

Cicero and Augustine on the Passions

I. – CICERO'S DOCTRINE OF THE PASSIONS

A. – The illness of the soul – philosophy as therapy

Like most hellenistic philosophers, Cicero is interested in a theory of counseling and therapy, that is, in the pedagogical competence of philosophy. Philosophy is not restricted to metaphysical or epistemological theories, nor is it identical with a contemplation of the supra-terrestrial world, but it is practical as well. It includes a technique by which rational beings can be cured from faults and sufferings of their souls, so that they can reach that for which each human being strives, namely wisdom and happiness. The introduction to the third book of Cicero's *Libri tusculanarum disputationum* gives an extensive account of this idea¹. There are illnesses of the body which are curable by medicines invented by men. There are ailments of the soul too. Nature created us well, and bestowed on us seeds of virtue, which, could they thrive unhampered, would unmistakably lead us to the happy life. But these seedlings are suppressed by wrong beliefs in the values of richness, pleasure, honor, and glory. Wrong attitudes towards alleged goods and evils are the essence of the soul's illness. Is there a remedy for this illness, as there are remedies for bodily diseases? According to Cicero, the soul not only invented medicines for the body, but also a remedy for its own ailments, namely philosophy. But there are differences between bodily and mental illnesses. The body is – so to speak – the external side of the self, by which it is subject to influences from outside, whereas the soul is closer to the self or even identical with it, and therefore within the reach of its own power. Bodily diseases affect us from outside, and medicines for the body are usually made from things external to the body itself. Because of the body's openness to contingent, external influences, its healing may be beyond the reach of our capabilities. The illness of the soul, on the contrary, is caused by itself, and the medicine, namely

1. Cf. *Libri Tusculanarum disputationum* (= Tusculan disputations) 3.1.1-3.6.

philosophy, is produced by itself. Philosophy provides the therapy by which the soul heals itself, so that it can reach the goal of goals, which is happiness.

B. – The motions of the soul

According to an opinion prevalent among ancient philosophers, happiness includes or is identical with a tranquil state of mind. Quietude characterizes the souls of the wise men, while the foolish are internally restless, turbulent, self-repugnant, and distracted². These turbulences are caused by passions, whereas tranquillity is the result of the dominion of reason. Here as elsewhere Cicero, introducing hellenistic philosophy to Roman readers, has to look for a suitable translation of Greek philosophical terms. He chooses *perturbatio animi* as the best equivalent of the greek³, because it expresses the impact of wrong moral attitudes. The storms of *perturbationes* toss up the soul and annihilate all inner tranquillity, and therefore are contrary to the calmness provided by the dominion of reason.

In fact, a single *perturbatio* is just the lightest case of internal disturbance. A *perturbatio* that is not immediately banned by reason adheres to the soul and strikes roots so that it becomes even harder to remove it. Untreated *perturbationes* turn into full-fledged illnesses (*morbi* ; *aegrotationes*). Cicero gives two examples of such illnesses: desire of honor (*gloriae cupiditas*) and love of women (*mulierositas*). The wretchedness (*vitiositas*) resulting from these *morbi* and *aegrotationes* not only shatters the soul at a particular moment, but makes its entire life unstable and self-contradictory, and tears the soul into parts⁴.

However, it is not the soul's motion as such that disturbs the inner calmness, for according to Cicero, who refers to Stoic doctrines, reason itself can move the soul without disturbing tranquillity⁵. Significant for *perturbationes* is the fact that their movements are always contrary to reason. What makes the irrational motions different from the rational ones ?

Volitional movements of the soul are always directed to objects. They aim at obtaining goods and avoiding evils. It is the quality of the objects that causes the difference between reasonable movements and *perturbationes*. Reasonable movements correspond to real goods (or real evils), whereas passions are related to objects which only seem to be goods or evils but really are not such⁶.

2. Cf. *Tusc.* 3.4.8-9.

3. *Passio*, frequently used by Augustine, was unknown in Cicero's times.

4. Cf. *Tusc.* 4.10.23-13.29. As any reader of Augustine's *Confessions* knows, these two vices prevented Augustine from fully enjoying the supreme good (cf. *Conf.* 8.6.13 ; 8.12.30).

5. Cf. *Tusc.* 4.6.12 f.

6. Because the character of a good/evil is the criterion for the distinction of good and bad movements, a convincing theory of the supreme good is needed for discerning which state of the soul contradicts happiness and which does not. Obviously, what the philosophical therapy of the passions looks like depends on the theory about the real good. Cicero gives an account of this problem in his *De finibus bonorum et malorum*.

According to Cicero the relationship between the object and the motion of the soul cannot be conceived in physiological terms. It is not a relationship of stimulus and response the first necessitating the second. Perceiving an object does not simply cause a desire. When an object is perceived and recognized, it needs to be evaluated as a good or an evil by an intermediating intellectual activity, which can be understood as an establishment of a practical syllogism. The conclusion of this syllogism is the enactment of a specific inner motion, which may be reasonable or not, depending on the validity of the syllogism. For example, if an honorable position is available, the evaluation may proceed the following way : Maj.) Honorable positions are a great good. Min.) This is a honorable position. Cc) Therefore it has to be desired. This syllogism may sound quite trivial, but it clarifies Cicero's conception. 1) The drawing of the conclusion is a theoretical activity that separates the appearance of the object from the volitional response. But the conclusion has a practical content. It is, as Cicero puts it, an assent or a dissent to the object, i.e. a decision about whether to strive for or to shun the object, or to do nothing. Thus, the drawing of the conclusion is an enactment of the desire for this object. This arrangement makes sure that volitional responses are not forced by the object, but depend on our own rational activities and insofar are under our control. 2) The desire will be reasonable if the conclusion is correct, i.e. if the premises are right. If not, the desire will be just a passion. Since the truth of the minor is taken for granted here⁷, the truth or falseness of the major that reflects our values and moral principles makes the difference. By referring to a syllogism which can be valid or void Cicero can give an account of the difference between passions and reasonable motions in terms of knowledge. If the major is wrong, i.e. if a honorable position is not really a good, the conclusion will not have the status of knowledge, but only that of mere opinion⁸. Thus, Cicero can say that all the irrational motions are based on opinion, that is on wrong premises, whereas the reasonable movements are grounded in knowledge.

Since passions are related to goods or evils, which can be either present or expected, there are four kinds of passions : Delight (*Voluptas gestiens*) or joy (*laetitia*) is the opinion of a great present good, lust (*cupiditas/libido*) the opinion of a future good, fear (*metus*) expresses the believe in an approaching evil, and sorrow (*aegritudo*) results from the opinion of a present evil⁹. Because none of these goods and evils is real, all the volitional movements pointing at them are contrary to reason and to the soul's tranquillity.

