

# Stoic view of passions / patheia vs the Epicurean view

Post by "Eikadistes" of November 4, 2025 at 8:09 AM

[Quote from Matteng](#)

Hi,

How do you see the Stoic theory/ view of the passions/ pathei/apatheia/ eupatheia and how differ it in the Epicurean view ? I know Philodemus did there much.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoic\\_passions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoic_passions)

As far as I know, each tradition's evaluation of "desire" and "passion" contradict.

For Epicureans, "feeling", itself, is one of the principle criteria of knowledge. We accept that the "affective sympathies" we feel are as informative as the colors we see. As Epíkouros writes, wise people will feel anger at injustice, and will experience pain upon being tortured. In each case, the lack of anger, or pain would make us numb and passive. We would feel apathy and indifference.

Meanwhile, "apathy" and "indifference" are preferred by those who see emotions, themselves, as deviant ripples that disrupt the pure, unblemished surface of the clear pond that is the mind. I think we'll find other parallels to many contemplative traditions that view pleasant emotions with suspicion, and privilege a sort of pure, neutral state to fun and laughter.

[Quote from Matteng](#)

When I understood Philodemus right, I think the Epicurean view would only match with the Stoic view when the Emotion

- 1) has harmful consequences ( pleasure then is not choiceworthy for example )
- 2) is irrational, based on empty believe
- 3) is based on unnecessary desire

I think you're on-point, there. Anger with harmful consequences, irrational anger, or anger based on unnecessary desires marks the line over which we are recommended not to cross, in which anger metastasizes into wrath or rage, as Philódēmos reinforces in *On Anger*.

[Quote from Martin](#)

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4792-stoic-view-of-passions-patheia-vs-the-epicurean-view/?postID=37692#post37692>

There seems to be a mix-up of two different usages of "irrational":

The usage in the quote seems to indicate that "irrational" is something "bad", against reason, to be avoided.

The other usage is neutral and refers to sensations, emotions, feelings being fundamentally, by definition, irrational, in contrast to something we have obtained with reasoning.

This is a great point, and just to demonstrate the fluidity of the usage, Diogénēs' records Epíkouros as having employed the word ἄλογός (*alogós*), or "irrational" to refer to *sensation*:

"'For every' [Epíkouros] affirms '*sensation is **irrational** and moved by no single memory...*'" (10.31)

In the *Epistle to Herodotos*, the Hegemon uses another declension of that same word ἀλόγωι (*alogoi*) to refer to the veracity beliefs that are incoherent, foolish, or absurd:

"...[the study of nature] will banish anything **irrational**..." (10.81)