

LAUTNER, Peter. – *Iamblichus' transformation of the Aristotelian κάθαρσις, its middle-Platonic antecedents and Proclus' and Simplicius' response to it.* AAntHung 2000 40 (1-4): 263-282. • In Iamblichus the survival and application of Peripatetic theories implies an ethical doctrine – partly inherited from Plotinus – which accounts for the possibility of the emotions being tamed instead of eradicated. Whether Simplicius accepted this interpretation in all respects remains unclear. At any rate, his method of soothing the emotions lacks the element of « persuasion by reason » which is typical of Iamblichus and, with even greater emphasis, Proclus. The constant allusion to κάθαρσις however suggests that he gave importance to the spontaneous response of the emotional faculties, even though ἀπάθεια remains the ideal way of life. [72-16063]

Aristotle bequeathed his followers certain notions that were to be of great importance to posterity. Some of them were taken up and discussed at length in Hellenistic schools, but others escaped notice; κάθαρσις belongs to the latter group. This is all the more surprising since the Stoics made considerable effort to demonstrate that passions (πάθη) can be tamed by reason. The Stoic ideal of freedom from passions which implies conversion of each passion into εὐπάθεια may at first sight have some affinity with the interpretation of κάθαρσις which focuses on the ethical importance of emotions for Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> But a closer look at the peculiar character of the Stoics' overall conception of the soul reveals that any similarity is but mere appearance. It is only among some of the later Neoplatonists that Aristotle's concept regains the significance it once had. By that time it gains a strong ethical emphasis. As far as our evidence allows us to say, the development started in the early imperial age. My aim is to follow the renaissance of this notion in Iamblichus, its antecedents among the Platonists of the early empire and the way Proclus and Simplicius reacted to Iamblichus' attempt. I hope that Professor Ritoók will consider this as an appropriate subject with which to honour him. His latest contribution to explaining the problem of how desire and cognitive activities are interlocked in Aristotle's concept of poetry will serve as an excellent point of reference for this investigation.<sup>3</sup> We can now see that the discussion of how desires are involved in, and formed by the watching of tragedies is intimately tied to the account of how understanding and desire to understand contribute to κάθαρσις.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This paper owes much to Richard Sorabji with whom I had the opportunity to discuss the whole material in April 1998 at Oxford. It was revised in the summer of 1999 with the support of the Center for Hellenic Studies. But it goes without question that all shortcomings are mine.

<sup>2</sup> The best recent overview may have been given by S. HALLIWELL: *Aristotle's Poetics*. London 1986, 1998<sup>2</sup>, 184–201.

<sup>3</sup> *Desire, Poetry and Cognition: A Chapter from Greek Aesthetic Thought*, Acta Antiqua XXVIII (1996/97) 37–53.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, 49–50.

## I

In order to discuss our topic properly it will first be necessary to lay out some of the Hellenistic preliminaries. This section may be taken as presenting certain premises which will be tied together and brought to bear on the issue of *kátharsis* in subsequent sections.

The lack of interest in this notion among the philosophers of the Hellenistic age is rather conspicuous. Nevertheless, we shall find sufficient reason both among the Epicureans and the Stoics for not incorporating it into their own theories. The former credited *lógos* with curing the soul from diseases caused by passions, thus securing a flourishing life. This is all the more possible because emotions are linked to beliefs and pleasant life involves *φρόνησις*.<sup>5</sup> The Epicurean sage is not free of emotions; on the contrary, he is more susceptible to emotions than the rest of us, but it does not impede him from becoming wise.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this is that his beliefs are not false and empty. Having right beliefs thus transforms the structure of an emotion which can therefore be beneficial.<sup>7</sup> For example, anger is commendable if it arises from the insight into the nature of things and from avoiding false beliefs. The abundance of medical analogies suggests that, like the Stoics, the Epicureans also drew a great deal from the therapeutic function of *lógos*.<sup>8</sup> The case with the Stoics can be better documented and has greater importance for the present purposes. The dismissal of the notion of *kátharsis* can be explained by reference to the difference between Aristotelian and Stoic views on the nature of the soul. At the root of the divergence we undoubtedly find Plato's tripartition of the soul. As is well known, he locates the different parts of the soul to different parts of the body. The modification Aristotle introduces into this conception seems only partial. While sharing with Plato the assumption that the soul is divided into separate parts and the part containing emotions is different from the intellect, he does not assign them to different bodily parts. As a further, far-reaching step, the Stoics do not even allow the lower parts to work independently of the intellect.<sup>9</sup> Their most important innovation was to massively expand the province of intellect, which was intimately tied to the conviction that the

<sup>5</sup> Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 132; Philodemus, *De Ira* XLVII 18–42, XLIX 28–50.8 INDELLI.

<sup>6</sup> Diogenes Laertius X 117–120 and, concerning natural anger, Philodemus, *De Ira* XXXVI 13–15; XLIX 20–22.

<sup>7</sup> See the discussion of anger in Philodemus, *De Ira* XXXVII 24–40; XLV 35 ff. INDELLI. J. PROCOPE: 'Epicureans on anger', G. W. MOST–H. PETERSMANN–A. M. RITTER (hrsg.): *Philanthropia kai eusebeia*. Festschrift für Albrecht Dihle zum 70. Geburtstag. Göttingen 1993, 363–386, emphasized that in the Epicurean concept the anger of the sage may be remarkably brief and mild – but this is without any reference to the *μετριοπάθεια* theory. For the sage the best way of being angry is not to be angry at all, only to pretend to be, cf. J. ANNAS: *The Morality of Happiness*. N.Y.–Oxford 1993, 199.

<sup>8</sup> Fr. 221 USENER: Philodemus, *De Ira* IV–V INDELLI. For details, see M. NUSSBAUM: *The Therapy of Desire*. Princeton 1994, 102–140; J. ANNAS: *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind*. Berkeley 1992, 189–199.

<sup>9</sup> In the following I shall discuss the early representatives of the school. For present purposes there is no need to discuss Posidonius' return to the Platonic tripartition of the soul or the differences between Zeno and Chrysippus. I am not going to discuss here either whether emotions in Plato are cognitive or not. But even if we accept that there is a cognitive element in them, the difference from Stoic passions or emotions remains decisive as the latter are doubtless propositional.

human soul is unitary, although not necessarily monadic. The main division of the human soul into parts or faculties is the following: it has eight parts, namely the five senses, the part giving heed to voice, the part regulating reproductive capacities, and the reason which controls the rest.<sup>10</sup> The control of reason over the whole soul is decisive. In explaining the arousal of passions the Stoics must rely on this overall picture. Passions are thus defined as perverted judgments or results of such judgments.<sup>11</sup> They are intrinsically wrong and products of a malfunctioning reason. Does this imply that the sage who does not have a single false judgment will be deprived of all kinds of emotion? Indeed, the Stoics were frequently accused of making the sage a sort of ascetic lacking all kinds of emotions, but the accusation is entirely unfounded. The sage has emotions, but these are accompanied by right judgments. To distinguish emotion accompanied by right judgments from passions that are unworthy of the sage, the Stoics termed it *εὐπάθεια*. There are three *εὐπάθειαι* corresponding to three of the four main types of *πάθος*: *χαρά* to *ἡδονή*, *βούλησις* to *ὄρεξις* and *εὐλάβεια* to *φόβος*.<sup>12</sup> The fourth type of *πάθος* (*λύπη*) has no equivalent *εὐπάθεια* presumably because the sage is not affected by bad things and therefore he does not have to feel distress by surmising that bad things are present.<sup>13</sup> Unlike *πάθη* that are excessive impulses and false judgments, *εὐπάθειαι* fit the sage whose soul is undisturbed by passions and whose judgments are right. Nevertheless, the early Stoic solution presupposes the unity of the human soul and the dominance of reason therein. One exception may be Diogenes of Babylon, disciple of Chrysippus, who is assumed to have adopted Aristotle's theory of *kátharsis* for his own purposes.<sup>14</sup> If this assumption proves to be correct, then we have a further piece of evidence for his Platonizing tendencies that can be shown in the same testimony, Philodemus' *On Music*.<sup>15</sup> In any

<sup>10</sup> Aëtius, IV 4.4 (*SVF* II 827); D.L. VII 110 (*SVF* II 828); Porphyry ap. Stobaeus, *Ecl.* I 350 W. (*SVF* II 830); Iamblichus ap. Stobaeus, *Ecl.* I 369 W. (*SVF* II 831).

<sup>11</sup> D.L. VII 111 (*SVF* III 456); Plutarch, *De virt. mor.* 441C, 446F (*SVF* III 459); Galen, *PHP* IV 1, p.334 M. (*SVF* III 461), IV 2, p.336 M. (*SVF* III 463).

<sup>12</sup> D.L. VII 15 (*SVF* III 431); Lactantius, *Div. instit.* VI 15 (*SVF* III 437); Cicero, *Tusc.* IV 12 (*SVF* III 438).

