

The question of the Freedom of Will in Epictetus:

AN ANALYSIS OF HIS THINKING AND A PROOF OF THE APPROPRIATENESS OF
THE USE OF THE CONCEPTS OF: *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* AND *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*
IN HIS LINE OF ARGUMENT

Exam. No.: 9418703

MSc Ancient Philosophy

The University of Edinburgh

2009

ABSTRACT

Stoic philosophers had to face the accusation of incoherence, self-contradiction and Paradoxes since ancient times. Plutarch in his *Moralia* writes against them; Cicero devotes a separate work on stoic paradoxes (*Paradoxa stoicorum*). Even in contemporary Literature there are still discussions on the possibility of such an incoherence and existence of paradoxes in the stoic theory.

At first glance, stoic Cosmology gives the impression to both (paradoxically) accept a kind of Determinism, and at the same time it undoubtedly argues for the moral agent's freedom of the Will. In pre-stoic or even other contemporary to Stoicism Philosophical Traditions, the definitions that these two terms/concepts are given, fairly accuse as incoherent any Theory that does not set them as "contraries". Under these types of accusations, the stoic Cosmology and Theory of the Freedom of the Will is often to be included.

This phenomenal self-contradiction inside the Principles of Stoicism becomes even more obvious in Epictetus, a philosopher of the Late Stoa. He is interested in practical ethics, thus the phenomenal contradiction gets more lucid. This would have augmented the criticism of the Stoic philosophy for incoherence, if Epictetus had not made his main philosophical aim/target (through the use of detailed ethical examples): the clarification of how an agent's Will can be (*prohairesis/προαίρεσις*) **Free** inside a Universe ruled by Fate/Destiny (*Πεπρωμένη*); namely, a Universe merely Determined by Nature's/God's Will.

Epictetus' **originality** appears in the way he interrelates the concept of Freedom (*ἐλευθερία*) of the Will with the concept of Destiny and Determinism, in order to accomplish their simultaneous co-existence. This approach guards him against being easily accused for incoherence and self-contradiction.

Through the unique way he understands and defines the Moral Agency, which is the agent's internal state/condition/disposition (*prohairesis*) , he steers towards an integrated, accomplished, strong and coherent line of argument. This sturdy declaration is able to support the weight of the **Consent to a Free Will** (*ἐλευθερία*), and thus a certain kind Freedom (defined differently to the common conception of Freedom) of the moral agent. The excellence of this line of argument is that it can bear also the burden of the **Consent** to the phenomenally contrary concept of **Determinism and Destiny** (*Πεπρωμένη*).

The elements used to the construction of this argument, which is stretched throughout the whole epictetean corpus (the *Discourses* and the *Enchiridion/Manual* as reported by Arrian, the Epictetus' pupil) can be summarised to a few key concepts, which are: *the things which are in our power* (*τά ἐφ' ἡμῖν*) and *the things which are not in our power* (*τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*), the concept of Freedom (*ἐλευθερία*). These concepts work towards his philosophical targeting, because of the special definition he gives them.

Axiomatically Epictetus states that in order for man to be free, it is necessary to be liberated from what the body forces him to do. Desires, passions and beliefs are considered as elements which are **external** to the moral agent. The moral agent "shrinks" into the Will. Thus man has the capability to free himself from anything external to his Will (*prohairesis*) and therefore to harmonise his own Will to the Will of Nature/God; namely, to *will* what Nature/God *wills* and thus never conflict to the external facts ("*ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν*": Diogenes Laert. VII 87). Consequently, Epictetus' solution, is to include in the category of *τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν* anything that he defines as external to the *prohairesis*: the desires, beliefs, passions and in general anything the body entails, the external facts. Thus the *prohairesis*, remains unhindered and it is completely depended on man's power (*τά ἐφ' ἡμῖν*); as characteristically Epictetus writes, "not even Zeus himself can overpower" the *prohairesis* (*Discourses*, 1.1.23-24).

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Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to elaborate on the issue of the freedom of the will as expressed by Epictetus, the stoic philosopher of the Late Stoa.

The subject of the free will is of central importance for every philosopher or school of philosophy. In the case of Stoicism however the importance is substantial since Nature/ God/ Destiny (*Πεπρωμένη*)/ law of nature or *logos*, is the life-giving, form-giving, and creating force that defines, governs, and brings everything together.

Nature in Stoicism has acquired a double meaning or otherwise a dualistic character¹. It is both *being* (descriptive meaning) and *must* (evaluative meaning). It points *being* to us as a course of laws that are governed by a specific *logos*. *Being* is the model in proportion to which man has to adopt his micro-type and participating to nature character. The accordance of the human with Nature/ God is virtue itself, it is *eudaimonia* itself.

As a rational being, man is conformable to the rational structure and “behaviour” of Nature, hence man himself is responsible for his internal peace of mind, or discomfort and discomposure. Hence, since man becomes morally responsible it is logically and morally necessary to have the free will to choose if he is going to shoulder or not his responsibilities regarding the identification with the Will of Nature for the sake of *eudaimonia*.

In this dissertation it will be attempted to defend the stoic philosophical thought from the accusation of being inconsistent or contradictory². To this purpose the argument on the basis of which stoic philosophy tries to harmonise *determinism* and *freedom* will be put forward and defended. Hence this is the fundamental proposal of this dissertation.

Since stoic philosophy has been present in the History of Philosophy for six centuries (3rd century B.C – 3rd century A.D), it is not possible to explore the concept of freedom in every single philosopher. After all, each philosopher’s thinking and hence the arguments via which they result to the simultaneous acceptance of

determinism and freedom are different, as well as the relevant axiomatic principles, conclusions, and their individual way they define these concepts.

For this reason the focus of this dissertation is going to be on Epictetus. This philosopher totally founded his line of arguments regarding freedom of will upon the concepts of: *τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν* and *τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*. These concepts are quite important in the History of Philosophy due to the philosophical dimension and the importance Epictetus has attributed to them.

In Chapter 1 the content of *ἐφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* will be analysed in the frame of the stoic, epictetean in particular, philosophy. In Chapter 2, the focus will be in the particular content and targeting of these terms in Epictetus. In Chapter 3, a correlation of *ἐφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* with the concept of Freedom will follow, in order to evaluate the functionality and aptness of these terms towards the conclusion of the thinking of Epictetus, related to the assumption of a form of freedom of choice of man. Finally in Chapter 4, an axiomatic principle will be put into test, and the benefit of the successful defence of this principle will be both the establishing of the epictetean acceptance of the freedom of choice according to one's will, as well as the validity of the line of arguments towards this final stance. A line of arguments based upon the concepts of *ἐφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*. This stance is tested both by arguments against it and for it, and is as follows: The necessity and sufficiency of the *προαίρεσις* in achieving freedom of will in the form of a freedom of choice of disposition. In the same chapter the most important issue-problem that arises in Epictetus, which is the possibility of coexistence of Determinism (Destiny/ *Πεπρωμένη*) and Freedom, will also be examined.

CHAPTER 1

«Περὶ τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν»

1.1. Introduction

“[...] ὁ ἀκώλυτος ἄνθρωπος ἐλεύθερος, ὃν πρόχειρα τὰ πράγματα ὡς βούλεται. ὃν δ' ἔστιν ἢ κωλύσαι ἢ ἀναγκάσαι ἢ ἐμποδίσαι ἢ ἄκοντα εἶς τι ἐμβαλεῖν, δοῦλός ἐστιν.

τίς δ' ἀκώλυτος; ὁ μηδενὸς τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐφιέμενος.

τίνα δ' ἀλλότρια; ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὔτ' ἔχειν οὔτε μὴ ἔχειν οὔτε ποιᾶ ἔχειν ἢ πῶς ἔχοντα. οὐκοῦν τὸ σῶμα ἀλλότριον, τὰ μέρη αὐτοῦ ἀλλότρια, ἢ κτήσις ἀλλοτρία.

ἂν οὔν τινι τούτων ὡς ἰδίῳ προσπαθῆς, δώσεις δίκας ἃς ἄξιον τὸν τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐφιέμενον. αὕτη ἡ ὁδὸς ἐπ' ἐλευθερίαν ἄγει, αὕτη μόνη ἀπαλλαγὴ δουλείας, [μόνη] τὸ δυνηθῆναί ποτ' εἰπεῖν ἐξ ὅλης ψυχῆς τὸ

ἄγου δέμ', ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ σύ γ' ἡ Πεπρωμένη,

ὅποι ποθ' ὑμῖν εἰμι διατεταγμένος.”

This is translated as follows:

“The man who is not under restraint is free, to whom things are exactly in that state in which he wishes them to be; but he who can be restrained or compelled or hindered, or thrown into any circumstances against his will, is a slave.

But who is free from restraint? He who desires nothing that belongs to (is in the power of) others.

And what are the things which belong to others? Those which are not in our power either to have or not to have, or to have of a certain kind or in a certain manner.

Therefore the body belongs to another, the parts of the body belong to another, possession (property) belongs to another. If then you are attached to any of these things as your own, you will pay the penalty which it is proper for him to pay who desires what belongs to another. This road leads to freedom, this is the only way of escaping from slavery, to be able to say at last with all your soul

*Lead me, O Zeus, and thou O destiny,
The way that I am bid by you to go.” (4.1.128-131)¹*

The understanding of the relation of what Epictetus calls *the things which are in our power* (τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν), and *the things which are not in our power* (τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν) with the concept of Freedom (ἐλευθερία), is a fundamental precondition for the understanding of his philosophy, and in particular his perception of Freedom.

One could deduce from the abstract above that, *ἔλεύτερος* is he who is *ἀκώλυτος*. *ἀκώλυτος* is “he who desires nothing that belongs to (is in the power of) others” (*τά ἀλλότρια*). *ἀλλότρια* are these “which are not in our power either to have or not to have, or to have of a certain kind or in a certain manner.”

In this chapter I will try to clarify the concept of *τά ἀλλότρια*, a concept necessary to understand, if we are to comprehend what is related to freedom in the teachings of Epictetus.

Regarding the issue of *the things which are in our power* (*τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν*), and *the things which are not in our power* (*τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*), Epictetus dedicates to them the first chapter of “Book I” of the *Discourses*², and also a large number of parts of his *Discourses* and *Enchiridion*.

The terms *τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν* - *τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* are used in this manner for the first time by Epictetus. This expression could be associated to the Aristotelian “*ἐφ' ἡμῶν*”³, that occurs in various types in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*. Chrysippus had in mind the term “*ἐφ' ἡμῶν*”, which is used in stoic philosophy in general, but he did not termed it as Epictetus does.⁴

1.2. Τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν καὶ τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν

Being occupied only with *τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν* will result to a life without obstacles and compulsion for man: “τὰ μὲν ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἐστι φύσει ἐλεύθερα, ἀκώλυτα, ἀπαραπόδιστα”⁵. No person can harm them since, very simply, they depend only on us. Therefore if man is occupied only with what depends on him can gain freedom.

In the *τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν* belong the «ὑπόληψις, ὀρμή, ὄρεξις, ἔκκλισις καὶ ἐνὶ λόγῳ ὅσα ἡμέτερα ἔργα»⁶, in the *τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* «τὸ σῶμα, ἡ κτῆσις, δόξαι, ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐνὶ λόγῳ ὅσα οὐχ ἡμέτερα ἔργα»⁷.

1.3. The theory of Epictetus as an attempt to ‘realise’ the ‘capable of being a free soul from birth

What the soul contains belong also to τὰ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν. It is only ἡ δύναμις ἡ λογική (the rational faculty)⁸, of all faculties (δυνάμεις) that is capable of understanding itself and all other faculties. This is a divine δύναμις given by the gods to man since they were not capable to render man completely free. With this offer of theirs, gods do not grant a ‘realised’ freedom to man, rather a ‘potential’ freedom that can be achieved through man’s effort. Gods, simply, give *powers* and not active capabilities.

As an axiom thus, Epictetus regarding this issue considers the soul as being δυνάμει/ potentially free since it is a faculty that gods have granted to since birth:

“But what says Zeus? Epictetus, if it were possible, I would have made both your little body and your little property free and not exposed to hindrance. But now be not ignorant of this: this body is not yours, but it is clay finely tempered. And since I was not able to do for you what I have mentioned, I have given you a small portion of us, this faculty of pursuing an object and avoiding it, and the faculty of desire and aversion, and, in a word, **the faculty of using the appearances of things**; and if you will take care of this faculty and consider it your only possession, you will never be hindered, never meet with impediments; you will not lament, you will not blame, you will not flatter any person.” (G. Long)⁹

Since man has only *powers* available in his possession, then anything he might desire or abhor (ὀρεκτικὴ τε καὶ ἐκκλιτικὴ δύναμις) and anything he pursues or avoids (ὀρητικὴ τε καὶ ἀφορητικὴ δύναμις) is initially only potential (δυνάμει). A theory regarding the steps of this effort towards the realisation of what is potential is the philosophy Epictetus for τὰ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν and τα οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν. In addition, this theory of him encompasses also the notion of how, via understanding and practically implementing this distinction, one can achieve freedom. It is in the frame of this very pattern that the research on the concept of freedom should be perceived.

1.4.1. The Rational Faculty (ἡ δύναμις ἡ λογική)

As mentioned before, the rational faculty has a special place among the other faculties. It is able to both *examine* itself as well as all the other faculties (δυνάμεις). Firstly, it is capable of contemplating both itself as well as all the other faculties of the

soul: (θεωρητική δύναμις) and, secondly, it is capable of approving (δοκιμαστική δύναμις) or of disapproving (ἀποδοκιμαστική δύναμις).

The “other faculties” correspond to the different parts of the Soul. In the Stoic Psychology, the Soul (ψυχή) has eight parts or faculties (SVF, II.836: Aetius Plac. IV.21)¹⁰: the ‘commanding/ governing faculty’ (ἡγεμονικόν or λογισμός), also called ‘mind’ (νοῦς), the ‘voice’ (φωνᾶν or φωνή), the ‘seed’ (σπέρμα) and the ‘five senses’ (αἰσθητήρια). ἡγεμονικόν is the central and the controlling part of the Soul; because of this, it is likened to the control that a spider has over its web (SVF, II.879: Calcidius ad Timaeum cp. 220) or to the body of the octopus in relation to its tentacles (SVF, II.836: Aetius Plac. IV.21.2).

The ‘governing part’ has four different powers: It is able of producing ‘impressions’ (φαντασία), ‘impulses’ (ὄρμητική δύναμις or ὄρμη), ‘assents’ (συγκατάθεσις) and ‘perceptions’ (αἰσθησις). The functions/ powers which are under the control of the ‘commanding faculty’ are explained below, in more detail.¹¹

ὄρμητική δύναμις (as opposed to ἀφορμητική δύναμις) is the Faculty, which has the power of either pursuing an object or avoiding it. It is that kind of desire or impulse that prompts to action. It is, therefore, that kind of desire, which defines the ethical subject’s “Realm of Praxis.”¹²

ὄρεκτική δύναμις (as opposed to ἐκκλιτική δύναμις) is the Faculty of either desire or aversion. This power is another kind of ‘desire’, better to be called an ‘appetite’, for it is what the ethical subject experiences as either pleasant or displeasing. It is what Gourinat defines as the “Realm of Passion.”¹³

Under the control of the ‘commanding faculty’ is also the power of using the appearances of things (δύναμις ταῖς φαντασίαις χρηστική) and the Assent (συγκατάθεσις - καταφρόνησις). Assent (συγκατάθεσις),¹⁴ is to either assent or dissent to an impression (φαντασία). Συγκατάθεσις is closely related to reason (λόγος); thus it is exclusive to (adult) humans. Having Reason, is an essential prerequisite to being able to assent or withhold assent from the appearances of things/ impressions. Animals respond to impressions without being able to control them by rationally

assenting to them or withholding their assent from them. Consequently, rationality or reason proves the existence of some kind of moral responsibility into the sphere of ethics and morality. Namely, through a careful reading of the Stoic Psychology, we can safely conclude that some kind of voluntary action (at least of the act of assent to impressions), and thus of moral responsibility, exists in humans. If this ‘voluntary assent’ to impressions can take the notion of ‘free will’ is what is less clear and needs further discussion, which takes place below.