If the object in question is not only in appearance but in reality a good or an evil, the corresponding motions will be reasonable. One could expect that a

7. This is the link between Cicero's theory of knowledge and his ethics. If we cannot recognize things without any doubt, as Carneades claimed, i.e. if we cannot know for sure, whether the minors are true, our whole life will be hypotheticalal.

8. Cf. *Tusc.* 4.7.14 *Sed omnes perturbationes iudicio censent* (sc. Stoici) *fieri et opinione*. If the conclusion is based on an error, Cicero calls the assent weak and unstable: *Opinationem autem, quam in omnis definitiones superiores inclusimus, volunt* (sc. Stoici) *esse inbecillam adensionem*. (Cf. *Tusc.* 4.7.15; cf. also SEXT. EMP. *adv. math.* 7.151.)

9. Cf. *Tusc.* 4.7.14.

rational counterpart corresponds to each *perturbatio*, according to whether the object is a real good or a real evil, and whether it is present or future. But this is not so. There is a counterpart to *libido/cupiditas* called *voluntas*; and one to *laetitia*, namely *gaudium*; and there is a reasonable version of *metus*, called *cautio*. But grief, the passion resulting from the opinion of a present evil, has no such counterpart. And this is consistent to the principles of Stoic ethics. Only the sage never fails in recognizing the real good and the real evil, so that the reasonable movements are the proper motions of his soul. According to the Stoics there is only a single real evil about which one could righteously grieve, namely wickedness (*turpitudō*). But because the sage is virtuous by definition, not wicked, he can never suffer from this evil. There is no rational form of grief. If we were really wise, we would never be sad.

C. – The case of the Peripatetics

Not all ancient schools had such a negative view of passions. Notoriously, the Peripatetics upheld the thesis that irrational motions, if only provided they were bridled and directed by reason, would contribute to human perfection. In terms of psychology, Cicero himself occasionally speaks like a Peripatetic, when he asserts with appeal to Pythagoras and Plato that there are two parts of the soul, a reasonable one, which tends to constancy and tranquillity, and a reasonless part, where wrath, desire (*cupīditas*), and all the motions contrary to reason arise. In several passages he even maintains that reason has to tame and bridle the motions of the lower part¹⁰. Nonetheless Cicero abides by Stoic orthodoxy when he defines *πάθος*, or *perturbatio*. Quoting Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, he says: A *perturbatio* is a motion of the soul averted from right reason and against the nature of soul. It is too strong a desire and too far from the constancy of nature¹¹. Although Cicero seemingly adopts the idea that the soul has an unreasonable part, he never accepts the conclusions that the Peripatetics drew from this view, namely that this part has a right on its own, and that moral perfection means a state of harmony, in which reason does not expell the lower motions but directs them. In Cicero's opinion, the Peripatetic doctrine is a scandal. A permission for a measured amount of motions contrary to reason equals allowing moderate injustice, moderate cowardice, and moderate intemperance – an absurd consequence of a wrong doctrine¹².

10. Cf. *De officiis* 2.5.18 ; 1.29.102 ; *Tusc.* 1.33.80 ; 2.21.47.

11. *Est igitur Zenonis haec definitio, ut perturbatio sit, quod ille dicit, aversa a recta ratione contra naturam animi commotio. Quidam brevius perturbationem esse adpetitum vehementiorem, sed vehementiorem eum volunt esse, qui longius discesserit a naturae constantia.* (*Tusc.* 4.6.11)

12. *Tusc.* 4.17.38 ff. The appeal to Zeno's definition looks like a flaw in Cicero's refutation of the Peripatetic doctrine. A Peripatetic would certainly have agreed on the thesis that any motion averted from reason or exceeding certain limits has to be avoided, but at the same time he would have argued that what he calls a moderate *πάθος* does neither of this. Thus, he could claim that Zeno's definition is wrong in assuming that all the *πάθη* are necessarily

The Peripatetics argued further that the passions are not only natural, but bestowed by nature to our great benefit. Wrath, they said, is the whetstone of bravery for only a warrior boiling with rage will be a good fighter. Nobody could accomplish anything without *libido* and *cupiditas*, i.e. without a strong desire for the projected goal. Even grief, which Cicero called an abominable, atrocious monster¹³, was considered useful by the Peripatetics, for without grief felt as the consequence of punishment, most people could not be prevented from committing felonies. And who would comply with the laws and obey to the authorities without fear? Cicero sharply refutes the idea that passions could be useful for a life of virtue. Aias, he asserts referring to Homer's Iliad, fought Hector in serenity, not in wrath.

In order to show the absurdity of the Peripatetic claims, Cicero gives a detailed critique of each of the passions. Because of the importance of this topic for Augustine, we will take a glance at Cicero's evaluation of *libido*. Cicero seems to aim mainly at the inner turbulences of the skirtchaser. Who is not deterred, Cicero asks, by the depravity of a mind confused by love-affairs (Tusc. 4.35.75)? It is disgraceful how somebody is out of control in the enjoyment of sexual pleasure, and even if he desires for such pleasure with an inflamed mind¹⁴. Cicero seemingly goes so far to condemn sexual pleasure as such for psychological reasons. In the moment of highest pleasure, one is unable to think or to concentrate the mind on any object¹⁵. How can the Peripatetics speak of a leadership of reason, when the mind is submerged by pleasure? Cicero does not touch upon the question how the depraved passions of *libido* and *laetitia* fit in to marriage, which he considers natural and valuable¹⁶. All he says is that according to the Stoics, the sage's love is free from *libido*.

D. – Ways of therapy

The tradition of hellenistic philosophy offers a rich variety of therapies for passions. Cicero considers nearly all of them valuable, but focuses on two strategies which can be used exclusively or simultaneously, depending on the

against reason, since the ones he has in mind are not. In order to reject this counter-critique, Cicero needs to assert that not only motions contrary to reason are sinful but also motions which do not originate in reason or are different from reasonable ones. With consideration of his doctrine about two kinds of inner motions, we can assume that Cicero, indeed, would have answered: if the motion does not originate in reason, it is grounded in wrong opinion and therefore vicious.

13. Cf. *Tusc.* 4.20.45.

14. ... *inflammatur animo concupiscunt.* (4.32.68)

15. Cf. *Hort.* 84 I ; IV, quoted in AUGUSTINE, *c. Jul.* 4.14.72 ; 5.10.42.

16. According to Cato, the Stoic speaker in Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, the sage may have a wife and children. Cato also allows for holy love : "*ne amores quidem sanctos a sapiente alienos esse arbitrantur*" (*fin.* 3.68).

particular case¹⁷. The first strategy, especially recommended by the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes, aims at the objects of the passions and dissolves these objects – so to speak – by demonstrating that they are good or evil only in our opinion but not in reality. The second way focuses on the passions themselves, asserting that they are internally bad and noxious. The idea is that somebody's desire can be reduced and finally annihilated without touching upon the question of real and apparent goods or evils. For example, in order to comfort a mourning person, one might refer to those who suffered the same and bore it with patience and without distress. Through imitation of those models one can get relief or even be liberated from the passion of grief. While a combination of both strategies would be the most thoroughgoing therapy, the second way alone is more effective in treating the masses, because it works even without the philosophical insight that the loss of a relative is not an evil. Cicero points out that Cleanthes' method rather teaches than comforts, and that a grieving person might not be a willing student.