<sup>13</sup> The definition of *λύπη* contains the assumption that bad things are present, see Ps-Andronicus, *περί παθῶν* I (*SVF* III 391); Galen, *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* IV 2 (*SVF* III 463); Stobaeus II 90.7 W. (*SVF* III 397); Cicero, *Tusc.* III 11.25 (*SVF* III 385). On the reaction of the sage, see Stobaeus II 7, 49.9 W. (*SVF* III 567). Cicero (*Tusc.* IV 14) claims that the presence of bad things does not affect the sage.

<sup>14</sup> As reconstructed by D. DELATTRE: Philodème, *De la musique*: livre IV, colonnes 40\* à 109\*, Cronache Ercolanesi XIX (1989) 49–143; see also R. JANKO: A first join between *P. Herc.* 411 + 1583 (Philodemus, *On Music* IV): Diogenes of Babylon on natural affinity and music, Cronache Ercolanesi XXII (1992) 123–129.

<sup>15</sup> For the case of passions – insofar as Diogenes anticipates Posidonius' return to Platonic psychology –, see M. C. NUSSBAUM: Poetry and the passions: Two Stoic views, J. BRUNSCHWIG–M. C. NUSSBAUM (eds): *Passions & Perceptions*. Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind. Cambridge 1992, 97–150, esp. 115–121. On the other hand, as has been shown by A. BRANCACCI: Diogene di Babilonia e Aristosseno nel *De Musica* di Filodemo, G. GIANNANTONI–M. GIGANTE (eds): *Epicureismo greco e romano*. Naples 1996, 573–583, Diogenes relied a great deal on Aristoxenus not only in discussing the features of musical sounds (first book), but also in examining the ethical implications. It proves that Diogenes was ready to accept non-Stoic ideas as well.

case, adherence to the concept of a tripartite soul would make the adoption of the notion of *κάθαρσις* more understandable.

In contrast with the predominantly rationalistic views held by the early Stoics, Aristotle supports the Platonic division of the soul into – though not spatially – different parts. He believes that *κάθαρσις* arises as an emotional response to what we see in tragedies and comedies.<sup>16</sup> While such responses are seen to involve thoughts as well as physiological processes, they are overwhelmingly emotional. That is, *κάθαρσις* cannot function at a purely intellectual level. But it is exactly this feature that allows us to associate it with the virtues of character.<sup>17</sup> This link gains particular significance if we emphasize the educative function of *κάθαρσις*. Accordingly, when watching a tragedy we are not only freed from unnecessary outbreaks of passion, it also teaches us to feel the emotions appropriate for the circumstances. By virtue of *κάθαρσις* we come closer to the emotions of the excellent and virtuous person which are mean states between the extremes relative to ourselves. It helps us acquire a disposition to feel emotions properly which, in turn, is the path to developing a good character. Having appropriate emotional response to conflicts in tragedies and comedies can accustom us to achieve and maintain the proper standard in our choices, which in turn leads towards the mean in emotional terms and hence to practical wisdom and virtue. All this may mean that *κάθαρσις* implies a concord of emotions, that it helps us to arrange emotions properly and without excesses. Aristotle puts forward a theory that virtue of character is an intermediate between two extremes. There is a *ἕξις* which imposes correct measure upon emotions.<sup>18</sup> However, he never termed this mean state *μετριοπάθεια*.

## II

It fell to his successors in the Lyceum to construe a more general theory around this notion. On elaborating it their main objective was to contest the Stoic ideal of *ἀπάθεια*. For them emotions are natural and beneficial as long as they are kept within bounds. They are not to be eradicated, for indifference reached in this way deprives us of the pleasant feelings coming from mutual affection. But they are not to be exaggerated either because it would exaggerate grief which is contrary to nature and results from false belief. Excessive emotions would injure us. This is not to say that grief, for instance, is to be dismissed altogether since a moderate feeling of grief is admissible. Emotions remain moderate insofar as reason imposes proper measure

<sup>16</sup> *Poetics* 1341b30, 1342a8–18; it is analogous to medical treatment, see *Politics* 1342a10.

<sup>17</sup> As has been pointed out by R. JANKO: From catharsis to the Aristotelian mean, A. O. RORTY (ed.): *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics*. Princeton 1992, 341–359. In discussing this point I am highly indebted to his findings. The other element, as he stresses, is *διαγωγή* (educative entertainment) whereby we can progress towards intelligence, see p.345.

<sup>18</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* II 5. The idea that *κάθαρσις* is *συμμετρία τῶν παθημάτων* comes from A. ROSTAGNI: *Aristotele e l'aristotelismo nella storia dell'estetica antica* (Origini, significato, svolgimento della Poetica), *Scritti Minori* I. Torino 1955, 99–109, 276–280.

upon them. And moderation in passions is a virtue.<sup>19</sup> One discordant voice in the choir may have been Aspasius' who, while accepting that there must be a *παθητική μεσότης*, does not regard it as a virtue. For virtue, he says, must pertain both to passions and to actions. But *μεσότης* inheres passions only. Some aspects of his wording might hint at contemporary debates over the status of *μετριοπάθεια*, of whether it is a virtue or just a moderate state of the passions which is preliminary to virtue. The crucial issue may have been to decide whether a moderate state of the passions is sufficient condition for a virtuous life. That is, it had to be clear whether such a *παθητική μεσότης* necessarily involves virtuous acts, or whether it does not necessitate virtuous acts which therefore must form a separate element in one's virtuous life.<sup>20</sup> Thus moderation in passions is not a virtue in itself, but a state resulting from a virtuous life. Aspasius' follower, Alexander seems to try to maintain a similar position. He says some virtue involves the removal of immoderate passions and thus we use virtues for the moderation of certain passions and actions. Thus moderation in passions may be the aim of a virtuous life. He also links moderation in passions to *σωφροσύνη* that is itself a middle state between bodily distress and pleasure.<sup>21</sup>

Due to the philosophical climate of the age, the notion found its way to the Platonists of the 1st and 2nd century AD as well. This should not come as a surprise for both Plato and Aristotle held very similar views on the constitution of the soul as having distinct parts, one of which contained the emotions.<sup>22</sup> Platonist philosophers in the early imperial age were unanimously convinced by the Peripatetic interpretation of Plato's tripartite psychology according to which the tripartition of the soul is based upon a dichotomy of reason and emotion (*θυμός*). This was the overall scheme within which they treated problems of psychology and ethics.<sup>23</sup> Calvenus Taurus emphasizes Platonic-Peripatetic moderation which leads to the control, but not the

<sup>19</sup> See Cicero, *Tusc.* IV 46; Stobaeus, II 138.19 W.; Plutarch, *Cons. ad Apoll.* 102CD; Pseudo-Plutarch, *De vita et poesi Homeri*. CXXXV, p.38.33–36 (Οἱ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ Περιπάτου τὴν ἀπάθειαν ἀνέφικτον ἀνθρώπων νομίζουσι, τὴν δὲ μετριοπάθειαν εἰσάγοντες, τῇ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῶν πάθων ἀναρρεῖν, μεσότητι τὴν ἀρετὴν ὀρίζονται) in *Plutarchi Opera* Vol. 5. ed. Fr. DÜBNER, Paris 1855. Diogenes Laertius also applies the term when discussing Aristotle's ethics in V 31.

<sup>20</sup> Aspasius, in *EN*, 55.7–28, with *παθητική μεσότης* in 13–14.

<sup>21</sup> *Quaest.* IV 24, 146.15–19, 147.9–10; 27, 154.6–7.

<sup>22</sup> Although Plato could also have been invoked on the side of the early Stoics since in the *Phaedo* he seems to side with those who want to eradicate the passions. I owe this point to J. DILLON in *Alcinous. The Handbook of Platonism*. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by J. DILLON, Oxford 1993, 188. The development of the notion in the early Imperial age has been discussed by J. DILLON: "Metriopatheia and Apatheia": Some reflections on a controversy in later Greek ethics', J. P. ANTON–A. PREUS (eds): *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy II*, Albany, NY, 1983, 508–517, repr. in J. DILLON: *The Golden Chain*, Aldershot 1990. He thinks – to my mind rightly – that Plutarch misrepresented Chrysippus' position by ignoring the notion of *εὐπάθεια*. But he seems to have shared this failure with all of the philosophers in the early Imperial age who criticised the Stoic position. On the relation between Aristotelian ethics and Middle Platonism, see P. L. DONINI: *Tre studi sull'aristotelismo nel II secolo D.C.* Torino 1974, 63–125. He suggests that Plutarch could not rely directly on Aristotle's *EN*, and also points to the parallels between Plutarch's *De virtute morali* and Alcinous' *Didaskalikos*.