The ability to form ‘concepts’ is derived from this rational - voluntary act to assent to impressions. Thus, *rational impressions* take the notion of beliefs and knowledge in the Epistemological Sphere. Correspondingly, in the Sphere of Ethics, the *rationality of impulses* constitutes a kind of ‘choice’; this is the ‘choice’ to voluntarily assent to or withhold assent from an impulsive impression. Impulses in the case of humans are thus defined as the choice of the one or the other way to act.

1.4.2. Ἡ Δύναμις ἢ ταῖς φαντασίαις χρηστική

The role of God in the pursuit of a free soul

One of the powers of the rational-governing faculty (*προαίρεσις*), as already mentioned, is the *δύναμις ταῖς φαντασίαις χρηστική*¹⁵.

Humans are able to use their impressions (*φαντασίαι*) rationally. ‘Rational’ is what is conformable to Nature¹⁶. Nature is as God chooses and wants¹⁷. Contrary to animals, humans do not simply receive and make use of the impressions, but are also able, firstly, to assent to or withhold assent from them and secondly, to understand them. By understanding them they can also memorize them and combine them in order to create new ‘intellectual’ impressions, such as concepts.¹⁸ These ‘intellectual’ impressions are opposed to the ‘sensual’ impressions that come straight, without any intellectual elaboration, from Nature-God, through the senses.

The understanding of the Works of God, makes humans not only spectators (*θεατής*) of His Works, but also **interpreters** (*ἐξηγητής*). In the frame of this rational the understanding of His Works renders also the understanding of ourselves, as part of His Works¹⁹.

In consequence this implies that man should use the faculties he has in common with God since it is to this purpose that God has granted them to him. The individual human soul constitutes a part of the Whole; it is united with it, thus, since the Whole is the God, then every single human being is a part of Him.²⁰ Therefore as E. Zeller observes: “It is a mere delusion to suppose that the soul possesses a freedom independent of the world’s course.”²¹

In all the freedom of our partial souls harmonises with the freedom of the Universal Soul. Epictetus mentions in detail how man can achieve this harmonisation, and this will be analysed further on in the dissertation. This point of harmonisation is one of the fundamental proposals of Epictetus in relation to the emancipation of the soul. These faculties that man shares with God are summarised in the ‘Rational Faculty’ (*λογική δύναμις* or *δύναμις χρηστική ταῖς φαντασίαις*).

Generally, the ‘**chief concern**’ (ὕλη)²² of the wise and good man is to use his *φαντασίαι* conformably to Nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*). This is achievable, only if man uses his *Reason* (the ‘Rational Faculty’). Living conformably to Nature, implies that man assents to Truth, he withholds assent from Falsehood, he is moved by a desire (ὄρεξις) of anything good and by an aversion (ἔκκλισις) from anything evil.

1.4.3. Προαιρετική δύναμις or προαίρεσις (prohairesis; Will)

This term²³ was used by a number of orators and philosophers; it was Aristotle however who employed it more persistently and then the Philosophers of the Early Stoa. In the case of Epictetus this term acquires a greatly central importance.

Προαιρετική δύναμις is the most powerful (τὸ κρᾶτιστον)²⁴ and the strongest (ἰσχυρότερον)²⁵ of all the other faculties, which “not even Zeus himself can overpower.”²⁶ The only possible obstacle²⁷ to the Will is the Will itself, in the case that it turns against itself. Consequently, the Will is by itself a criterion of the good (ἀγαθόν) and therefore of the eudemonia (the ἀγαθόν, which is the virtue (ἀρετή), according to the Stoics, is sufficient and necessary for the achievement of the eudemonia).

Προαίρεσις is the main power of the ‘governing faculty’ (*ἡγεμονικόν*) which, as previously mentioned, is that part of the soul that locates the *rational power* (*reason/λογική δύναμις*). It is therefore the predominantly rational faculty given by the gods to man as a *potential* freedom:

“Ἐλεύθερος γάρ ἐστιν, ὃ γίνεται πάντα κατὰ προαίρεσιν καὶ ὃν οὐδεὶς δύναται κωλύσαι.”²⁸

Προαίρεσις encompasses everything belonging to *ἐφ’ ἡμῶν*. Nothing from *οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν*, that is external things, can hinder it. Hence it is the predominant criterion for freedom, yet, under one condition: being free does not mean being able to choose *anything* I want, namely to *will* inconsiderately²⁹. I have to be able to *will* things as they happen, and they happen as they have been determined to happen by God/Nature. It would be meaningless to try to change “the constitution of things”, namely the facts; this is not in our power and thus it is not potential (we are not able to achieve it); what is possible to do is to act in such a way so that our Will is conformable (*συνηρμοσμένη*)³⁰ to what is happening.

The punishment³¹ for those, who do not accept and do not harmonize with the constitution of things, is for them to remain ‘prisoners’ in the dissatisfying disposition they already are; dissatisfying because they can in no other way change it, and therefore they remain there against their Will, but still not being ready to compromise with the Will of Nature. It is therefore wrong to wait for a situation to adapt to our will. Rather we should try to adapt **our** will to the various situations. Through this way we can be happy since we will achieve the harmony between our will and the events; therefore we will *want/will* only what can be achieved. As Myrto Dragona – Monachou mentions “aversion from what is not in our power will guarantee us at least ‘serenity’ and ‘a good flow of life’ that constitutes the stoic eudaimonia (1.4.1-4). The one who *progresses* on the path towards wisdom has been freed from desire and tries not to venture to what exceeds his limits (1.4.2)”³²

CHAPTER 2

Content and targeting (aim) of *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* and *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*

What mainly differentiates the epictetan ‘stoic philosophy’, and thus the epictetan ‘stoic approach’ to Freedom, from the ‘stoic philosophy’ of the other Stoics, is the way he relates the *τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν* and *τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* with *ἐλευθερία*¹. As S. Bobzien notes, “there is no evidence that the topics of freedom and of that which depends on us were connected in Stoic philosophy in any way before Epictetus”.² The concepts of Freedom and of these which depend on us, have been both used in stoic philosophy before Epictetus, but they were nowhere related to each other that closely. In the philosophy of Epictetus they take a central role; the concept of ‘that which depends on us’ cannot be thought of separately from the concept of ‘Freedom’ and vice versa.

2.1. The epictetan targeting³ to the integration of the internal powers to the *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* and the external necessities to the *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*

At this point a fundamental distinction between the internal things will be made (those *sub*-jected: the faculties of the soul, i.e. desire, impulse etc) to a moral agent and those that are external to the moral agent (those that *stand facing* man: the external objects).

Susanne Bobzien in her comparative presentation⁴ of the various positions of the philosophy of morals introduces some fundamental distinctions. Initially she defines seven different kinds of freedom. The first three belong to the category she terms “indeterminist freedom”⁵: *freedom to do otherwise, freedom of decision, freedom of the will*. She terms the fourth: “un-predeterminist freedom”⁶. The fifth, sixth, and seventh kind are in the general category she calls: “types of freedom compatible with both indeterminism and ‘un-predeterminism’”⁷: *freedom from force and compulsion, freedom from determination by external causal factors, freedom from determination by (external and) certain internal causal factors*.

This categorisation continuous with the presentation of two different perceptions regarding moral responsibility⁸.

The first approach⁹ states that a moral agent is responsible for an action only if it has acted independently: “[...] considers it a necessary condition of praising or blaming an agent for an action, that it was the agent *and not something else* that was causally responsible for whether the action occurred. The contrast is between self-determination and other-determination to act. Actions or choices can be attributed to the agent because it is in them that the agents, qua rational or moral beings, manifest themselves. Some thinkers consider the un-predeterminedness of an action/ choice as a necessary condition for autonomy, and consequently for the attribution of moral appraisal.”¹⁰

The second approach to the moral responsibility issue, states that the moral agent is responsible for an action only if it could have acted in a different way: “[...] considers it a prerequisite for blaming or praising an agent for an action that the agent could have done otherwise. This idea is often connected with the agents’ sentiments or beliefs that they could have done otherwise, as well as the agents’ feelings of guilt or regret. Some philosophers consider the indeterminateness of an action/choice as a necessary condition for the guarantee that the agent could have done otherwise. The concepts of indeterminist freedom of an agent [...] gain importance at the point at which moral appraisal is connected with the idea that at the very same time, the same agent, with the same beliefs and desires, could have done otherwise.”¹¹

The first is the perception of moral responsibility that the ancient philosophers had. T. Brennan¹² comments that in ancient philosophy the desires, predispositions, impulses, and the ‘beliefs’ of the moral agent were considered as something from which the moral agent could not escape, thus man he had to define his freedom within the frame allowed by this internal condition. It was thus something **internal** in relation to the agent. The moral agent, according to his description, was like a ‘thick ball’ consisting of desires, predispositions, impulses, and the ‘beliefs’. The only element external to these was the cosmos and everything it encompasses: animals, plants, inanimate objects and humans. There were however exceptions to this rule such as the case of Plato who considered the body and everything it entails (desires, impulses, passions, etc) as slavery and coercion¹³.

In later philosophy it is the latter view that prevails. Desires, passions, beliefs etc are considered as an element **external** to the moral agent from which man can free himself from as he can free himself from all the rest external things and thus become free. The moral agent is independent and autonomous from his desires and ‘beliefs’; it is his very psychology / mental condition that allows him to “act otherwise also”. The moral agent ‘shrinks’¹⁴ into ‘ego’ or ‘Will’. Therefore according to this perception the

moral agent can act in completely the opposite way in comparison to the way he would act at another given time but with the same desires and ‘beliefs’, because these desires and ‘beliefs’ do not force the moral agent towards act x or the opposite one.

Brennan and Susanne Bobzien agree over this distinction. They disagree¹⁵, as to which should be the point of emphasis for the contrasting of ancient thinking with the modern one.

According to S. Bobzien, the difference between the two lines of thinking lies in the contrast between autonomy and the freedom to act differently.

According to T. Brennan the contrast lies in the content of the psychology attributed each time to the moral agent: “[...] it is a contrast between a psychologically rich and complicated self, whose autonomy consists in its ability to do otherwise, so far as the world outside the whole psychology goes, and an abstract and point-like self, whose autonomy consists in its ability to do otherwise, even so far as the agent’s own desires and preferences go. Or rather, the desires and preferences are no longer conceived as being the ‘agent’s own’, since they belong in the shell of psychology that is external to the point-like self.”¹⁶

Relatively to the ancient perception of the psychology of the agent he mentions among others: “[...] Ancient psychological theories always strove for complete explanatory power: understanding an agent’s actions means seeing that given the beliefs and desires they had, they could not have acted otherwise than as they did. What makes the agent responsible for their actions is that the actions stemmed from the agent’s psychology, not from anywhere else. It is true, given those beliefs and desires, the agent could not have acted otherwise; but the action is still the *agent’s* action, because it came from the *agent’s* beliefs and desires. [...] But the mere fact that the agent could not do otherwise, given their actual psychological state, does nothing to extricate them from responsibility for the things that they actually did. Autonomy, not the ability to do otherwise, is the issue. [...] Of course, so far as my psychology goes, it may be that I am not capable of doing otherwise. My beliefs and desires may be such that I am psychologically compelled to stay in my room – given what I want and what I believe, it is not possible for me to do otherwise. But in antiquity, that is no threat to responsibility, because I am acting as an autonomous agent, unhindered by anything outside me.”¹⁷

Regarding the contemporary thinking on the same subject he writes: “If we now contrast this with the modern view, it should be clear that the difference in where I draw the boundaries of my self, or draw the boundaries around agents in general. Moral responsibility now requires that I be autonomous even from my own beliefs and desires – that even my own psychology leaves me free to

do otherwise. And this is a natural evolution of the ancient view, if we imagine a shrinking of the self, so that desires that were once thought of as internal to the agent come to be seen as external to the agent.”¹⁸

As for the freedom of will, in Epictetus the following change occurred, in relation to ancient philosophy, (however the essence of this change agrees with the philosophy of later eras)¹⁹: Epictetus contrary to Chrysippus and, in general, the Ancient Stoa, maintains that man as the moral agent, is independent from his ‘beliefs’ and desires. This means that he can treat them as something external and thus be liberated from them. The body for Epictetus, as well as for Plato and also for the Neo-Platonic philosophers is the agent of the desires and passions that, on one hand hinder man (according to Plato) from rising to the world of ideas and free himself from the ties of the body. On the other hand (according to Epictetus) they hinder man from the ability to dedicate himself to his internal faculties and progress on the path towards wisdom (*προκοπή*²⁰) through exercise to the extent he will become free, hence virtuous and finally happy too.

The solution for Epictetus is one and only, given the axiomatic preconditions and aims of his philosophy that were mentioned above: in order for man to be free – virtuous – happy it is necessary to be able to be liberated from what the body forces him to do²¹. The only way for Epictetus to defend this view is to distinguish things into the categories of *τά ἐφ’ ἡμῶν* and *οὐκ ἐφ’ ἡμῶν* and to include in the second category the necessities that derive from the Will and from the body (and everything it entails). Only thus he would be able to provide answers as to how these are to be treated in order to put them, as best as we can, in a secondary importance. By doing this we will gain freedom because we will have succeeded to deal only with the soul (that is what completely belongs to *ἐφ’ ἡμῶν*). The philosophy of Epictetus lies exactly to the attempt to describe what he believes to be the most effective path to freedom, which, as it was explained above, is the one of *capability*; and it is this one, because the gods have offered us a number of capabilities (*τά ἐφ’ ἡμῶν*)²² which, if developed appropriately, freedom can finally be *realised*.

2.2. The distinctiveness of the content and the targeting of ἐφ' ἡμῶν and οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν in Epictetus

In order to clarify the distinct character of these concepts in Epictetus I will be presenting them comparatively to the perception of Chrysippus, one of the most typical philosophers of the Ancient Stoa.

Chrysippus' perception of these two concepts is quite different than that of Epictetus, both regarding their content and their targeting²³.

Firstly, while Chrysippus places emphasis on the factor of *causality*, and the moral agent and also to what extent the agent assents or not to the external “impressions”, Epictetus only provides definitions for the moral agent, such as *κόριος* and *αὐτεξούσιος*. Secondly, Chrysippus considers that in order to decide if something depends on us, we have to examine each specific case as it occurs every time: Something depends on us if at the *present* moment there are no obstacles to hinder its realisation. The existence of obstacles will appear only if we attempt to act. On the other hand, Epictetus categorises a series of events that definitely depend on us in every possible case. He wants to ensure that the external factors, natural or human, will never remove from our control the specific group of things that are on our power, whose content he specifies. In other words he wants to establish an “ἐφ' ἡμῶν” of stable content that in every circumstance will remain “ἐφ' ἡμῶν”.

From the above one can observe that the difference between the two philosophers concerns the content, but mainly the targeting. It is this targeting that differentiates the philosophy of Epictetus from the rest of the Stoics. In order for Epictetus to define the ἐφ' ἡμῶν he sets as a criterion and precondition, the safeguarding of a serene, tranquil and in general well constituted internal condition-disposition of the moral agent. This approach responds completely to the realities of the Hellenistic Era and the needs of the people that were crushed under the monstrous Roman Empire. The indisputable dependence of certain things on the moral agent alone could guarantee to the man of that era, (an era when everything would change from day to day), that he could build to a certain degree his next day and his future in general. Otherwise, the pressing

external factors would void every individual initiative, moral responsibility, and freedom.

