵⁰ For the Cynic influence on the Stoic doctrine of common law (or natural law, as it would come to be called) see BROUWER (2021a).

of Gadara, *On the Stoics*, at cols. XVIII-XIX DORANDI (1982), where he summarizes «the noble thoughts of these people», i.e. of Diogenes, Zeno and his followers⁵¹. Sexual matters get most of the attention (masturbation in public; free sexual intercourse, with sisters, mothers and other members of the family, brothers as well as sons, sometimes even in the form of rape), but also their approval of killing fathers. It appears more likely, though, that the Stoics did not carry their Cynicism to the extreme. See yet again a (stylized) anecdote with regard to Zeno, which continues the one about him following Crates, at Diogenes Laertius VII 3:

«From then on he studied with Crates, proving in other respects well suited for philosophy, though he was bashful about adopting Cynic shamelessness. Hence Crates, who wanted to cure him of this, gave him a pot of lentil soup to carry through the Cerameicus. And when he saw that Zeno was ashamed and tried to keep it hidden, he struck the pot with his cane and broke it. As Zeno was running away, the soup streaming down his legs, Crates said, “Why run away, little Phoenician? Nothing terrible has happened to you”» (tr. MENSCH, 2018).

This brings us to Socrates, about whom Zeno had heard the bookseller reading in the earlier anecdote. Despite the differences in the accounts about Socrates, «his searching for wisdom, examining himself and others» (Plato, *Apology* 28e) stands out. In his search he exposed his citizens, confronting them with the incorrectness of their conventional opinions, presenting them his own set of unconventional opinions, such as the overall importance of virtue, or that virtue is knowledge. These convictions are referred to as *paradoxes*, in the literal sense in Greek as «doctrines that go against common opinion», in the ancient sources and in the modern scholarly literature⁵². The Stoics exploited Socrates’ unconventional opinions, as can already be inferred from Cicero, *On the Paradoxes of the Stoics*, Pr. 4 (not in *SVF*, but cf. his *Lucullus* 136, *SVF*III, 599):

«These doctrines are surprising and they run counter to common opinion (the Stoics themselves actually term them paradoxes); [...] and I wrote them with the greater pleasure because these Stoic paradoxes appear to me to be in the highest degree Socratic, and far and away the truest»⁵³ (tr. RACKHAM, 1942, modified).

With regard to the Stoic use of the Socratic paradoxes, what is relevant here yet again is that for the Stoics (or Socrates or the Cynics) «verbal influence of others» cannot go unexamined.

⁵¹ Col. XVIII ll. 1-2: τὰ κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

⁵² For the Socratic paradoxes see e.g. O'BRIEN (1967), who reconstructs them from Plato's texts only; GERSON (2013), 41; cf. DILLON (2019), 41, who rather speaks of «principles» (which are, of course, no less controversial; for the Stoic paradoxes and Socrates see ALESSE, 2001, 121; BROUWER, 2020b).

⁵³ «Quae quia sunt admirabilia contraque opinionem omnium (ab ipsis etiam παράδοξα appellantur), [...] eoque hos locos scripsi libentius, quod mihi ista παράδοξα quae appellant maxime videntur esse Socratica longeque verissima».

5. A final remark on Calcidius' Commentary

According to the Stoics, human beings are born with sparks of reason that need to be developed. Unfortunately, these sparks are but tiny and hence human beings, obviously even more so when just born, are vulnerable creatures. Both the impressions that things can bring forth, notably that pleasure is a good, as well as the verbal influence by others make that the vast majority of people develop bad dispositions.

This cannot be the place to go into Stoic accounts on how to overcome these bad dispositions, that is on how to educate children and on how in adulthood one can cure oneself from one's bad emotions, both vast topics in themselves and best left to other occasions. Here I would like to end with a remark on the educational programme that Calcidius sets out immediately after his presentation of the Stoic doctrine of double perversion, at 168:

«Thus those who would want to become sages require a free education and precepts leading to virtue as well as erudition which is foreign to the mob, and they must see and contemplate all that has been selected to drive them toward wisdom. Above all they require divine aid for perception of the highest goods, which, although proper to divinity, are nevertheless made common to human things. Also, the body's obedience to the faculties of the soul must be at a level sufficient for its tolerating the labour entailed by the exercise. Likewise, good teachers must be available, and the mode of conduct that each is allotted in the form of his tutelary genius. For Socrates is said to have been "accompanied from childhood by a *daimōn*", an instructor in what was to be done, not one such as to urge him to any particular course of action, but such as to warn against those whose fulfillment would not be beneficial, the reason being that, if the things that are within human power should be enacted through imprudence when its is not beneficial for them to be enacted, they would bring ruin, which the benevolent genius kept away from Socrates»⁵⁴ (tr. MAGEE, 2016, adapted).

Von Arnim did not take up the passage in his collection of evidence on the Stoics, but as already WASZINK (1975), 196, suggested, Calcidius' account is well in line with Stoic thought, including the references to «sages» (*sapientes*) and to the (Socratic) *daimōn*, which the Stoics were happy to exploit⁵⁵. Even if Calcidius were to rely on

⁵⁴ «Opus est ergo futuris sapientibus tam educatione liberali praeceptis que ad honestatem ducentibus quam eruditione a vulgo separata uidentia que eis et spectanda sunt lecta omnia quae protelent ad sapientiam. ante omnia divino praesidio opus est ad perceptionem bonorum maximorum quae, cum sint propria divinitatis, cum hominibus tamen communicantur. corporis quoque obsequium sufficiens animae viribus esse debet ad tolerandum exercitii laborem. oportet item sufficere praeceptores bonos propositum que id quod sortiti sumus singuli numen. quippe Socrati dicitur a pueris comes daemon rerum agendarum praeceptor fuisse, non ut hortaretur eum ad aliquem actum, sed ut prohiberet quae fieri non expediret propterea quod, quae in hominis potestate sunt, si per imprudentiam agantur, cum agi ea sit inutile, cladem afferant, quod a Socrate arcebat benivolum numen».

⁵⁵ For *daimōn* see e.g. the Stoics' conception of the good life in Diogenes Laertius VII 88 (SVF III, 4, LS 63C): εἶναι δ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὴν τοῦ εὐδαίμονος ἀρετὴν καὶ εὐροῖαν βίου, ὅταν πάντα πράττηται κατὰ τὴν συμφωνίαν τοῦ παρ' ἐκάστῳ δαίμονος πρὸς τὴν τοῦ τῶν ἄλων διοικητοῦ βούλησιν («And this very thing constitutes virtue and smooth current of the happy life, when everything is done in light of the harmonious accord of each man's *daimōn* with the will of him who governs the universe», tr. MENSCH, 2018, adapted).

Plato's educational programme, as set out in his *Republic* VII 521c-541b, as den BOEFT (1970), 66, followed by BAKHOUCHE (2011), 765 suggested, it is remarkable, though, Calcidius does not use the typically Platonic terms guardians or of philosopher-kings. It is tempting to think, then, that the programme Calcidius presents in this passage was in fact developed by the Stoics themselves as their response as to how to deal with the two causes of human badness they had first set out⁵⁶.

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⁵⁶ I would like to thank the two anonymous readers of the journal and the editors of this special issue for their helpful and constructive comments. All remaining errors are mine, of course.

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