

The Phenomenology of Proairesis in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: 'Desire' and 'Aversion'

By Franco Scalenghe*

If we agree that Proairesis, and not simply Reason, is the fundamental and sovereign faculty the man is naturally endowed with, it appears appropriate to identify the actions that this reality sets in motion. With regard to them, Epictetus calls 'deeds of proairesis' our desires and aversions, our impulses and repulsions, our assents and dissents. The present paper is devoted to a discussion of the phenomenology of desire and aversion only. It shows how the only four basic possible attitudes of human proairesis towards both proairetic and aproairetic things generate the corresponding kinds of desires and aversions.

Introduction

If we agree, as Epictetus¹ tells us, that the proairesis², is the fundamental and sovereign faculty the man is naturally endowed with, and the one that enables us: A) to operate the diairesis³ between what is proairetic, i.e. what is in our exclusive power; and what is aproairetic, i.e. what is not in our exclusive power; B) to recognize the nature of things⁴, and to make the proper use of impressions⁵; C) to

*Independent Scholar, Italy.

1. Franco Scalenghe, "A new Italian and a new English translation of all the works of Epictetus" according to the Greek text edited by Oldfather, William Abbot: 'Epictetus. The Discourses as reported by Arrian, the Manual and the Fragments' (London, Heinemann 1961). Unpublished translations available at www.epitteto.com.

2. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 17, 21); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book II, ch. 10, 1); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 13); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book IV, ch. 4, 23); Franco Scalenghe, 'Proairesis', 'Proairetic' and 'Aproairetic': Synopsis of All the Passages Containing these Terms in the 'Discourses' and the 'Manual' of Epictetus. *International Journal of Philosophy*, 3, no. 3(2015): 24-33. doi: 10.11648/j.ijp.20150303.11.

3. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book II, ch. 6, 24); Franco Scalenghe, "Epictetus: Diairesis and Contradiairesis" in 'Prometeus' Ano 7, Numero 15, Janeiro-Junho 2014, E-ISSN: 2176-5960; Epictetus "The Manual" 51, 1.

4. Franco Scalenghe, "'Nature' and the 'Nature of Things' in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: A Synopsis," *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts* 4, no 4(2017): 259-282; Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 4, 18); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 11, 9-15); Epictetus "The Manual" 4; Epictetus "The Manual" 1.

5. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 1, 7); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 30, 4).

take a diairetic attitude⁶, i.e. an attitude that is in harmony with the nature of things and therefore makes human life virtuous and happy; or a counterdiairetic attitude⁷, i.e. an attitude in contrast with the nature of things and that therefore makes human life vicious and unhappy; then it seems appropriate to try to identify the actions that the reality of proairesis sets in motion.

With regard to this, Epictetus identifies three main fields of action of the proairesis, and calls 'deeds of proairesis'⁸, the operations in which the man who intends to be virtuous and happy, has to train himself and achieve perfection. The 'first field' concerns our desires and aversions. The man must train himself in this field so as to obtain always what he desires and never stumble into what he averts⁹. The 'second field' has to do with our impulses and repulsions, i.e. with our rights and duties as simple animals and as social beings, so that we may act rationally and without negligence¹⁰. The 'third field' concerns our assents and dissents; so that we may avoid logic mistakes and randomness of judgment¹¹.

In the "Discourses" as collected by his pupil Arrian, Epictetus quotes many more deeds of proairesis, but according to him the cardinal ones are the six that have been just quoted: desire and aversion, impulse and repulsion, assent and dissent. Moreover, he explicitly tells us that, according to him, for man's life the order of importance of the three fields is the same in which they have just been listed¹². Some more deeds of proairesis quoted by Epictetus are the following (this list is far from being a complete one and, for the sake of brevity, I quote here only the first appearance of each in the 'Discourses'): purpose¹³, design¹⁴, judgment¹⁵, conception¹⁶, preparation¹⁷, proposition of assent¹⁸. The present paper is devoted to a presentation of the phenomenology of two proairetic deeds: 'desire' and 'aversion'.

6. Franco Scalenghe, "The diairesis at work". Unpublished text. www.epitteto.com/Dialogue3.html

7. Franco Scalenghe, "Gyges: Diairesis and Counterdiairesis, Good and Evil," Unpublished text. www.epitteto.com/Dialogue5.html.

8. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 22, 10); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book II, ch. 1, 12).

9. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 1); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 3).

10. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 2); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 4).

11. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 2); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 5).

12. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 3); Epictetus "Discourses" (Book III, ch. 2, 4).

13. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 21, 2).

14. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 12, 8).

15. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 3, 1).

16. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 11, 33).

17. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 7, 28).

18. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 4, 11).