<sup>23</sup> For a clear analysis of the fusion of Peripatetic and Platonist ideas in the interpretation of Plato's psychology, see P. A. VAN DER WAERDT: *Peripatetic soul-division, Posidonius and Middle Platonic moral psychology*, GRBS 26 (1985) 373–394.

destruction of anger and contrasts it with the Stoic ἀναλγησία.<sup>24</sup> He refuses to equate lack of anger with insensibility and recommends a moderate amount of such emotions. Maximus of Tyre claims that reason puts measure into emotions whereby virtue comes about, with happiness as a result.<sup>25</sup> Alcinous also defends moderation in passions against insensibility.<sup>26</sup> He is also influenced by the Aristotelian notion of moral virtue as a mean state for, similarly to Alexander, he assumes that virtues render us moderate in passions. The Neopythagorean texts, probably written in this period, display a similar attitude towards moral virtue: it is a kind of μετριοπάθεια.<sup>27</sup> They contested ἀπάθεια on the grounds that it is not only inaccessible to human beings, but also useless. It deprives the soul of the enthusiasm and desire for the good.<sup>28</sup> The main target, of course, is the Stoic theory, but we have to bear in mind that the first Pythagorean communities may also have preferred ἀπάθεια. In contrast, for Metopius the virtues issue from passions and after having come about they conjoin them again. This can only mean that a virtuous life involves, and is accompanied by, certain types of passions all the time. Two passions, pleasure and pain, gained particular importance. Unfortunately, we do not know how they argued for their case, but the result is clear: moral virtue is a middle between pleasures and pains. To put it otherwise, virtue is a concord of pleasure and pain between the two extremes, ἀπάθεια and ἐμπάθεια.

But the most important witness is Plutarch of Chaironea, one of the two authors of this period who connected virtue as moderation in passions and κάθαρσις. He must have had wide access to the writings of earlier philosophers and handbooks in which the matter was discussed in different depth.<sup>29</sup> His treatise *On Moral Virtue* wheels out a whole range of Aristotelian arguments against the Stoic theory of ἀπάθεια and concludes that virtue is a kind of mean. Quantitatively, virtue is a mean state conceived of as a harmonic middle between extremities, but qualitatively it is a

sort of αὐτοτελής ἀκροτής of reason.<sup>30</sup> Although the qualitative sense with which Plutarch endows the concept may reflect Stoic, and perhaps Platonic, views, the greatest influence is exerted by the Peripatetic theories. The evidence may be that in interpreting the Stoic doctrine as prescribing that emotions are to be weeded out Plutarch contrasts it with the Peripatetic notion of μετριοπάθεια.

"For as in the realm of sound musical art produces consonance, not by doing away with the deep low and the shrill high notes; and in the case of body, medical art produces health, not by the removal of heat and coldness, but by the proportionately quantitative admixture of the two; so in the soul moral character (τὸ ἠθικόν) is produced when equity and moderation (μετρίότης) are engendered by reason in the affective (παθητική) faculties and activities."<sup>31</sup>

(tr. by W.C. Helmbold, slightly modified)

Moderation in passion is also considered as a special virtue which is accompanied by moderation in anger (πραότης).<sup>32</sup> In all the ethical works, Plutarch seems to be resolute in his support of μετριοπάθεια.<sup>33</sup> We also have to see that μετριοπάθεια is reached by the interference of reason into the matters of the affective faculties. It is, then, not a self-regulating mechanism of these faculties that opens the way towards virtue. This assumption may be regarded as a compromise with Stoic doctrines, but also as a faithful adherence to Plato's account of the different parts of the soul and their corresponding virtues towards the end of *Republic IV*. On the other hand, the medical analogy may suggest that we can count on the appearance of the term κάθαρσις in this context. The question is how to join it with μετριοπάθεια which is the upshot of the intervention of reason.

In the work on the cheerfulness of soul, when comparing the benefits and harms coming from without with those whose source is in our soul or body, Plutarch makes it clear that the only thing which can impart calm to life is the soul which is purified from evil acts and purposes.<sup>34</sup> But calm of soul is regarded as the state of mind people generally hope to attain. Along with the imperturbable and undefiled

<sup>24</sup> Ap. Gellius, *NA* I 26.10–11. He seems to take ἀναλγησία and ἀναισθησία to mean the same. See also K. PRAECHTER's entry 'Tauros' in *RE* II 5.1, cols. 58–68, esp. 62–63. Cf. also Apuleius: *De Plat. et eius dogmate* II 5.228. I owe this reference to M.-L. LAKMANN: Der Platoniker Tauros in der Darstellung des Aulus Gellius. Leiden 1995, who discusses the passage on pp. 41–45. μετριοπάθεια is also examined here, although she seems to assume that the theory was held by the Peripatetics unanimously.

<sup>25</sup> καὶ μετρεῖ μὲν ὁ λόγος, μετρεῖται δὲ τὰ πάθη (καὶ τὸ μὲν σοφίαν) τοδὲ ἐξ ἁμφοῦν ἔργον εὐδαιμονία, *Diss.* 27.7.122–124 Trapp. See also 1.7. The emphasis is on μετριοπάθεια as an ethical norm, contrasted with the life of the intellect, see S. LILLA: Introduzione al Medio platonismo. Roma 1992, 91.

<sup>26</sup> *Didaskalikos* XXX 5–6, 184.20–36 H. See also the notes by J. DILLON: *op. cit.* 1993, 188–189, 196.

<sup>27</sup> See Archytas, *De educ.* 2, 41.16 Th.; Metopius, *De virt.* 2, 120.24, 121.12 Th.; Theages, *De virt.* 1, 191.28; 2, 192.11 Th. The relevant texts have been discussed by F. BECCHI: L'idea della *metriopatheia* nei testi pseudopitagorici: a proposito di una contraddizione nello Ps.-Archita, *Prometheus* XVIII (1992) 102–120.

<sup>28</sup> Diotogenes, *De regn.* 2, 79.9–11 Th.; Metopius, *De virt.* 2, 121.7–8 Th.

<sup>29</sup> The question of Plutarch's reading list is still open. Although not without predecessors, F. H. SANDBACH: Plutarch and Aristotle, *JCS* VII (1982), 207–223, concluded that there is no firm evidence to show that Plutarch had direct acquaintance with *Nicomachean Ethics*. Donini also points out (*op. cit.*, 70) that it is improbable that Plutarch had direct access to *EN* or *EE*. But he draws attention to the striking similarities between *MM* and Plutarch's *De virtute morali* (p. 72 ff.).

<sup>30</sup> 444D. See M. PINNOY: Het begrip "Midden" in de ethica van Plutarchus, *Zetesis*. Album amicorum ... aan E. de Strycker. Antwerpen 1973, 224–233. He detects Platonic influence in the discussion of the mean in terms of musical sounds.

<sup>31</sup> *De virt. mor.* 451F.

<sup>32</sup> *De cohib. ira* 458C; *De frat. amore* 489C; *Adv. Col.* 1119C. The meaning of πραότης as moderation in anger can be derived from Aristotle *EN* IV 5, 1125b26–31.

<sup>33</sup> For a general overview of the notion of ἀπάθεια in the early Imperial age, see M. SPANNEUT: *Apatheia* ancienne, *apatheia* chrétienne. I<sup>re</sup> partie: L'apatheia ancienne, *ANRW* II 36.7, 4642–4717. He believes that Plutarch and Apuleius wavered in their support of μετριοπάθεια. To confirm it in Plutarch, he points mainly to the *Lives* where ἀπάθεια of the protagonists is a kind of *exemplum*. In the ethical treatises, however, Plutarch prefers μετριοπάθεια. On μετριοπάθεια among the Middle Platonists, see also S. LILLA: Clement of Alexandria. A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism. Oxford 1971, 101–108. He points to the triadic scheme in Alcinous where μετριοπάθεια stands between ἀμετριοπαθής and ὑπερπαθής, see *Didasc.* 184.24–30 H.

<sup>34</sup> *De tranq. an.* 477A–B: ψυχὴ καθαρεύουσα πραγμάτων καὶ βουλευμάτων πονηρῶν. Especially in the Epicurus, calm (γαλήνη) refers to tranquillity of mind, cf. *Ep. Her.* 83; fr. 425 USENER. See also *De cup. div.* 524C; *Quaest. conv.* VII 693D; *Praec. ger. reipub.* 814B.

character, then, freedom from baleful acts and purposes signals the end which is proper to a flourishing life. Such life involves virtue. Discarding detrimental passions and purposes is therefore a prerequisite of the virtue of character which, as we have seen, is nothing but μετριοπάθεια. This might indicate that moderation in passions requires purification which may therefore occur at the level of emotions only. Alas, Plutarch does not specify the way we can attain a virtuous character through κάθαρσις, but so much may be obvious that he ascribed a crucial role to the Aristotelian notion in the effort to reach our main objective, namely happiness.<sup>35</sup>

However, we have another source for the possible link between κάθαρσις and μετριοπάθεια. Gellius makes mention of a certain Platonist from Crete who praised drunkenness. His case might have been founded upon the *Republic* where Plato stresses the importance of common symposia where the Guards can enjoy the company of one another and develop intimate relationships. Such symposia, like those in Sparta, were not without consumption of wine. But, we must add, the Guards are supposed to drink in moderation; just like in Sparta, drunkenness is forbidden in the ideal state of Kallipolis.<sup>36</sup> Further support to this claim may be taken from the *Laws*. But here Plato also advocates moderate drunkenness in controlled situations and lists three benefits which moderate consumption of wine can provide: /1/ training to resist pleasure and desire, overcoming pain and distress and producing courage, /2/ test of character and behavior, /3/ safeguards correct education by leading the youth towards virtue.<sup>37</sup>