E. – Alcibiades and the penitent's paradox

Cicero argues further that in some cases the strategy of liberation from passions by removing false opinions is simply not applicable. His example is Alcibiades¹⁸. In Plato's *Symposium*, deceitful Alcibiades considers himself a well educated and knowledgeable man, but when Socrates makes clear to him how mistaken he is about himself and how far he is from being wise, Alcibiades starts crying and grieving about his own wickedness. Because wickedness is the real evil, it is impossible to cure somebody like Alcibiades by demonstrating that the evil about which he is grieving is just based on opinion. The Stoics may be right in claiming that the sage never grieves, but they overlooked the possibility that somebody who is on his way to wisdom grieves of his not yet being there. Cicero asks how those aspirants to wisdom can be helped who are driven to despair by having revealed the flaws of their character? Only the second strategy can save them from abandoning all efforts to make further progress. Alcibiades needs to be taught that even if the real evil is present, passions ought to be rejected. Constancy, magnanimity and strength are the goal of each aspirant to wisdom. Grief and distress, therefore, can never be righteous.

It is important to understand the psychological structure of this case. Alcibiades' distress differs significantly from ordinary passions, because it is not caused by a loss of what is believed to be an external or bodily good. He does not grieve of pain or of the death of a beloved person, but of the depravity of his own character, which is still liable to many illnesses.

17. Cf. *Tusc.* 4.28.60.

18. Cf. *Tusc.* 3.32.77 f. ; 4.28.61. The story goes probably back to Aischines. It can be found in Plato's *Symposium* 215e-216c, and in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 4.2.23 ; 39 f. For a more detailed interpretation of the penitent's paradox cf. Stephen A. WHITE, «Cicero and the Therapist», in : *Cicero the Philosopher*, ed. J. Powell (Oxford 1995).

Alcibiades' grief is related to his persistent passions. For reasons of conceptual clarity, we call the *perturbationes* and illnesses that are the object of this grief first-order passions, and the grief of them a second-order passion. The phenomenon of second-order passions can be seen only through the lense of moral pedagogy. Only he who has already made moral progress and who is on his way to perfection is capable of such a degree of self-criticism. One can grieve of one's own passions only if one has understood what the real good is, and if one loves it, and knows why passions are an obstacle on the way to the ultimate goal. We will see how important this phenomenon analyzed by Cicero will become within a Christian framework, where life as a whole is conceived as a pilgrimage to perfection.

To summarize Cicero's theory : The idea of a philosophical therapy is essentially based on the assumption that there is nothing natural or necessary in passions¹⁹. All the soul's diseases are contracted through will and opinion. Therefore it must be in the soul's power to get rid of them. Cicero's position is not intellectualistic in the sense of claiming that being taught about the real good immediately enables us to become virtuous. Cicero knows that *perturbationes* turn into deeply rooted habits that require a lengthy and laborious therapy. But ultimately, therapy is possible, and philosophy is the medicine that the soul invented to cure itself. One might add that the soul is also culpable, because it is responsible for its flaws. Cicero is not interested in the question of guilt, but rather in providing relief for suffering. But within a Ciceronian conception, it is clear that responsibility and culpability imply each other and the possibility of self-healing.

II. – AUGUSTINE'S RESPONSE TO CICERO

A. – The framework

The influence of Cicero's *Libri Tusculanarum disputationum* can be traced back to Augustine's earliest writings²⁰, and one can argue that even Augustine's self-description as given in the central book 8 of the *Confessions* is influenced by Cicero's characterization of Alcibiades²¹. But the most explicit discussion of Cicero's teaching on passions is contained in books 9 and 14 of the *City of God*²². Augustine mentions several Latin equivalents of the Greek

19. ...*non naturale esse, sed voluntario iudicio et opinionis errore contractum.* (3.80)

20. Cf. Augustine's explanation of *nequitia* and *frugalitas* (*De beata vita* 8) to Cicero's (*Tusc.* 3.8.16 ; 17.36).

21. Augustine grieves (*sic aegrotabam* ..., 8.11.25) about his persisting desires of sexual pleasure and honor (8.6.13), and he seeks healing of his illness (*morbus concupiscentiae*, 8.7.17), while his soul is torn apart by his vices (*dissipatio* ; *dissipabar*, 8.10.22 ; *discerpunt* ; *discerpitur*, 8.10.24).

22. Cf. *De civitate dei* (cd) 9.3-6 ; 14.5-24.

πάθη, namely Cicero's *perturbationes*, *affectiones*, *affectus*, and Apuleius' neologism *passiones*, which Augustine uses in most cases²³.

Like Cicero and the Stoics, Augustine distinguishes a state of *apatheia*, where no passions exist anymore, from an inferior state in which the soul has to struggle with *perturbationes* and *morbi*. *Apatheia* means tranquillity of the soul, and as for Cicero, for Augustine this does not preclude but instead includes positive motions of the soul²⁴. Augustine uses slightly different terms in naming the positive and the negative motions, but he is quite flexible here. He distinguishes the same four passions as Cicero²⁵, and lists two of Cicero's three positive motions, namely *amor* and *gaudium*²⁶. Two major differences ought to be noted: First, against the Stoics, Augustine asserts that the goal of *apatheia* cannot be reached during this life on earth. *Apatheia* was real in the earthly paradise²⁷, and it will be real again in the afterlife with God. All the claims of freedom from passions in this life are either self-deception, wishful thinking, or lies. In order to support this eschatological reservation, Augustine ultimately claims that passions in this life are necessary and natural. Second, referring to the example of Alcibiades, Augustine claims that second-order passions can be pedagogically useful, although the existence of passions in general is a punishment for Adam's and Eve's fall.

B. – The necessity of passions

Augustine's critique of Stoicism in book 9 of the *City of God* is designed to prove the necessity of passions. Some complications are added to this case, because Augustine wants to relate his argument to the controversy between the Peripatetics (to whom he attaches Plato's Old Academy) and the Stoics. Like

23. Cf. *cd* 9.4.

24. Cf. *cd* 14.9. In order to avoid falling victim to Augustine's polemics, it is important to compare the descriptions of the state of perfection, not the declarations concerning the best possible state in this life. Whereas the ideas about perfection are nearly identical, the theses on what is possible on earth are quite different. According to the Stoics one can be free from passions in this life, but according to Augustine one can not. In his polemics Augustine likes to make his doctrine appear very different from the Stoic theory by stressing this point and by concealing that his ideal of freedom from passions is the same as the Stoic one.