Further on I am presenting a selection of interpretations that scholars of ancient philosophy put forward and with which I agree.

W. L. Davidson writes: “[...] the Stoics made desire and the right handling of it practically the centre of their system.”²⁴

The way that M. Dragona – Monachou presents this change in targeting is quite to the point: “[...] with the narrowing of the margins of the act as a manifestation of *creative* freedom which starts from the *prohairesis*, the *prohairesis* in Epictetus becomes an internalised act, a free choice of life disposition (attitude), an expression of the soul and of the moral will [...]”.²⁵

S. Bobzien provides a similar interpretation of this issue: “For Epictetus, the notion of that which depends on us serves – on the basis of an already established theory of morals – a predominantly practical purpose. It has its role within ethics. It is intended to provide a means that helps people to plan and lead a good and undisturbed life. Its primary function is guidance of life and actions.”²⁶

The same view is also held by A. A. Long: “[...] Stoics require their adherents to treat their pre-philosophical selves as shifted out of dominant social values to the detriment of what human nature actually requires of them. The schools’ common emphasis on austerity and frugality is not simply a recommendation to prune one’s diet and give up unnecessary luxuries, but an invitation to enter an alternative world and acquire a new self. [...] for the purpose of a reconstructed self which will view the world with eyes undiverted by passion.”²⁷

Finally, G. Koumakis interrelates the peaceful and serene emotional condition with freedom, education and well being. The targeting of the philosophy of Epictetus regards the previous virtues. In the frame of this targeting, every term of his

philosophy should be perceived as a functional term towards this specific targeting. This applies for the terms $\tau\acute{\alpha} \acute{\epsilon}\phi' \eta\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu$ and $\tau\acute{\alpha} \omicron\acute{\upsilon}\kappa \acute{\epsilon}\phi' \eta\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu$, as well.

“Every human being tries to achieve the supreme good and the virtues, such as ‘ataraxy’ (serenity), ‘aphobia’ (fearlessness) and freedom, thus leading himself to happiness which is the final purpose of human action. [...] The argument upon which Epictetus bases the view that education helps create freedom rests upon his definition of freedom. ‘Freedom is to live as you wish’. [...] A free man is he who lives just as he wishes, and nobody wishes to be in fear, disturbance or sorrow. Consequently, nobody who is disturbed, afraid or sorry is free. It follows from this assertion that free man is neither afraid, neither sorry nor disturbed. Education is the instrument that releases one from fear, disturbance and sorrow and, therefore, it renders him/her free. (Epictetus, *Dissertations*, II, 1, 21-25). [...] Education liberates the mind and calms the soul of man.”²⁸

CHAPTER 3

The relationship of ἔφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν with ἔλευθερία

In this short chapter the correlation of these two most fundamental concepts in Epictetus' teachings will be analysed: on one hand the concept of ἔφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν and on the other that of ἔλευθερία. As I have mentioned, Epictetus is the first philosopher that correlated the concepts of ἔφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν with ἔλευθερία in such a way and so closely. For the analysis of this correlation I will be based on observations of mine and the relevant to this subject analysis by Susanne Bobzien¹.

According to Epictetus there are two preconditions in order to achieve freedom. The first one is a **cognitive** precondition: man should know what belongs and what does belong to τὰ ἔφ' ἡμῶν. The second precondition is a **moral** one: it regards the adjustment of our desires, and our way of life in general, in the frame of our cognitive-theoretical education to the τὰ ἔφ' ἡμῶν. This means to limit ourselves to the faculties that God granted to us, which are included in the Commanding-faculty; these are: the προαίρεσις that is analysed in the use of the impressions, the desire, the impulse and the reason.

Such a correlation can be made only if what Epictetus means with the concept of τὰ ἔφ' ἡμῶν is understood correctly. Other philosophers also employ this concept but do not imply such a kind of relationship. Chrysippus is an example of this. He maintains that there does not exist a consistent group of things that belong to the τὰ ἔφ' ἡμῶν but that each time, they are specified by the current circumstances and external obstacles the agent encounters.

For Epictetus, as well as for the ancient Stoics, there does not exist a wider spectrum of things that belong to the τὰ ἔφ' ἡμῶν for the Sage, in relation to the other people. The difference is that the 'common persons' do not succeed in the first cognitive² precondition. Still they are as morally responsible for their actions as the wise person is, who is free by definition. Therefore the lack of freedom cannot constitute an alibi for the moral responsibility of the agent. Epictetus documents very well his view (described extensively in this study) according to which the limitation that the concept

of the *τά ἐφ' ἡμῶν* imposes to the agent, does not in parallel limit his moral responsibility.

CHAPTER 4

The epictetean προαίρεσις as the freedom of choice of the internal disposition

The above axiom, which is used as a title, is the key point regarding the defence or negation both of the margins for freedom that Epictetus leaves and of the way he proposes towards Freedom. (This way has been explained in the previous chapters and in short it concerns the correlation between ἐφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν and ἔλευθερία.)

4.1. In support of this stance

According to the view of Epictetus, nothing can hinder¹ προαίρεσις. There can be obstacles only for the body and everything else that belongs to the οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, that is all those that are ἀπροαίρετα. The “τά τῶν ἐκτὸς τῆς προαιρέσεως”² are considered as neither “τί ἀγαθόν” nor “τί κακόν”; they are just ἀδιάφορα (indifferent: neither good nor bad). Thus if man acts according to his προαίρεσις, then he will be limited to those of the “τά τῆς προαιρέσεως”, where there is no obstacle. Though this way he gains freedom.³ Freedom requires the following condition: to be limited to the “τά τῆς προαιρέσεως”; whoever is not willing to abide by this condition has only one option: lack of freedom.

This is the prison and the punishment⁴ of any person that could not accept and play the role that was given to the Whole. The Whole/ the Universe in its totality is a festival in which everyone gives his performance. God has no need of any “discontented spectator”⁵ of His Works; he only “needs” those who will join Him to the festival (πανηγύρις), and accept his terms regarding what belongs only to Him. He will gladly see those, who do not enjoy, to leave the festival⁶ (that is the life itself), by *suicide*. Since, either leaving or staying, they do not participate in the festival in any

case, they do not participate to the capabilities/ powers⁷ granted to them by God, one of which is *freedom*. After all, they have chosen not to be free even if they live, hence their lives are not greatly different from not been alive.

Everything that has been given to man is for him to use⁸ it in conformity to the will of the one who has *lent it* (*ὁ χρήσας*) to him, which is God. Moreover, the one who sets his face against God, trying to force a more powerful entity than him, is more *unjust*⁹ than an *idiot*; and being unjust is much more to blame. Unjust to the entity to which he should at least be grateful. Because God could have been very unfair, if he had chosen to lend him only what does not depend on him: namely, a **non** freedom of choice, by not offering to him anything from those that He has rendered dependable to him (which give him the opportunity to acquire them). If someone has lent something to you he is entitled to take it away from you at any time and under any terms he wishes, because he is the one who willingly has lent it to you. He has brought you to the world **at the time** He wished and **with the faculties/powers** He wished: “**οὐχὶ ἑκεῖνός σε εἰσήγαγεν;** οὐχὶ τὸ φῶς ἑκεῖνός σοι ἔδειξεν; οὐ συνεργοὺς δέδωκεν; οὐ καὶ αἰσθήσεις; οὐ λόγον; **ὡς τίνα δὲ εἰσήγαγεν;** οὐχ ὡς θνητόν; οὐχ ὡς μετὰ ὀλίγου σαρκιδίου ζήσοντα ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ θεασόμενον τὴν διοίκησιν αὐτοῦ καὶ συμπομπεύσοντα αὐτῷ καὶ συνεορτάσοντα πρὸς ὀλίγον;”¹⁰

These are the *faculties/powers* that in contemporary philosophy are summarised in the term ‘Will’, mainly by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, meaning a human Will that necessarily remains *human* and limits the freedom of its agent (man) within the boundaries of the human idiosyncrasy and essence; in other words into the dimensions and properties that this Will *has the ability* to stretch and extent itself.

I believe that the difference is that in the case of contemporary philosophy the Will is a kind of ‘*corporeal προαίρεσις*’: namely, a consequence of what the body *can/is able to*. The mental powers constitute a part of the body in the sense that they are constrained, forced and imprisoned in all those that the body *wills/ is able to*.

For the ancients it was a ‘*προαίρεσις of the psyche*’, the outcome of an internal disposition / choice. It (the *προαίρεσις*) also included the choice of all of the things (internal or external) that the human nature *is capable of*. As it was pointed out in

previous chapters, the ancients believed that the human *προαίρεσις*, which is nothing but a faculty / power of the soul, can choose to be *indifferent* towards external things, (including the body), in the same way it can choose *indifference* towards internal things, which are the properties /faculties /powers of the soul: impulse, desire, assent, etc. In other words in the frame of ancient thinking the body and all the objects that are outside of the soul (contrary to the above modern pattern) were considered as part of the soul in the sense that they are constrained, forced and imprisoned in all that the soul *wills/ is able to/ προαίρεται*.

4.2.1. Negation of this stance

One could raise a serious objection to all the above, like the one Cicero raises, among others. I will first present it and then I will attempt, on the basis of the arguments and viewpoints of Epictetus, to show that it can be overpassed:

“They argue in this manner: - If all happens by fate, then every effect is determined by an anterior cause. If appetite be allowed, those things also must be allowed which follow appetite: and on the same principle thus it is with our sentiments. But if the cause of appetite does not depend on us, then, even the appetite itself is no longer in our power. If the affair stands thus, the effects produced by appetite are no longer chargeable on ourselves. Thus we lose all command both of our sentiments and actions. From which it follows that all praise and blame must be equally unjust, and all honours and punishments. And as this consequence is absurd, they conclude with much probability that all the events which happen are not the effects of fate.”¹¹

4.2.2. Moral Intension and Moral Responsibility

«[...] Sur les tables d'airain où notre loi se grave,
 « Vous effacez le nom de la FATALITÉ,
 « Vous déliez les pieds de l'Homme notre esclave.
 « Qui va porter le poids dont s'est épouvané
 « Tout ce qui fut créé ? ce poids sur la pensée,
 « Dont le nom est en bas : RESPONSABILITÉ ?»¹²

This objection leads to a capital problem regarding both the Philosophy in general and also the individual philosophers and schools: the problem of moral intension, which leads to that of the **moral responsibility**¹³.

Epictetus refers to this issue not by using the term of ‘moral responsibility’ but indirectly by using the terms: *ψόγος, ἔπαινος, ὑπέθνονος*.

The precondition for such a moral judgement to be made, is the agent to take moral responsibilities, hence have opinions and wills (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*) only for what the gods have made him responsible of (*ὑπέθνονον*),¹⁴ that is all that depend on him. Otherwise the moral judgment has no meaning, is out of place. We cannot judge someone for what he cannot *assent* and *desire*, because since he is not even *able* for these there is no room for moral judgment on these; he cannot be predisposed to them either in the right or in the wrong manner.

If the above precondition is met then we proceed to the moral judgment. Moral judgment has its own rules/criteria according to Epictetus: We blame or praise someone with the only criterion¹⁵ being this: whether his deed (*ἔργον*) resulted from an appropriate or not use of what he has under his moral responsibility. The *προαιρετικόν* and any power it includes (*ὀρμή, ὄρεξις, συγκατάθεσις, δύναμις ταῖς φαντασίαις χρηστική*), is “ἀκόλυτον ἀνάγκαστον ἀπαραπόδιστον”¹⁶ because it is only for this that gods hold man *ὑπέθνονον*. Therefore only the above belong to the *ἐφ’ ἡμῶν*, which are the things that we are able of realising/achieving at a moral burden/price, namely in a correct or wrong way.

Epictetus limits the *ἐφ’ ἡμῶν* mainly to the use of impressions (*φαντασίαι*) and generally in our opinions and wills (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*), because he believes that the final outcome of a series of actions **does not** fully depend on us.

In other words what is accountable for Epictetus is the moral intension/disposition; the maintenance of *προαίρεσις* close to the good, to what is in accordance with nature. I think that the analysis of the moral intent provided by Myrto Dragona – Monachou is very much to the point:

“The moral intention guaranties the ‘appropriate’ type of the condition of the soul, the specific quality of the character, the rigid moral, the good moral/ethos thus the essence of human good (1.8.16). [...] Proairesis is also the resultant of the ‘opinions for the external’ and is accordingly good or evil (3.2.13). It is the essence of judgements and decisions and the ultimate and decisive evaluative and

deontological judgment, equivalent to the ‘opinion’ (1.17.27) and the ‘use of impressions (φαντασία)’ (2.23.6-7), namely the ‘Rational Faculty/Reason’ (1.1.4-6) [...]’.¹⁷

4.2.3. The internal moral disposition of the moral agent

What will be analysed in the following chapters is the response of the Stoics, Epictetus in particular, to the question of moral responsibility mentioned before, and also to the main objection: whether the *prohairesis* in the theory of Epictetus leads to a freedom of choice of disposition.

4.2.4. Προαίρεσις – Soul – Man – Individual/ Self Identity/ Person (πρόσωπον)

Προαίρεσις is the man himself; retelling this in terms Aristotle would use, we could say that προαίρεσις is the *essence/ definition* of man. In stoic terms, προαίρεσις is the **general end or purpose** of man¹⁸. As I aforementioned, what differentiates man from animals is the rationality of the soul (*λογική δύναμις*); using again Aristotelian terms, this could mean that the body is nothing but a *συμβεβηκός* ('accident'). Thus, all the powers (*δυνάμεις*) of man are “placed” into the soul; and more specifically, they are foregathered into the commanding-faculty of the soul, which is προαίρεσις.

Epictetus poses the following question: “Πόθεν οὖν αἰσθησόμεθα τοῦ κατὰ πρόσωπον ἕκαστος;”¹⁹ The response he himself gives, is that each man is able to understand the powers he owns, or in other words, his ‘character.’²⁰ This is because each one comes to know his own powers, through their outcomes. In order, however, for these powers to be able to produce results, that is to become reality, what is needed is exercise (*ἀσκησις*), preparation (*παρασκευή*) and discipline (*παιδεία*), in order for us to we know what depends on us and what does not, so as not to exhaust ourselves to efforts and waste our powers for the οὐκ ἔφ’ ἡμῶν. Therefore the knowledge regarding προαίρεσις renders man an individual human being²¹.

4.2.5. The internal moral disposition of the moral agent as the primary cause of the externalised and internalised act

What is elaborated in this chapter is how from the concept of the '*Individual/ Self Identity/ Person (πρόσωπον)*' we can come to conclusions regarding the moral disposition of the moral agent:

“By the time of Roman Stoicism, the term *prosôpon*, ‘role’, had become a way of designating a person's character and the ‘performance’ expected of one. Epictetus makes it clear that a character in this sense is something that is partly determined by circumstances—one's role as a son, a citizen, and so on—but still more importantly, by one's choices and understanding of ‘who one is’ (cf. *Diss.* 1.2, 2.10).”²²

“[...] he insists that we are all owners of one supremely valuable thing—our minds or moral purposes or autonomy. This is not, of course, property in the material sense of the word, but it is fundamental to the way Epictetus conceptualizes the self. As he sees it, all human beings are alike in their natural ownership of the one thing that makes each of them essentially human—an autonomous mind and power of moral choice or assent.