As a response to such claims by the Cretan Platonist, Gellius summarizes the views expounded by other Platonists on the issue. As in other cases, his main source must have been his teacher Calvenus Taurus. Relying on *Laws* I 637A14–648A2 and II 666A12–671B6 he specifies three advantages of the moderate use of wine. They differ from the benefits recorded by Plato in some respects. The most important difference is that for Gellius one advantage is that moderate drunkenness helps us bring to light passions from the depths of our soul that are concealed by some respectful shame. Thus being lit up by wine can contribute to virtue insofar as it enables one to heal and set right excessive desires without facing serious danger in evoking them. To justify this claim Gellius takes Plato to say that no one can be self-controlled (*continens*, ἐγκρατής) and temperate whose life was not tested in the midst of errors and pleasures. To become virtuous everybody has to experience and overcome such temptations. This idea will be explored later on by Iamblichus. Although curing passions with the aid of wine is not called κάθαρσις, Gellius' description fits the process

<sup>35</sup> These ideas are reflected in a treatise published by H. DAIBER: Ein bisher unbekannter pseudo-platonischer Text über die Tugenden der Seele in arabischer Überlieferung, *Der Islam* 47 (1977) 25–42. He thinks the Greek original is from the period before Plotinus. The example quoted there also recalls Plutarch.

<sup>36</sup> *Rep.* III 398c6–7; 403e4–6.

<sup>37</sup> I 649D7–E2; II 652B3–653A3, 670E1. For an analysis of these passages, see E. BELFIORE: Wine and catharsis of emotions in Plato's *Laws*, *CQ* n.s. 36 (1986) 421–437, with the remark that these passages may have been important for Aristotle when developing the notion of *catharsis*. For further references see *Platon. Nomoi I–III*. Übersetzung und Kommentar von K. SCHÖPSDAU. Göttingen 1994, 249 ff.

very well. Its aim is σωφροσύνη (*temperantia*) which, as we shall see, will be closely related to μετριοπάθεια by later Platonists.<sup>38</sup>

### III

Before turning to Iamblichus we should briefly consider Plotinus' contribution. He does not seem to add too much to the picture painted by his Middle Platonic predecessors. The only innovation he introduces may be the distinction of two sorts of virtues. Greater virtue enables us to meet the Platonic requirement of assimilating to god, as we know it from the *Theaetetus*, while lesser virtues help us conduct life in the polis. People possessing greater virtues necessarily have the possibility (δυνάμει) to acquire the lesser virtues as well, those, however, who have the lesser virtues only, do not necessarily have the greater.<sup>39</sup> In all probability, this does not mean that one can acquire greater virtues without previously having the lesser. To understand the passage, we should bear in mind that δύναμις is used in two senses: /1/ a child is potentially capable of using geometrical skills, although he has not acquired them yet, /2/ the sleeping geometer does not use this skill actually, though he has already acquired it. It seems that in this case we should think of the second meaning. Those who have the greater virtues possess the lesser as well, but do not actually use them.<sup>40</sup> This is corroborated by another passage where Plotinus claims that those who have greater virtues do not really need lesser, civic virtues, though they could easily acquire them, while people lacking greater virtues possess the lesser in a deficient way only.<sup>41</sup> The civic virtues encompass passions and are a measure which forms the matter of the soul: they are made like the measure in the intelligible world and contain traces of the highest good which dwells there.<sup>42</sup> In short, they are images of the intelligible measure. It is in virtue of their being image that lesser, πολιτικά virtues impose measure onto our desires and, in general, moderate our passions and set us free

<sup>38</sup> Gellius NA XV, II 5, Vol. II 128.28–32 Hosius: si qui penitus in his adfectionem cupiditatumque errores inessent, quos aliquis pudor reverens concelaret, ea omnia sine gravi periculo, libertate per vinum data detegi et ad corrigendum medendumque fieri oportuniore. Adfectio and cupiditas translate πάθος and ἐπιθυμία. H. TARRANT in 'Platonic interpretation in Aulus Gellius', *GRBS* 37 (1996), 173–194, correctly notes that Gellius' account here mirrors Taurus' arguments faithfully. This notion of κάθαρσις could not be taken directly from the medical writers who used the term to denote purgation. Sextus makes mention of purgatives which do not only take away the ill humours from the body, but along with the humours they eliminate themselves too (PH I 206, II 188). But Gellius is not describing κάθαρσις in terms of throwing up which may well be a result of drunkenness.

<sup>39</sup> *Enn.* I 2; on their reciprocal implication (ἀντακολουθήσις), see esp. 7.1–3, 10–12.

<sup>40</sup> See I 2.7.23–27.

<sup>41</sup> I 3.6.14 ff. I owe the reference to Richard Sorabji.

<sup>42</sup> That passions form the matter of virtue is a doctrine widely held by earlier thinkers, cf. Plutarch, *De virt. mor.* 440D; Aspasius, in *EN* 42.40–42 and the Neopythagorean Metopius, *De virtute* p. 119.8 (τὰ δὲ πάθη τὰς ἀρετὰς ὕλα· περὶ ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἡ ἀρετὴ) in H. THESLEFF (ed.): Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period. Åbo 1961 (= Stobaeus, *Anth.* I 1, 115, p. 71.16 Hense). For the latter reference I am indebted to P. KALLIGAS, ΠΛΩΤΙΝΟΥ, ΕΝΝΕΑΣ ΠΡΩΤΟΣ, ΑΡΧΑΙΟ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟ, ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ, ΣΧΟΛΙΑ. Athens 1994, 195–196, who also draws attention to the importance of μετριοπάθεια in the Middle Platonic ethics, of which we may have a faint echo here.

of false beliefs.<sup>43</sup> They are capable of achieving this by being determined and exempt from what are beyond measure and limit. Although the concept of moderation may testify to acquaintance with Aristotelian theories, Plotinus does not seem to have had a first hand knowledge of the theory we find in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, let alone its Middle Platonic applications.<sup>44</sup> His account of the virtues has been formed essentially by his reading of Plato's *Republic*.<sup>45</sup>

After this brief outline of the development of these notions we can now turn to Iamblichus. It has already been noted that he must have been familiar with the Aristotelian notion of *kátharsis*.<sup>46</sup> But he preserves it in a transmuted form to meet the requirements arising from his overall theory of the human soul. He uses the term in a broader sense than Aristotle, for he applies it also to describe purification of the intellect or of the whole soul from influences disturbing its contact with higher entities. Issued from the transcendent Soul which in turn comes from the Intellect, the human soul strives to return to its origin and all kinds of bodily interference can only hinder or slow down the way back. This view reflects Plato's position in the *Phaedo*. No one could deny that Iamblichus made extensive use of the notion. His intellectual hero, Pythagoras purged his intellect and whole soul with music and various pursuits.<sup>47</sup> In this sense it is only through philosophy that we can purify our soul and attain perfect virtue.<sup>48</sup>

But there is an interesting and more specific application which leads us back to Aristotle and the Middle Platonists. Iamblichus accepts the account of the *Timaeus* that our soul consists of three faculties.<sup>49</sup> Although we receive reason from the god, the divine origin on its own does not constitute rational rule in the soul. There is a possibility of conflict between reason, spirit and appetite, which means that the two non-rational faculties are also endowed with a sort of autonomy.<sup>50</sup> And this is where the Aristotelian *kátharsis* comes in. The notion may have seemed to Iamblichus flexible enough to utilize it for his own purposes. The adoption of the Platonic tripartition of the soul could help him apply and extend this notion in any case. Iamblichus regards the restriction of *kátharsis* to tragedy and comedy too narrow and extends the

<sup>43</sup> I 2.2.15–17: μετροῦσαι τὰς ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ὅλως τὰ πάθη μετροῦσαι καὶ ψευδεῖς δόξας ἀφαιροῦσαι.

<sup>44</sup> Porphyry seems to adhere to the same doctrine, cf. *Sent.* 32, p.23.4–12 LAMBERZ. For further references, see LAMBERZ's app. crit.

<sup>45</sup> As has been noted by L. GERSON: *Plotinus*. London–N.Y. 1994, 199.

<sup>46</sup> E. g. J. BERNAYS: Grundzüge der verlorenen Abhandlung des Aristoteles über die Wirkung der Tragödie. Breslau 1857, 158–163; M. POHLENZ: Die griechische Tragödie. Göttingen 1954<sup>2</sup>, 488.

<sup>47</sup> *Vit. Pyth.* XVI 68.1–3, 70.15–17; XXV 110.4–5. Elsewhere he also advocates such views, cf. *Protr.* 65.7–8; *Comm. Math.* 26.146 (where he is talking about purification of the immortal soul paralleled with the intellect investigating objects proper to it). See also *Myst.* I 12, 41.18–42.5 Des Places.

<sup>48</sup> *Protr.* 13, p.96.10–13 Des Places.

