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Margaret Graver (trans.), *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pp. xli, 254. ISBN 0-226-30577-5. $17.00.

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So you're a classicist with a recently-published book, and one fine morning you find in your e-mail "Inbox" a message bearing the familiar "BMCR" rubric followed by your surname and the book's title: tell us, how do you feel?

In most cases, I imagine, you feel a spike of anxiety or a flutter of hope, at least; and then (quick, open the e-mail, skim the first paragraph, and the last) a more generous menu of options opens before you, as a 'good' review prompts relief or gladness or pride, while a 'bad' review allows you to renew your acquaintance with sadness or anger or indignation or shame or contempt or . . . (as always, the pantry of 'negative' emotions is more fully stocked). But why do you feel any of these things? And why are 'good' and 'bad' here placed in scare-quotes? Cicero, who thought he knew the answers to such questions, offered them up in Books 3 and 4 of his "Tusculan Disputations," the most important general discussion of the emotions to survive from antiquity. Now Margaret G(raver)'s wonderful book makes Cicero's thoughts more accessible to a wider audience than ever before.

Cicero would say that if you feel some species of distress at a 'bad' review, it is because you have assented to the conclusion of a syllogism that runs something like this (adapted from G., p. 91):

Component #1: "A bad review of my book is an evil for me."

Component #2: "When something that is an evil for me has just occurred, it is appropriate for me to feel mental pain [= a 'contraction' of the mind]."

Occurrent belief: "My book has just received a bad review."

Conclusion: "It is now appropriate for me to feel mental pain."

Your assent to this conclusion is something that is 'up to you'--subject to your volition--and accordingly something that you choose to give: your distress is in this sense voluntary. The problem--from the Stoic point of view that Cicero develops--is that the conclusion does not deserve your assent, above all because the syllogism's initial component is deeply flawed by its ascription of value (judging the 'bad' review an 'evil' for yourself). For "within [Stoic] ethics, ascriptions of value . . . are false for all circumstances not under your control" (92); and the only circumstances that are truly and always under your control are those internal to your own mind and subject to your volition. It follows that no person, event, or state of affairs in the world 'out there' can ever be the subject of a sentence in which "is an evil for me"--*or* "is a good for me"--is a valid predicate: hence any emotion based on such a predication can only be wrong as a matter

of logic and vicious as a matter of ethics. Any emotion (*pathos*) that we know is just the mind in a 'diseased' state, and *that* is the only true evil.

So we arrive at the normative 'impassivity' (*apatheia*) for which Stoicism is best known. The Stoic sage, all of whose volitions are in harmony with the divine mind that orders the universe, does not experience ordinary *pathos* but knows only the 'correct *pathos*' (*eupatheia*, translated by Cicero as *constantia* and in turn by G. as "consistency"); and *eupatheia* is simply the mind's action as it assents to predications of 'good' and 'bad' made of things under the sage's control in the present and future (TD 4. 10-14, with G. p.p. 136-38): "joy" (an "elevation" at some present good, corresponding to to the *pathos* "delight"), "volition" (a "reaching" for some future good, corresponding to "desire"), and "caution" (a "withdrawing" from some future evil, corresponding to "fear": the sage knows no 'contraction' from a present evil corresponding to the *pathos* "distress"). It may logically follow, as G. suggests (140), that the sage's "joy," "volition," and "caution" entail 'feelings'--psychophysical effects--that are similar to your and my 'feelings' of "delight," "desire," and "fear." But we cannot know for sure, because no one--not a single human person--has ever made the 'progress' to sagehood that would allow the comparison to be made. We can be pretty certain that no one ever will.

