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PASSIVE DISPOSITIONS: ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ΠΑΘΟΣ AND ἜΞΙΣ IN ARISTOTLE

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Introduction

Recent years have brought an increased philosophical interest in the theme of the emotions or affections. In the field of ancient philosophy, Aristotle's account of affection (πάθος)¹ has been the topic of many studies, as Aristotle provides not only phenomenologically rich descriptions of the affections, but also situates them within the context of personal character (the *Nicomachean Ethics*), rhetoric (the *Rhetoric*), drama (the *Poetics*), and, ultimately, the *polis* (the *Politics*). What is taken for granted in many of these contemporary Aristotelian studies is the fact that there is a relationship between the affections or πάθη and the dispositions² or ἔξεις with which they are associated. Vis-à-vis the relationship between the actions (πράξεις) and the *active* dispositions (ἔξεις) – i.e. those dispositions that pertain more directly to how we *act*, for instance

¹ Since the meaning of the term πάθος is under investigation here, we will mostly refer to this term in its original, not translated, Greek form. Notably, the Greek term πάθος has many meanings, which we will discuss further in the subsequent sections of this paper. If we use a translation, we prefer to use the term “affection” as a translation, since that word keeps intact the inner connection with the (passive) process of being affected, similar to the way the Greek term πάθος is rooted in the paradigmatic verb for passivity, πάσχειν (cf. Liddell & Scott, *Greek and English Dictionary*, 1996, 1285; Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus*, 1955 [1870], 555). An additional advantage of the translation “affection” is that it can be used in a wide variety of contexts, extending from qualitative changes to suffering and emotions, and consecutively does justice to the wide scope of meanings of the Greek term πάθος. Thus, when we translate πάθος we will use the term “affection,” despite the fact that usage of “affection” to designate what we nowadays often call “emotions” has become nearly obsolete in contemporary English.

² While Joe Sachs argues in his glossary to the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the translation “disposition” for ἔξις is too general by including both “something passively present as well as something actively achieved” (J. Sachs, *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics*, 2002, 201), it is our opinion that the translation “disposition” is particularly well-suited to translate ἔξις, especially since we argue in this paper that affective moral ἔξεις are the resultant qualities of undergoing particular affections. While we do not want to dispute Sachs' thesis aimed at distinguishing activity and passivity, our paper will try to show the intertwining of activity and passivity. For reason of this ambiguity, the term “disposition” serves well as a translation for ἔξις in this paper.

generosity or magnificence – it is relatively well known that Aristotle claims that moral ἔξεις in the forms of virtue or vice develop from corresponding activities (e.g. *EN* II.1, 1103a32, 1103b21). For this reason, it is very important what habits are inculcated in us: Aristotle underlines that one becomes just or unjust through habituating to behave oneself in a particular kind of way, similar to how one becomes a good or bad harpist through the practice of playing the harp in a particular way (*EN* II.1, 1103b9). In other words: particular actions or πράξεις (e.g. acting generously) result in particular *active* ἔξεις (e.g. having the active disposition of generosity).

However, the origin of the *passive* or *affective* dispositions is more puzzling.³ Presumably, equal to the habitual inculcation associated with actions, particular affections can also become habitually inculcated so as to result in particular affective dispositions, but how this exactly works is not explicitly stated in Aristotle’s texts. For instance, Aristotle writes that “by reacting (ἀναστρέφασθαι) in one way or another to given circumstances some people become self-controlled and gentle, and others self-indulgent and short-tempered” (*EN* II.1, 1103b19-22), but he does not explain how this process of passively reacting to particular circumstances (i.e. the event of a mere πάθος) can turn into a particular moral (virtuous or vicious) *disposition to be affected* (i.e. a passive or affective disposition).