<sup>49</sup> *Protr.* 5, p.61.12 ff.: τρία τριχῇ ἐν ἡμῖν εἶδη κατ'ὀκρίσται. τὸ μὲν ὃ λογίζομεθα, τὸ δὲ ὃ θυμούμεθα, τρίτον δὲ ὃ ἐπιθυμούμεν. See also Stobaeus, *Ecl.* I 369.10 ff. W. (ὅτι τριῶν ὄντων τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς εἰδῶν ἢ μερῶν. φροντικῶς θυμικῶς ἐπιθυμητικῶς); *Anth.* I 4.9 (θυμός, ἐπιθυμία, λόγος, p. 258.16 H). There is no evidence that Iamblichus endorsed the view of the *Timaeus* that the parts of the soul are spatially different too.

<sup>50</sup> *Prot.* 5, p. 61.23–27.

theory to invocations and obscenities in religious rituals. Such rites involve setting up phalli and uttering obscenities.<sup>51</sup> We become acquainted with obscenities through foul language and this is the proper way to get rid of them.<sup>52</sup> These acts and utterances should not be banned in rituals – as they should not be prohibited in comedies either. Their purpose is to purify our whole soul, not only its rational part. They can help us, mature citizens, to acquire the skill of mastering our psychic activities and, consequently, control our deeds. In a discussion whose aim is to defend pagan rituals Iamblichus states that – however briefly – we have to experience harmful passions to get rid of them or to avoid them in the future. The medium through which to experience them are tragedy, comedy and religious rituals respectively:

“The powers of human emotions that are in us become more violent if they are hemmed in on every side. But if they are briefly put into activity and brought to due proportion, they give delight in moderation (μετρίως) and are satisfied and, purified (ἀποκαθαίρονται) by this means, are stopped by the aid of persuasion (πειθῶ) and not by force. For this reason, by observing others' passions (πάθη) in both comedy and tragedy, we can check our own passions, make them more moderate (μετρώτερα) and purify them. So too in holy rites, when we watch and hear vile things we are freed from the harm that derives from them in actuality.”<sup>53</sup>

(trans. by R. Janko, slightly modified)

The therapy, Iamblichus goes on to say, consists in using such things so that we can moderate the harmful impacts attached to the soul at birth and can detach ourselves from them. For the present purposes, the by far the most important mark of the passage is that Iamblichus explicitly connects *kátharsis* of excessive passions to moderation. The aim of *kátharsis* is to cure the soul, moderate harmful impacts and, ultimately, set us free of the chains of this world and leave them behind. Passions are therefore not to be wiped out utterly since they can delight us if we are capable of bringing them to due proportion. They are not to be suppressed by force either – sometimes this may be an impossible task anyway –, rather we do better to moderate and soothe them by persuasion. The task of persuasion, then, is to put a stop to the excessive spread of emotions. This may lead to the right exercise of emotions which can make them moderate. As persuasion involves reason there is a possibility for reason to intervene in emotional matters. But we should not believe that the situation is always like this. In watching tragedies and comedies, for instance, we do not nec-

<sup>51</sup> Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* I 11, 38.14–15, 39.3–4.

<sup>52</sup> *De Mysteriis* I 11, 39.10–11. The extension of the notion has been discussed by R. SORABJI: *Animal Minds and Human Morals*. London–Ithaca N.Y. 1993, 187–188. He also draws attention to the contrast with Porphyry's theory which I am not going to discuss here. I 12 can also be taken as a response to Porphyry's criticism of invocations.

<sup>53</sup> *De Mysteriis* I 11, 39.14–40.8 Des Places, also quoted by BERNAYS (*op. cit.*, 160) who demonstrates the Aristotelian provenience. The passage reveals another affinity with the Aristotelian theory, namely that comedies are supposed to include obscenities and invectives, but only in order to help spectators rid themselves of such behaviour, see *Pol.* VII 1336b13–24, quoted by JANKO: *op. cit.* in n.17, p. 353.

essarily persuade ourselves or others by the aid of arguments on a certain issue, on the necessity of soothing our emotions in a particular situation. Our response to what we see on the stage may be entirely emotional and spontaneous. Iamblichus thus combines two accounts on how to handle excessive emotions. Purification of passions can occur in two ways: either by persuasion which involves reason, or by watching tragedies or comedies and by taking part in rites which stir up emotional reactions. Iamblichus also explains why we need emotions. Delight alone is not sufficient reason for approving them. The main reason seems to lie in religious practices. Invocations (κλήσεις) themselves also require πάθη. Although they enable the priests to purge their soul of passions and to free of the world of generation, there are emotions attached to them. This is not to say that invocations turn gods into impure beings subjected to all kinds of affection. Instead, they direct us to divine purity – and they do it in virtue of involving emotions.<sup>54</sup> Only when reaching such a divine state can we rid ourselves of emotions.<sup>55</sup>

Further evidence for the close link between moderation in passion and κάθαρσις is offered in the *Pythagorean Way of Life*. Iamblichus describes how his philosophical hero, Pythagoras practiced moderation in passions and accepted the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean.<sup>56</sup> At first glance this may seem odd. However, he is not the only author to forge stories such as this one. By attributing these views to Pythagoras, Iamblichus could rely on a long-standing tradition as some Pythagoreans before him had no scruples about ascribing the doctrine of moderation in passions to their spiritual ancestor.<sup>57</sup> Thus, there were highly respected authors to follow. But the main point is that he accepted this attribution because it seemed to fit in with his own views. Both κάθαρσις and μετριοπάθεια are assigned a proper place in his conception of morality. His scattered remarks on ethical theory indicate that moderation in passions may have a role in completing a virtue of a particular kind.<sup>58</sup> First we can turn to the *Theologoumena Arithmeticae*, a work not written by Iamblichus, but one which nevertheless reflects his own views. Four kinds of virtue are listed there, each having three aspects. Insight (φρόνησις) evokes quick sensibility of the body and luck in external matters, temperance corresponds to bodily health and good fame, courage goes with bodily strength and power (δυναστεία) and justice is accompanied with beauty

<sup>54</sup> *De Mysteriis* I 12, 41.17–42.5. Invocations (κλήσεις) must be distinguished from evocations (προσκλησεις) as the latter do not involve emotions: it is not by the aid of passions that evocations connect priests to gods, cf. I 12, 42.6–7. See also V 6, 206.17–19; X 7, 293.6–8.

<sup>55</sup> This may be the influence of Stoic ideas, as has been pointed out by R. SORABJI: *op. cit.*, 188.

<sup>56</sup> ἀσκήσαι δὲ φασιν αὐτὸν καὶ τὰς μετριοπάθειας καὶ τὰς μεσότητας, *VP XXVII* 131.9. See also the note to this passage in Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*. Text, translation and notes by J. DILLON and J. HERSHBELL. Atlanta 1991, 151.

<sup>57</sup> See Nicomachus, *Introductio Arithmeticae* I 14.2, p. 37.1 Hoche (μετρίτης καὶ εὐπρέπειας); Pseudo-Archytas *De Educ.* II p.41.15–18 (quoted by Stobaeus, *Anth.* I 1.106, p. 57.4–5 H) in H. THESLEFF (ed.): *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*. Åbo 1961.

<sup>58</sup> On Iamblichus' ethics see also D. P. TAORMINA: *Le δυνάμεις dell'anima. Psicologia ed etica in Giamblico*, H. J. BLUMENTHAL–E. G. CLARK (eds): *The Divine Iamblichus. Philosopher and Man of Gods*. London 1993, 30–48. She draws attention to the definition of σωφροσύνη as a kind of symmetry and concord of the different δυνάμεις of the soul (p. 40).

of body and friendship.<sup>59</sup> Along with this fourfold division, derived from Plato's *Republic IV*, there is still another Neoplatonic division of virtues which ranks them. At the bottom of this grade of virtues are the physical excellences, followed by moral, civic (πολιτική) and purificatory (καθαρτική) virtues, with theoretical virtues on the top.<sup>60</sup> If this grade of virtues can be attributed to Iamblichus with certainty – which may well be the case – then it offers further evidence for his view that political and moral virtues necessarily involve moderation in passions. Another problem is to find correspondence between the two divisions. While insight may correspond to theoretical virtue, it is by no means clear whether temperance (σωφροσύνη) perhaps alludes to civic and moral virtues. One passage in the *Life of Pythagoras* suggests that it does. There we are told that the youth should attain temperance because this is the age when desires are at their strongest.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, in the letter on σωφροσύνη to a certain Arete, quoted by Stobaeus, Iamblichus claims that this virtue has to deal with the pleasures, but disregards them.<sup>62</sup> It seems that σωφροσύνη has the same function as μετριοπάθεια in other texts and – we shall anticipate it now – in Proclus. As Iamblichus says in this letter, the immoderate force of the passions distorts our humanity and drags us to a non-rational, disordered and bestial nature.<sup>63</sup> Temperance must check the passions by moderating them. As he adopts not only the Platonic tripartition of the soul, but also the unity of cardinal virtues expounded at the end of *Republic IV*, Iamblichus stresses that virtues must be in concord. There is one harmony or concord that suits each virtue together in the way that they can blend with one another.<sup>64</sup> Thus temperance can also contribute to the well-being of the whole soul. As Iamblichus says, all three parts of the soul should be in concord and well ordered. The order and proper arrangement of these parts lead to the right distribution of primacy. Recalling the *Charmides*' definition of temperance that it is nothing but doing one's own, the distribution itself proves to be a kind of temperance which has many forms.<sup>65</sup> This means that the Peripatetic theory of moderating the passions was fitted into the framework of Iamblichus' overall vision of the soul and, therefore, into

<sup>59</sup> *Theol. Arithm.* 25.7–12 De Falco. Quick sensibility (εὐαισθησία) comes from *Timaeus* 76D2, see also *Protr.* 2, p. 43.1 Des Places.