What Epictetus calls self-ownership was the Stoics' most far-reaching contribution to their reflections on society, justice, and personal freedom.”²³

Epictetus and the Stoics in general, following Aristotle up to a certain point²⁴ put “the internal and external aspect of the *actions* on the same level.”²⁵ Theory or in other words our own opinions and wills (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*) is in some way a type of act. When I have some kind of *προαίρεσις* or internal dispositio/temper/Will and in general a certain use of impressions (*φαντασίαι*), I already **act** in a moral way, even if I am not causing any material changes to the external objects. As I have pointed, for Epictetus what counts is the moral intention/ the wills (*δόγματα*) and not the material acts. In his First of the *Discourses* Epictetus provides a clear explanation of the causes of the acts, and through this explanation we can see clearly his statements on the moral intension and the internal disposition: “And in a word, neither death nor exile nor pain nor anything of the kind is the cause of our doing anything or not doing; but our own opinions and our wills (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*).”²⁶

In the next chapter I will present the elements/causes that result the freedom of choice and the “Freedom of the Will” – a term that is not used in this context in Epictetus or any other philosopher before him, but first appears in a later writer/philosopher, which is Augustine²⁷ – .

4.2.6 . Freedom of choice or Freedom of choice of disposition?

Freedom with a positive or negative sign?

αὐτὴ ἡ ὁδὸς ἐστ' ἐλευθερίαν ἄγει, αὐτὴ μόνη ἀπαλλαγὴ δουλείας, [μόνη] τὸ δυνηθῆναί ποτ' εἶπεῖν
 ἐξ ὅλης ψυχῆς τὸ ἄγου δέ μ', ὦ Ζεῦ καί σύ γ' ἡ Πεπρωμένη,
 ὅποι ποθ' ὑμῖν εἰμί διατεταγμένος.²⁸

As I mentioned in a previous chapter, Epictetus concludes that man **is able** to gain freedom through the use of the concepts of *ἐφ' ἡμῖν* - *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*.

What will be elaborated in this chapter is how from the treatment/use of these concepts, Epictetus succeeds in allowing **margins of freedom** for man, given that he also accepts a **deterministic model cosmos** (Destiny: *Πεπρωμένη*). His **interpretation of freedom of choice and freedom in general** will also be explained.

God makes decisions about the course of events, therefore everything is predetermined according to the Will of God/ Nature: both the external events/facts that will happen to man and everything that man will choose internally. A very descriptive writing for this stance is the abstract from Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*²⁹ which Epictetus continuously repeats. In these excerpt, the help of Zeus is invoked in order for man to be able to live according to Zeus' Will, by harmonising his own Will to that of Zeus.

I think that Epictetus succeeds in proposing a parallel existence of Destiny (*Πεπρωμένη*) and Freedom. In other words he succeeds to conclude that in a deterministically predefined World/Universe there does exist space for freedom. This is his unique proposal. A proposal which has its roots in the Early Stoics; Epictetus however brings this issue to a central point and treats it in detail.

In Chapter 2, I referred to various interpretations of the targeting of *ἐφ' ἡμῖν* and *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν*. Based on these interpretations, I will proceed to explain more concretely **to what kind of freedom they lead.**

The achievement of a good internal disposition, which consists of freedom from passions, liberty and tranquillity (*ἀπάθεια, ἐλευθερία, ἀραξία*)³¹ of the soul, leads to better planned future with realistic goals (*τέλος*), that can be materialised. The establishment of the notions of *ἐφ' ἡμῶν - οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*, is identified with the establishment of a pattern of a life that is in accordance to God/ Nature, as perfectly expressed by Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*. Thus disappointments and failures of man are reduced and man comes even more close to the achievement of *eudaimonia*³¹, which is the ultimate goal of every cultural manifestation and of every philosophical theory, especially of every *practical* –therapeutic philosophical theory (as the Hellenistic ones are). Such a theory strives to make the future more certain, particularly if it is the future of the people of the Roman Empire. This is achieved via the guidance of the behaviour, the internal disposition and the acts (that is the internal and external acts) of the moral agent.

The external obstacles occur in every kind of movement that involves the body, for the very reason that the body itself is another external material thing. There are therefore two alternative solutions. The first is to avoid the obstacles by avoiding the acts with a positive sign. This, in other words, implies the performance only of acts with negative sign: this ends up to apraxia (total inactivity). The second, and the preferred solution is the indifference towards the external obstacles, which the body comes across (externalised act) and the pursuit of the achievement of freedom through the internalised acts. These are inherent to man in various forms: *assent, intention, avoidance of act with a positive sign*.

In the case of the second, the preferred solution the external obstacles cannot be conceived because the externalised acts, or otherwise the *προαίρεσις*, cannot be stopped even by God.³² God is the entity that predetermines the Destiny (*Πεπρωμένη*) and the natural order of events. *Πεπρωμένη*, therefore is not a problem for Epictetus, since only the events/ things, that are external to man, fall under its predetermination. By harmonising our life to the rules of Destiny, we place everything that it influences and determines in a 'skinbag' that Epictetus calls: *τά οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*. We then accept these with moral indifference. Namely, we have no moral responsibility towards them, because only Nature/ God is *responsible* for these. (By paraphrasing the

conceptual pattern of Epictetus we can say that these do not belong to *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* but to the *ἐπί τῆς Φύσεως*.)

Man has been granted only a partial participation to the cosmic discourse (logos) since total participation would mean identification with this discourse, hence with Nature/ God. However, none of the participating beings can be identified with the whole. The partial participation of man can be placed in a second 'skinbag' that Epictetus calls: *τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν*. What is contained in this skinbag is not contained in the skinbag of God/ Nature and therefore in everything that is predetermined by Destiny (*Πεπωρωμένη*). (They belong to the *οὐκ ἐπί τῆς Φύσεως*.) The same way that Nature is able to have power on what depends on it and predetermine it, we are equally able to have a complete freedom of choice over everything that is in our power (depends on us).

Our freedom of choice can be exercised only to anything that depends on us. Respectively the freedom of Nature will also be exercised upon what depends on it, which are these things that are out of our control.

Our participation in the cosmic logos has been misunderstood: It is not a participation to the same *ἐφ' ἡμῶν* and not participation to the same *οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν* as God/ Nature/ cosmic logos, but a participation to the same *powers/ abilities*. The powers are the faculties of the soul. The misunderstanding occurs because we believe that we participate in the Whole with our body, but for Epictetus the body acts as something external to the moral agent. The soul is *corporeal*, according to one interpretation: it does not correspond the *passive* part of the body, but is part of an *active* principle within the body. It is, in other words participant to divine forces. The divine forces are summarised in *προαίρεσις*. In conclusion, our common with Nature/ God *power* is the freedom of choice as a **faculty** and not as what the freedom consists of (the **content** of freedom). By 'content' I mean the things we can choose, which are the spectrum of things upon which we can exercise our freedom of choice.

This proposal for freedom has two characteristics. The **first** is that it is a concept of freedom that **does not** refer to the possibility of choosing anything, or choosing to do

anything else than what is predetermined. It is a freedom that refers to anything that we cannot be hindered by external factors in *choosing* it, or be forced to choose it while we prefer to abstain.

I think that it is wrong to believe that in the case of the *οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν* we have no freedom at all, while in the case of the *ἔφ' ἡμῶν* we have a complete freedom. In short, the **second** characteristic is telling us that in both cases we can have *some* freedom.

This freedom is about the choice of an internal disposition of the moral agent and not an unconditionally free choice of the internal or external state/course of things

In the case of the *οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν*, this freedom is limited to a freedom of choice of disposition by the moral agent. This means the following: the moral agent wills whatever is happening, the way it happening, to happen exactly as it does. The options of the moral agent are *two*, and none of these two involves the freedom of the choice of how the **external** things (events) will happen and which ones will happen. The *first* choice is to live willing what is predetermined to happen, gaining thus ataraxia (tranquillity). The *second* choice is to oppose to what is happening and try to change it in vain, disturbing thus the peace of the soul.

In the case of the *ἔφ' ἡμῶν*, contrary to the *οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν*, freedom can be expanded to a freedom of choosing or rejecting *how* and *which* **internal** things will happen. This is because it pertains to the **internal** things, hence the things that belong to the *ἔφ' ἡμῶν*.

Besides, the help Epictetus implies that we should ask from God, is not a request of such *powers/abilities* so that we will be able to determine the process of things, but it is just request for some support to be given to us in our effort to treat appropriately our already granted *powers/abilities*, so that even in the case of external events (*οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν*) we will be able to achieve an internal freedom: namely, a freedom related to the internal impact of the external events.

In short, the inwardness (anything internal to the moral agent) is the only 'place' where the freedom of man can flourish. Therefore in the case of the *ἔφ' ἡμῶν*, the

inwardness is where they are “placed” and on the basis of the above, it is proven that freedom exists somewhere and somehow. In the case of the *οὐκ ἔφ' ἡμῶν* inwardness might not be their place in the way it is for the *ἔφ' ἡμῶν*, but it could indirectly become a kind of place, because whatever touches our soul is not external things, (material or immaterial), but the soul itself. The soul touches itself with the *opinions* and the *wills* (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*), or, in other words, our *ideas* for things. Things themselves cannot touch anything but our body, since it is one of them, it belongs to the same ‘place’ with them, which the external world.

The soul has the *powers/ abilities* to depend on its *προαίρεσις*, the choice of its *impulses, desires* and *assents*. Therefore if it can choose its disposition regarding the above (δηλαδή, *τά προαιρετικά/ τά ἔφ' ἡμῶν*/ its inwardness (internal), *τό αὐτεξούσιον*³³), can also choose the opinions and our wills (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*) towards them. That is the opinions and the relevant wills that the opinions entail. The external objects themselves as such are not compatible to the admissions of the soul. By this I mean that they can be externalised, that is to enter and influence the soul, only through the opinions and wills that man forms when in contact with them through his perceptive mechanism.

In conclusion whatever touches our soul,³⁴ that is us as conscientious beings, is just our opinions and our wills for things and not the things themselves. It is up to us to treat these opinions and wills in such a way so that they will not disturb the peace of our soul. External things are lost due to some external cause (“ἀπροαίρετον αἰτίαν”), while ataraxia and apathy, that is the good internal disposition, is lost due to our own internal cause:

“And yet the things first mentioned are lost by some cause **external and independent of the will**, and the second by **our own fault**; and as to the first neither to have them nor to lose them is shameful; but as to the second, not to have them and to lose them is shameful and matter of reproach and a misfortune. [...]

In the first place consider what *hurt* (*βλάβη*) is, and remember what you have heard from the philosophers. For if the good consists in the **will (purpose, intention, προαιρέσει)**, and the evil also in the will, see if what you say is not this: What then, since that man has hurt himself by doing an unjust act to me, shall I not hurt myself by doing some unjust act to him? Why do we not imagine to ourselves

(mentally think of) something of this kind? But where there is any detriment to the body or to our possession, there is harm there; and where the same thing happens to the faculty of the will, there is (you suppose) no harm; for he who has been deceived or he who has done an unjust act neither suffers in the head nor in the eye nor in the hip, nor does he lose his estate; and we wish for nothing else than (security to) these things. But whether we shall have the will modest and faithful or shameless and faithless, we care not the least, except only in the school so far as a few words are concerned. Therefore our proficiency is limited to these few words; but beyond them it does not exist even in the slightest degree.”³⁵

This treatment concerns the going together of our “internal” Will with the “external” Will, which is the Will of God/ Nature. The *powers/abilities* that God gave us are sufficient for this going together of our partiality (which is the *commanding-faculty* and in general the partial soul/powers/prohairesis), with the corresponding universal ones.

As Sofronis Sofroniou outlines: “His teaching can be considered as an elaboration of his fundamental insight that morality and success and happiness consist in the realisation that since we cannot do the impossible, i.e. change the world and since we cannot evade its inevitability and inconstancy and perishability and apparent sadness we should do the only possible thing, i.e. change ourselves, our minds and our values so as to be enabled to admire the design and beauty and wisdom and hidden goodness of the universe and become worthy and happy spectators and actors in it.”³⁶

In addition if we undertake such an *internal* treatment of things we will also define our position as a philosopher or common person:

“ταῦτα ἐπίσκεψαι. εἰ θέλεις ἀντικαταλλάξασθαι τούτων ἀπάθειαν, ἐλευθερίαν, ἀταραξίαν: εἰ δὲ μή, μὴ προσάγαγε. μὴ ὡς τὰ παιδία νῦν φιλόσοφος, ὕστερον δὲ τελώνης, εἴτα ῥήτωρ, εἴτα ἐπίτροπος Καίσαρος, ταῦτα οὐ συμφωνεῖ. ἕνα σε δεῖ ἄνθρωπον ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν εἶναι: ἢ τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν σε δεῖ ἐξεργάζεσθαι τὸ σαυτοῦ ἢ τὸ ἐκτὸς ἢ περὶ τὰ ἔσω φιλοτεχνεῖν ἢ περὶ τὰ ἔξω: τοῦτ’ ἔστιν ἢ **φιλοσόφου** τάξις ἐπέχειν ἢ **ιδιώτου**.”³⁷

What will be analysed in the next chapter is what kind of treatment should we exercise to our opinions and wills (*ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα*), in order to achieve a the peace of the soul or ataraxia, even in the case where Destiny (*Πεπωμένη*) exercises

all its determinism upon us, making all that it can depend on itself completely non-dependable on us (*οὐκ ἔφ' ἑμῶν*).

4.2.7. The Character/ Psychology/ Psûche and the φαντασίαι' of the moral agent as sufficient conditions for the Freedom of Choice of Disposition

The psychology of the individual at its totality is predetermined; thus the assent of the individual to an impression is also predetermined.

The assent of the individual is free, however, for the following reasons³⁸: First, no external factor can hinder the individual from assenting to an impression or from assenting to the contrary one. Therefore no external factor can stop him from accepting *on his own will* what is already predetermined to happen even if his partial *προαίρεσις*/ Will does not *will* it.

Second, my impression itself with my disposition to assent to this impression, are sufficient conditions for the act of Assenting. Impression on its own would not suffice, because a different *psychology* (that is the internal world of another person), due to a different predetermined for this person psychology, would have acted otherwise. Hence the assent cannot be stopped by anything external, and so it merely depends on the moral agent.

The moral agent, as has already been mentioned, shrinks to an 'ego' that receives impressions. The desires and impulses that connect it to these impressions are something external to this agent/ 'ego'. Therefore the moral agent becomes ***morally responsible***, because its detachment from its own psychology/character (desires, passions, etc) and therefore from everything that links him with the impressions he receives, the opinions, the wills, and therefore all the external things, gives to the agent the freedom to choose to do otherwise.

In other words, the desires, as well as all the other faculties/powers that are contained in the Character/ Psychology/ Psûche of the agent, are to the agent what the impressions are to the rest of the external objects of the world. Hence, even the psychological/internal objects (that is all those included in the Soul/ Psûche) come in

contact with the moral agent or ‘ego’, only through the impressions. So they do not force the agent more than any other impression and their characterisation as *psychic* does not imply any difference regarding the necessity and the determinism they exercise. This characterisation simply categorises them (ontologically) in relation to their substance, which is intangible/ psychic unlike the rest of the objects (even the body, its Will and, according to an interpretation, the Soul/ Psûche itself) which are corporeal/ material.

In other words the agent *shrinks*, in the sense that it excludes from its internal disposition its body and everything the body entails (desires, impulses, the Will, etc). As it is pointed out by T. Brennan: “Here again we see the conception of the agent in the process of shrinking to exclude the body and its desires, and this alienation leads to the reclassification of large portions of the agent's psychology. What was internal when it was *my* desire becomes external when it is my *body's* desire. The true self, the real me, is a rational soul, which will be most clearly revealed only after it is freed from the body. The boundary of ‘external hindrances’ advances inwards; when I act from my desire for food, this action is no longer fully up to me, but is symptomatic of the way that my body, which is not me, hinders my eternal soul, which is the real me.”³⁹

What is taken onto consideration for the ‘measurement’ of the moral responsibility is the use of our impressions (*φαντασίαι*), and not our *actions*. Each time we assent to a certain impression, we automatically choose some type of action. This choice depends on us. The **paradox** is that this choice is predetermined due to our given Character/ Psychology/ Psûche. Therefore, the anything up to the level of our specific Character / Psychology is predetermined.