Importantly, Aristotle describes in a few instances how young people follow the spur of the moment and are *only* living on the basis of their πάθη (*EN* I.13, 1095a4-10, VIII.3, 1156a31-33), since they have not yet acquired a moral ἔξις. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that only at particular, more adult, stages of one’s life the acquisition (and the subsequent actualization) of the corresponding ἔξις can take place, which supports Aristotle’s reasoning that the acquisition of a moral ἔξις is neither “natural” nor “counter-natural” (*EN* II.1, 1103a23) as such. However, again, Aristotle omits an exact description of how a particular πάθος results in a *passive* ἔξις. Perhaps Aristotle discussed the connection between πάθος and passive dispositions in

³ While we emphasize here the distinction between the origin of active and passive dispositions, this is not to suggest that *active* dispositions – i.e. dispositions that have mostly to do with actions (πράξεις) – exclude affection (πάθος) or vice versa, that *passive* dispositions – i.e. dispositions that are mostly oriented around our affections – have nothing to do with πράξεις. The intertwining of action (πράξεις) and affection (πάθος) is crucial to the *Nicomachean Ethics* as argued by Jacobi, 1981, 47 and Kosman, 1980, 103-116.

relationship to the correlated categories of doing (ποιεῖν) and being affected (πάσχειν) in *Categories* 9, but, unfortunately, the extant manuscript of the *Categories* breaks off a few lines into the discussion of ποιεῖν and πάσχειν.⁴

In light of the foregoing absence of explanation, this paper seeks to offer a systematic exploration of the connection between πάθος and passive or affective moral dispositions, specifically in terms of the acquisition of the passive or affective dispositions. It is our thesis that the constitution of passive ἕξις on the basis of πάθος is best understood by appealing to change, and specifically qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις). On the basis of *Categories* 8, we argue that two forms of qualitative change underlie the alteration from πάθος to passive or affective moral ἕξις. First, natural πάθη cause affective temperaments that may influence our passive moral dispositions. Secondly, Aristotle’s discussion of an acquired bodily πάθος causing a particular affective quality such as a tan skin serves well as a more *direct* model for comprehending how frequent, consistent and habitual exposure to certain acquired and selected psychological πάθη may generate particular passive or affective moral dispositions.

Ostensibly, it is *qualitative change* that needs to underlie this alteration from πάθος to passive ἕξις since no other form of change as described by Aristotle – substantial change, locomotion, or quantitative change – seems to apply to the specific kind of change at stake here. First of all, it cannot be substantial change, since the coming into being of a ἕξις does not presuppose the coming-into-being or corruption of a particular substance or οὐσία. It cannot be change of place either, since the coming into being of a particular virtuous or vicious disposition does not depend on a change in location,⁵ unless incidentally.⁶ Thirdly, the process cannot be that of quantitative change either, since the acquisition of a passive disposition, although connected to the relative more or less of a particular affection, is not defined solely through appeal to quantity (*EN* II.6, 1106a33 ff.). Thus, on the basis of this logical exclusion, qualitative change seems the most likely candidate.

⁴ As Ackrill writes in his introductory note to the *Categories*, the text “fades out in Chapter 9” and the transition made to chapters 10-15 is “certainly not genuine Aristotle” (Ackrill 1963, 69).

⁵ Unless we follow Aristotle’s argument in *Physics* VIII.7 closely, where ultimately qualitative change is said to be ontologically dependent upon locomotive change (*phora*) insofar as qualitative change presupposes a change in distance and thus location of those things effecting the qualitative change (*Physics* VIII.7, 260b4-5).

⁶ I.e., incidentally insofar as the acquisition or realization of a passive moral *hexis* has to take place at a particular location but does not depend for its definition upon a change towards this location.

In additional support of qualitative change as the transformative process that leads from πάθος to passive ἔξις we can offer, first of all, *Categories* 8 as an instance where Aristotle analyzes the virtuous dispositions as qualities (ποιότητες). Here he lists “virtue, justice, temperance and the rest” as examples of qualities (*Cat.* 8, 8b33-36) which implies that the process leading to the acquisition of all such virtuous dispositions (active or passive) must involve a form of qualitative change. Moreover, in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.6, 1096a25, Aristotle describes how the word “good,” when applied to the category of quality, entails “virtue,” thereby offering more evidence for his understanding of ἔξις, and thus passive ἔξις, as a particular kind of quality. Finally, it is important to note that on the more malleable end of the qualitative spectrum (i.e. on the side of the more changeable πάθη as opposed to the more stable ἔξεις), Aristotle often gives significance to πάθος in the context of quality, and particularly in connection with change of quality (e.g. *Metaphysics* V.14, *Metaphysics* V. 21 and *Categories* 8).⁷ It thus seems probable to assume that the process of the acquisition of a *passive* ἔξις has to be understood along similar, qualitative lines.