25. *Cupiditas*, *laetitia*, *timor*, and *tristitia*. Cicero used *metus* instead of *timor* and *aegritudo* instead of *tristitia*.

26. Augustine's *amor* is the equivalent to Cicero's *voluntas*. Both of them have *gaudium*. The omission of Cicero's *cautio* from Augustine's list is a consequence of the differences between their positions with regard to the afterlife. Since Cicero's sage lives on earth, he needs caution to avoid undesirable impacts by external events, although they cannot really do him harm. In heaven, we are no longer subject to uncalculable accidents, so that Augustine need not include caution in his description of the perfect soul.

27. I do not see how Marcia Colish (*The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, Leiden 1990, vol. II 225) can declare that there was no *apatheia* in paradise. The text she refers to (*cd* 14.10) says the opposite.

Cicero, Augustine explains their positions in the following way: Peripatetics and Academics asserted that passions “fall into” the sage but there they are moderate, subordinate to reason and reduced to a necessary amount, whereas the Stoics claimed that no passions enter the soul of a wise man²⁸. As we can see, Augustine clearly takes sides. By disclosing internal inconsistencies, he wants to convict the Stoics of basically holding the same view as the Academics and Peripatetics²⁹. Whether Augustine’s argument really matches what the Peripatetics and Academics had in mind is a special question, which we will not discuss here. For our purposes, it suffices to understand Augustine’s method of defeating his most serious enemies. If the Stoics are right in maintaining that *apatheia* is achievable on earth by a philosophical therapy, then we do not need an afterlife and no savior who opens the door to heaven. By imputing Peripatetic views to the Stoics, Augustine wants to show that the Stoics, against their own claims, did not really believe in the possibility of tranquillity and happiness on earth.

Augustine’s argument is drawn from a story told in the *Noctium Atticarum* by Aulus Gellius³⁰. Gellius reports that when he once traveled by ship, one of his fellow passengers was a noble Stoic philosopher. When a tremendous storm came up, all the travellers were terrified, and even the Stoic grew pale with fear of death. But the storm passed by, and when the sea was calm again, Gellius asked the philosopher why he lost his complexion. As an answer the Stoic gave him a book by Epictetus, a famous Stoic philosopher who, as Gellius reports, agreed with the doctrines of Zeno and Chrysippos, the founders of the school. According to Augustine’s rendering of Gellius’ report, Epictetus expounded the Stoic doctrine in the following way: It is not in the sage’s power to prevent perceptions and imaginations (*phantasiae*) of terrible and intimidating things from entering his mind. These *phantasiae* necessarily move the soul and evoke passions so that one gets pale with fear, or starts grieving. But the rise of these passions does not give testimony of an assent. Rather, they precede the activity of reason so that there is no opinion of an evil and no consent involved³¹. Unlike these motions, assent is in the power of the soul. Augustine’s rendering implies that only the fool consents to passions and lets them agitate his reason, whereas the sage restricts them to the lower part of the soul.

A comparison of the texts shows, that Augustine’s account of the story differs from Gellius’ words in a few but significant details. Gellius never

28. Cf. *cd* 9.4.

29. Cf. *cd* 9.4. Cicero developed this strategy in his *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, where he criticizes the Stoic doctrine of the supreme good. But he did not apply it to his *Tusculan Disputations*, where he endorses the Stoic standpoint. It is Augustine who transferred it to the doctrine of passions, with Cicero against Cicero, as it were.

30. *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, with an english translation by John C. ROLFE, 3 vol., London 1927 (Loeb Classical Library). The story is contained in book 19, chapter 1.

31. Gellius’ report is an extract of the (lost) fifth book of Epictetus’ *Discourses*. A similar distinction between involuntary emotional reactions and passions can be found in Seneca, *De ira* 2.3.1-4.2 and in *SVF* 3.574.

expressly says that the sage is subject to passions but that his soul is involuntarily moved and contracted “a little bit”. Gellius seems to be ready to reserve the term “passion” for a motion based on consent. If this is true, the result which he derives from this story says that when one sees a man growing pale in danger, one needs not assume that the man has a passion. He might as well be subject to a brief natural impulse due to human weakness. On the other hand, Augustine’s account emphasizes that the Stoic is indeed suffering from passions. His soul is not only moved and contracted (Gellius has : ... *sapientis quoque animum paulisper moveri et contrahi et pallescere necessum est* [Noc. Att. 19.1.17]), but moved by fear and contracted with distress (*paulisper vel pavescat metu, vel tristitia contrahatur* [cd 9.4 ; ed. Dombart p.373, 1.8-9]), and what precedes the judgement of reason is not a swift and unexpected motion (Gellius : ... *non opinione alicuius mali praecepta, sed quibusdam motibus rapidis et inconsultis, officium mentis atque rationis praeventibus*. [19.1.17]) but passions (...*tamquam his passionibus praevenientibus mentis et rationis officium* [cd 9.4 ; ed. Dombart p.373, 1.9-10]). Augustine says that there was no opinion of an evil and no consent involved, *after* he has pointed out that the Stoic had passions, thereby implying that passions need not be based on an act of consent. Gellius, however, first asserts that no opinion of an evil, that is no passion, was there when the sage’s soul was moved, so that these motions cannot be counted as passions. Gellius wants to make clear that the motions in the Stoic’s soul were not passions, because they lacked consent, while Augustine claims that the Stoic had passions, even though he gave no consent. By a few alterations, Augustine seems to turn the meaning of the story around so that it looks as if the Stoics themselves claimed that passions are unavoidable³².

The assumption that Augustine deliberately made the meaning of Gellius’ story “unambiguous” so that it serves his purposes is endorsed by a view at his *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* where he mentions Gellius’ report again³³. Commenting on Abraham’s fear (cf. Gn. 15.12), Augustine discusses the question whether *perturbationes* fall into the sage’s soul. (cf. section XXX) Instead of giving a clear answer, Augustine retells Gellius’ story with some interesting qualifications. According to Augustine, the Stoic assertion that the sage has no *perturbationes* does not mean he shows no affections (*affectiones*). Rather, because the Stoic definition of *perturbatio* suggests a yielding of reason to the *affectio*, there may be cases when reason does not yield ; therefore the

32. At this point Augustine resumes the topic of preferred indifferents and lower goods. The fact that the sage on board of the ship feared for his belongings and his survival shows that he considered them not only preferables (*commoda*) but goods (*bona*). By the means of Gellius’ story, Augustine reduces Stoicism to Peripateticism on both fields, the doctrine of passions and the theory of goods. He finishes this section with the thesis that the Stoics agree or at least should agree to what he thinks is the Peripatetic position, namely that *perturbationes* fall into the lower part of the soul, where they shall be ruled and governed by reason. These overtly anti-Stoic results make Colish’s thesis doubtful that Augustine had a better grasp of Cicero’s philosophical materials, and a more authentic idea of Stoicism, than Cicero himself. (cf. II, 209) Augustine’s goal is the refutation of the Stoic doctrine, not its better understanding.