Human 'Desire' Is a Proairetic Deed

What is desire? 'Desire' is a movement of the soul of the virtuous man, a movement that incorporates the due reservation¹⁹, that is directed towards the attainment of something that can be proairetic or aproairetic, and which is judged to be a good. In order to indicate this movement, Epictetus consistently uses the noun ὄρεξις (*òrexìs*) and the verb ὀρέγομαι (*orégomai*). What is craving? 'Craving' is the name that the desire takes when the movement of the soul towards what *is not present* and that is judged to be a good, lacks the due reservation²⁰. To crave for something is the typical attitude of the vicious man. In order to indicate the craving, Epictetus consistently uses the noun ἐπιθυμία (*epithumìa*) and the verb ἐπιθυμῶ (*epithumò*). What is passion? 'Passion' is the name that the desire takes when the movement of the soul towards what *is present* and is judged to be a good, lacks the due reservation²¹, and the soul is unable to obtain it. In extreme cases, the soul reiterates its failed attempts to get the good, till it can attain a state of frenzy. To conceive a passion for something is the typical attitude of the vicious man. In order to indicate the passion, Epictetus consistently uses the noun πάθος (*pàthos*), calls ἀπάθεια (*apàtheia*) not the impossible state of a permanent and total absence of any passion, but the state of full control over the passions, and calls ἀπαθής (*apathés*) the virtuous man who is able to attain this state.

Phenomenology of the Desire for Aproairetic Things

Desire is the first of the six cardinal deeds of proairesis and is the opposite of aversion. As we have just said, its action takes place in the field of 'good and evil', of 'virtue and vice'. The desire is 'proairetic' and can be addressed both to what is aproairetic (for example a sum of money) and to what is proairetic (for example the peace of mind).

Now, according to Epictetus there are two kinds of possible ways of desiring something aproairetic. The first kind of desire is the desire of the man who operates the diairesis between aproairetic and proairetic things and therefore knows and respects the existence both of the nature of things and of his own proairesis²². This man is the 'Homo proaireticus'. The desire of this man is a desire

19. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

20. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

21. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

22. Franco Scalenghe, 'Proairesis', 'Proairetic' and 'Aproairetic': Synopsis of All the Passages Containing these Terms in the 'Discourses' and the 'Manual' of Epictetus. *International Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 3(2015): 24-33. doi: 10.11648/j.ijp.20150303.11. Franco Scalenghe, " 'Nature' and the 'Nature of Things' in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: A Synopsis". *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts* 4, no. 4(2017): 259-282.

that incorporates a perfect knowledge of the natural difference between the proairetic and the aproairetic things and, as a consequence, incorporates unequivocally the following reservation²³: 'I know that the fulfillment of my desire of an aproairetic thing is not in my exclusive power, and I shall blame nobody, not even myself, in case of failure, nor take it as something evil that has happened to me; and in case of success I shall never become elated²⁴ and never believe that something good has happened to me'²⁵. The second kind of desire is the desire of the man who ignores or denies the existence of the nature of things and therefore of his own proairesis. Due to the fact that he does not operate the diairesis between aproairetic and proairetic things, we cannot say that the desire of this man is directed to something aproairetic or to something proairetic, because the ignorance or the denial of the existence of the nature of things means by definition ignorance or denial of both aproairetic and proairetic things. This man is the 'Homo sapiens', the one who is proud to call himself a man endowed with and a strict follower of 'Reason' in every circumstance²⁶. The desire of this man is a desire that incorporates the following explicit or implicit assumption: 'I believe that the fulfillment of my desire is in my power. In case of failure I shall blame and curse other people or Nature, and take it as an evil that has happened to me; while in case of success I shall become elated and believe that something good has happened to me'²⁷.

Phenomenology of the Desire for Proairetic Things

There are also two kinds of possible ways of desiring something proairetic, and even in this regard the two men totally differ. The desire of the 'Homo proaireticus' who knows and respects the nature of things and his own proairesis cannot be but successful, because by the definition itself of the nature of things²⁸, proairetic things are the only ones that are in our exclusive power. But what happens to the 'Homo sapiens' who denies the existence of the nature of things? This man can well ignore or deny the existence of the nature of things and accordingly of his own proairesis, but he has no power at all to cancel the existence of the nature of things, and no power at all to cease to be a natural creature²⁹. Thus, he constantly reveals himself unprepared to face the consequences of his

23. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

24. Epictetus "The Manual" 6.

25. Epictetus "The Manual" 5.

26. Epictetus 'Fragments' XXVIIIa = Marcus Aurelius "Meditations" (Book XI, ch. 39).

27. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book II, ch. 22, 15-21).

28. Franco Scalenghe, "'Nature' and the 'Nature of Things' in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: A Synopsis". *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts*, 4, no. 4(2017): 259-282.

29. Epictetus "The Manual" 4.

own desires and finds himself continually in contradiction, because he pretends to be able to get what the nature of things absolutely forbids: i.e. that both aproairetic and proairetic things are in his power. And if he denies being able to fulfill his desire of something, he is again ignoring or denying the existence of the nature of things³⁰.

To sum the things up, due to the existence and to the inviolability of the nature of things, we can say that the man who desires something without the due reservation³¹ cannot be certain to succeed and inevitably, sooner or later, he is doomed to fail. And even if he could once fulfill his desire he would become elated³², drawing the false conclusion that he has power over what he has no power at all. Epictetus, therefore, advises the beginner in philosophy to refrain completely from desire, because he is not yet able to clearly understand the difference between proairetic and aproairetic things and consequently he ignores what, of what is in our exclusive power, is contrary to the nature of things³³.