<sup>60</sup> See *Prolégomènes à la philosophie de Platon*, text établi par L. G. WESTERINK et traduit par J. TROUILLARD avec la collaboration de A. Ph. SEGONDS, Paris 1990, 26.30–36 with n. 221 on p. 76. The author is not known. He may have written this introduction in the second half of the 6th century, but he may also have relied on Iamblichus. The idea of a hierarchy can be traced to Plotinus (I 2) and Porphyry (*Sententiae* 32). I think that καθαρτική ἀρετή refers to the purification of the soul from all kinds of bodily influences, not to the special case involving emotions which is the domain of moral and civic virtues. At the bottom of this notion lies Plato's description of κάθαρσις in the *Phaedo*.

<sup>61</sup> *VP V* 23.18 ff.

<sup>62</sup> Stobaeus, *Anth.* I 4.45 (p. 270.11–16 H). That σωφροσύνη is concerned with desires is confirmed also by the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Divis. Arist.* 17b6 MUTSCHMANN.

<sup>63</sup> Stobaeus, *Anth.* I 4.46 (p. 217.3–6 H): ὅλως γὰρ ἡ τῶν παθῶν ἄμετρος ἐπικράτεια οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπους ἐφρίσιν εἶναι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἀλόγιστον αὐτοὺς ἔλκει φύσιν καὶ θηριώδη καὶ ἄτακτον.

<sup>64</sup> Stobaeus, *Anth.* I 4.49 (271.24–272.3 H).

<sup>65</sup> *Charmides* 161B5–6. Iamblichus *ap.* Stobaeus *Anth.* I 4.9 (p.258.13–259.4 H), esp.: καὶ τούτων ἡ τοῦ ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἐν δέοντι γινομένη διανομή σωφροσύνη ἂν εἴη πολυειδής. We must also note that this definition of temperance (τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν) is to be found in *Republic IV* as definition of justice.

his overall concept of morality. Linked to the notion of *κάθαρσις*, this theory can account for a life worthy of good citizens.

What we see in Iamblichus, then, is the survival of Peripatetic notions, partly in Pythagorean disguise, embedded into a Platonic frame. The application of Peripatetic theories does not seem peripheral, rather they constitute the core of an ethical theory – partly inherited from Plotinus – which tries to account for the possibility that emotions can be civilized and thus should not be eradicated right away. They are of use and significance insofar as we lay stress upon the ways of getting on in everyday life.

#### IV

With Iamblichus, it seems, the tradition of blending Peripatetic theories into Platonic ethics reached its final point. Not that later Neoplatonists were unacquainted with *On Mysteries* or *Pythagorean Way of Life*; on the contrary, they refer to these works many times.<sup>66</sup> But most of them seem to have preferred the complete banishment of the tragedies and comedies from the ideal state. This had considerable impact on their view of emotions as well. Although it was generally held that emotions do not have an intrinsic value for those striving towards the proper end, namely the return of the soul to where it was taken from, they accepted that emotions have a role in earthly life. Although emotions are inherently evil and there is little chance of curing them, there must be a way of handling them. Nevertheless, perfection of life involves attempts to be free of all kinds of emotions; they cannot help us on the way back to our spiritual origin. The shift of emphasis may be best illustrated by a passage from Proclus:

“For education is purification (*κάθαρσις*) of immoderate passions or, more properly speaking, the way from moderation in passions (*μετριοπάθεια*) to freedom of passions (*ἀπάθεια*), insofar as reason does not feel sympathy any more, only moderately, but is disturbed by all kinds of pollution coming from the passions.”<sup>67</sup>

If education aims at finding the way in which emotions can be expelled from the soul, then moderation of emotions by any means – whether by force or by persuasion – is only of temporary significance. On the whole, this opinion on the process of purification does diverge from Iamblichus’ view. One difference may be that Iam-

<sup>66</sup> On the influence of *De mysteriis*, see the introduction by É. Des Places to his edition of the work, pp. 21–27; the influence of the *Vit. Pyth.* can be documented, for example, in Proclus’ *In Remp.* and in Marinus’ *Life of Proclus*.

<sup>67</sup> «καὶ γὰρ παιδεία» *κάθαρσις* ἐστὶ ἀμετρίας παθῶν. καὶ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀπὸ μετριοπαθείας εἰς ἀπάθειαν ὁδός, μηκετὶ τοῦ λόγου συμπάσχειν μὲν, ἀλλὰ μετρίως, ἐθέλοντος, πάντα δὲ τὸν ἐκ τῆς τῶν παθῶν μολυσμῶν ἐκτινασσομένου, *De Prov.* 27.9 BOESE. The Latin text runs as follows: *et enim paideia (id est eruditio) est purgatio immensurationis passionum et multo magis que in impassibilitatem a mediocritate passionum via, non adhuc ratione volente compati quidem, sed mediocriter, omnem autem funem passionum exuente*. See also *In Remp.* I 105.9 Kroll.

blichus lays considerably more emphasis on the stage involving *μετριοπάθεια*. Another is that the twofold aspect of the purification of passions – either by persuasion or by immediate emotional response through tragedies, comedies and religious rites – is replaced with an account which stresses that it should be achieved solely by the intervention of reason. In Proclus moderation in passion is still given the role of arranging our emotions, but the link to tragedies and comedies we can observe in Iamblichus has disappeared entirely. With this, the connection with *κάθαρσις* has also not been taken for granted either.<sup>68</sup> The innovation, however, is embedded into Proclus’ metaphysical scheme not randomly, but deeply.

The best evidence for the re-evaluation of the notion of moderation in passions is to be found in the lectures on Plato’s *Republic*. Not surprisingly, it emerges in passages that deal with tragedies, and has the special appeal of being set within Proclus’ defense of Plato against charges by Aristotelians.<sup>69</sup> In the section on Plato’s notion of poetic art and its species he lists ten problems, the second of which concerns the prohibition of tragedies and comedies in Plato’s state. He seems to paraphrase an objection to Plato’s theory when saying that it was absurd to forbid tragedies and comedies since by means of these we can satisfy the emotions in due measure and thus we can keep them in check for education by curing the troublesome element in them. The ultimate source of the objection is Aristotle, though Proclus mentions other defenders of the literary genres as well, even if not by name.<sup>70</sup> Tragedies and comic poetry may help us expiate emotions that are neither to be satisfied, nor to be expelled altogether. Instead of being suppressed, emotions need some incitement in due course. The central notion in Proclus’ view is expiation (*ἀποσιώσις*). As Bernays has shown, it refers to an effort of dealing with emotions without satisfying them entirely.<sup>71</sup> It cannot be ruled out that the term comes from an Aristotelian context, but it is remarkable that, although clearly drawing on Aristotelian sources, Iamblichus does not use the term or its cognates. It might well be that the term was added to the dispute by Proclus or his teacher, Syrianus. It could be that the account recorded by Proclus contains reference to some theory centered on the concept of *μετριοπάθεια*.

Proclus’ criticism rests on his own convictions that, being the source of disorder, tragedies and comedies should not be allowed to play any role in the ideal city.

<sup>68</sup> Proclus’ procedure may be linked to his attempts to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, cf. A. SHEPPARD: *Studies on the 5th and 6th Essays of Proclus’ Commentary on the Republic*. Göttingen 1980, 111.

<sup>69</sup> As has been emphasised by A. SHEPPARD: *op. cit.*, 105.

<sup>70</sup> *In Remp.* I 49.13–20. The passage has been discussed by J. BERNAYS: *op. cit.* 164–165, and by R. JANKO: *op. cit.* 347. Bernays believes that Proclus drew from Aristotle’s lost examination of *κάθαρσις*, while JANKO – together with ROSTAGNI: *op. cit.*, 285 – assumes that Proclus drew on Aristotle’s *On Poets*, although – as he makes it clear elsewhere (R. JANKO: *Aristotle’s Poetics*. Indianapolis 1987, 175) – the attribution is conjectural. V. ROSE lists the passage as belonging to Aristotle’s lost dialogue entitled *περί πολιτικοῦ*, see *Aristotelis quae ferebantur librorum fragmenta*. Coll. V. ROSE, Leipzig 1886, fr. 81. In any case, in Proclus there is no support of any of these assumptions. Against the attributions of the passage to various, but now lost, works of Aristotle, see the cautious remarks by A. SHEPPARD: *op. cit.*, 110–111.