33. *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*. Ed. I. Fraipont. CCSL 35. Turnhout, Brepols, 1967.

sage may have *affectiones* but no *perturbationes*. Although Augustine was well aware of these differences, he deliberately omits them in his *City of God*. In the introduction to his rendering of Gellius' story, Augustine treats the terms, *perturbationes*, *affectiones*, *affectus*, and *passiones* as equivalent. As the *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* show, this is not an innocent terminological clarification but a maneuver which enables Augustine to call the motions of the travelling Stoic *passiones* although they are not based on a consent³⁴.

With the help of Gellius' report in his own interpretation Augustine employs a new conception of passion, which differs from Cicero's ideas in several respects. First, according to Cicero, *perturbationes* are based on opinions and thus presuppose a rational activity. According to Augustine's interpretation of Gellius, they precede all such activity, and therefore are not manifestations of opinions, but immediate impacts of *phantasiae*. This conception is much closer to a physiological scheme of stimulus and response than Cicero's. Second, the intrusion of *phantasiae* into the mind is out of the reach of the soul's power. Since these *phantasiae* necessarily evoke mental motions, even the sage cannot help having passions. Whether or not his soul is moved by *perturbationes* is not in his power. By granting or denying consent, one determines whether passions may gain influence on reason. Cicero's entire conception, on the other hand, is based on the idea that the formation of passions is already under our control. Only if consent is given, a passion can come into being at all. Third, because the rise of the passions is not within the reach of our power, we can assume that their extinction is not either. We simply have to live with these motions in the basement of our souls³⁵. We can extrapolate that since the rise of the passions is beyond our reach, the soul is not culpable. There is no fault in having passions. We can speak of a sin only if the passions are permitted to confuse reason and to drive it to wrong choices. The passions in themselves are not sins but rather evils, because they naturally tend to seize the entire soul and thereby are constantly challenging reason by urging it to defend itself. As long as reason denies consent, a soul is not morally inferior because of its passions, but it will not have peace, tranquillity and happiness as long as even a single passion dwells in it.

34. SENECA, *De ira* 2.3.1-4 expressly forbids the equation of *affectus* and *passio*, because the former is an *impetus sine assensu mentis*.

35. M. Colish (cf. II 208 f.) comes to different results in her interpretation of this passage. According to Colish, Augustine wants to show that all relevant schools elevate the mind over the body. Although Augustine agreed on Cicero's assertion that the debate between Peripatetics and Stoics is terminological, he develops a new argument. Instead of following Cicero in his "conflation" of the Peripatetic view of the origin of the passions with the intellectualistic Stoic explanation, Augustine refers to Gellius, whose report makes clear that the Stoics also believed in the rulership of reason over the passion. To my mind, Cicero neither in the *Tusculan Disputations* nor in *De finibus* conflates the Peripatetic and the Stoic doctrine of passions, but keeps them strictly separate. According to Cicero, only the debate about the lower goods and evils is terminological. By the means of Gellius' story, Augustine transfers this "conflation" to the debate on passions. The whole section does not deal with the superiority of the mind to the body, but with the Stoic claim of the possibility of happiness on earth.

Augustine's reference to the Peripatetics and their quarrel with the Stoics does not mean he accepts the idea that a certain amount of passion is legitimate or even required for a fully human life. Augustine is not interested in a positive evaluation of the passions. What he finds worth adopting from the Peripatetic doctrine is the assumption that passions are unavoidable because they are a part of human nature. Augustine uses Gellius' story for imputing the idea to the Stoics that even the souls of the best human beings are troubled as long as life on earth lasts. If the Stoics admit that passions are necessary, or at least unavoidable, then even they cannot deny the sage's need for salvation and the necessity of an afterlife.

C. – Passion and consent

In book 14 of his *City of God*, however, Augustine returns to the Ciceronian conception of passions. Here, he asserts that all the emotions are directions of will (*voluntates*), and they are agreements or disagreements with regard to goods or evils which can be present or future. *Cupiditas* is a consent to desiring what we want, namely a good which is not yet there; *laetitia* is a consent to enjoying what one wants, namely a good being present; *metus* and *tristitia* are the equivalent emotions related to evils. According to the variety of different objects, which are pursued or shunned, because they are attracting or repelling, the will turns into these different affections (*affectus*)³⁶.

Like Cicero, Augustine distinguishes the motions of the soul according to the character of their objects. Furthermore, Augustine recognizes an element of consent as constitutive of those volitional movements. In this context, he remarks that the Stoics were already refuted in book 9 so that there is no need to deal with them again³⁷. Augustine seems to overlook that a conception of passions as consents or dissents implicitly denies the idea of a quasi-physiological, pre-volitional formation, and therefore contradicts the concept of passion that Augustine expounded in his interpretation of Gellius' report. If consent is a constitutive element of a passion, then it cannot be caused only by a *phantasia*. Nor can the product of such a *phantasia*, namely a motion in the soul which strives for consent, be called a passion any longer, because what strives for consent has not yet received it. On the basis of Augustine's second definition, the question why passions should be unavoidable and why a life without them should be impossible, is open again.

D. – Good and bad passions

One of Augustine's most prominent counter-theses against the Stoics is that even *cupiditas*, *timor*, *laetitia*, and *tristitia* can be right motions of the soul, given that the will is directed to the true good.

36. Cf. *cd* 14.6.

37. Cf. 14.9.

Not only are all these passions not necessarily wrong, but depending on the general orientation of the will they can even be praiseworthy. If the will is rightly directed to the real supreme good, which is God, then all its emotional manifestations will be right too. But if the will is otherwise oriented, taking a lower good for the supreme one and thus falling towards evil, all its motions will be wrong. Augustine knows that Cicero reserved special terms for the positive version of each passion, but Scripture does not use different words for right directions of will, or for wrong ones, but calls both of them indiscriminately *amor*, *caritas*, and *dilectio*. Augustine follows Scripture here rather than Cicero. Therefore for Augustine, the right will is a good *amor*, the perverted will a bad *amor*. And even *cupiditas*, *laetitia*, *metus* and *tristitia* are used in a negative and in a positive sense. For Augustine, the love of an inferior good instead of the supreme one is manifest in bad *cupiditas*, *laetitia*, *timor*, and *tristitia*, whereas the love of the *summum bonum* leads to good *cupiditas* etc³⁸.