Human 'Aversion' Is A Proairetic Deed

What is 'aversion'? 'Aversion', like desire, is a movement of the soul of the virtuous man, a movement that incorporates the due reservation³⁴, that is directed with hostility and repugnance against something that can be proairetic or aproairetic, and that is judged to be an evil. In order to indicate this aversion, Epictetus consistently uses the noun ἔκκλισις (*ekklisis*) and the verb ἐκκλίνω (*ekklino*). What is fear? 'Fear', like 'craving', is the name that the aversion takes when the movement of the soul against something that *is not present* and that is judged to be an evil, lacks the due reservation³⁵. Fear is a typical attitude of the vicious man; and the most common fear that the humans have, is the fear of death. In order to indicate the fear, Epictetus consistently uses the noun φόβος (*fobos*) and the verb φοβούμαι (*fobumai*), calls ἀφοβία (*afobia*) not the impossible state of a permanent and total absence of any fear, but a state of full control over it, and calls ἄφοβος (*afobos*) the virtuous man who is able to attain this state. What is grief? 'Grief', like 'passion', is the name that the aversion takes when the movement of the soul against what *is present* and is judged to be an evil, lacks the due reservation, and the soul is unable to get rid of it. In extreme cases, the soul reiterates its attempts to get rid of the evil but, being unsuccessful, it can attain a state of deep depression. In order to indicate the grief, Epictetus consistently uses

30. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 11, 9-15).

31. Epictetus "The Manual" 5.

32. Epictetus "The Manual" 6.

33. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

34. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

35. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

the noun λύπη (*lûpe*) and the verb λυπῶ (*lupò*), calls ἀλυπία (*alupia*) not the impossible state of a permanent and total absence of any grief, but a state of full control over it, and calls ἄλυπος (*alupos*) the virtuous man who is able to attain this state.

Phenomenology of the Aversion to Aproairetic Things

Aversion is the second of the six cardinal deeds of proairesis and is the opposite of desire. Like desire, aversion is 'proairetic' and can be directed both against what is aproairetic and against what is proairetic.

As in the case of desire, according to Epictetus there are also two kinds of possible ways of averting something aproairetic. The first kind of aversion is the aversion of the 'Homo proaireticus', i.e. the man who operates the diairesis between aproairetic and proairetic things and therefore knows and respects the existence of both the nature of things and his own proairesis³⁶. The aversion of this man is an aversion that incorporates a perfect knowledge of the natural difference between the proairetic and the aproairetic things and, as a consequence, incorporates unequivocally the following reservation³⁷: 'I know that the fulfillment of my aversion to an aproairetic thing (for example an illness) is not in my exclusive power, and I shall blame nobody, not even myself, in case of failure, nor take it as something evil that has happened to me; and in case of success (i.e.: if I recover from an illness) I shall never become elated³⁸ and never believe that something good has happened to me'³⁹. This happens because, due to the inviolability of the nature of things, sooner or later, he who averts an aproairetic thing is bound to run into what he averts. Epictetus, therefore, advises repeatedly the beginner in philosophy to never avert something aproairetic and to limit himself only to avert what, of what is proairetic, he knows well, has so far practiced and is against the nature of things: for example, anger, disdain, envy and pity⁴⁰.

36. Franco Scalenghe, 'Proairesis', 'Proairetic' and 'Aproairetic': Synopsis of All the Passages Containing these Terms in the 'Discourses' and the 'Manual' of Epictetus. *International Journal of Philosophy*, 3, no. 3(2015): 24-33. doi: 10.11648/j.ijp.20150303.11. Franco Scalenghe, "'Nature' and the 'Nature of Things' in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: A Synopsis." *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts*, 4, no 4(2017): 259-282.

37. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

38. Epictetus "The Manual" 6.

39. Epictetus "The Manual" 5.

40. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

Phenomenology of the Aversion to Proairetic Things

There are also two kinds of possible ways of averting something proairetic, and even in this regard the two men totally differ.

The aversion of the 'Homo proaireticus' who knows and respects the nature of things and his own proairesis cannot be but successful, because by the definition itself of the nature of things⁴¹, proairetic things are the only ones that are in our exclusive power.

But what happens to the 'Homo sapiens', the one who denies the existence of the nature of things? This man is proud to call himself a man endowed with and a strict follower of 'Reason' in every circumstance⁴². As we have already said, he ignores or denies the existence of the nature of things and therefore of his own proairesis. Due to the fact that he does not operate the diairesis between aproairetic and proairetic things, also in this case we cannot say that the aversion of this man is directed to something aproairetic or to something proairetic, because the ignorance or the denial of the existence of the nature of things means by definition ignorance or denial of both aproairetic and proairetic things. The aversion of this man is an aversion that incorporates the following explicit or implicit assumption: 'I believe that the fulfillment of my aversion is in my power. In case of failure I shall blame and curse other people or Nature, and take it as an evil that has happened to me; while in case of success I shall become elated and believe that something good has happened to me'⁴³. This man can well ignore or deny the existence of the nature of things and accordingly of his own proairesis, but he has no power at all to cancel the existence of the nature of things, as he has no power at all to cease to be a natural creature⁴⁴. Thus, he constantly reveals himself unprepared to face the consequences of his own aversions, and so finds himself continually in contradiction, because he pretends to be able to get what the nature of things absolutely forbids: i.e. that both aproairetic and proairetic things be in his exclusive power. And if he denies to be able to fulfill his aversion to something, he is again ignoring or denying the existence of the nature of things⁴⁵. As it is evident, this happens because the man who averts something without the due reservation⁴⁶ cannot be certain to succeed and inevitably, sooner or later, he is doomed to stumble in what he averts. And even if he could once fulfill his aversion, he would become elated⁴⁷, drawing the false conclusion that