The **moral intention** is the *criterion* of the moral responsibility. The latter is analysed as the disposition of the voluntary assent to the deterministically specified and automatic, (due to our character/psychology), original assent and it completely depends on us. The Psychology/ Psûche/ inwardness/ the internal disposition is the one that makes the choice; we, as moral agents (our ‘ego’), can ONLY accept willingly/ voluntarily its choice or not. In other words, the ‘ego’/moral agent *προ-αίρεται* to this choice because it chooses if it will accept it or not; hence the term

προαίρεσις: it *pre-* chooses whether to choose or not to choose, what is already deterministically chosen by the given Psychology/ Psûche of the agent. This faculty is not predetermined by any impression or Psychology/ Psûche. Hence if the agent uses appropriately the originally predetermined illiberal *προαίρεσις*, this could become a spark of freedom. In order for man to succeed its proper use, exercise is required⁴⁰ (*ἀσκήση*), as well as preparation (*παρασκευή*) and discipline (*παιδεία*).

On the contrary, the realisation of what we have chosen, after we have assented to it, does not depend on us, because it can be hindered by external factors. For this reason it was supported above that the **action** (*ἔργον*) does not constitute a criterion for the morality of the agent.

In conclusion assent is free and the agent is morally responsible. Hence, freedom of the will is **accepted** by Epictetus due to the sufficiency of the impressions and the Character/ Psychology/ Psûche for the freedom of choice of disposition, as long as this sufficiency is appropriately treated by the moral agent. In addition the purpose/targeting of the distinction of ‘ego’ from the internal psychology of the agent (mainly the *προαίρεσις* and the Will), in my opinion is the following: to transform the **compulsion** that is accompanied by the Character/ Psychology/ Psûche to a simple **necessity**. I think that the abstract below is quite essential regarding the above conclusions and it constitutes a concise answer to the total of the issues posed in this paper:

“A man’s moral character is the primary cause of his performing good or bad acts. Each act additionally requires a triggering cause, normally in the form of a sense-impression, since all acts are somehow responses to external circumstances. [...] He must, especially when the apportionment of responsibility is at issue, distinguish himself from the chain of external influences. Thus fate, from his point of view, is the set of external causes which, by acting upon him, work to bring about their destined effects. But since these external causes are no more than triggering causes, he cannot hold them in any strong sense *responsible* for his actions, let alone sufficient to necessitate them. **The primary cause is himself.** [...] was to concede that fate necessitates but to distinguish the kind of **necessity** involved from **compulsion**. On either version, answerability for our actions in no way requires an **open future** and might even be seriously jeopardized by one. What it requires is a proper system for apportioning responsibility between the relevant causal factors. For actions to be ‘in our power’ is simply for us to be their principal causes [...]. **Fate can be said to bring them about**

through us. [...] Our minds are fragments of the divine mind, and by lining up our own impulses with the pre-ordained good we can achieve individual goodness, and the only true freedom.”⁴¹

Conclusion

According to Chrysippus:

“And we say that the house-builder builds the house, in reference to that which is to be produced. So we say that the cloak is woven; for that which makes is the indication of the operation. That which makes is not the attribute of one, and the cause that of another, but of the same, both in the case of the cloak and of the house. For, in as far as one is the cause of anything being produced, in so far is he also the maker of it. Consequently, the cause, and that which makes, and that through which (δί ὄ), are the same. Now, if anything is a cause and that which effects, it is certainly also that through which. But if a thing is that through which, it does not by any means follow that it is also the cause. Many things, for instance, concur in one result, through which the end is reached; but all are not causes. For **Medea** would not have killed her children, had she not been enraged. Nor would she have been enraged, had she not been jealous. Nor would she have been this, if she had not loved. Nor would she have loved, had not Jason sailed to Colchi. Nor would this have taken place, had the Argo not been built. Nor would this have taken place, had not the timbers been cut from Pelion. For though in all these things there is the case of that through which, they are not all causes of the murder of the children, but only Medea was the cause. Wherefore, that which does not hinder does not act. Wherefore, that which does not hinder is not a cause, but that which hinders is. For it is in acting and doing something that the cause is conceived.”¹

Epictetus employs the example of Medea², in his attempt to prove that it is not possible for someone to consider something being to his greater interest than something else and not choose what *seems* to this person that serves his better interest. The measure for every act as far as man is concerned is the appearance (*φαινόμενον*)³. From that aspect Medea is morally responsible and the sole cause of her act, yet she is not to be censurable for this act (always according to Epictetus). Because it is not the *blame* but the *pity* that fits to a human that has been deluded by the *appearances* (*φαινόμενα*), and thus makes the wrong decisions regarding issues of the greatest importance such as children.

Medea is aware that her deed is “ἔργον ἄνοσιώτατον”⁴, but she is not aware what is more profitable to her, because her ‘Rational-commanding Faculty’ (*προαίρεσις*) has been blinded by anger (*θυμός*). Thus is out of pure ignorance that she judged wrongly as to what is the more profitable to her: to succumb to her anger, in order to avenge her husband, or to follow her Reason and save her children; so she opted for the former:

“[...]πάντως πέπρακται ταῦτα κούκ ἔκφεύζεται (1064)

[...] ἀλλά νικῶμαι κακοῖς,

καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά,

θυμός δέ κρείσσων τῶν ἑμῶν βουλευμάτων,

‘ ὅσπερ μεγίστων αἴτιος κακῶν βροτοῖς. (1077-1080)’⁵

“Medea nunc sum; crevit ingenium malis. (910)

[...]quid, anime, titubas? Ora quid lacrimae rigant

variisque nunc huc ira, nunc illuc amor

diducit? Anceps aestus incertam rapit; (937-939)

[...] ira pietatem fugat

iramque pietas – cede pietati, dolor. (943-944)

[...] rursus increscit dolor

et fervet odium, repetit invitam manum

antiqua Erinys – ira, qua ducis, sequor. (951-953)’⁶

The clear statement by Medea that she cannot escape Fate is worth noting (“πάντως πέπρακται ταῦτα κούκ ἔκφεύζεται”; “antiqua Erinys – ira, qua ducis, sequor”). This statement of hers serves as an example to the apparently contradictory proposal by Epictetus regarding the possibility of the parallel existence of Destiny and Freedom (*Πεπωμένη – Ελευθερία*).⁷ A statement that is the fundamental proposal of this dissertation.

Therefore what Medea lacked was not the *moral* precondition for freedom but the *cognitive (gnosiological)* one⁸. The knowledge offered by the Rational Faculty (*προαίρεσις*), when not clouded by the passions (*πάθη*), is the knowledge that shows us that the power to achieve what we want does not lie *ἕξωθεν*⁹, (that is in the change and distortion of things according to our Will), but according to the Will of God/Nature. And what God wills can pass on to the knowledge of man through his

Rational Faculty (*ἡ δύναμις ἡ λογικῆ*). Hence the power to achieve what we want lies *within* us and it is *ἡ δύναμις ἡ λογικῆ*. The cognitive/ gnosiological precondition for the freedom of the Will, is a precondition that depends on us (*ἔφ' ἡμῶν*), for the very reason that it belongs to the *προαίρεσις*; namely, it belongs to the the moral agent's choice of its internal disposition/ mood. In the Fourth Chapter, I attempted to support that Character/ Psychology/ Psûche and the use of the Impressions, constitute sufficient as well as necessary conditions for the choice of the disposition.

In conclusion, although Medea ignores which decision is in compliance to the Will of the Nature/ God, she is considered as ***morally responsible*** for her act. As it was explained in the Third Chapter, the lack of knowledge or the delusion in relation of the Will of Nature, is in no way an alibi for Epictetus. The reason for this is that God/ Nature has provided humans with Rationality, so that they will be able to be aware of God's Will. Under Spinoza's terms, freedom becomes an ***imperative freedom*** for man thanks to the ***imperative knowledge*** of the will of God. It is therefore the choice of man himself, whether he will follow the right decision, (which he is able of being aware of through his Reason), or whether he will be led by his Passion.

Destiny (*Πεπωμένη*) decides and predetermines what concerns the moral agent, disregarding its Will, yet the moral agent itself chooses either to *resist* or *obey* to what has been predetermined and there is no hope of changing. The final decision is ***exclusively up to man himself***. According to the Stoics, man is not a moral automaton. The World we live in is not simply *the only possible world*, as it is according to Spinoza, but also *The Best possible world* of Leibniz.

The optimism of the Stoic Philosophy¹⁰ lies in the following: the cosmic deterministic plexus is governed by Rationality and *Divine Providence* together, since this plexus is identified with God himself, who is the a priori agent of Reason and Providence. Providence is necessary due to the axiom of the Stoics according to which Nature/God is governed by *λόγος*, hence it cannot but function in the best possible manner. The deterministic plexus of the world is considered to be governed by *λόγος*, in the sense that the rational structure and evolution of the World are the best possible kind of structure and evolution. For this reason, and also given that the

Cosmos in the perception of the ancients is a closed Cosmos, (making the time a cyclical time), the *Eternal Recurrence* of this Cosmos becomes also necessary. Eternal Recurrence is not subject to any kind of divine planning since God, contrary to Christianity, constitutes a part of this cosmic plexus and is also governed by the Natural Law. Eternal Recurrence lies in the fact that the present deterministic plexus is the only rational evolution that things might follow. Cosmos repeats itself because every previous Cosmos was perfect and God, on account of his providence, allows the continuous recurrence of *the best possible world*.

As A.A. Long writes, “the conflagration is providential since, *sub specie aeternitatis*, it preserves the present world by constantly reconstituting it.”¹¹ The Ancient Stoics, Chrysippus mainly, perceive the eternal recurrence *literally*, in fact there are attempts to calculate recurrences and the date when the World and its recurrences will come to an end¹². In the Late Stoa, however a more metaphoric interpretation is treated by Marcus Aurelius¹³. This philosopher puts eternal recurrence indifferently aside so that it will give its place and all its greatness to the *present moment*. Since this moment will be returning exactly the same it is concluded that the moment is identical, therefore whatever is the number of its past or future recurrence it provides nothing more to man than just *one* moment. As these moments accumulate they result to only *one* life.

In more recent years Nietzsche treats eternal recurrence in a similar manner. I think that Eternal Recurrence in Nietzsche is something similar to Kant’s Categorical imperative. Where Kant states (and I quote in a free interpretation): “act in such a way so what you do (the choices of your actions) could become the universal law”, correspondingly Nietzsche states: “act in such a way so that the choices of your actions will be those you wanted to have in every return of yours to eternity”. In other words it has a metaphysic nuance, aiming to underscore the importance of our choices in every present moment. We have to *be able to* choose correctly because a wrong choice will cancel the tranquillity of the soul not only during some moments of the present life but throughout eternity, throughout an infinite number of lives in which we will force ourselves to live in misery. Nietzsche places the emphasis on *selectivity*. In a sense Epictetus also insists on *selectivity* since his whole efforts are to prove that

freedom of choice is not utopic for man. (Epictetus nowhere refers explicitly to eternal recurrence hence the parallelisms here are simply hypothetical.)

Christianity introduced a linearity of time by eradicating the eternal recurrence, since the way it proposes is that of the perfect completion after death. Jesus Christ abolished sin, hence the cyclicity of time becomes meaningless. For Kant there is a kind of eternal recurrence in the sense that the structure of the human mind remains eternally the same. Therefore the same noetic/ mental “Categories” return. Selectivity however does not constitute such *category* for Kant. So everything continuously returns and not only what man selects as worth of returning, which is what Nietzsche introduces.

The optimism of the Stoics underlines, above all, the power of Reason or Rational Faculty in man. Its power is so great that, on the basis of all that have been explained above, could even make the difference¹⁴ between an **optimist** and a **pessimist**. The reason for this is that we become optimists or pessimists depending on whether we choose to make our Reason to obey Nature (optimism) or resist its will (pessimism). If man does not have an optimistic attitude towards the World but keeps complaining to the deeds of God, then it would be better to retire from the whole fete; the door is open:

“Ἐξέλθε, ἀπαλλάγηθι ὡς εὐχάριστος, ὡς αἰδήμων: δὸς ἄλλοις τόπον: δεῖ γενέσθαι καὶ ἄλλους, καθάπερ καὶ σὺ ἔγένου, καὶ γενομένου ἔχειν χώραν καὶ οἰκήσεις, τὰ ἐπιτήδεια. ἂν δ’ οἱ πρῶτοι μὴ ὑπεξάγωσιν, τί ὑπολείπεται; τί ἄπληστος εἶ; τί ἀνίκανος; τί στενοχωρεῖς τὸν κόσμον;”¹⁵

NOTES

Introduction

¹ Cf. Ioannes ab Arnim (collegit), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (SVF)*, I. 179:

Diogenes Laert. VII 87: “διόπερ πρῶτος ὁ Ζήνων ἐν τῷ περὶ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως τέλος εἶπε τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῆ φύσει ζῆν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν· ἄγει γὰρ πρὸς ταύτην ἡμᾶς ἡ φύσις”.

Cic. de fin. IV 14: “hunc ipsum Zenonis aiunt esse finem, declarantem illud, quod a te dictum est, convenienter naturae vivere”.

See also, **Charles L. Stevenson**, *Ethics and Language*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944, p. 210: “In any “persuasive definition” the term defined is a familiar one, whose meaning is both descriptive and strongly emotive. The purport of the definition is to alter the descriptive meaning of the term, usually by giving it greater precision within the boundaries of its customary vagueness; but the definition does *not* make any substantial change in the term's emotive meaning. And the definition is used, consciously or unconsciously, in an effort to secure, by this interplay between emotive and descriptive meaning, a redirection of people's attitudes.”

² Stoic philosophy has been accused of self contradictions since ancient time, two of the most representative examples are firstly, **Plutarch's** *Περὶ Στωικῶν ἐναντιωμάτων (De Stoicorum repugnantiiis)*: cf. “Plutarch, *The Contradictions of the Stoics*” [Translation by E. Smith] in William W. Goodwin (ed.), *Plutarch's Morals* (Translated from the Greek by several hands; Introduction by Ralph Waldo Emerson), vol. IV, Boston, Published by: Little, Brown, and Company, 1878, 428-477; and secondly, **Cicero's** *Paradoxa stoicorum*: cf. “Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Paradoxa stoicorum*” in Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De oratore, Vol. 2, Book III; together with De fato, Paradoxa Stoicorum, De partitione oratoria* (translation by H. Rackham), London, 1948.

Contemporary literature also discusses this topic, i.e. cf. **Ivan Gobry**, “**La Contradiction du Stoïcisme**” in *Chypre et Les Origines du Stoïcisme* (Actes du Colloque Paris, 12-13 Mai 1995), Publications du Centre Culturel Hellénique de Paris, 1996, pp. 56-61.

Chapter 1

«Περὶ τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν»

¹ Epictetus, *Discourses*, 4.1.128-131: For the Greek Text, cf. Heinrich Schenkl (ed.), *Epicteti Dissertationes ab Arriano digestae*, Leipzig B. G. Teubner, 1916. [Provided online by <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>].

Translation (in English): George Long (translator), *The Discourses of Epictetus, with the Enchiridion and Fragments*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1890 [Provided online by <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>].

[Where a translation is given in English, for the rest of this paper, the translation that will be used is the aforementioned one by G. Long, except if stated otherwise.]

For an alternative translation cf. Thomas Wentworth Higginson (translator), *The Works of Epictetus: His Discourses, in Four Books, the Enchiridion, and Fragments*, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1890 [Provided online by <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>].

² *Discourses*, 1.1. (“Περὶ τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν”)

³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics (EN III.3 and 5)* and *Eudemean Ethics (EE II.6 1223^a1–9 and II.10)*: cf. Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2001, 280.

⁴ Cf., Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 330-332.