How is Augustine's claim related to Stoic ideas? Is Augustine simply offering an impoverished terminology so that, for example, the praiseworthy kind of joy should no longer be called by a different name than the wretched version? A more interesting thesis underlies this approach. It is important to see that positive versions of the passions are not equivalents to what the Stoics said are the motions of a morally perfect soul. Instead they represent Augustine's answer to the problem of Alcibiades. A look at Augustine's examples shows that he tries to justify second-order passions. Like Alcibiades' grief, all the passions Augustine presents are reactions to sin, i.e. reactions to the victory of first-order passions, be it present, past, or future, real or possible, one's own sin or the sin of others. The first example is about the passions of man on earth, who remains involved in sins and evils, but thinks about eternal reward and punishment. He fears pain, desires life, grieves because life is not yet there, and rejoices in hope for it³⁹. In reaction to actual sin, the aspirant to wisdom fears sinning, hopes for perseverance, grieves because of his sin, and rejoices in a good deed. Being liable to temptation, i.e. proneness to sin, is a sign of moral weakness. Adam and Eve avoided sin in security and in full tranquillity. But since the fall, humans are stirred up not only by temptations but even by their reaction to it. The Christian fears temptation and feels pain, when it has come, but on the other hand he desires to be tested and rejoices in it. The last example concerns the sins of others and their salvation or rejection. The inhabitant of the city of God wishes for their salvation and rejoices in it, but fears for their downfall and grieves, if it happens⁴⁰.

Finally, when he speaks about *tristitia*, Augustine himself makes the connection to Alcibiades. According to Augustine, Scripture explicitly distinguishes a wrong grief, called *tristitia mundi*, from a right one, the

38. Cf. 14.7 f.

39. Notice that according to *cd* 9.25 obedience out of fear of pain is a sin.

40. This is the systematic place for Augustine's more extensive praise of compassion, which can be found in the context of his first criticism of Stoicism (cf. book 9.5)

tristitia secundum deum (cf. 2 Cor 7,8 ff.) which is a consequence of sin and naturally involved in penitence. St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians to this kind of grief, and, as Augustine relates, there is an example of it even in pagan literature, namely the story of Alcibiades, who considered himself happy until Socrates demonstrated how miserable he was because he was foolish, whereupon he burst into tears. «Thus for him foolishness was the cause of this salutary and desirable grief, the grief of one who laments that he is not what he ought to be»⁴¹.

Augustine claims that the praiseworthy passions flow from love of the real good, and thereby cannot be equated with first-order passions, which make men strive for wrong goods. In contrast with first-order motions, second-order passions are always related to real goods or evils. Cicero laid the groundwork of this conception by pointing out that the dichotomy between motions of the sage and passions of the fools cannot be equated with the one between motions directed to real goods or evils and those directed to mere appearances. Alcibiades may still be a fool, but he has proceeded so far as to grieve for a real evil. According to Augustine, a good Christian remains a pilgrim. Like Alcibiades, the Christian has proceeded on the way to perfection so that his passions can be directed to real goods and evils. But Augustine extends Cicero's idea when he ascribes not only grief but a second-order version of all the passions to the aspirant to wisdom. The Christian is moved in a good way not only by grief, but also by desire, joy and fear. However, the main difference between Cicero's and Augustine's view of the matter lies in the evaluation of second-order passions as such. According to Cicero, Alcibiades needs to be liberated from his second-order grief in order to be able to leave behind the first-order passions too. Another passion is not the way to overcome being subject to passions⁴². Against Cicero's view, Augustine asserts that both Alcibiades and the Corinthians were right in grieving, and that the *tristitia secundum deum* as well as the other second-order passions are pedagogically useful and commendable, for they help the will keep the right direction.

But for Augustine even the good versions of the passions are still passions, and as such ambivalent, if not dangerous. They can be accepted as long as they follow right reason and are exhibited in the proper situation. But like all

41. *cd* 14.9. We unraveled Augustine's argument in order to make its point clear. The section begins with an examination of the Stoic thesis that there are only three positive motions, called *εὐπάθειαι* by the Greeks, and by Cicero *constantiae*, corresponding to four *perturbationes*. Is it true, Augustine asks, that there cannot be *tristitia* in the sage's soul? Misleadingly, Augustine seems to identify the positive passions to the motions of a perfect soul. But he retracts this idea, when he points out that the phenomenon of a good grief, as found in the Corinthians and in Alcibiades, does not contradict to the Stoic claim that only the sage does not grief, because the Corinthians and Alcibiades were still sinners.

42. Cicero explicitly refers to philosophers who are eminent, but have not yet reached wisdom. They know that they are still fools and that there is no greater misery than foolishness, and yet they do not grieve. By this example, Cicero wants to show that because these philosophers do not grieve, although they had the best reason to do so, distress is rather a matter of convention than of nature. (Cf. *Tusc.* 3.28.68)

passions, they tend to turn into disobedience. Even the second-order passions can overwhelm reason and drive it to sin, namely to too much fear of eternal punishment, too much grief for our sins, and too much compassion⁴³. To this extent passion *per se* (including first-order and second-order motions) is an evil, to which we are subject in this life, but from which we will be liberated in the tranquillity and apatheia of the eternal life⁴⁴.

E. – Christ’s passions as therapy

Augustine points at those passages from Scripture which speak about Christ’s passions, that is his grief because of the death of Lazarus (Joh 11.33) and his sadness during last supper when he announced Judas’ treason (Joh 13.21). Is Augustine arguing against the Stoic ideal of *apatheia* by referring to Christ’s passions?⁴⁵ If Christ himself, who is more than human, suffered from passions can the Stoics be right in recommending freedom from passions to humans? Indeed, Augustine’s *tractatus LX* on Joh 13.21 (*Cum haec dixisset Jesus turbatus est spiritu*), which is the most substantial treatise on this topic, contains a sharp critique of Stoicism⁴⁶. In order not to fall victim to Augustine’s rhetoric we will have to examine his commentary closely.