41. Franco Scalenghe, "'Nature' and the 'Nature of Things' in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: A Synopsis". *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts*, 4, no. 4(2017): 259-282.

42. Epictetus 'Fragments' XXVIIIa = Marcus Aurelius "Meditations" (Book XI, ch. 39).

43. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book II, ch. 22, 15-21).

44. Epictetus "The Manual" 4.

45. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book I, ch. 11, 9-15).

46. Epictetus "The Manual" 5.

47. Epictetus "The Manual" 6.

he has power over what he has no power at all. Epictetus, therefore, is right in advising the beginner in philosophy to completely remove his aversion to all aproairetic things and, among the proairetic things, to avert only what is not in accord with the nature of things⁴⁸.

Three Remarks

As a conclusion, at this point it appears useful to add three considerations. The first is that the difference between desire, craving and passion is not a difference of intensity or of nature, but simply of the presence, in the desire, of the due reservation; and of the absence, in crave and in passion, of the due reservation. The same is true for the difference between aversion, that incorporates the due reservation; and fear and affliction, which are aversions lacking the due reservation. The second consideration is that although desire and aversion, at first sight, might seem two distinct deeds; actually, they are one and the same proairetic deed, simply seen from two opposing points of view. Indeed, the desire of something automatically means the aversion to its opposite. The desire (a proairetic thing) of good health (an aproairetic thing) means aversion (a proairetic thing) of illness (an aproairetic thing). The desire of serenity (a proairetic thing) automatically means aversion to disconcertment (also a proairetic thing)⁴⁹. The third and most important consideration, (and this is the brilliant contribution of Epictetus to Stoicism) is that the desire and the aversion of the 'Homo proaireticus' are always proairetic deeds, while the objects of his desire and aversion can be both proairetic things (such as anger and envy) or aproairetic things (like money and health). This, unfortunately, is not true of the 'Homo sapiens', who is unable to add the due reservation to any of his soul's movements.

The Guiding Principle of the Synopsis

The present synopsis is divided in two sections. The first section is an analytic synopsis that collects the quotations of all the different grammatical forms (i.e. noun, adjective, adverb, verb, etc.) of the terms 'desire' and 'aversion' as they appear in the first and second book of the *Discourses* of Epictetus. This choice has been dictated by the fact that an analytic synopsis of these two terms in all the works of Epictetus would have taken a larger space than the one reasonable in a research paper, while it would have added nothing to what already emerges very clearly from the quotations of the first two books.

48. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

49. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book IV, ch. 4, 1-5).

If not otherwise stated, all the English translations of Epictetus quoted in this paper are taken from a new English translation of all Epictetus, that I have found especially useful, because its distinctive feature is the fact of having being strictly based upon the analysis of the “Index Verborum” included in H. Schenkl’s critical edition of Epictetus⁵⁰. This means that the translator has been very scrupulous in giving to each word of the Greek text, one or the least possible number of meanings consistent with the different contexts in which they appear, and so has been able to keep in the English translation essentially the number of occurrences that each word has in the Greek text. In this first synopsis, all the fragments are labeled with the notation P²DA (Proairetic Desire and Aversion) followed by a serial number (P²DA1, P²DA2, etc.) The reason for the choice of this notation, that has already been used⁵¹ in order to label as P² anything that is ‘proairetic’, is the discovery, as has been shown analytically in a paper recently published⁵², that it is possible to formally treat the human proairesis as a natural exponential function written in complex numbers. In particular, if one analyzes its arithmetic and its geometry, one finds that the proairesis can be understood and treated as a negative real number which is the one and the same fourth grade power (P⁴) of four different complex numbers (for example $p_1= 1+i$, $p_2= -1+i$, $p_3= -1-i$, $p_4= 1-i$). Moreover, it turns out that if one squares each of these four complex numbers, one gets a couple of imaginary numbers that differ only for their sign: in this case $+2i$, $-2i$. If we consider that desire and aversion are proairetic deeds and that they can be actually treated as the same deed simply seen from two opposite points of view, exactly as 4 is the square of both $+2$ and -2 , I believe that we are entitled to continue the use of the notation (P²) in order to label everything that is ‘proairetic’.

The second section contains a synthetic summary of the total occurrences not only of the terms ‘Desire’ and ‘Aversion’, but also of the terms ‘Craving’, ‘Passion’, ‘Fear’ and ‘Grief’, that have been discovered and shown to be so strictly connected to the previous ones.