Certainly, the sense of qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις) we have in mind here has to be taken in its most flexible meaning. As Aristotle explains in *DA* II.5, 417a30-417b28, the process of acquiring a disposition (the example he uses is acquiring knowledge or grammar) can loosely be said to involve qualitative change since it implies a change from one qualitative state into its contrary and takes place over time.⁸ However, strictly speaking (and thereby in line with *Physics* VII.3, 245b3-247a18)⁹ ἀλλοίωσις is reserved for an exchange of πάθη (the loss of one πάθος and the acquisition of its opposite) while the development of a ἔξις is most precisely said not an alteration but entails, as Polansky clarifies, “a development of a new relation with respect to the

⁷ Πάθος as change of quality is at the very center of Aristotle’s own vocabulary list of πάθος in *Metaphysics* V.14 and V.21 (1022b15-22). In addition, change of quality is the focus of Aristotle’s elaborate discussion of πάθος in *Categories* 8, lending more support to the idea that change of quality is vital to his understanding of πάθος. We will discuss this in more detail in Sections 1 and 2 of this paper.

⁸ Ron Polansky’s commentary on this passage is very enlightening, as he outlines what Aristotle strictly speaking defines as alteration and how he might more loosely use this term. See Ron Polansky, *Aristotle’s De Anima*, 2007, in particular 233, 235 and 240.

⁹ As Polansky points out, also *GC* I.4, 319b6-14 and *Physics* III.3, 202a32ff need to be seen in light of *Physics* VII.3. Polansky, 2007, 233.

πάθη”¹⁰ and is thus a true self-realization, a development of one’s φύσις (cf. *DA* II.5, 417b16-17). Acknowledging these two senses of ἀλλοιώσις is especially important for our research as it allows us to differentiate initially between seemingly more incidental changes on the level of the πάθη and more vital changes that have to do with the relationship between the πάθη and passive ἕξεις.

To obtain more insight into the connection between πάθος and passive ἕξις in Aristotle, we will first analyze Aristotle’s definition of πάθος in *Metaphysics* V.21, since this passage offers a helpful general introduction¹¹ to the meaning of πάθος in the context of change of quality, and can, thus, offer support to relate πάθος to passive ἕξις. Subsequently, we will turn to Aristotle’s usage of πάθος in *Categories* 8, which gives important indications as to how particular kinds of πάθη (natural or acquired) can underlie particular passive or affective ἕξεις.

I. An initial exploration of πάθος: πάθος as change of quality in *Metaphysics* V.21

Aristotle’s listing of πάθος in *Metaphysics* V.21 emphasizes one particular meaning: that of πάθος as “change of quality.” Aristotle writes:

Πάθος means in one sense a quality (ποιότης) in virtue of which a thing can be altered (ἀλλοιοῦσθαι), such as white and black, or sweet and bitter, or heaviness and lightness, or whatever else is of this sort. And in another sense it means the actualizations (ἐνέργειαι) and the alterations (ἀλλοιώσεις) of these. Of the latter, it implies especially harmful alterations and motions (βλαβεραὶ ἀλλοιώσεις καὶ κινήσεις), and of these most of all those which are painful. Also, misfortunes and pains of considerable magnitude are called πάθη (*Metaphysics* V.21, 1022b15-22).¹²

¹⁰ Polansky, 2007, 233.

¹¹ Notably, Amélie Oksenberg Rorty’s informative article “Aristotle on the Metaphysical Status of *Pathē*” in *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (March 1984), 521-546, offers a fine overview of the various meanings of πάθος in Aristotle’s corpus. Another worthwhile reading is Joachim’s analysis of πάθος in his reading of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Joachim, 1970, 81-85).