There were, of course, compelling personal reasons for Cicero, generally inclined to the Academic skepticism of his day, to find this Stoic view of the emotions compelling in the summer of 45 BCE. Few documents from antiquity retain their power to grip the heart as surely as Cicero's letters to Atticus following the unexpected death of his daughter Tullia in mid-February of that year. Written in the intervals when he was apart from Atticus and not prevented by his grief from writing at all, they show us a man who is coming apart, who knows that he is coming apart, and who must deal both with his self-conscious dissolution and with the bad opinion of observers who thought that coming apart was not the proper thing for someone of his station to do. Partly as therapy and partly as a response to such criticism (for who could criticize a man doing such valuable work?), Cicero buried himself in reading and writing: between late spring and the end of summer there resulted a formal *Consolation* to himself on Tullia's death, a first draft and then a complete revision of the *Academics*, a political pamphlet to Caesar, five books *On Ends*, and the five books of the *Tusculan Disputations* themselves.

Books 1 and 2 of the *Tusculans* treat death and bodily pain, respectively, while the last considers whether the Stoics' account of value comprises all genuine goods and evils: Books 3 and 4, which are obviously consistent with the interests of the rest but separable from them, treat first distress--the 'general' emotion of which his grief for Tullia was a 'species'--and then the emotions as a group, taking the firm Stoic line already described. Both books have much the same structure. (Oddly, G. omits an actual outline from her excellent introduction, though her commentary is built on quite a careful one: I've assembled an outline from the divisions of her commentary and appended it to this review, with the thought that some readers might find it useful.) After a brief introduction (3. 1-6, 4. 1-7) and statement of the questions to be addressed (3. 7-13, 4. 8-10), each book first treats its topic in the "Stoic manner" (3. 13-21, 4. 10-33)--that is, in technical terms and (especially in Book 3) with an attention to formal logic--that Cicero plainly finds less congenial than the more expansive "rhetorical presentations" that follow (3. 22-27, 4. 34-57); Book 3 also includes an extended refutation of (what Cicero presents as) the Epicurean and Peripatetic views on the emotions (28-51, 52-75), which can be taken to serve for

both books (the Peripatetics reappear briefly at 4. 38-47), and each book concludes with extended 'therapeutic' remarks intended to suggest cures for grief (3. 75-84) and for the emotions in general (4. 58-84).

In every important respect G. treats all of this as well as it could be treated. Her introduction concisely and sympathetically places the *Tusculans* in the context of Cicero's life, has helpful things to say about the form and manner of his discussion, and does a remarkably effective job of presenting in brief compass the essentials of the Peripatetic, Stoic, and Epicurean views of the emotions, along with the synthesis of the Peripatetic and Stoic views urged by Antiochus of Ascalon, who some forty-odd years earlier had briefly been Cicero's teacher. (G. writes with the economy and clarity found in much of the best anglophone work in the history of ancient philosophy: if I mention Tony Long for comparison, it is only because I happened to read his exhilirating monograph, *Epictetus* [Oxford, 2002], in tandem with G.'s book--this really has been an *annus mirabilis* for the Stoics.) The translation is both very accurate and highly readable; and though everyone will differ on a nuance here or there, I cannot find a single consequential choice that, after careful reflection, I would fault G. for making.

But the truly fine achievement of the book is the commentary. In each segment (and the segments are defined to make them easily digestible units) G. offers notes in familiar commentary format, with lemmata from the English translation to which more or less brief remarks are appended. (These are sometimes miserly in providing students with information on historical persons whom Cicero mentions: e.g., on 3. 5 [p. 78], "Ennius (b. 239) was the most influential of the older generation of poets writing in Latin[: his works include. . . .?] Cicero makes every effort to promote appreciation of his work [because. . . .?]").1 But the more important part of the commentary precedes such notes, in the small essays through which G. introduces each segment, outlining Cicero's specific arguments, tracing their background, and following out their implications, often with apt comments on some less-than-completely-legitimate move that Cicero (or one of his sources) has made. The issues are often complex, but G.'s penetrating exposition never falls short of the standard of lucidity already noted in her introduction.

The book is then rounded off by four appendixes dealing with more technical questions of Cicero's relations to his most important sources (the "Old Academic" Crantor in App. A; Epicurus and the Cyrenaics in App. B; the early Stoa and Chrysippus in App. C; and Posidonius in App. D). There is at the end an *index locorum* and a general index.