50. Franco Scalenghe, “A new Italian and a new English translation of all the works of Epictetus” according to the Greek text edited by Oldfather, William Abbot: ‘Epictetus. The Discourses as reported by Arrian, the Manual and the Fragments’. London, Heinemann 1961. Unpublished translations available at www.epitteto.com

51. Franco Scalenghe, ‘Proairesis’, ‘Proairetic’ and ‘Aproairetic’: Synopsis of All the Passages Containing these Terms in the ‘Discourses’ and the ‘Manual’ of Epictetus. *International Journal of Philosophy*, 3, no. 3(2015): 24-33. doi: 10.11648/j.ijp.20150303.11

52. F. Scalenghe, “About the Arithmetic and the Geometry of Human Proairesis and the Natural Asymmetry by Which Unhappiness Wins the Game against Happiness 3 to 1”. *International Journal of Philosophy*, 3, no. 6(2015): 72-82. doi: 10.11648/j.ijp.20150306.14

The Analytic Synopsis

(P²DA1) - I gave you a certain particularity of yours: the faculty [...] of **desiring** and **averting**; a faculty, in short, able to use impressions.

'Discourses' I,1,12

(P²DA2) - This is [...] to have arranged an unhampered **desire** and an unstumbling **aversion**.

'Discourses' I,1,31

(P²DA3) - Having learned from the philosophers that **desire** is towards good things and **aversion** is towards evil things, [...] he <who profits> gets an unfailing **desire** and an unstumbling **aversion** <if> he has fully removed **desire** from himself or has deferred it, and uses **aversion** only towards what is proairetic.

'Discourses' I,4,1

(P²DA4) - For if he **averts** something aproairetic, he knows that some time he will stumble on it in spite of his **aversion**.

'Discourses' I,4,2

(P²DA5) - And where is your work? In **desire** and **aversion**, that you may be unfailing in **desire** and unstumbling in **aversion**. [...] If you seek to have an unstumbling **aversion** while trembling and mourning, how do you profit?

'Discourses' I,4,11-12

(P²DA6) - Slave! I don't seek that, but how [...] you **desire** and **avert** [...]: if in harmony with the nature of things or not in harmony with it.

'Discourses' I,4,14

(P²DA7) - Come on, is it otherwise in the topic of **desire** [...] What can overcome [...] a **desire** and an **aversion** except another **desire** and another **aversion**?

'Discourses' I,17,24

(P²DA8) - <If> it is unmanageable to determine one thing useful and yet to **desire** another, [...] why are we any longer embittered against the multitude?

'Discourses' I,18,2

(P²DA9) - Can you <the tyrant> secure me an unhampered **desire**? [...] An unstumbling **aversion**? Do you have it?

'Discourses' I,19,2

(P²DA10) - Who ever sacrificed for having **desired** as a virtuous man?

'Discourses' I,19,25

(P²DA11) - I am content if I **desire** and **avert** in accord with the nature of things.

'Discourses' I,21,2

(P²DA12) - To **desire** something with a shameful crave makes no difference to us, if only we hit the mark in the aproairetic things.

'Discourses' II,1,10

(P²DA13) - For if one transposes his caution there where proairesis and the deeds of proairesis are, [...] he will also have his **aversion** in his exclusive power. If, on the contrary, he transposes his caution there where lies what is not in our

exclusive power and is aproairetic, having his **aversion** turned to things that are in power of other people he will necessarily fear.

'Discourses' II,1,12

(P²DA14) - Show me [...] how you stand towards **desire** and **aversion**; if you do not fail in what you want, if you do not stumble on what you do not want.

'Discourses' II,1,31

(P²DA15) - "See how I do not fail in my **desire**. See how, in my **aversion**, I do not stumble on what I **avert**".

'Discourses' II,1,35

(P²DA16) - Appear to know only this: how you never fail in your **desire** nor stumble on what you **avert**.

'Discourses' II,1,37

(P²DA17) - Who will constrain you to **desire** what does not seem to you to be **desirable**, and to **avert** what it does not appear to you that should be **averted**? But someone will perform against you things that seem to be frightful. And how can he also make you to experience them with **aversion**? When, then, it's in your exclusive power to **desire** and to **avert**, what do you turn anymore your mind towards?

'Discourses' II,2,4-6

(P²DA18) - He <is lord> who has power over any of the things that you are eager for or that you **avert**.

'Discourses' II,2,26

(P²DA19) - We ought to come to them <the seers> apart from **desire** and from **aversion**, just as the traveller tries to know [...] which one of two roads brings forth to his destination, without **desiring** that the road <be> the right or the left one.

'Discourses' II,7,10

(P²DA20) - I'll show you the sinews of a philosopher: [...] an unfailing **desire**, an unstumbling **aversion**.

'Discourses' II,8,29

(P²DA21) - What is the profession of a citizen? To [...] deliberate [...] like the hand or the foot, which, if they [...] understood the structure of nature, would never [...] **desire** otherwise than by referring to the whole.

'Discourses' II,10,4

(P²DA22) - Yet he does not [...] seal up a bond with his seal amiss or write a guarantee amiss, and nevertheless he uses **desire** and **aversion** apart from any lawyer.