According to Augustine, Christ was incomparably firmer in mind than any human being can be because he was not only man but also God⁴⁷. Due to this power he could impossibly suffer from passions which confused his mind against his will. He was subject to *perturbationes* only because he decided to

43. Cf. *cd* 21.17 about the excesses of compassion.

44. In her interpretation of *cd* 14, M. Colish comes to unacceptable results. She asserts that Augustine makes «a frontal attack on the Stoic doctrine of the passions [...] redefining them as moral states that are intrinsically good» (II,223). In fact, Augustine is as far as one can be from asserting that *libido/concupiscentia* or *tristitia mundi* are intrinsically good. According to our interpretation, there is no frontal attack but rather a modification when Augustine states that the second-order version of each passion *can* be good, whereas first-order passions are always reprehensible. Nor is Augustine’s evaluation of second-order passions a “crushing judgment against Stoic apatheia” (II,224). For Augustine as well as for Cicero and the Stoics, apatheia characterizes the state of perfection. The fact that Augustine allows for *amor* and *gaudium* in this state marks not a deviation but an endorsement of the Stoic teaching (cf. II,225). Colish not only neglects the distinction between first-order and second-order passions, but also conflates motions directed to false goods with those directed to real goods. According to her interpretation, Augustine would have to consider the joy of sexual pleasure in adultery of the same kind as the blessed’s joy of God in the eternal life.

45. M. Colish is convinced that this is the case. According to her, «Augustine reserves his fullest fire for his exegesis of the Gospel of John, in exploring the unique and exemplary merits of the passion of Christ» (II,223). J. Wetzel is willing to follow her; cf. his *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 104.

46. *Pereant argumenta philosophorum, qui negant in sapientem cadere perturbationes animorum.* (*Tract. LX 3.*) *De civitate dei* 14.9 contains a shorter account of the problem.

47. *Sed qui non solum homo, verum etiam Deus erat, ineffabili distantia universum genus humanum animi fortitudine superabat.* (*Tract. LX 5.*)

be. Sadness did not overcome him involuntarily when he grieved because of Lazarus' death, but Christ himself evoked this sadness in his soul⁴⁸. Christ's state of mind is different from that of a human mind, because in us the rulership of reason is always endangered, whereas he due to his Deity has full command over his passions and even produces them deliberately. Thus, it is impossible to refer to Christ as a model for our dealing with passions. The moral psychology of a being which has divine power of mind cannot be transferred to humans who are incapable to be sad deliberately and, due to their weakness, permanently struggle with passions which rise even against will. Neither can virtuous Christians on earth reach Christ's state of mind, because they are still oppressed by passions, nor are the blessed in heaven in Christ's position, because in heaven there will be no more grief. The Stoic ideal of *apatheia* has to be compared with what Augustine says about the state of perfection. To criticize this ideal by reference to Jesus Christ makes no sense, because Christ's state of mind can not be reached by humans, neither on earth nor in heaven.

Furthermore, Augustine can not even have the intention to let humans strive for an imitation of Christ's mind, since his deliberate evocation of passions is part of his work of redemption. Christ takes on *perturbationes* for our sake. We shall be healed from our grief by his passions. Through Christ's *perturbationes* we can regain tranquillity, and through his *infirmetas* we become firm again. Christ's evocation of passions aims at deliberating humans from their passions. In order to explain this, Augustine briefly expounds his distinction between good and bad passions. The Christian may have passions because of just reasons (*justis de causis*). These are second-order passions related to one's own sins or the sins of a fellow human being⁴⁹. Here, Augustine harshly criticizes the Stoics for not allowing for these positive versions of passions. He polemically calls *apatheia* dullness (*stupor*). This polemic falls short from his account in the *City of God* book 14 where he expounds the Stoic doctrine of positive motions and thereby makes clear that *apatheia* does not mean dullness. His objection against Stoic ethics in the *tractatus LX* is not aimed at the ideal of *apatheia* as such but at the missing of a positive evaluation of second-order passions.

As his *tractatus LX* on the Gospel of St. John shows, even Augustine does not consider these passions praiseworthy without reservation. His example is

48. *Affectum quippe humanum, quando oportuisse judicavit, in seipso potestate commovit, qui hominem totum potestate suscepit. (Tract. LX 5.)*

49. *Turbetur plane animus christianus, non miseria, sed misericordia: timeat ne pereant homines Christo, contristetur cum perit aliquis Christo; concupiscat acquiri homines Christo, laetetur cum acquiruntur homines Christo: timeat et sibi ne pereat Christo, contristetur peregrinari se a Christo; concupiscat regnare cum Christo, laetetur cum sperat se regnaturum esse cum Christo. (Tract. LX 3)*

fear of death⁵⁰. Christians need not be afraid of death because they know that it is not really an evil. Seeing the last hour coming, a Christian should rather rejoice in being close to eternal happiness. But due to their weakness humans become overwhelmed by fear. Since Christians know that they should not yield to passions like this, they may consider themselves condemned because of their fear and thereby fall to the death of desperation which is even worse than the bodily death. According to Augustine, such a person can be saved from this kind of death by meditating on Christ and his passions. Since even Christ grieved (even if voluntarily) Christians need not despair of their own incapability to avoid grief. In an act of sovereignty Christ evoked distress in his soul when he saw his death coming. By this distress he saved the Christians from ultimate grief about their own sadness in the hour of death⁵¹.

Augustine's reflection on Christ's passions is not an attack on Stoic moral psychology. Instead, Augustine uses Cicero's analysis of the passions to explain Christ's way of therapy. Augustine's case of the despairing Christian is even comparable to Cicero's case of Alcibiades. Like Alcibiades dying Christians realize that their souls are ruled by a bad passion, namely by fear of death. Since Christians know the faulty character of this fear, they despair of their chance to reach the state of perfection. Whereas fear of eternal punishment is a useful second-order passion, desperation of one's own salvation is clearly the case, where even a second-order passion exceeds its limits and therefore needs to be healed. According to Augustine, the appropriate therapy is Christ's grief. Christians who see even the son of God grieve might not be less sad about the imminent death, but at least no longer despairing because of their sadness. While the first-order fear remains, the really threatening second-order grief disappears. Cicero and Augustine agree on the necessity of removing desperation, and they both give priority to a therapy of second-order passions. Whereas the diagnoses are the same, the proposed therapies are different. According to Cicero, all the passions ultimately need to be dissolved if happiness shall be reached. Since Augustine holds the view that freedom from passions is impossible on earth, he has to make provision for the case that one is unable to stop fearing death. Therefore he claims that through Jesus Christ the Christians can reach the happiness of a life in heaven even if they were incapable of leaving off all their passions during life on earth. In fact, freedom from passions is a necessary condition of salvation as far as negative second-

50. *Firmissimi quidem sunt christiani, si qui sunt, qui nequaquam morte imminente turbantur: sed numquid Christo firmiores? Quis hoc insanissimus dixerit?* (Tract. LX 5.) Augustine seems to suggest that no Christian is completely free from fear of death since no one can be as firm in mind as Christ.