If I were to cast about for criticism--and I suppose I must, since this is a review--I would follow up one remark made just above on the commentary: though G. does occasionally blow the whistle on Cicero for saying, or coming close to saying, something he really should not say (e.g., when some rhetorical cliché leads him to speak of the mind in quasi-dualistic terms), she perhaps does not do this as often or as vigorously as would have been good for a hypothetical student's benefit. Let me give an example.

In arguing against the Peripatetic view that the emotions should be moderated, not extirpated (4. 38-47), Cicero hews closely to the Stoic line in making two points: first, that anything that should be limited in this way cannot be 'natural' and 'good'; second, that it is at least doubtful that

our responses *can* be limited as the Peripatetics urge. Cicero gives two reasons for this latter doubt: "since we have no control over the circumstances which, on the Peripatetic view, necessitate emotional response, we cannot expect to set any firm limit on the extent of that response," given that "new causes can always be added which will necessarily heighten the response"; and "[o]nce the mind has initiated an emotional movement, . . . it does not have within itself any mechanism for stopping its own movement, just as a person who has jumped from a cliff cannot subsequently reverse the downward movement he has himself begun" (G.'s summaries, pp. 164-65). In commenting on the latter two arguments, G. notes that the first--concerning the relation between circumstances and limits--is valid on only one (not at all clearly correct) understanding of what a "moderate emotion" is in Peripatetic terms.2 But it is the second, 'falling body' argument that seems at least as questionable in one respect, and in another a good deal worse.3

It seems questionable, first, because if the mind has no mechanism for stopping its own emotional movement once it has begun, it's not really clear why we should think that the mind has a mechanism for regulating *any* of its irrational movements--in the normative sense, movements that "fall away from right reason"--once they have begun; and since the movements of the non-sage's mind--even seemingly quite 'dispassionate' ones--fall away from right reason on any number of occasions (that's what makes it a non-sage's mind), it would then be hard to see how we could ever *not* be in the same 'uncontrolled' state.4 But Stoic philosophy of mind aside, the 'falling body' argument seems deeply bad for the simple reason that it contradicts what I assume is the universal human experience of 'talking oneself out of' or 'reining in' emotional responses--positive and negative alike--once they have already begun, even when they are still quite 'fresh' and strong.5 To tell the truth, this argument has always struck me as a Stoic version of the "reefer madness" campaigns of the 1930s (and later), intended to persuade potential users of marijuana that one hit on a single joint would ineluctably lead, via sexual mania and heroin addiction, to an early death in sordid circumstances. Both are mere scare tactics, and not very impressive as such. In the Stoic case, the scare tactic perhaps is invoked because the main thesis at issue--that emotions spring from ascribing value to external things not essential to our human good--seems unlikely to carry conviction with most humans. Or perhaps the argument is just an artefact of the severe Stoic tenet that 'fool' and 'sage' are the only modes of being: if there really is nobody here but us fools, then it might well be the case that we're all falling off the cliff together, time after time, in slightly different ways and combinations, forever . . . How would we know the difference? (Cf., e.g., David Lynch, "Mulholland Drive.") Be that as it may: though some students will think this sort of thing through on their own, it would have been good occasionally to give them more of a nudge.

But as I said, even this sort of criticism requires some casting about, and it only suggests how much I already look forward to being able to use G.'s book with students. I conclude, then, by stressing the exceptional excellence of this work, which presents Cicero's text and the profound issues it raises in a way that can speak not only to readers familiar with Hellenistic philosophy and ancient psychology but also to students who know little or nothing about such subjects. Appearing at just the time when a great deal of other important and stimulating scholarship is being devoted to the ancient understanding of the emotions, G.'s introduction, translation, and commentary will make it possible to use Cicero's centrally important text as a teaching tool in a way that simply was not possible before. To invoke the terms that G. applies to Cicero, G.'s book

is "lively and accessible, for [her] intention is . . . to engage a wider public in disciplined reflection upon a matter of importance" (viii). Buy it, read it, put it in your students' hands.6