'Discourses' II,13,7

(P²DA23) - When, then, you see someone who turns pale, as the physician looking at someone's complexion says: "This fellow's spleen is affected; and this fellow's liver is"; so, you also say: "This fellow's **desire** and **aversion** are affected".

'Discourses' II,13,12

(P²DA24) - And from this ensues [...] not to fail in **desire** and, in **aversion**, not to stumble on what is **averted**; [...] while keeping with the mates the relationships - both natural and acquired- of son, father, brother, citizen, husband, wife.

'Discourses' II,14,8

(P²DA25) - But if you say to someone: "Your **desires** are inflamed, your **aversions** are those of a slave-minded fellow, [...] your conceptions are rash and false"; straightaway he goes out and says: "He outraged me!"

'Discourses' II,14,22

(P²DA26) - When you dispose and **desire** along with him <Zeus>, why do you still fear to fail? Give graciously your **desire** and your **aversion** to poverty in money and to money's wealth: you will fail, you will stumble on what you **avert**.

'Discourses' II,17,23-24

(P²DA27) - And then [...] you return again to the same things. You **desire** in the same way, you **avert** in the same way.

'Discourses' II,17,36

(P²DA28) - You sir, your program was to fashion yourself able to use the impressions that befall you in a way which is in accord with the nature of things: unflinching in **desire**, unflinching in **aversion**.

'Discourses' II,23,42

(P²DA29) - But if he < who listens> lies nearby like a stone or fodder, how can he move such **desire** <to speak> in a man?

'Discourses' II,24,16

(P²DA30) - The person unaware of who he is [...] and who will neither **desire**, nor **avert** [...] in accord with the nature of things; on the whole this person [...] is nobody.

'Discourses' II,24,19

(P²DA31) - Three are the topics in which the man who will be virtuous must train himself: that which deals with **desires** and **aversions**, that he may not fail in his **desire** and, when he **averts**, that he may not stumble on what he **averts**.

The Synthetic Synopsis

Synthetic summary of the occurrence of the terms Desire, Craving, Passion, Aversion, Fear, Grief in the works of Epictetus

DESIRE

Total occurrences of the term 'Desire' - ὄρεξις - (noun + verbal forms) in Epictetus
118

I,1,12 - I,1,31 - I,4,1 - I,4,11-12 - I,4,14 - I,17,24 - I,18,2 - I,19,2 - I,19,25 - I,21,2 - II,1,10
- II,1,31 - I,1,35 - II,1,37 - II,2,4-6 - II,7,10 - II,8,29 - II,10,4 - II,13,7 - II,13,12 - II,14,22 -
II,17,23-24 - II,17,36 - II,23,42 - II,24,16 - II,24,19 - III,2,1 - III,2,3 - III,3,2 - III,6,6 -
III,7,26 - III,7,34 - III,9,18 - III,9,22 - III,12,4-8 - III,12,13 - III,12,16 - III,13,21 - III,14,10

- III,18,2 - III,21,23 - III,22,13 - III,22,31 - III,22,36 - III,22,43 - III,22,48 - III,22,61 - III,22,104 - III,23,9 - III,23,12 - III,24,54 - III,24,56 - III,26,13-14 - IV,1,1 - IV,1,4-5 - IV,1,27 - IV,1,74-77 - IV,1,81 - IV,1,84 - IV,1,89 - IV,4,6 - IV,4,16 - IV,4,18 - IV,4,28 - IV,4,33 - IV,4,35 - IV,5,27 - IV,6,18 - IV,6,2 - IV,8,20 - IV,10,4-6 - IV,11,6 - IV,11,26 - 'Manual' 1,1 - 'Manual' 2,1-2 - 'Manual' 14,1 - 'Manual' 15 - 'Manual' 29,6 - 'Manual' 31,4 - 'Manual' 32,2 - 'Manual' 48,3

AVERSION

Total occurrences of the term 'Aversion' - ἔκκλισις - (noun + verbal forms) in Epictetus **114**

I,1,12 - I,1,31 - I,4,1 - I,4,2 - I,4,11-12 - I,4,14 - I,17,24 - I,19,2 - I,21,2 - II,1,12 - II,1,31 - II,1,35 - II,1,37 - II,2,4-6 - II,2,26 - II,7,10 - II,8,29 - II,13,7 - II,13,12 - II,14,8 - II,14,22 - II,17,23-24 - II,17,36 - II,23,42 - II,24,19 - III,2,1 - III,2,3 - III,3,2 - III,6,6 - III,7,26 - III,7,34 - III,12,4-8 - III,12,13 - III,12,16 - III,14,10 - III,22,13 - III,22,31 - III,22,36 - III,22,43 - III,22,48 - III,22,61 - III,22,104 - III,23,9 - III,23,12 - III,24,54 - III,24,56 - III,26,13-14 - IV,1,1 - IV,1,4-5 - IV,1,81 - IV,4,6 - IV,4,16 - IV,4,18 - IV,4,28 - IV,4,33 - IV,4,37 - IV,5,27 - IV,6,18 - IV,6,26 - IV,8,20 - V,10,4-6 - IV,11,6 - IV,11,26 - 'Manual' 1,1 - 'Manual' 2,1-2 - 'Manual' 31,4 - 'Manual' 32,2 - 'Manual' 48,3