¹² This is our own translation. We have rendered “μᾶλλον” in *Metaphysics* V.21, 1022b19 as “especially,” in line with Tredennick’s translation (Tredennick, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, 1996).

Four senses of πάθος can be distinguished in this passage:¹³ (1) πάθος as changeable quality; (2) πάθος as change of quality; (3) πάθος as harmful change of quality; (4) πάθος as great, painful suffering or misfortune. The range of meanings covered by Aristotle’s discussion of πάθος in *Metaphysics* V.21 is wide, echoing the broad scope of meaning of πάθος in ancient Greek¹⁴: it extends from the “neutral” potential changes in quality which beings can experience, to the actual life-changing experiences of suffering which afflict beings. Yet, despite its variation in meaning, there is a common thread: πάθος is associated, in every definition, with a change – extending from the most minor, limited qualitative changes to life-altering experiences.¹⁵ What constitutes the difference between these various senses of πάθος is the question as to whether these changes are only potentially occurring (as in the first sense), actual (as in the second sense,

¹³ The following outline has been based in part upon Carvallo’s outline that is added to Bonitz’s translation of *Aristoteles’ Metaphysik*, 1968. Carvallo distinguishes between three sub-categories: changeable quality, change of quality, and harmful change of quality (1968, 120). The advantage of Carvallo’s outline is that one can clearly see the interrelations between the various definitions, while also emphasizing the main association of πάθος with change of quality. Bonitz and Carvallo, however, omit the fourth (4) listing in this outline, that of πάθος as great misfortune. No reason is provided for omitting this fourth category. We could speculate that what is listed here under (4) is interpreted by Bonitz and Carvallo as a subcategory of (3), i.e. harmful alterations.

¹⁴ Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* presents an extensive overview showing πάθος’ wide range of meanings. It can refer, among other things, to that which happens to a person or thing, to (good or bad) experience, to emotions of the soul, or to states, conditions and properties of things. See Liddell and Scott 1996, 1285. With regard to the meaning of πάθος in Aristotle’s works, Bonitz writes that “πάθος is said in many ways”; Bonitz provides five main categories to give an overview of the meaning of πάθος in Aristotle (H. Bonitz, 1955 [1870], 555-7).

¹⁵ In the latter case, we could argue that the meaning of πάθος surpasses the realm of qualitative change and enters the realm of substantial change, particularly when πάθος is of the kind to include killings and excessive wounds which lead to the demise of a particular substance. For more on this sense of πάθος as overwhelming human suffering, see *Poetics* 11, where Aristotle defines πάθος in the following way: “πάθος is a destructive or painful action (πρᾶξις φθαρτικὴ ἢ ὀδυνηρά) such as killings in the open and the infliction of excessive pains and wounds and everything of this sort (*Poetics* 11, 1452b10-13; Translation by S. Benardete and Michael Davis, Aristotle *On Poetics*, 2002). As examples of a tragedy rich in suffering – παθητική – Aristotle mentions the *Ajax* and the *Ixion* (*Poetics* 18, 1455b33-34), with the *Ajax* focusing on Ajax’s suicide, and the *Ixion* focusing on Ixion’s sufferings in Hades.

which Aristotle sometimes describes through the neologism πάθησις¹⁶), painful (as in the third sense) or extremely painful and overwhelming in scope (as in the fourth sense).

Moreover, the change that occurs is, in every instance, associated with passive undergoing or being affected (πάσχειν), extending from the qualities that are potentially to be affected by their contraries (or from what is intermediate¹⁷) to the actual suffering of living beings affected by life-changing events. For instance, in connection with the first sense of πάθος discussed here, that of πάθος as changeable quality, Aristotle speaks of πάθος as a quality that can be altered (ἀλλοιοῦσθαι). The *passive* verbal voice in which alteration is expressed highlights that the potential change under examination here is a change brought about through a process of being affected (πάσχειν).

For our subsequent analysis of the relationship between πάθος and passive moral dispositions, we will need to examine whether these two core notions of πάθος – i.e. (qualitative) change and passive undergoing – resurface there as well.