51. *nos ipsos in illius perturbatione videamus, ut quando turbamur, non desperatione pereamus. Quando turbaretur nisi volens, eum consolatur qui turbatur et nolens.* (Tract. LX 2.) *Quid est ergo quod ille turbatus est, nisi quia infirmos in suo corpore, hoc est in sua ecclesia, suae infirmitatis voluntaria similitudine consolatus est: ut si qui suorum adhuc morte imminente turbantur in spiritu, ipsum intueantur, ne hoc ipso se putantes reprobos, peiore desperationis morte sorbeantur?* (Tract. LX 5.) *non est tamen ullo modo dubitandum, non eum (sc. Christ) enim infirmitate, sed potestate turbatum; ne nobis desperatio salutis oriatur, quando non potestate, sed infirmitate turbamur.* (Tract. LX 5)

order passions are concerned; there is no way to heaven for somebody who despairs of the chance of rescue. But since Christ deliberately suffered from passions, the Christian's fear of death does not prevent him from reaching the goal of goals.

Neither book 14 of the *City of God*, nor the *tractatus LX* on the Gospel of St. John legitimates passions as such. Both texts contain the idea that Christians in the state of pilgrimage, besides being plagued by first-order passions which try to persuade reason to wrong choices may also have passions aiming at the real good and the real evil. But even the latter are praiseworthy only as long as they are not allowed to do what all the passions tend to, namely overwhelm reason and take control over the soul.

E. – Passion and sin

In his description of the conditions of this life, Augustine sets up a close connection between passion and sin. As we have just seen, not only is there no apatheia on earth, but also no freedom from sin. Mankind will be liberated from passions when all sin has been washed away and ended, not earlier. Are passions necessary? And are they necessarily sinful?

According to book 9 of the *City of God*, passions are necessary, or at least unavoidable. As such they are evils, because they threaten the dominion of reason over the soul, but since they do not presuppose consent, one cannot call them sins. According to book 14, however, because passions are grounded in a consent given by the will, the soul is implicitly guilty of its passions. But because consent is voluntary, passions cannot be necessary. The passages of the *City of God* that we analyzed leave us with the dilemma that passions are either unavoidable, or voluntary; either necessary evils, or avoidable sins.

Whoever tries to understand how Augustine operates with his Ciceronian heritage inevitably runs into the problem of original sin. The reader of the *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* is amazed to see how carefully Augustine can separate sin from evil. Augustine starts with the thesis that passions are evils inflicted on all human beings as a punishment for Adam's sin. After the fall, being troubled by passions became part of human nature. Concupiscence⁵², which is the worst of these evils, can be called sin because it came into being through sin, namely as its punishment, and because it results in sin if it succeeds in gaining consent. But Augustine clearly points out that this is an improper way of speaking⁵³. According to Augustine, concupiscence without consent is an unavoidable evil, not a sin. And yet, although the infant due to its age is incapable of consenting to anything, Augustine claims that it needs forgiveness for the guilt of concupiscence in baptism, which in fact takes away the guilt, but not the evil of concupiscence itself. When the infant has grown up and begets children in an honorable marriage (i.e. without consenting to the

52. Augustine uses *concupiscentia* as an equivalent of *libido*. In the *City of God*, the latter is prevalent, whereas the anti-Pelagian writings rather employ the former.

53. Cf. *De nupt.* 1.23.25.

unchaste desires of concupiscence) it not only transfers the evil of concupiscence to the offspring, but also its guilt, even though it received forgiveness and may never have sinned in the meantime. We cannot unravel the details of Augustine's complex theory here. But as a general thesis one may say that Augustine tried to use Ciceronian categories to interpret Saint Paul's doctrine of universal sin and redemption, and that the heterogeneity of these two intellectual worlds makes him end up with the idea that the soul might be culpable for having a passion to which it never consented and on whose formation it had no influence at all. Augustine is enough of a Ciceronian to admit that his idea of necessary guilt is astonishing, mysterious and scarcely comprehensible⁵⁴.

A good portion of Augustine's extensive controversy with Julian of Eclanum revolves around one specific question : Is *libido*, if only ruled by reason and prevented from abuse, a natural good that contributes to full humanity and leads us to achieving the good of propagation, as Julian asserted ; or is it always an evil that unwillingly has to be taken into the bargain in order to realize the good end of procreation, as Augustine claimed ? Is it a gift of God, or a result of sin ?⁵⁵ One can easily recognize that this controversy is a follow-up to Cicero's discussion with the Peripatetics, in which Julian applies the idea of passion as a "whetstone" of virtue even to sexual *libido*, whereas Augustine exacerbates Cicero's critique by claiming that sexual desire is in itself unalterably evil, even in the context of marriage. But does it therefore confer guilt ? Augustine correctly claims Cicero's support when he argues against Julian's positive evaluation of concupiscence⁵⁶. But he has no support from Cicero for his crucial claim that concupiscence is not only an evil, but also involves guilt, even if no consent was given. If Augustine's conception is open to some criticism from Julian, then it is on this point.

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54. Cf. *De nupt.* 1.19.21.

55. Augustine's standard argument is the shame which Adam and Eve felt when they realized that their genitals were uncovered, and the shame due to which all humans perform sexual intercourse in private, not publicly.

56. In his *Contra Julianum* Augustine repeatedly quotes from Cicero's *Hortensius*. M. Colish seems to miss the point when she examines the role of Stoicism in Augustine's controversy with Julian. She is certainly right in pointing out that Augustine criticizes Julian's appeal to the Stoic doctrine of Cicero's *De natura deorum* on the grounds that the passages about the natural good of propagation to which Julian refers, deal with animals, not with humans. But she is wrong in saying : «Augustine maintains that it is not apposite to invoke the Stoics as authorities on human sexual ethics in any case, because they saw sexual activity as neither good nor bad, but as a matter of indifference [...]». (II,168) Augustine does invoke Cicero and the Stoics because they consider sexual desire an evil (cf. *c.Jul.* 4.15.76 ; 4.15.72). Neither do the Stoics support Julian, nor are they neutral in the case of concupiscence, but they back Augustine's position.

ABSTRACT : It is commonly believed that Augustine in his *De civitate dei* 9 and 14 sharply rejects the ideal of *apatheia* as well as the refutation of the passions as advanced by the Stoics. A comparison with Cicero's *Tusculan disputations*, however, shows how deeply Augustine's own theory of the passions is indebted to Stoic ideas that came down to him by his teacher Cicero. Such a comparison also sheds light on Augustine's concept of concupiscence.

RÉSUMÉ : En général, on croit que dans *De civitate dei* 9 et 14 Augustin critique vigoureusement l'idéal d'*apatheia* et le refus des passions établis par les Stoïciens. Cependant, une comparaison avec les *Tusculanae Disputationes* de Cicéron prouve dans quelle mesure la théorie augustinienne des passions dépend justement de la tradition qu'Augustin avait reçu de son maître Cicéron. Une telle comparaison éclaircit de plus le concept de *concupiscentia* chez Augustin.