CRAVING

Total occurrences of the term 'Craving' - ἐπιθυμία - (noun + verbal forms) in Epictetus **46**

I,6,24 - I,9,26 - I,19,29 - II,1,10 - II,16,45 - II,18,8-9 - II,18,19 - II,19,24 - II,19,27 - II,24,1 - III,5,9 - III,9,3 - III,9,6 - III,9,21-22 - III,11,2 - III,15,7 - III,15,11 - III,19,5 - III,24,112 - IV,1,23 - IV,1,33 - IV,1,84 - IV,1,170 - IV,1,174-175 - IV,4,1-2 - IV,4,21 - IV,6,36 - IV,7,28 - IV,9,3 - IV,9,5 - IV,11,19 - IV,13,22 - 'Manual' 21 - 'Manual' 22 - 'Manual' 29,3

FEAR

Total occurrences of the term 'Fear' - φόβος - (noun + verbal forms) in Epictetus **100**

I,5,4 - I,9,6 - I,9,8 - I,9,26 - I,17,25 - I,23,4 - I,24,13 - I,25,1 - I,25,25 - I,27,10 - I,29,8 - I,29,12 - I,29,61-62 - II,1,8-9 - II,1,11-14 - II,1,21 - II,1,24 - II,5,12 - II,5,17 - II,7,9 - II,8,15 - II,8,24 - II,10,18 - II,13,5 - II,13,9 - II,14,8 - II,16,11-12 - II,16,19 - II,16,45 - II,17,23 - II,17,29 - II,18,30 - II,22,6 - II,23,30 - II,23,33 - III,2,3 - II,10,13 - III,10,17 - II,18,7 - III,22,16 - II,22,25 - III,22,48-49 - II,22,61 - III,22,106 - II,24,112 - III,24,116-117 - II,26,21 - III,26,23 - II,26,27 - III,26,38 - IV,1,4-5 - IV,1,10 - IV,1,23 - IV,1,48 - IV,1,60 - IV,1,81-85 - IV,1,114 - IV,2,7 - IV,4,19-20 - IV,5,27 - IV,6,16 - IV,4,7 - IV,9,5 - IV,10,5 - IV,10,22 - 'Manual' 12,1 - 'Manual' 35

PASSION

Total occurrences of the term 'Passion' - πάθος - (noun only) in Epictetus **10**

I,4,26 - I,27,10 - II,9,20 - II,18,11 - III,1,8 - III,2,3 - IV,1,57 - IV,1,115 - IV,8,28

GRIEF

Total occurrences of the term 'Grief' - λύπη - (noun + verbal forms) in Epictetus
33

I,2,21 - I,9,7 - I,23,4 - II,1,24 - II,12,7-8 - II,14,8 - II,16,45 - II,18,14 - II,22,6 - III,2,16 - III,8,3 - III,11,2 - III,13,11 - III,22,61 - III,24,23 - III,24,43 - III,24,72 - III,24,81-82 - III,24,90 - IV,1,4-5 - IV,1,84 - IV,3,7 - IV,4,32 - IV,6,8 - IV,12,20 - 'Manual' 5 - 'Manual' 12,1

There are only Four Basic Attitudes of the Human Proairesis with Regard to Desire and Aversion

Since it is empirically true that any man judges good to get what he desires, and judges bad to run into what he averts, the 'virtuousness' or the 'viciousness' of any man is strictly correlated with the 'diairetic' or 'counterdiairetic' attitude of his proairesis⁵³. This means that the only virtuous man is the man whose proairesis respects its nature, who recognizes the 'nature of things' and treats accordingly what is 'proairetic', led by the judgment that the outcome of the operation is in his exclusive power, and thus obtains what he wants; and interacts with what is 'aproairetic', led by the judgment that the outcome of the operation is not in his exclusive power, and therefore with the due reservation, so as not to run into self-failure and distress⁵⁴. It is evident that, on the contrary, the man who does not use the diairesis and doesn't apply the due reservations to his desires and aversions, will be a vicious and unhappy fellow, because he is treating what is 'proairetic' as if it were not in his exclusive power, and what is 'aproairetic' as if it were instead in his exclusive power.

Now, if we assume as reasonably proven that the human proairesis (P⁴) can be considered and treated as a natural exponential function whose arithmetic and geometry are written in complex numbers⁵⁵, we can easily deduce that the proairesis can take only four basic attitudes. And remembering that the nature of things tells us that all the existing things divide themselves into proairetic and aproairetic ones⁵⁶, the only four basic possible attitudes of our proairesis can be obtained in the following way.