II. Affections and affective qualities in *Categories* 8

Aristotle comes to speak of πάθος in *Categories* 8 in light of addressing the category of quality (ποιότης).¹⁸ The term “quality” is “spoken of in a number of ways” (8b26-27), encompassing a range of meanings. Aristotle initially distinguishes four kinds of qualities (γένος ποιότητος), of which πάθος constitutes a part (8b25-10a10):

(1) dispositions (ἕξεις) and conditions (διαθέσεις);

¹⁶ Thus, in this second sense Aristotle aims at capturing the process or activity (ἐνέργεια) of passive change – which he sometimes calls πάθησις. The term πάθησις is, as Hussey points out, a “new coinage of Aristotle’s” (Hussey, 1993, 67) and only occurs in *Physics* III.3 and in *De Anima* III.2; cf. also Bonitz’s entry for πάθησις: Bonitz refers to *Physics* III.3, 202a23, 27, 32, b3 and to *De Anima* III.2, 426a9 (Bonitz, 1955 [1870], 555).

¹⁷ In the case of contraries, a white thing may be altered by something black; in the case of intermediates, a white thing may be altered by something intermediate within the spectrum of opposites, e.g. something red (e.g. *Physics* I.5, 188b1-2).

¹⁸ Plato uses the term “quality” in the *Theaetetus* (182A) and in the *Republic* (438c ff.). Cf. Ackrill, 1963, 103; Trendelenburg, 1864 [1963], 90; Bonitz, 1853 [1967], 58. Note that the term ποιότης is “an abstract noun derived from the interrogative adjective ποιόν” (Cohen & Matthews, *On Aristotle’s Categories*, 1991, 97, footnote 121). Ackrill adds that ποιόν can both be used as “an interrogative and an indefinite adjective” (Ackrill, 1963, 103).

- (2) natural capacities or incapacities (δύναμις φυσικὴ ἢ ἀδυναμία);
- (3) affective qualities (παθητικαὶ ποιότητες) and πάθη; and
- (4) shapes and figures (σχῆμά και μορφή).

The discussion of πάθος is thus unmistakably part of a larger group of kinds of quality and finds its significance in its distinction from the other members of this group. Notably, the contrast drawn with these other kinds of qualities is echoed in other works as well,¹⁹ such as *Metaphysics* V.19-21,²⁰ and *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4.²¹

Among these different kinds of qualities, dispositions (ἔξεις) stand out as the qualities that are most stable, enduring, and “unmoved.” Examples of dispositions are virtues such as justice and temperance (*Cat.* 8, 8b33-36). By contrast, affective qualities (παθητικαὶ ποιότητες) and affections (πάθη) such as hotness and coldness, paleness and darkness (*Cat.* 8, 9a28-32) seem to be mostly located at the opposite – i.e. less stable and more flexible – end of the qualitative spectrum, signifying fleeting and non-permanent qualitative changes. However, this initial characterization becomes problematic once we unravel the meanings of the term “πάθος.” As we will see in what follows, unraveling these different meanings is particularly useful to increase understanding of the relationship between πάθος and passive moral ἔξεις.

Qualities are called “affective” (παθητικαί), according to Aristotle, for two different reasons: either they produce an affection (πάθος)²² or they are brought about “by an affection” or

¹⁹ The significance of these parallels can only be elaborated upon after each passage has been discussed in detail. Cf. Trendelenburg, who refers to both *Categories* 8 and to *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4. In his view, *pathē*, *hexeis*, and *dunamis* are “indeed differentiations of actions and motion” (Trendelenburg, 1963 [1864], 94).

²⁰ In *Metaphysics* V.19-21, Aristotle discusses conditions (διαθέσεις) (V.19), dispositions (ἔξεις) (V.20) and affections (πάθη).

²¹ In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, distinctions are drawn between affections (πάθη), dispositions (ἔξεις), and potencies (δύναμις) (EN II.4 1105b19-21).