Notes:

1. A slightly more substantive but still minor slip concerns the distinction between 'aegritudo' and 'aegrotatio' drawn by Cicero at 3. 23 (associating the former with mental conditions, the latter with physcial illness), where G. notes (94) that "the second [term] was restricted in ordinary usage to illness of the body. For specialized uses of the term *aegrotatio* (= 'infirmity') see comm. 4, IIC (on 4. 23-33), section 1." It is difficult to know what "ordinary usage" means here, since the PHI database reveals only 4 occurrences of *aegrotatio* in classical Latin (once each in the elder Pliny and Gellius, twice in the the younger Seneca) beyond its 23 technical occurrences in *TD* (I suspect that G. was thinking of the verb, *aegrotare*, which is indeed restricted as she suggests and a great deal more common than the noun). In any case, following the cross-reference given will not lead you to further comment on specialized uses of the term *aegrotatio*.

2. "[T]his argument does not work unless by 'moderate emotion' [Cicero's] opponents mean one which does not exced some absolute limit (*modus*) relative to the capacity of humans to generate emotions. If the Peripatetics' moderate response were simply a response coming from Aristotle's 'mean state,' it might go to any extent, so long as that extent was appropriate to the circumstances presented" (164).

3. Cicero's exact words are these (4. 41): "qui modum igitur uitio quaerit, similiter facit, ut si posse putet eum qui se e Leucata praecipitauerit sustinere se, cum uelit. ut enim id non potest, sic animus perturbatus et incitatus nec cohibere se potest nec, quo loco uult, insistere." The conceit of 'excessive movement' is clearly traditional, originating probably with Chrysippus, and much the same image was used later by Seneca (e.g., *De ira* 1. 7. 4 "ut in praeceps datis corporibus nullum sui arbitrium est nec resistere morariue deiecta potuerunt, sed consilium omne et paenitentiam inreuocabilis praecipitatio abscidit et non licet eo non peruenire quo non ire licuisset, ita animus, si in iram amorem aliosque se proiecit adfectus, non permittitur reprimere impetum. . . .").

4. I speak of "falling away from right reason" on the basis of 4. 22 (where G. translates *defectio* as "rebellion"): "Omnium autem perturbationum fontem esse dicunt intemperantiam, quae est [a] tota mente a recta ratione defectio sic auersa a praescriptione rationis, ut nullo modo adpetitiones animi nec regi nec contineri queant." I take it that the phrase 'tota mente' makes no difference to the point at issue here (as though emotions might represent a 'falling away' in the 'whole mind,' as distinct from other instances of 'falling away' that occur only in some 'part' of the mind), unless Cicero is tacitly relying on a dualistic model that departs from the orthodox Stoic view of the unitary mind (G. does not think he is: p. 141).

5. This objection *could* be defined out of existence by taking the position that a 'true' emotion / *pathos* 'really' occurs when and only when the mind's movement cannot be regulated once it has begun: thus the only true 'distress' would by definition be *uncontrollable* grieving vel sim., the only true 'delight' would by definition be *uncontrollable* elation vel sim., and so on; and in fact 4.

22, quoted in the preceding note, could be read as implying something along these lines, in the qualification "sic aversa a praescriptione ratione ut . . . ." But it is hard to see how this move would be consistent with much else that our Stoic sources say about the character of the emotions. It would certainly require some significant adjustment in the usual conception (ancient as well as modern) of Stoic 'impassivity.'

6. The production of the book meets the standards expected of the University of Chicago Press: I noticed exactly two typos, both obvious and neither significant; and the 'perfect binding' of the paperback review copy held up to a great deal of folding and other fairly rough use, which suggests that it will give students decent value for their money. One gripe: G.'s method of cross-reference in the commentary, not ideally user-friendy in itself (see the example in n. 1 above), is made still more difficult to deal with by the absence of any appropriate section-markers in the commentary's running heads.

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