53. Franco Scalenghe, "The diairesis at work". Unpublished text. www.epitteto.com/Dialogue_3.html; Franco Scalenghe, "Gyges: Diairesis and Counterdiairesis, Good and Evil". Unpublished text. www.epitteto.com/Dialogue_5.html

54. Epictetus "The Manual" 6; Epictetus "The Manual" 5.

55. F. Scalenghe, "About the Arithmetic and the Geometry of Human Proairesis and the Natural Asymmetry by Which Unhappiness Wins the Game against Happiness 3 to 1". *International Journal of Philosophy*, 3, no. 6(2015): 72-82. doi: 10.11648/j.ijp.20150306.14

56. Franco Scalenghe, "'Nature' and the 'Nature of Things' in the Stoic Philosophy of Epictetus: A Synopsis". *Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts*, 4, no. 4(2017): 259-282.

Let us give to the attitude 'proairetic things are in my exclusive power' the value $+1$, and to the attitude 'proairetic things are not in my exclusive power' the value -1 ; and to the attitude 'aproairetic things are in my exclusive power' the value $+i$, and to the attitude 'aproairetic things are not in my exclusive power' the value $-i$. It logically follows that the first attitude ($p_1 = +1+i$) is the one that can be called 'exaltation'; the second ($p_2 = -1+i$) is the one that can be called 'foolishness'; the third, that is ($p_3 = -1-i$) the one that can be called 'depression' and the fourth and last ($p_4 = +1-i$) the one that can be called 'wisdom'. Moreover because, according to this model, proairesis can be seen as a negative real number which is the one and the same fourth grade power of four different complex numbers (in the present case $P^4 = -4 = p_1^4 = p_2^4 = p_3^4 = p_4^4$), we can postulate that all these four attitudes are continuously available to the proairesis and that the transition from one attitude to another one is possible via a simple proairetic operation that in mathematical language consists, for example, in the multiplication of p_1 (or p_2 or p_3 or p_4) by the imaginary unit i . In fact if we multiply p_1 by i we obtain p_2 $(+1+i) \times i = (-1+i)$; if we multiply p_2 by i we obtain p_3 $(-1+i) \times i = (-1-i)$; if we multiply p_3 by i we obtain p_4 $(-1-i) \times i = (+1-i)$; and if we multiply p_4 by i we are again back to p_1 $(+1-i) \times i = (+1+i)$. Now, what happens to the desires and aversions in these four different proairetic attitudes?

The 'exalted' $(+1+i)$ man is the man convinced that everything is in his exclusive power and, in Epictetus' terms, that both proairetic and aproairetic things are in his exclusive power. Therefore, he hurls himself without the due reservation⁵⁷ into the desire of both what is proairetic and of what is aproairetic, ignoring or denying the existence of the nature of things and applying no diairesis at all⁵⁸.

The 'foolish' $(-1+i)$ man operates the diairesis and recognizes the distinction between what is proairetic and what is aproairetic but he strongly believes to have power only over aproairetic things and concentrates all his desires and aversions over them. He desires money and averts the lack of money, while judging to have no power at all to modify the attitude of his own proairesis. And if one tries to draw his attention upon the contradiction that he is trapped in, he justifies himself by saying that all men do what he does, and that it is a good thing to behave as the majority of men behave.

The 'depressed' $(-1-i)$ man is disconsolately convinced that nothing is in his power. Like the exalted man, he also does not recognize the existence of the nature of things nor operates the diairesis between what is proairetic and what is aproairetic. His usual occupation is to think while standing still, and staring at the insurmountable wall that he sees in front of him. He is the man who desires to never desire and who always averts to avert.

57. Epictetus "The Manual" 2.

58. Franco Scalenghe, "Epictetus: Diairesis and Contradiairesis" in '*Prometeus*' 7, no. 15 (Janeiro-Junho 2014). E-ISSN: 2176-5960

Finally, the 'wise' (+1-*i*) man is the only one of the four who, through the constant and correct use of the diairesis between what is proairetic and what is aproairetic opens himself without fear nor elation to a full interaction with the universe in its complexity; who lives well, and, as Marcus Aurelius tells us⁵⁹, shines of the light with which he sees the truth of the nature of things and the truth that is in himself⁶⁰.

Conclusion. The Words of Epictetus

Let now Epictetus to draw some conclusion for us: "Remember that it is not only the craving for offices and money's wealth that make people slave-minded and subordinated to others, but also the craving for quiet, for leisure, for setting off, for scholarship. In short whatever is the external object, its price subordinates you to another. Which difference does it make to crave for being a Senator or not being a Senator? Which difference does it make to crave for an office or for not having it? Which difference does it make to say 'I fare badly, I have nothing to do but am tied down to books like a corpse', or say 'I fare badly, I have not enough leisure to read'? For, as salutations and offices are external and aproairetic objects, so is also a book. Why do you want to read? Tell me. If you turn to reading because your soul is won by it or in order to learn something, you are a cold and slothful fellow. If you refer reading to what it ought to be referred, what else is this but serenity? And if reading does not secure you serenity, of which avail is it to you? -It secures me serenity, one says, and for this reason I am vexed when I must leave reading behind- And which serenity is this, that a chance comer can hinder, I don't say Caesar or a friend of Caesar but a crow, a flute-player, a fever and thirty thousand other things? Serenity cleaves to nothing so strongly as to continuity and freedom from hindrance⁶¹".

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61. Epictetus "Discourses" (Book IV, ch. 4, 1-5).

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