<sup>71</sup> *In Remp.* I 42.10–16. In the Appendix 14 of his *op. cit.* (pp. 199–200) BERNAYS depicts the development of the term and traces occurrences of the same meaning in Plato (*Leg.* VII 752D; *Phaedo* 61A; *Ep.* VII 331B). He renders it as “Abfinden”. It must be added that the term was also used in religious sense, to mean completing a rite, see Hermias, in *Phaedr.* 68.1–2 Couvreur. ROSTAGNI: *op. cit.*, 103, n. 1, also thinks that the term is not free of religious connotations, and refers to *Phaedrus* 242C.

However, for reasons that are both obvious and practical, emotions cannot be denied to have a room in it.

"It is clear that we should beware both of tragedy and of comedy for they imitate all kinds of characters and impress the spectators with pleasure. We do it in order that in inducing the pliable element of the soul to feel sympathy with them, their appeal does not fill the life of the youth with harmful impacts coming from imitation (μίμης) and, instead of expiating the passions moderately (μετρίως ἀφοσιώσεως), they implant into the souls a habit (ἔξις) which is bad, hard to cleanse and obliterates the one and the simple (τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ ἀπλοῦν), and – as a result of its love for all sorts of imitations (μιμήματα) – emphasizes that which is opposite to them [*scil.* the one and the simple]. Thus, these kinds of poetry are directed especially towards the element in the soul which is most exposed to passions; comedy, inducing fondness for pleasure and leading to unnatural laughter, tragedy, training fondness for distress and dragging down to base lamenting. Both nourish the emotional element in us (τὸ παθητικόν) and the more they complete their proper function, the more they can [affect us]. Although we shall also affirm that the politician ought to find a way of relieving (ἀπεράσεις) these passions, though not in order to have a tendency to cling to them, but rather to bridle and smooth suitably (ἐμμελῶς) the excitements caused by the emotions. We think therefore that in addition to the manifold (ποικιλία), these arts of poetry involve also immoderation. In luring out those passions and are far from being useful for expiation (ἀφοσίωσις). For expiation is not excessive (ἐν ὑπερβολαῖς) but smooth the activities and retain only a small similarity to those which they expiate."<sup>72</sup>

Proclus' intention, then, is to separate tragedies and comedies from ἀφοσίωσις. The effort implies also a change of terms since instead of κάθαρσις we find ἀφοσίωσις and ἀπέρασις. The shift may be due to the fact that κάθαρσις was intimately tied to poetical theories and its use in a new situation would have made the impression that Proclus was unable to break away from the context of poetical works. We have seen that Iamblichus made use of κάθαρσις and its cognates in similar context. On the other hand, κάθαρσις seems to lack the striking connotation which ἀφοσίωσις carries: the reference to the effort to get done with the feeling. The idea of moderation in passions is also discernible in the account because we read that the politician has to rely on it as an element which can be useful in settling civic matters. Purification, therefore, must have some relevance to the acquisition of civic virtues. The passage is full of allusions to μετριοπάθεια as a possible result of expiation, whereas tragedies and comedies do not lead to this state of mind.<sup>73</sup> The main reason why Proclus agrees

<sup>72</sup> In *Remp.* I 50.2–26. In line 18 the mss. give ἀπέρανσις which BERNAYS amends to ἀπέρασις. The emendation was accepted by KROLL as well. The term ἀπέρασις comes from the medical writers and its meaning is similar to κάθαρσις, see App. 15 in BERNAYS, *op. cit.*, 200. Cf. also Iamblichus, *De Myst.* III 9, 119.15 DES PLACES. Along with ἀφοσίωσις, BERNAYS considers ἀπέρασις as the positive result of the Neoplatonic interpretations of the Aristotelian notion of κάθαρσις.

<sup>73</sup> See μετρίως at 50.6, ἐμμελῶς at 50.21, οὐκ ἐν ὑπερβολαῖς at 50.26.

with Plato in banishing tragedy and comedy is typical of his overall outlook. He assumes that both tragedy and comedy are capable of implanting into the youth a habit which disregards the one and the simple and prefers the manifold instead, which involves immoderation as well. But unity and simplicity are divine attributes. Virtue implies a kind of simplicity which fits best to the god himself.<sup>74</sup>

This is a full-blooded Neoplatonic reasoning which may, however, contain a Stoic element as well. The remark that virtue is simple recalls Plutarch's account on the different conceptions of virtue among the Stoics. We are told that some Stoics, notably Zeno of Citium and his disciple, Aristo of Chios taught that virtue is essentially one, although it has many aspects.<sup>75</sup> In addition, Proclus shares Plato's conviction, expounded in *Republic III*, that imitation is not allowed to the guardians and should be banned from the city because it distracts them from their true task.<sup>76</sup> But despite his resolute criticism of tragedies and comedies, Proclus seems to admit that relieving of passions is useful in civic life. That is, while rejecting purification by way of tragedies and comedies, he leaves open the possibility for another type of purification. To see how he accounts for it we have to turn to another passage in the essays on Plato's *Republic*.

In other matters, then, Proclus seems to be more faithful to Iamblichus since he too links moderation in passions with temperance. In discussing the parts of the soul and the virtue appropriate to them, he distinguishes two aspects which could be applied to each part. Either it dominates (ἄρχων) or is dominated (ὑρχόμενος). To begin from below, appetite (ἐπιθυμία) can only be dominated. If dominance functions properly appetite has the virtue of temperance. In this way, on returning to reason it can measure desires of its own.<sup>77</sup> But to reach this state appetite needs habituation and education. As it stands, the whole concept is colored by a Neoplatonic idea according to which things are determined by a threefold scheme: "procession" (πρόοδος), "return" (ἐπιστροφή) and "rest" (μονή). Each thing proceeds from itself to multiplicity and then returns to itself while its essential character remains the same. "Return" is thus the tendency to maintain the essential feature. In the soul, the appetitive part "returns" to reason because – after all – the whole soul originated in the Intellect, of which the reason in us is the trace. Measurement of desires is therefore to be seen as imposing rational mark on them. Much the same description applies to the spirited part of the soul. Spirit (θῦμος) can be seen in two respects: it can rule or can be ruled. If it rules the corresponding virtue is courage, but if it is ruled then it may be given the possibility to have temperance. Similarly to appetite, spirit also shows temperance when desiring the measures that come from reason.<sup>78</sup> In both cases, then, we find close link between temperance and measurement of desires.

<sup>74</sup> See, in *Remp.* I 49.26–27.

<sup>75</sup> Plutarch, *De virt. mor.* 440E–441A. They are listed together with Menedemus of Eretria, a disciple of Stilpo.

<sup>76</sup> 394E–398B.

<sup>77</sup> In *Remp.* I 212.11–12: καθ' ἣν μετρεῖ τὰς αὐτῆς ὀρέξεις ἐπιστροφούμενη πρὸς τὸν λόγον.

<sup>78</sup> In *Remp.* I 212.15–20 (αὐτὸς ὀρέγεται τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου μέτρων παιδευθεὶς), cf. 23–24; 211.18–19; 214.2.

But we must be aware that this is not the type of *μετριοπάθεια* theory we find in some Middle Platonists and Peripatetics. There is no explicit evidence that for these authors moderation in passions consists of using measures coming from reason. Although it cannot be ruled out that this may have been the case with Plutarch and his fellow-Platonists, the texts available to us are silent on this issue. By contrast, the term *ἐπιστροφόμενη* clearly suggests that Proclus viewed temperance in terms of the return of the lower parts of the soul to reason. This may be a decisive mark in Proclus' account. He thinks that moderation is acquired if reason imposes measures onto our emotions. Iamblichus may have borne similar things in mind when talking about persuasion as one of the means leading to *κάθαρσις* and, through it, to moderation. But he also allowed the emotional part of our soul to possess a spontaneous movement initiated by tragedies and comedies, as well as by religious festivities, whereby it can rid itself of excessive emotions. Spontaneity does not involve intervention by reason. By contrast, Proclus denies this kind of spontaneous element to our emotional part. As a result, what remains for him is to emphasize the rational side of purification, that is to point to persuasion as grappling with the task of purifying our souls of excessive emotions. The reason for this is that the "return" to the rational part of our soul must be achieved with the aid of rational means. As the spontaneous response of our emotional faculty to the plot we see on the stage cannot be regarded rational *tout court*, it is persuasion alone that has to help us soothe our passions and return to our true self (*πρὸς ἑαυτὸν*). In fact, Proclus seems to connect *ἐπιστροφή* with persuasion when claiming that reason is responsible both for returning to itself and for persuading us to moderate our passions.<sup>79</sup> All in all, Proclus may have rejected tragedies and comedies not only to remain faithful to the letter of Plato's text, but also to dovetail the notion of moderation into his overall scheme of the threefold activity of all beings. As we have seen, Iamblichus did not incorporate his account of purification by means of tragedies and comedies into this overall framework. He may have relied on another scheme, that the rational part of the soul pervades the other faculties to the extent that they also come to have rational marks.<sup>80</sup> It is by virtue of this influence that, for example, sense-perception is capable of reverting to itself, which results in perceptual awareness. As a pure speculation, one can surmise that thanks to the influence of reason emotions might contain a cognitive element. But in the lack of clear textual evidence, this is nothing but sheer conjecture.