²² In this first case, affective qualities are called “affective” because they produce an affection. More particularly: they “are productive of an affection of the senses” (κατὰ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ... πάθους εἶναι ποιητικῆν; 9b7). For instance, honey is called sweet not because the honey itself “has been affected somehow” (πεπονθῆναι τι; 9b1-2), but because honey’s sweetness *produces* an affection (πάθος) of taste in us. Said differently, the “affective” aspect of qualities such as hotness and sweetness is grounded in its transference to the subject who is subject to it. Πάθος is understood here as the qualitative affection that takes place in the senses, as a result of a certain action (ποιεῖν).

“through an affection” (διὰ πάθος; *Cat.* 8, 9b12-13).²³ The first sense of “affective” is significant, not only in light of its very interesting meaning pointing to an active affection of the senses, but also in light of the broader framework of understanding the connection between ἔξις and πάθος, since it underlines that when a qualitative passive ἔξις has come about, it is and remains to be active in producing affections.²⁴ This is in line with Aristotle’s ideas in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he argues that once dispositions have been established, they express themselves actively through our affections. For instance, once the disposition of gentleness has been formed, we will allow ourselves to be angered in the proper circumstances (cf. *EN* II.5, 1125b32-35). However, it is especially the second sense of “affective” that we will examine below, since Aristotle mostly uses the term πάθος in this way in *Categories* 8, and because this conception of πάθος as being *productive* of a quality points the way towards understanding how something like a passive ἔξις can emerge on the basis of πάθος. With regard to this latter meaning of πάθος we can distinguish three meanings of πάθος which all emphasize πάθος’ ability to effect change, possibly aiding us to understand how passive *moral* dispositions may come into being.

First, Aristotle focuses upon natural πάθη that are “hard to change and permanent” and which bring about effects that truly qualify someone. In Aristotle’s words: when particular qualities “have their origin (ἀρχήν) in affections (πάθων) that are hard to change (δυσκινήτων) and permanent they are called ‘affective qualities’” (*Cat.* 8, 9b20-21).²⁵ To illustrate this, Aristotle gives the example of how one’s “natural make-up” (κατα φυσικὴν σύστασιν; *Cat.* 8, 9b18) can result in a ruddy complexion. Due to the effects of this natural πάθος, a person may be called “ruddy.” In light of our more general project of outlining the relationship between affections and moral dispositions, this analysis in the *Categories* points the way towards understanding how πάθη that have to do with our natural constitution (such as hotness, coldness,

²³ Ammonius sums this up nicely: “<a quality is affective> either because it produces an affection or because it is generated by an affection” (Ammonius, 1991, 81, 15-17).

²⁴ Undeniably, the example given in *Categories* 8, that of honey’s sweetness producing an affection of the senses, has considerable complexity, since the example includes the additional layer of a *transference* of an external sensible quality to the senses. However, we omit the specifics of this analysis as our main research is oriented around the issue of πάθος as being productive of ἔξις.

²⁵ Translation Ackrill modified, since he omits the term ‘affective’ and puts instead ‘qualities’ (Ackrill, 1963).

and the like) might be the underpinnings for certain conditions (such as irascibility or fearfulness) that could impact the coming into being of certain moral dispositions.

Secondly, Aristotle discusses qualities that result from an *acquired* cause or πάθος. As in the previous case, resultant affective qualities such as paleness and darkness “do not easily give way – or even last for a lifetime” (*Cat.* 8, 9b26-27), but the πάθη that cause them are not congenital, but acquired. In this case, Aristotle speaks of long-term affections (πάθη) such as “long illness or sunburn” (*Cat.* 8, 9b24-25), i.e. initially external πάθη which have, as it were, “grown upon” a subject, resulting in something that we could call, in a Thomistic fashion, a qualitative “second nature.” Importantly, the sunburn about which Aristotle is talking here cannot be a solely occasional event, such as the sporadic sunburn acquired during a vacation resulting in a reddened skin. It is not reasonable to call the temporarily reddened skin something that “does not easily give way – or even lasts for a lifetime.” Instead, what Aristotle must be talking about is continuous exposure to sunburn resulting in a consistently tan skin, for instance that of people who work outside in sunny environments and whose skin is exposed. For our assessment of the relationship between affections and moral dispositions, this analysis of acquired πάθη will prove to be crucial, as it allows us to understand how continuous exposure to and modification of particular πάθη such as fear may result in a particular moral disposition such as courage.