⁵ *Enchiridion*, 1.2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.1

⁷ Ibid., 1.1; Translation: [G. Long]: “OF things some are in our power, and others are not. In our power are opinion (ὐπόληψις), movement towards a thing (ὄρμη), desire, aversion (ἔκκλισις, turning from a thing); and in a word, whatever are our own acts: not in our power are the body, property, reputation, offices (magisterial power), and in a word, whatever are not our own acts.”

⁸ Cf. *Discourses*, 1.1.4.: [G. Long.] “What faculty then will tell you? That which contemplates both itself and all other things. And what is this faculty? The rational faculty; for this is the only faculty that we have received which examines itself, what it is, and what power it has, and what is the value of this gift, and examines all other faculties: for what else is there which tells us that golden things are beautiful, for they do not say so themselves? Evidently it is the faculty which is capable of judging of appearances.”

⁹ Ibid., 1.1.10-12: “Ἐπίκτητε, εἰ οἶόν τε ἦν, καὶ τὸ σωματίον ἄν σου καὶ τὸ κτησίδιον ἐποίησα ἐλεύθερον καὶ ἀπαραπόδιστον. νῦν δέ, μή σε λανθανέτω, τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν σόν, ἀλλὰ πηλὸς κομψῶς πεφυραμένος. ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦτο οὐκ ἠδυνάμην, ἐδώκαμέν σοι μέρος τι ἡμέτερον, τὴν δύναμιν ταύτην τὴν ὀρμητικὴν τε καὶ ἀφορμητικὴν καὶ ὀρεκτικὴν τε καὶ ἐκκλιτικὴν καὶ ἀπλῶς τὴν χρηστικὴν ταῖς φαντασίαις, ἧς ἐπιμελούμενος καὶ ἐν ἧ τὰ σαυτοῦ τιθέμενος οὐδέποτε κωλυθήσῃ, οὐδέποτε ἔμποδισθήσῃ, οὐ στενάξῃς, οὐ μέμνη, οὐ κολακεύσεις οὐδένα.”

¹⁰ For a translation of the fragment SVF, II.836, see A.A. Long, D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 315-316. Regarding the Parts and the Faculties of the Soul cf. Jean –Baptiste Gourinat, *Οἱ Στωικοὶ για την ψυχή*, 33-42; A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, p. 170-174 [ch. 4: (vi): “The Soul and Human Nature”] and p. 175-178 [ch. 4: (vii): “Human rationality and the passions”]; A. A. Long, “Stoic Psychology” (ch.17), in K. Algra, J. Barnes, J. Mansfeld & M. Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 560–84; A.A. Long, “Representation and the self in Stoicism” (ch. 6), in S. Everson (ed.), *Companions to Ancient Thought 2: Psychology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991; LS, vols.1-2, (ch. 53: “Soul”); Julia Annas, “The Stoics” (Part Two), in *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994.

¹¹ Cf. *Discourses*, 1.1.1-6. Regarding the faculties of the Soul and their relation to the rational faculty: Ibid., 1.1.12, 23-24 (προαίρεσις), 1.17.21-29; 3.22.103-106;

4.1.68-75:

“[...] Is any man able to make you *assent* to that which is false—No man—In the matter of assent then you are free from hindrance and obstruction. [...] And who can compel you to *desire* what you do not wish?—No man—And to *propose* or *intend*, or in short to *make use of the appearances* which present themselves, can any man compel you?—He cannot do this: but he will hinder me when I desire from obtaining what I desire.—If you desire any thing which is your own, and one of the things which cannot be hindered, how will he hinder you?—He cannot in any way—Who then tells you that he who desires the things that belong to another is free from hindrance?”;

4.1.83-84:

“[...] and what else have you been studying from the beginning than to distinguish between your own and not your own, the things which are in your power and not in your power, the things subject to hindrance and not subject? and why have you come to the philosophers? was it that you may never the less be unfortunate and unhappy? You will then in this way, as I have supposed you to have done, be without fear and disturbance. And what is grief to you? for fear comes from what you expect, but grief from that which is present. But what further will you desire? For of the things which are within the power of the will, as being good and present, you have a proper and regulated desire: but of the things which are not in the power of the will you do not desire any one, and so you do not allow any place to that which is irrational, and impatient, and above measure hasty.”

See also the following books: Jean –Baptiste Gourinat, *Οἱ Στωικοὶ για την ψυχή*, 33-42; A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, p. 170-174 [ch. 4: (vi): “The Soul and Human Nature”] and p. 175-178 [ch. 4: (vii): “Human rationality and the passions”].

¹² Jean –Baptiste Gourinat, *Οἱ Στωικοὶ για την ψυχή*, 124-125: «εἶναι ο κόσμος της πράξης». [The translation in English –from Greek- is by me].

¹³ Ibid., 124: «εἶναι ο κόσμος του πάθους».

¹⁴ Cf. *Discourses*, 1.17.21-23; 3.22.104.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1.1.12. A brief, comprehensive and introductory presentation of the *δύναμις ταῖς φαντασίαις χρηστική* is given by Sofronis Sofroniou, “The value system of Epictetus”, *Επετηρίς: Φιλοσοφικόν Παράρτημα II: Στωικισμός*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1985, 71-73.

¹⁶ Cf. *Discourses*, 3.1.25-26:

“ἄνθρωπος εἶ: τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶ θνητὸν ζῷον χρηστικὸν φαντασίαις λογικῶς. τὸ δὲ λογικῶς τί ἐστίν; φύσει ὁμολογουμένως καὶ τελῶς. τί οὖν ἐξαίρετον ἔχεις; τὸ ζῷον; οὐ. τὸ θνητὸν; οὐ. τὸ χρηστικὸν φαντασίαις; οὐ. τὸ λογικὸν ἔχεις ἐξαίρετον: τοῦτο κόσμει καὶ καλλώπιζε: τὴν κόμην δ’ ἄφες τῷ πλάσαντι ὡς αὐτὸς ἠθέλησεν.”

“You are a human being; and this is a mortal animal which has the power of using appearances rationally.

But what is meant by 'rationally'? Conformably to nature and completely.

What then do you possess which is peculiar? Is it the animal part? No. Is it the condition of mortality? No. Is it the power of using appearances? No. You possess the rational faculty as a peculiar thing: adorn and beautify this; but leave your hair to him who made it as he chose.”

¹⁷ Ibid., 1.1.17:

“δεῖ τὰ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν βέλτιστα κατασκευάζειν, τοῖς δ’ ἄλλοις χρῆσθαι ὡς πέφυκεν. “πῶς οὖν πέφυκεν;” ὡς ἄν ὁ θεὸς θέλη.”

“We must make the best use that we can of the things which are in our power, and use the rest according to their nature.

What is their nature then? As God may please.”

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.6.10-13:

“ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν: ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη τῆς διανοίας κατασκευή, καθ’ ἣν οὐχ ἀπλῶς ὑποπίπτοντες τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τυπούμεθα ὑπ’ αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκλαμβάνομεν τι καὶ ἀφαιροῦμεν καὶ προστίθεμεν καὶ συντίθεμεν τὰδε τινὰ δι’ αὐτῶν καὶ νῆ Δία μεταβαίνομεν ἀπ’ ἄλλων ἐπ’ ἄλλα τινὰ οὕτω πως παρακείμενα, οὐδὲ ταῦτα ἱκανὰ κινήσασθαι τινὰς καὶ διατρέψαι πρὸς τὸ ἀπολιπεῖν τὸν τεχνίτην; ἢ ἐξηγησάσθωσαν ἡμῖν τί τὸ ποιοῦν ἐστίν ἕκαστον τούτων ἢ πῶς οἶόν τε τὰ οὕτω θαυμαστὰ καὶ τεχνικὰ εἶκη καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτομάτου γίνεσθαι.

Τί οὖν; ἐφ’ ἡμῶν μόνων γίνεται ταῦτα; πολλὰ μὲν ἐπὶ μόνων, ὧν ἐξαίρετως χρεῖαν εἶχεν τὸ λογικὸν ζῷον, πολλὰ δὲ κοινὰ εὐρήσεις ἡμῖν καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἄλογα. ἄρ’ οὖν καὶ παρακολουθεῖ τοῖς γινομένοις ἐκεῖνα; οὐδαμῶς. ἄλλο γάρ ἐστι χρῆσις καὶ ἄλλο παρακολούθησις. ἐκείνων χρεῖαν εἶχεν ὁ θεὸς χρωμένων ταῖς φαντασίαις, ἡμῶν δὲ παρακολουθούτων τῇ χρήσει.”

“ If they do not, let us consider the constitution of our understanding according to which, when we meet with sensible objects, we do not simply receive impressions from them, but we also select something from them, and subtract something, and add, and compound by means of them these things or those, and, in fact, pass from some to other things which, in a manner, resemble them: is not even this sufficient to move some men, and to induce them not to forget the workman? If not so, let them explain to us what it is that makes each several thing, or how it is possible that things so wonderful and like the contrivances of art should exist by chance and from their own proper motion?

What, then, are these things done in us only? Many, indeed, in us only, of which the rational animal had peculiarly need; but you will find many common to us with irrational animals. Do they then understand what is done? By no means. For use is one thing, and understanding is another: God had need of irrational animals to make use of appearances, but of us to understand the use of appearances.”

¹⁹ Ibid., 1.6.17-21:

“οὐ τοίνυν ἡ κατασκευὴ μόνον χρηστική, τούτῳ χρῆσθαι ὁπωσοῦν ἀπαρκεῖ: οὐ δὲ καὶ παρακολουθητικὴ τῇ χρήσει, τούτῳ τὸ κατὰ τρόπον ἂν μὴ προσῆ οὐδέποτε τεύξεται τοῦ τέλους. τί οὖν; ἐκείνων ἕκαστον κατασκευάζει τὸ μὲν ὥστ’ ἐσθίεσθαι, τὸ δ’ ὥστε ὑπηρετεῖν εἰς γεωργίαν, τὸ δ’

ὥστε τυρὸν φέρειν, τὸ δ' ἄλλο ἐπ' ἄλλη χρεῖα παραπλησίω, πρὸς ἃ τίς χρεῖα τοῦ παρακολουθεῖν ταῖς φαντασίαις καὶ ταύτας διακρίνειν δύνασθαι; τὸν δ' ἄνθρωπον θεατὴν εἰσήγαγεν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐ μόνον θεατὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξηγητὴν αὐτῶν.

διὰ τοῦτο αἰσχρὸν ἔστι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἄρχεσθαι καὶ καταλήγειν ὅπου καὶ τὰ ἄλογα, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἔνθεν μὲν ἄρχεσθαι, καταλήγειν δὲ ἐφ' ὃ κατέληξεν ἐφ' ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ φύσις. κατέληξεν δ' ἐπὶ θεωρίαν καὶ παρακολούθησιν καὶ σύμφωνον διεξαγωγὴν τῇ φύσει. ὁρᾷτε οὖν, μὴ ἀθέατοι τούτων ἀποθάνητε.”

“In those animals then whose constitution is adapted only to use, use alone is enough: but in an animal (man), which has also the power of understanding the use, unless there be the due exercise of the understanding, he will never attain his proper end. Well then God constitutes every animal, one to be eaten, another to serve for agriculture, another to supply cheese, and another for some like use; for which purposes what need is there **to understand appearances and to be able to distinguish them?** But God has introduced man to be a **spectator** of God and of His works; and not only a spectator of them, but an **interpreter**.

For this reason it is shameful for man to begin and to end where irrational animals do; but rather he ought to begin where they begin, and to end where nature ends in us; and nature ends in **contemplation** and **understanding**, and in **a way of life conformable to nature**. Take care then not to die without having been spectators of these things.”

²⁰ Ibid., 1.14.5-6:

“ἀλλὰ τὰ φυτὰ μὲν καὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα σώματα οὕτως ἐνδέδεται τοῖς ὅλοις καὶ συμπέπονθεν, αἱ ψυχαὶ δ' αἱ ἡμέτεραι οὐ πολὺ πλέον; ἀλλ' αἱ ψυχαὶ μὲν οὕτως εἰσὶν ἐνδεδεμέναι καὶ συναφεῖς τῷ θεῷ ἅτε αὐτοῦ μόρια οὔσαι καὶ ἀποσπάσματα, οὐ παντὸς δ' αὐτῶν κινήματος ἅτε οἰκείου καὶ συμφυοῦς ὁ θεὸς αἰσθάνεται;”

“But are plants and our bodies so bound up and united with the whole, and are not our souls much more? and our souls so bound up and in contact with God as parts of Him and portions of Him; and does not God perceive every motion of these parts as being his own motion connate with himself?”

²¹ E. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, (translation from German: Rev. Oswald J. Reichel), London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892 [new and revised edition], 217.

²² *Discourses*, 3.3.1-2: “**Υλη** τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ τὸ ἴδιον ἡγεμονικόν, τὸ σῶμα δ' ἰατροῦ καὶ [ἀπ]ἀλείπτου, ὁ ἀγρὸς γεωργοῦ ὕλη; ἔργον δὲ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ τὸ χρῆσθαι ταῖς φαντασίαις κατὰ φύσιν. πέφυκεν δὲ πᾶσα ψυχὴ ὥσπερ τῷ ἀληθεῖ ἐπινεύειν, πρὸς τὸ ψεῦδος ἀνανεύειν, πρὸς τὸ ἄδηλον ἐπέχειν, οὕτως πρὸς μὲν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὀρεκτικῶς κινεῖσθαι, πρὸς δὲ τὸ κακὸν ἐκκλιτικῶς, πρὸς δὲ τὸ μήτε κακὸν μήτε ἀγαθὸν οὐδετέρως.”

“The **material** for the wise and good man is his own ruling faculty: and the body is the material for the physician and the aliptes (the man who oils persons); the land is the matter for the husbandman. The business of the wise and good man is to use appearances conformably to nature: and as it is the nature of every soul to assent to the truth, to dissent from the false, and to remain in suspense as to that which is uncertain; so it is its nature to be moved towards the desire of the good, and to aversion from the evil; and with respect to that which is neither good nor bad it feels indifferent.”

T.W. Higginson translates “**Υλη**” as ‘chief concern’: cf. Thomas Wentworth Higginson (translator), *The Works of Epictetus: His Discourses, in Four Books, the Enchiridion, and Fragments*, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1890: “The **chief concern** of a wise and good man is his own Reason. [...]”

²³ Regarding the use of this term before Epictetus, cf. Robert Dobbin, “Προαίρεσις in Epictetus”, *Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 11, Mathesis Publications, 1991, 111-115.

²⁴ *Discourses*, 2.23.11.

²⁵ Ibid., 2.23.18.

²⁶ Ibid., 1.1.23-24.

²⁷ Ibid., 2.23.19: “προαίρεσιν δὲ τί ἐμποδίζειν πέφυκεν; ἀπροαίρετον οὐδέν, αὐτὴ δ' ἐαυτὴν διαστραφεῖσα. διὰ τοῦτο κακία μόνη αὕτη γίνεται ἢ ἀρετὴ μόνη” and 2.23.28-29: “τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ κἀκείνῃ χρώμενον καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις πάσαις καὶ μικραῖς καὶ μεγάλαις δυνάμεσιν· τούτου κατορθωθέντος ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος γίνεται, ἀποτευχθέντος κακὸς ἄνθρωπος γίνεται· παρ' ὃ ἀτυχοῦμεν, εὐτυχοῦμεν, μεμφόμεθ' ἀλλήλους, εὐαρεστοῦμεν, ἀπλῶς ὃ λεληθὸς μὲν κακοδαιμονίαν ποιεῖται, τυχὸν δ' ἐπιμελείας εὐδαιμονίαν.”

²⁸ Ibid., 1.12.9.