As far as our sources permit us to say, Simplicius may have been the most important exception to the entirely negative attitude towards emotions among the late Neoplatonists after Proclus. His commentary on Epictetus' *Handbook* contains a remarkable suggestion as to how to tame emotions of young people. He voices that on occasion we should give way to mad desires in order to be cured of them.<sup>81</sup> The whole passage draws heavily on medical terminology and I think Stanhope's translation – or rather paraphrase – stresses this point particularly well.

<sup>79</sup> See *In Remp.* I 121.20–22 (αἰτίος ... τοῦ παιθνήνιους γενέσθαι: "responsible ... for having persuaded those who are persuaded"). Note that Kroll's app. crit. indicates that the text is corrupt.

<sup>80</sup> See Ps.-Simplicius, in *De Anima* 187.35–39 Hayduck, *CAG* XI.

<sup>81</sup> *In Epict.* *Ench.* XXXV 453–455 Hadot. Youth is especially faced with the danger of passions, cf. XLVI 37–43.

"And for the same Reasons, may wise Educators of Youth, do not think themselves oblig'd to be always thwarting the Inclination of those under their Charge; but sometimes connive at their Follies, and give them a loose; there being no way so effectual for the purging of their Passions, as to let them sometimes be indulged, that so the Persons may be cloyed, and nauseate, and grow sick of them."<sup>82</sup>

"Thus Health, and Power, and Preferments, very often there to the prejudice of vicious Men, and there are sent partly in vengeance to scourge them for their past Follies, and partly as Chastisements to reduce them; that when they have given a swinge to their Appetites, and gorged themselves with criminal Pleasures, they may at last grow sick of them, throw off their ill Humours, and become reformed men."<sup>83</sup>

By attributing a positive role to giving free rein to emotions when they cannot be bridled otherwise, Simplicius seems to have come closer to Iamblichus' position. In his account, again, *κάθαρσις* is connected to moderation in passions. He also adds that just because they allow their pupils to indulge in excessive passions we cannot blame the teachers of corrupting them; on the contrary, all this happens for the sake of the good.<sup>84</sup> Actually, the only point of difference is that Simplicius does not mention comedies and tragedies as means of purification. In this, he seems to side with Proclus. On the other hand, the description of how to give ground to passions lacks any kind of reference to the Proclean theory of the return to reason. One reason may be that the introductory character of the commentary does not necessitate a delving into the intricacies of late Neoplatonic metaphysics. But we may also assume that Simplicius viewed the purification of passions – although he did not designate the phenomenon in this way – as not to be subsumed under the sphere of this basic triad.<sup>85</sup> Whenever he makes use of *ἐπιστροφή* and its cognates, he does it in a context different from the purification of excessive passions. At one point, he makes a small di-

<sup>82</sup> Epictetus *His Morals with Simplicius His Comments. Made English from the Greek* by George STANHOPE, London 1694, pp.290–291. The Greek runs as follows: Διὸ καὶ οἱ παιδαγωγοῦντες καλῶς οὐ μέχρι παντὸς ἐναντιοῦνται ταῖς τῶν παιδῶν ὀρέξεσιν. ἀλλ' ἐνδιδόασιν πολλάκις καὶ συνεργοῦσιν ἐνίστη, ὥς μὴ δυναμένης τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκείνης ἐξεμέσαι τελέως τὰ τοιαῦτα πάθη. εἰ μὴ ἐνεργήσῃ ποτὲ κατ' αὐτὰ καὶ κορεσθῇ τῆς ἐνεργείας (XXXV 455–459 HADOT).

<sup>83</sup> p.389 (XXXVIII 611–615 H. with *κάθαρσις* – rendered as "throw off their ill Humours" – on line 614 H.). The Greek: Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ὑγιεῖται καὶ δυναστεῖται βλάπτουσι καὶ μᾶλλον τοὺς κακοὺς, καὶ αἱ μὲν κολαστικῶς. αἱ δὲ κατὰ τιμωρίαν δίδονται, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ἐπιτριβῆς τῶν παθῶν κορεσθέντες ἐξεμέσων ποτὲ τὴν ἐμπάθειαν καὶ πρὸς κόλασιν λοιπὸν καὶ κάθαρσιν ἐπιτήδειοι γίνωνται.

<sup>84</sup> XXV 459–460 H.

<sup>85</sup> We might speculate as to whether this feature can serve as evidence for the date of the treatise: whether it was written in Alexandria – as K. PRAECHTER mistakenly believes (Simplikios, *RE* IIIA, I, 206–210) – or in Harran – as I. HADOT assumes in her *La vie et l'œuvre de Simplicius d'après des sources grecques et arabes*, in: *Simplicius. Sa vie, son œuvre, sa survie*. Berlin–N.Y. 1978, I–39, esp. p. 28 (earlier, she was doubted its date, cf. *Le problème du néoplatonisme alexandrine*: Hiéroclès et Simplicius, Paris 1978, 33–43). The absence of Proclean influence may not, however, be decisive evidence for the earlier date. I. HADOT proves that Simplicius was influenced by Damascius in many points, cf. the introduction to her *Simplicius. Commentaire sur le Manuel d'Epictète*. Leiden 1996, 69–114. Here (pp. 8–24) she also discusses other hypotheses (by A. Cameron and Ph. Merlan) on when and where Simplicius composed the text.

gression when saying that the goal of education is to enable the soul of the pupils to return to itself.<sup>86</sup> Education is by discourse (λόγοι), as Simplicius says, and aims not only at avoiding influences from external things, but also at turning away from the passions in our soul and, in general, from the body.<sup>87</sup> This is not to say that purification does not have the purpose of getting closer to a state completely free of passions, only that Simplicius did not conceive it in terms of progression from, and reversion to reason. But it is subordinated to the greatest task of our soul: to return to itself, which also involves a return to real being and to the common forms of λόγος which are lodged in the soul purified of images.<sup>88</sup> That is, purification of excessive passions is a prerequisite for our soul to return to its origin. On the other hand, similarly to Iamblichus and Proclus, he also connects relieving of excessive passions with temperance, but without developing this point further.<sup>89</sup> For him, to overcome passions is the task of ἐγκράτεια.<sup>90</sup>

To conclude, it remains unclear whether Simplicius accepted Iamblichus' interpretation in all respects. At any rate, his description of how to soothe emotions lacks the element of persuasion by reason that we find in Iamblichus and, with much more emphasis, in Proclus.<sup>91</sup> The constant allusion to κάθαρσις, however, might allow us to infer that he attached importance to the spontaneous response by our emotional faculties.<sup>92</sup> He does not reject them altogether for certain emotions are justified insofar as they aim at a natural way of life fitting in with reason.<sup>93</sup> It is here that moderation in passions can have a role to play. But however moderate our passions may be, they can give way to disease.<sup>94</sup> The best remedy is ἀπάθεια. In any case, Simplicius seems to accept that purification of emotional excess can happen by virtue of the spontaneous motion of the emotional part of the soul and this can lead to a life better suited to the requirements of reason. But this in turn indicates an – at least partial – adherence to Iamblichus' views and at the same time may also hint at a small dissent from Proclus' doctrines.

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<sup>86</sup> XX 2–4 H. Following the general assumption Simplicius states that ἐπιστροφή involves abandoning all extraneous things (XXXIII 4; XLVI 8–9 H.).

<sup>87</sup> XL 18–21 H. As discourse can be inner and silent – an allusion to *Theaetetus* – Simplicius writes in passages 83–84 that καθαίρων ἐαυτὸν τῇ μετὰ τῆς σωπῆς εἰς ἐαυτὸν ἐπιστροφῇ.

<sup>88</sup> LXVI 44–46 H: κεκαθαρμένος ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων ἤδη καὶ τῆς σκίας τῶν ὄντων, εἰς ἐαυτὸν καὶ τὸ ὄντως ὄν καὶ τὰ κοινὰ εἶδη τοῦ λόγου τὰ ἐν ἐαυτῷ ἐπιστρέφεται. This implies return to god, LXXI 39–40 H.

<sup>89</sup> XXXV 460–461 H. He defines σωφροσύνη as σωτηρία καὶ ὑπεροχὴ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν φρονούντος.

<sup>90</sup> XVI 14–15 H.

<sup>91</sup> Persuasion is a rational activity, see XXXVII 170 H.

<sup>92</sup> Of course, κάθαρσις occurs many times in the sense of general purification of all kinds bodily involvement, cf. XL 83–84; XXXVIII 713–714 H.

<sup>93</sup> See VII 138–139: ὀρέγεσθαι μὲν καλὸν ἐστὶν ἀπαθείας καὶ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν πρεπούσης τῷ λόγῳ διαγωγῆς.

<sup>94</sup> LXI 20 H, cf. VII 139–140 H.