Thirdly, in contrast to the previous two senses, a particular quality may also be due to a very different kind of cause or πάθος: one that is neither long lasting nor permanent but fleeting. An example of this is turning red because of being ashamed: one’s coloring here is due to a temporary affection that quickly passes away. With regard to this third kind of cause, the resulting “quality” is comprehended as a πάθος and, oddly and in contradiction to earlier passages in *Cat.* 8 (9a28-35), is no longer said to be part of the category of quality:

Those [occurrences] that result from something that easily disperses (διαλυομένον) and quickly gives way (ταχὺ ἀποκαθισταμένων) are *called* affections (πάθη); for people are not, in virtue of them, *said* to be qualified somehow. Thus a man who reddens through shame (αἰσχυνθῆναι) is not *called* ruddy, nor one who pales in fright (φοβηθῆναι) pallid;

rather he is *said* to have been affected somehow (πεπονθέναι τι). Hence such things are *called* affections (πάθη) but not qualities (ποιότητες) (*Cat.* 8, 9b28-34).²⁶

The way we linguistically express the kind of qualitative change associated with πάθος unlocks the meaning of πάθος. Whenever there is the issue of a process of something temporarily undergoing a change, the term πάσχειν²⁷ is used instead of the term “quality.” This use of the term πάσχειν reveals that the change that the subject undergoes does not adhere or “stick” to the subject in the way qualities do: the latter’s (relative) permanence makes them true candidates for qualifying a subject. The change effected by a πάσχειν, i.e. πάθος, is, on the contrary, only temporarily acquired: after a short while, the subject recovers its “original” state.

When we think about how this sense of πάθος will be productive for our assessment of the relationship between affections and moral dispositions, then this particular analysis of πάθος seems to approximate closely the analysis of the affections in *EN* II.5, 1106a4-5, where affections such as anger, fear and jealousy (to name a few) are mentioned as temporary ways human beings are moved and are juxtaposed with the more “permanent” ways humans are disposed through the virtues and vices. Both passages seem to highlight the *difference* rather than the connection between πάθος and ἕξις.

Reviewing this third sense of πάθος in the *Categories* in relationship to the other senses, πάθος inarguably acquires significance as the temporary result of a process of πάσχειν, of undergoing something. Yet, earlier in *Categories* 8 (9b20ff.), in Aristotle’s discussion of affective qualities, the term πάθος was used to refer to particular causes which have the power to effect changes, resulting in affective qualities. In that context, πάθη were apprehended as causes that could bring about particular qualities. As cause and effect, πάθος and quality were linked. Here, in 9b28-34, πάθος is used in contradistinction from quality. This is due to the fact that πάθος is now perceived from the perspective of the *result* of a temporary process: πάθος is the result of a process that temporarily affects a subject. Since πάθος, in that role, signifies a fleeting attribute, it must be distinguished from the more permanent nature of a quality. To summarize the various ways in which the term πάθος has been used in *Cat.* 8, the following outline may be helpful:

²⁶ Our italics.

²⁷ Note that in the above quote Aristotle uses the perfect infinitive of the verb πάσχειν, πεπονθέναι.

1. πάθος as a natural cause of an affective quality, such as our natural composition causing a ruddy complexion.
2. πάθος as an acquired cause of an affective quality, such as long illness causing (enduring) paleness.
3. πάθος as cause and effect of a temporary process of being affected (*paschein*), such as the impermanent cause (πάθος) of shame leading to the fleeting affection (πάθος) of blushing.

As this summary shows, πάθος is apprehended in different ways in *Cat.* 8. What is new in *Cat.* 8, compared to our preceding analysis of the *Metaphysics*, is the fact that πάθος emerges here in another major sense: that of a *power to effect change*. It is exactly this “active” notion of πάθος that is helpful to comprehend how πάθος can serve as the basis for a passive disposition, and the following section will apply what we have learned to understand the coming-into-being of a passive, *moral* disposition. As we will see, especially the notion of πάθος as a natural and acquired cause of a quality will point the way towards grasping how exposure to particular πάθη can result in particular moral dispositions coming into being.