²⁹ Ibid., 1.12.15: “ἐνταῦθα οὖν μόνον ἐπὶ τοῦ μεγίστου καὶ κυριωτάτου, τῆς ἐλευθερίας, **ὡς ἔτυχεν ἐφεῖται μοι θέλειν; οὐδαμῶς**, ἀλλὰ τὸ παιδεύεσθαι τοῦτ' ἔστι μανθάνειν ἕκαστα οὕτω θέλειν ὡς γίνεται. πῶς δὲ γίνεται; ὡς διέταξεν αὐτὰ ὁ διατάσσων.”

“Is it then in this alone, in this which is the greatest and the chief thing, I mean freedom, **that I am permitted to will inconsiderately? By no means**; but to be instructed is this, to learn to wish that every thing may happen as it does. And how do things happen? As the disposer has disposed them [...]”

³⁰ Ibid., 1.12.17: “Ταύτης οὖν τῆς διατάξεως μεμνημένους ἔρχεσθαι δεῖ ἐπὶ τὸ παιδεύεσθαι, οὐχ ἵν' ἀλλάζωμεν τὰς ὑποθέσεις οὔτε γὰρ δίδονται ἡμῖν οὔτ' ἄμεινον, ἀλλ' ἵνα οὕτως ἐχόντων τῶν περὶ ἡμᾶς ὡς ἔχει καὶ πέφυκεν αὐτοὶ **τὴν γνώμην τὴν αὐτῶν συνηρμοσμένην τοῖς γινομένοις ἔχωμεν**.”

“Remembering then this disposition of things, we ought to go to be instructed, not that we may change the constitution of things,—for we have not the power to do it, nor is it better that we should have the power,—but in order that, as the things around us are what they are and by nature exist, we may maintain **our minds in harmony with the things which happen**.” [Long]

“Mindful of this appointment, we should enter upon a course of education and instruction, not in order to change the constitution of things,—a gift neither practicable nor desirable,—but that, things being as they are with regard to us, **we may have our minds accommodated to the facts**.” [Higginson]

³¹ Ibid., 1.12.21-23: “τίς οὖν ἢ **κόλασις** τοῖς οὐ προσδεχομένοις; τὸ οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς ἔχουσιν. δυσαρεστῆ τις τῷ μόνος εἶναι; ἔστω ἐν ἐρημίᾳ. δυσαρεστῆ τις τοῖς γονεῦσιν; ἔστω κακὸς υἱὸς καὶ πενθεῖτω. δυσαρεστῆ τοῖς τέκνοις; ἔστω κακὸς πατήρ. “βάλε αὐτὸν εἰς φυλακὴν.” ποῖαν φυλακὴν; ὅπου νῦν ἐστίν. ἄκων γὰρ ἐστίν; ὅπου δὲ τις ἄκων ἐστίν, ἐκεῖνο φυλακὴ αὐτῷ ἐστίν. καθὼ καὶ Σωκράτης οὐκ ἦν ἐν φυλακῇ, ἐκὼν γὰρ ἦν.”

“What then is the punishment of those who do not accept? It is to be what they are. Is any person dissatisfied with being alone? let him be alone. Is a man dissatisfied with his parents? let him be a bad son, and lament. Is he dissatisfied with his children? let him be a bad father. Cast him into prison. What prison? Where he is already, for he is there against his will; and where a man is against his will, there he is in prison. So Socrates was not in prison, for he was there willingly.” [Long]

“What, then, is the punishment of those who do not so accept them? To be as they are. Is any one discontented with being alone? Let him remain in his desert. Discontented with his parents? Let him be a bad son; and let him mourn. Discontented with his children? Let him be a bad father. Shall we throw him into prison? What prison? Where he already is; for he is in a situation against his will, and wherever any one is against his will, that is to him a prison, —just as Socrates was not truly in prison, for he was willingly there.” [Higginson]

³² Μυρτώ Δραγώνα – Μονάχου (Myrto Dragona-Monachou), “Ἡ προαίρεσις στον Αριστοτέλη και στον Επικτήτο” (“Prohairesis in Aristotle and Epictetus”), *Φιλοσοφία: Επετηρίς του κέντρου ερεύνης της Ελληνικής Φιλοσοφίας*, 8-9, Αθήναι, Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1978-79, 301 [The translation in English is by me].

CHAPTER 2
Content and targeting (aim) of ἐφ' ἡμῶν and οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν

¹ See “Chapter 3” of this Paper.

² Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 343.

³ Regarding “targeting”, see “Chapter 2.2” of this Paper.

⁴ Cf., Susanne Bobzien, “The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem”, *Phronesis: A Journal of Ancient Philosophy*, The Netherlands, Brill, Volume XLIII, 1998, 133-137, 160-167 and Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 331-338.

⁵ Susanne Bobzien, “The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem”, 133.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 135-136.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 135 and Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005, 291.

¹⁰ Susanne Bobzien, “The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem”, 135.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹² Cf., Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, 293-294.

¹³ Cf., Plato, *Phaedo*, 66 b-d.

¹⁴ Cf., Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*, 294.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 291-293 and Tad Brennan, “Fate and Free Will in Stoicism: A Discussion of Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*”, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, United States, Oxford University Press: Ed. David Sedley, Volume XXI, Winter 2001, 259-286.

¹⁶ Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate*, 294.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 292-293.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 294.

¹⁹ Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, 297; also cf., Susanne Bobzien, “The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem”, 160-161.

²⁰ Cf., *Discourses*, 1.4 (“Περὶ προκοπῆς”: “Of progress or improvement”).

²¹ This Theory refers to Theories of the Will of Philosophers of the Modern Era, such as Spinoza, Arthur Schopenhauer and, partly, Friedrich Nietzsche.

²² Regarding the content of ἐφ' ἡμῶν and οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, see “Chapter 1.3” and “Chapter 2.1” of this Paper.

²³ For a detailed presentation of the differences, cf. Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 330-332 and Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, 300-304.

²⁴ William L. Davidson, *The Stoic Creed*, New York, Arno Press, 1979 [1st: 1907], 177.

²⁵ Μυρτώ Δραγώνα – Μονάχου (Myrto Dragona-Monachou), “Η προαίρεσις στον Αριστοτέλη και στον Επίκτητο” (“Prohairesis in Aristotle and Epictetus”), 308. See also Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1.29.58; 2.14.23; 1.6.19-21.

²⁶ Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 338.

²⁷ A. A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006 [Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2007], p.13.

²⁸ George Koumakis, “Education and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy”, *Diotima: Review of Philosophical Research*, 20: Le Stoïcisme et la Culture, A Publication of the Hellenic Society for Philosophical Studies, 1992, 51, 53.

CHAPTER 3

The relationship of ἐφ' ἡμῖν - οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν with ἐλευθερία

¹ Cf. Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 341-343.

² The socratic “οὐδεὶς ἐκῶν κακός” is transparent here. Cf. *Discourses*, 1.26.7; 1.28; 2.14.19-22. For a detailed presentation of the links between Socratic and Epictetan thought, cf. A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002 [Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: November 2003].

CHAPTER 4

The epictetan προαίρεσις as the freedom of choice of the internal disposition

¹ *Enchiridion*, 9.

² *Discourses*, 1.29.47: “[...] μή τι τῶν ἐκτὸς τῆς προαιρέσεως ἀγαθὸν ἔστιν ἢ κακόν”

³ *Ibid.*, 1.12.9: “Ἐλεύθερος γάρ ἐστιν, ὃ γίνεται πάντα κατὰ προαίρεσιν καὶ ὃν οὐδεὶς δύναται κωλύσαι.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.12.21-27: “Ἔορτήν καὶ πανήγυριν καὶ οὕτως πάντα εὐαρέστως δέχεσθαι. τίς οὖν ἢ κόλασις τοῖς οὐ προσδεχομένοις; τὸ οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς ἔχουσιν.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.1.108-110: “— Τί οὖν μ' εἰσήγεν ἐπὶ τούτοις; — Καὶ εἰ μὴ ποιῆ σοι, ἔξελθε: οὐκ ἔχει χρεῖαν **θεατοῦ μεμψιμοίρου**. τῶν συνεορταζόντων δέεται, τῶν συγχορευόντων, ἵν' ἐπικροτῶσι μᾶλλον, ἐπιθειάζωσιν, ὑμνῶσι δὲ τὴν πανήγυριν. τοὺς ἀταλαιπώρους δὲ καὶ δειλοὺς οὐκ ἀηδῶς ὄψεται ἀπολελειμμένους τῆς πανηγύρεως: οὐδὲ γὰρ παρόντες ὡς ἐν ἑορτῇ διήγον οὐδ' ἐξεπλήρουν τὴν χώραν τὴν πρέπουσαν, ἀλλ' ὠδυνῶντο, ἐμέμφοντο τὸν δαίμονα, τὴν τύχην, τοὺς συνόντας: ἀναίσθητοι καὶ ὧν ἔτυχον καὶ τῶν ἐαυτῶν δυνάμεων, ἃς εἰλήφασιν πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία, μεγαλοφυχίας, γενναιότητος, ἀνδρείας, αὐτῆς τῆς νῦν ζητουμένης ἐλευθερίας. — Ἐπὶ τί οὖν εἴληφα ταῦτα; — Χρησόμενος. — Μέχρι τίνος; — Μέχρις ἂν **ὁ χρήσας** θέλη. — Ἄν οὖν ἀναγκαῖά μοι ᾖ; — Μὴ πρόσπασχε αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐκ ἔσται. σὺ αὐτὰ αὐτῶ μὴ εἴπης ἀναγκαῖα καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν.”

“— Why then did he introduce me into the world on these conditions? — And if the conditions do not suit you, depart. He has no need of **a spectator who is not satisfied**. He wants those who join in the festival, those who take part in the chorus, that they may rather applaud, admire, and celebrate with hymns the solemnity. But those who can bear no trouble, and the cowardly he will not unwillingly see absent from the great assembly (*πανήγυρις*); for they did not when they were present behave as they ought to do at a festival nor fill up their place properly, but they lamented, found fault with the deity, fortune, their companions; not seeing both what they had, and their own powers, which they received for contrary purposes, the powers of magnanimity, of a generous mind, manly spirit, and what we are now inquiring about, freedom.—For what purpose then have I received these things? —To use them—How long?—So long as he who has **lent** them chooses.—What if they are necessary to me?—Do not

attach yourself to them and they will not be necessary: do not say to yourself that they are necessary, and then they are not necessary.” [Long]

““Why, then, did he bring me into the world upon these conditions?” Well, if it is not worth your while, depart. He has no need of a **discontented spectator**. He wants such as will share the festival; make part of the chorus; who will extol, applaud, celebrate the solemnity. He will not be displeased to see the wretched and fearful dismissed from it. For when they were present they did not behave as at a festival, nor fill a proper place, but lamented, found fault with the Deity, with their fortune, with their companions. They were insensible both of their advantages and of the powers which they received for far different purposes, - the powers of magnanimity, nobleness of spirit, fortitude, and that which now concerns us, freedom. "For what purpose, then, have I received these things?" To use them. "How long?" As long as he who lent them pleases. If, then, they are not necessary, do not make an idol of them, and they will not be so; do not tell yourself that they are necessary, when they are not.” [Higginson]

⁶ Ibid., 4.1.109.

⁷ Ibid., 4.1.109.

⁸ Ibid., 4.1.110.

⁹ Ibid., 4.1.101: “τί οὖν θεομαχῶ; τί θέλω τὰ μὴ θελητά, τὰ μὴ δοθέντα μοι ἐξ ἄπαντος ἔχειν; ἀλλὰ πῶς; ὡς δέδοται καὶ ἐφ’ ὅσον δύναται. ἀλλ’ ὁ δοὺς ἀφαιρεῖται. τί οὖν ἀντιτείνω; οὐ λέγω, ὅτι **ἡλίθιος** ἔσομαι τὸν ἰσχυρότερον βιαζόμενος, ἀλλ’ ἔτι πρότερον **ἄδικος**.”

“Why then do I fight against God? why do I will what does not depend on the will? why do I will to have absolutely what is not granted to me? But how ought I to will to have things? In the way in which they are given and as long as they are given. But he who has given takes away. Why then do I resist? I do not say that I shall be a fool if I use force to one who is stronger, but I shall first be unjust.”

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.1.104: “Did not he (God) introduce you here, did he not show you the light, did he not give you fellow workers, and perceptions and reason? and as whom did he introduce you here? did he not introduce you as subject to death, and as one to live on the earth with a little flesh, and to observe his administration, and to join with him in the spectacle and the festival for a short time?”

¹¹ M. Tullius Cicero, *De Fato*, XVII: cf. C.D. Yonge (ed.), *The Treatises of M.T. Cicero on The Nature of the Gods; On Divination; On Fate; On the Republic; On the Laws; and On Standing for the Consulship*, (translated by C.D. Yonge), London, Henry G. Bohn, 1853, pp. 279-280.

¹² Alfred de Vigny, *Les destinées : poèmes philosophiques*, Michel Lévy frères, Librairie nouvelle (Paris), 1864, verses 70-75 [Provided online by Gallica Digital Library: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k70632p.image.r=vigny.f4.langEN#>]. Also see E. Moutsopoulos, “Ἡ ἀντιστροφή της έννοιας της εμαρμένης στην ποίηση του Vigny”, *Επετηρίς: Φιλοσοφικόν Παράρτημα II: Στωικισμός*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1985, pp. 1-7.

¹³ For a detailed analysis of this topic, cf. Susanne Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, 334-338 ; Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, 298-304; Μυρτώ Δραγώνα – Μονάχου, “Ἡ προαίρεσις στον Ἀριστοτέλη και στον Ἐπίκτητο”, 305-306; A. A. Long, D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, (Volume 1), p. 386-394 (ch. 62); Maria E. Koutlouka, “La liberté dans le stoïcisme”, *Επετηρίς: Φιλοσοφικόν Παράρτημα II: Στωικισμός*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1985, 123-125; F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics*, Great Britain, The Bristol Press, 1989 [1st: 1975], 101-108.

¹⁴ Cf., *Discourses*, 1.12.32-5: “οὐ μᾶλλον εὐχαριστεῖς τοῖς θεοῖς, ὅτι σε ἐπάνω τούτων ἀφῆκαν ὅσα μηδ’ ἐποίησαν ἐπὶ σοί, μόνον δ’ **ὑπεύθυνον** ἀπέφηναν τῶν ἐπὶ σοί; γονέων ἔνεκα ἀνυπεύθυνον ἀφῆκαν: ἀδελφῶν ἔνεκα ἀφῆκαν, σώματος ἔνεκα ἀφῆκαν, κτήσεως, θανάτου, ζωῆς, τίνος οὖν ὑπεύθυνόν σε ἐποίησαν; τοῦ μόνου ὄντος ἐπὶ σοί, χρήσεως οἷας δεῖ φαντασιῶν. τί οὖν ἐπισπᾶς σεαυτῷ ταῦτα ὧν ἀνυπεύθυνος εἶ; τοῦτό ἐστιν ἐαυτῷ παρέχειν πράγματα.”

Also, cf. *Discourses*, 1.11.33: “καὶ ἀπλῶς οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε φυγή οὔτε πόνος οὔτε ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιοῦτων αἰτιόν ἐστι τοῦ πράττειν τι ἢ μὴ πράττειν ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ’ **ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα**.”

“And in a word, neither death nor exile nor pain nor anything of the kind is the cause of our doing anything or not doing; but our own **opinions and our wills** (δόγματα).”

“Do you not rather thank the gods that they have allowed you to be above these things which they have not placed in your power, and have made you accountable only for those which are in your power? As to your parents, the gods have left you free from responsibility; and so with respect to your brothers, and your body, and possessions, and death and life. For what then have they made you responsible? For that which alone is in your power, the proper use of appearances. Why then do you draw on yourself the things for which you are not responsible? It is, indeed, a giving of trouble to yourself.”

¹⁵ Ibid.,1.12.34; 1.17.21-24; 4.8.1-4;

4.4.44: “μηδέποτε γάρ ἀπὸ τῶν κοινῶν μήτ’ **ἐπαινῆτε** μήτε **ψέγετε**, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ δογμάτων. ταῦτα γάρ ἐστι τὰ ἴδια ἐκάστου, τὰ καὶ τὰς πράξεις αἰσχροῦς ἢ καλὰς ποιοῦντα.”

“For never **commend** a man on account of these things which are common to all, but on account of his opinions (principles); for these are the things which belong to each man, which make his actions bad or good.”

¹⁶ Ibid.,1.17.23-24: “οὐδὲ εἷς. ὁρᾷς ὅτι ἐν τούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ **τὸ προαιρετικὸν ἔχεις ἀκώλυτον ἀνανάγκαστον ἀπαραπόδιστον**; ἄγε ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ ὀρεκτικοῦ καὶ ὀρμητικοῦ ἄλλως ἔχει; καὶ τίς ὀρμὴν νικῆσαι δύναται ἢ ἄλλη ὀρμὴ; τίς δ’ ὄρεξιν καὶ ἔκκλισιν ἢ ἄλλη ὄρεξις καὶ ἔκκλισις;”

“You see that in this matter **you have the faculty of the will free from hindrance, free from compulsion, unimpeded**. Well then, in the matter of desire and pursuit of an object, is it otherwise? And what can overcome pursuit except another pursuit? And what can overcome desire and aversion (ἔκκλισιν) except another desire and aversion?”

¹⁷ Μυρτώ Δραγώνα – Μονάχου, “Ἡ προαίρεσις στον Αριστοτέλη και στον Επίκτητο”, 305.

¹⁸ Cf., *Discourses*: 3.1.40; 4.5.12; 2.22.20; 2.10.1: “σκέψαι τίς εἶ. τὸ πρῶτον ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο δ’ ἔστιν οὐδὲν ἔχων κυριώτερον προαιρέσεως, ἀλλὰ ταύτη τὰ ἄλλα ὑποτεταγμένα, αὐτὴν δ’ ἀδούλευτον καὶ ἀνυπότακτον.”;

and 3.23.4-6:

“λοιπὸν ἢ μὲν τίς ἐστι **κοινὴ ἀναφορά, ἢ δ’ ἴδια**.

πρῶτον ἴν’ ὡς ἄνθρωπος. ἐν τούτῳ τί περιέχεται; μὴ ὡς πρόβατον, † εἰ βλαπτικῶς † καὶ ἐπιεικῶς, ὡς θηρίον.

ἢ δ’ ἴδια πρὸς τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα ἐκάστου καὶ τὴν προαίρεσιν. ὁ κιθαρωδὸς ὡς κιθαρωδός, ὁ τέκτων ὡς τέκτων, ὁ φιλόσοφος ὡς φιλόσοφος, ὁ ῥήτωρ ὡς ῥήτωρ. ὅταν οὖν λέγῃς “δεῦτε καὶ ἀκούσατέ μου ἀναγιγνώσκοντες ὑμῖν”, σκέψαι πρῶτον μὴ εἰκῆ αὐτὸ ποιεῖν. εἴτ’ ἂν εὐρῆς, ὅτι ἀναφέρεις, σκέψαι, εἰ ἐφ’ ὃ δεῖ.”

“Further, there is a **general end or purpose**, and a **particular purpose**.

First of all, we must act as a man. What is comprehended in this? We must not be like a sheep, though gentle; nor mischievous, like a wild beast.

But the particular end has reference to each person's mode of life and his will. The lute-player acts as a lute-player, the carpenter as a carpenter, the philosopher as a philosopher, the rhetorician as a rhetorician. When then you say, Come and hear me read to you: take care first of all that you are not doing this without a purpose; then if you have discovered that you are doing this with reference to a purpose, consider if it is the right purpose.”

¹⁹ Ibid.,1.2.30-31: “Πόθεν οὖν αἰσθησόμεθα τοῦ **κατὰ πρόσωπον** ἕκαστος; — Πόθεν δ’ ὁ ταῦρος, ἔφη, λέοντος ἐπελθόντος μόνος αἰσθάνεται τῆς αὐτοῦ παρασκευῆς καὶ προβέβληκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀγέλης πάσης; ἢ δῆλον ὅτι εὐθύς ἅμα τῷ τὴν παρασκευὴν ἔχειν ἀπαντᾷ καὶ συναίσθησις αὐτῆς; καὶ ἡμῶν τοίνυν ὅστις ἂν ἔχη τοιαύτην παρασκευὴν, οὐκ ἀγνοήσει αὐτήν.”

“[...] how then shall every man among us perceive what is **suitable to his character**? How, he replied, does the bull alone, when the lion has attacked, discover his own powers and put himself forward in defence of the whole herd? It is plain that with the powers the perception of having them is immediately conjoined: and, therefore, whoever of us has such powers will not be ignorant of them.”

²⁰ Ibid., 1.2.30-32 and 1.2.5-7: “Ἄλλω δ’ ἄλλο προσπίπτει τὸ εὖλογον καὶ ἄλογον, καθάπερ καὶ ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακὸν ἄλλω ἄλλω καὶ συμφέρον καὶ ἀσύμφορον. διὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα **παιδείας** δεόμεθα, ὥστε μαθεῖν τοῦ εὐλόγου καὶ ἀλόγου πρόληψιν ταῖς ἐπὶ μέρους οὐσίαις ἐφαρμόζειν συμφώνως τῇ φύσει. εἰς δὲ τὴν τοῦ εὐλόγου καὶ ἀλόγου κρίσιν οὐ μόνον ταῖς τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀξίαις συγχρώμεθα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸ **πρόσωπον** ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστος.”

“But the rational and the irrational appear such in a different way to different persons, just as the good and the bad, the profitable and the unprofitable. For this reason, particularly, we need **discipline**, in order to learn how to adapt the preconception of the rational and the irrational to the several things conformably to nature. But in order to determine the rational and the irrational, we use not only the estimates of external things, but we consider also what is appropriate to each **person**.”

Regarding ‘discipline’ (*παιδεία*) see also George Koumakis, «Education and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy», 51-53.

²¹ Cf. Μυρτώ Δραγώνα – Μονάχου, “Ἡ προαίρεσις στον Αριστοτέλη και στον Επίκτητο”, 305-306; for more details see Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, 298-304 and Jean –Baptiste Gourinat, *Οι Στωικοί για την ψυχή*, 124-130.

²² A. A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*, 15.

²³ Ibid., 345.

²⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, HN and H.

²⁵ Cf. Μυρτώ Δραγώνα – Μονάχου, “Ἡ προαίρεσις στον Αριστοτέλη και στον Επίκτητο”, 307 [The translation is by me from the Greek Text, which is: θέτουν «σε ἴση μοίρα την εσωτερική και την εξωτερική πλευρά των ενεργημάτων»].

²⁶ *Discourses*, 1.11.33: “καὶ ἀπλῶς οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε φυγή οὔτε πόνος οὔτε ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων αἰτιῶν ἐστὶ τοῦ πράττειν τι ἢ μὴ πράττειν ἡμῶς, ἀλλ’ ὑπολήψεις καὶ δόγματα.”

“And in a word, neither death nor exile nor pain nor anything of the kind is the cause of our doing anything or not doing; but our own opinions and our wills (*δόγματα*).”

²⁷ Cf. Jean –Baptiste Gourinat, *Οι Στωικοί για την ψυχή*, 158-9.

²⁸ Cf., *Discourses*, 4.1.131.

²⁹ Ibid., 1.12.25; 1.12.15-17; 2.23.42; 4.1.131; *Enchiridion*, 53.1:

“ἄγου δέ μ’, ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ σύ γ’ ἢ Πεπρωμένη,
ὅποι ποθ’ ὑμῖν εἶμι διατεταγμένος:
ὡς ἔψομαί γ’ ἄοκνος: ἦν δέ γε μὴ θέλω,
κακὸς γενόμενος, οὐδὲν ἦττον ἔψομαι.”

³⁰ Cf., *Enchiridion*, 29 and *Discourses*, 2.1. For their relation to discipline (*παιδεία*), cf. George Koumakis, “Education and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy”, 51-53.

³¹ Cf., *Discourses*, 2.23.28-29: “τοῦτο γάρ ἐστὶ τὸ κἀκείνη χρώμενον καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις πάσαις καὶ μικραῖς καὶ μεγάλαις δυνάμεσιν: τοῦτου κατορθωθέντος ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος [ἀγαθὸς] γίνεται, ἀποτυχεθέντος κακὸς ἄνθρωπος γίνεται: παρ’ ὃ ἀτυχοῦμεν, εὐτυχοῦμεν, μεμφόμεθ’ ἀλλήλους, εὐαρεστοῦμεν, ἀπλῶς ὃ λεληθὸς μὲν κακοδαιμονίαν ποιεῖται, τυχὸν δ’ ἐπιμελείας **εὐδαιμονίαν**.”

³² Ibid., 1.1.23-24.

³³ Ibid., 4.1.56, 62.

³⁴ Ibid., 4.1.86; 2.1.12-13: “ἄν γάρ τις ἐκεῖ μεταθῆ τὸ εὐλαβές, ὅπου προαίρεσις καὶ ἔργα προαιρέσεως, εὐθύς ἅμα τῷ θέλειν εὐλαβεῖσθαι καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτῷ κειμένην ἔξει τὴν ἔκκλισιν: ἂν δ’ ὅπου τὰ μὴ ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ἐστὶ καὶ ἀπροαίρετα, πρὸς τὰ ἐπ’ ἄλλοις ὄντα τὴν ἔκκλισιν ἔχων ἀναγκαίως φοβήσεται, ἀκαταστατήσεται, ταραχθήσεται. **οὐ γὰρ θάνατος ἢ πόνος φοβερόν, ἀλλὰ τὸ φοβεῖσθαι πόνον ἢ θάνατον.** διὰ τὸ ὕπο ἐπαινοῦμεν τὸν εἰπόντα ὅτι οὐ κατθανεῖν γὰρ δεινόν, ἀλλ’ αἰσχροῶς θανεῖν.”

³⁵ Ibid., 2.10.16-30 (excerpts): “εἴτα γραμματικὴν μὲν ἀποβαλὼν ἢ μουσικὴν ζημίαν ἂν ἡγοῦ τὴν ἀπώλειαν αὐτῆς; εἰ δ’ αἰδῶ καὶ καταστολὴν καὶ ἡμερότητα ἀποβαλεῖς, οὐδὲν ἡγῆ τὸ πρῶγμα; καίτοι ἐκεῖνα μὲν παρ’ ἔξωθεν τινα καὶ **ἀπροαίρετον αἰτίαν ἀπόλλυται**, ταῦτα δὲ παρ’ ἡμᾶς; καὶ ἐκεῖνα μὲν οὐτ’ ἔχειν καλὸν ἐστὶν οὐτ’ ἀπολλύειν αἰσχρόν ἐστὶν, ταῦτα δὲ καὶ μὴ ἔχειν καὶ ἀπολλύειν καὶ αἰσχρόν ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπονείδιστον καὶ ἀτύχημα. τί ἀπολλύει ὁ τὰ τοῦ κιναιδίου πάσχων;”

³⁶ Sofronis Sofroniou, “The value system of Epictetus”, *Επετηρίς: Φιλοσοφικὸν Παράρτημα II: Στωικισμός*, Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1985, 82.

³⁷ *Enchiridion*, 29.7.

³⁸ Cf. Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life*, 300-301.

³⁹ Ibid., 302.

⁴⁰ Cf., *Discourses*, 1.2.6-7; 1.2.30-32; 1.4 (“Περὶ προκοπῆς”).

⁴¹ A. A. Long, D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, (Volume 1), Great Britain, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 393-394.

Conclusion

¹ The Translation is from: Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (eds), *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (translated by William Wilson), Vol. 2, Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885. [Provided online by New Advent: Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02108.htm>].

For the Ancient Text, cf. Ioannes ab Arnim (collegit), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (SVF)*, Volumen II, Ed. Stereotypa. - Stuttgart, B. G. Teubner, 1964 [1st: 1903], 347: Clemens Alexandrinus *Stromat.* VIII. 9.

² Cf. *Discourses*, 1.28.6-7: “οὐ δύναται οὖν τις δοκεῖν μὲν, ὅτι συμφέρει αὐτῷ, μὴ αἰρεῖσθαι δ’ αὐτό;” οὐ δύναται. πῶς ἢ λέγουσα καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἷα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά, θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων; ὅτι αὐτὸ τοῦτο, τῷ θυμῷ χαρίσασθαι καὶ τιμωρήσασθαι τὸν ἄνδρα, συμφορώτερον ἡγεῖται τοῦ σῶσαι τὰ τέκνα.”

³ Ibid., 1.28.11-13: “ὥστε καὶ τὰ οὕτω μεγάλα καὶ δεινὰ ἔργα ταύτην ἔχει τὴν ἀρχὴν, τὸ **φαινόμενον**; ταύτην οὐδ’ ἄλλην. ἡ Ἰλιάς οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἢ φαντασία καὶ χρῆσις φαντασιῶν. ἐφάνη τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἀπάγειν τοῦ Μενελάου τὴν γυναῖκα, ἐφάνη τῇ Ἑλένῃ ἀκολουθῆσαι αὐτῷ. εἰ οὖν ἐφάνη τῷ Μενελάῳ παθεῖν ὅτι κέρδος ἐστὶ τοιαύτης γυναικὸς στερηθῆναι, τί ἂν ἐγένετο; ἀπολώλει ἢ Ἰλιάς οὐ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Ὀδύσσεια.”

“So then all these great and dreadful deeds have this origin, in the **appearance** (opinion)? Yes, this origin and no other. The Iliad is nothing else than appearance and the use of appearances. It appeared to Alexander to carry off the wife of Menelaus: it appeared to Helene to follow him. If then it had appeared to Menelaus to feel that it was a gain to be deprived of such a wife, what would have happened? Not only would the Iliad have been lost, but the Odyssey also.”

⁴ Εὐριπίδου, *Μήδεια*, 796: J. Diggle (Ed.), *Euripidis Fabulae*, Tomus 1, Oxford University Press, 1991 (reprinted) [1st: 1984].

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1064 and 1077-1080.

⁶ L. Annaei Senecae, *Medea*, 910, 937-939, 943-944, 951-953: Fridericus Leo (Ed.), *L. Annaei Senecae, Tragoediae*, Vol. II, Berlin, Apud Weidmannos (Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung), 1962.

⁷ Regarding the parallel existence of Destiny and Freedom see “Chapter 4.2.6” of this Paper.

⁸ Regarding the preconditions of freedom, see “Chapter 3” of this Paper.

⁹ Cf., *Discourses*, 2.17.21.

¹⁰ Cf. Dorothea Frede, “Stoic Determinism”, *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press (Ed. Brad Inwood), 2003, 204-205 and A. A. Long, D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic philosophers*, Vol. 1, 308-313 (ch. 52).

¹¹ A. A. Long, *From Epicurus to Epictetus*, 271.

¹² *Ibid.*, 256-282 (ch. 13).

¹³ Cf. Marcus Aurelius, *Τά ἐξ ἑαυτόν*, 2.14.

¹⁴ Cf. E. Zeller, *The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, 213: “The Stoical optimism is a most significant fact, and has a lesson for the present time. Among other things, it gives us in a very striking fashion a practical refutation of the theory frequently advocated to-day, that “temperament and circumstance, not logic, make the difference between a pessimist and an optimist”.”

¹⁵ *Discourses*, 4.1.106: “go away like a grateful and modest man; make room for others: others also must be born, as you were, and being born they must have a place, and houses and necessary things. And if the first do not retire, what remains? Why are you insatiable? Why are you not content? why do you contract the world?”. Also see 1.25.26-28.

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