III. Πάθη and passive moral dispositions: an exploration of their connection

Of the various senses of πάθος outlined above, πάθος as cause or origin of affective qualities is especially crucial for understanding the underpinnings of passive moral dispositions. For, Aristotle’s discussion of the natural and acquired causes for particular bodily conditions such as a ruddy or pale complexion can readily be translated into the context of “psychological” processes – i.e. processes pertaining to the soul.²⁸ In fact, Aristotle’s discussion in *Categories* 8 explicitly encourages this analogy when he writes that

²⁸ This is not to suggest that the body and soul are separable “entities.” As Aristotle makes clear in *De Anima* I.1 and II.1, body and soul are intricately bound up together and inseparable (*DA* II.1, 413a4-5). Especially since Aristotle defines the πάθη as “λόγοι ἔνυλοι” (*DA* I.1, 403a25-26) the distinction drawn here does not imply an exclusion of one or the other, rather a difference in emphasis and perspective, since the psychological affections that we will discuss here are also bodily affections (cf. *DA* I.1, 403a5-6)

Similarly (ὁμοίως) with regard to the soul also we speak of affective qualities (παθητικαὶ ποιότητες) and affections (πάθη) (*Cat.* 8, 9b33-34).

Parallel to his discussion of bodily affective qualities and πάθη, Aristotle distinguishes various psychological πάθη that cause particular affective qualities and πάθη to come into being.

Schematically, analogous to our previous outline, we can differentiate the following:

(1) Natural πάθη that are not easily changeable (πάθων δυσκινήτων)²⁹ lead to particular affective qualities. When the πάθος or power to effect change is, as Aristotle writes, “present right from birth” (ἐν τῇ γενέσει; i.e. what we call “congenital”) people are qualified “as mad persons (μανικοί) or as irascible persons (ὀργίλοι)” (*Cat.* 8, 9b34-10a2).³⁰

(2) Acquired πάθη also cause affective qualities to come into being. In this context, Aristotle speaks of “changes that are not natural” (ἐκστάσεις μὴ φυσικαί) (*Cat.* 8, 10a3) and that “are hard to get rid of (δυσσάλλακτοι) or even completely unchangeable (ἀκίνητοι)” (*Cat.* 8, 10a4-5). Undoubtedly, an understanding of how such an acquired πάθος can cause an affective quality will prove essential for our analysis, since it will enlighten us as to how continuous exposure to particular πάθη might lead us to acquire particular affective psychological ἕξεις.

(3) Finally, Aristotle identifies the πάθη as both temporary causes of fleeting affections and as the temporary affections that result from those causes:

But those which result from things that quickly subside are called affections (πάθη), e.g. if a man in distress is rather bad-tempered; for the man who in such an affection (πάθει) is rather bad-tempered is not said to be bad-tempered, but rather he is said to have been affected somehow (πεπονθέναι) (*Cat.* 8, 10a6-9).

Analogous to his discussion of ruddiness as a quality vs. blushing as invoked through shame (*Cat.* 8, 9b28-34), Aristotle appeals to the way we distinguish “psychological” affections from

²⁹ Ackrill omits “which are not easily changeable” in his translation (Ackrill, 1963, 27), and so does Apostle (Apostle, 1980, 17) for reasons unknown to me. Cooke accurately translates πάθων δυσκινήτων by “certain affections not easy to change or remove” (Cooke, 1938, 71)

³⁰ Translation Ackrill modified (Ackrill, 1963, 27).

“psychological” qualities in speech. Because our language distinguishes between bad-tempered as something that someone can undergo (πάσχειν) vs. someone being qualified as bad-tempered, this implies that a temporary result of a (temporary) passive movement, πάθος, has to be distinguished from a quality that permanently characterizes someone. In other words, when a qualitative “property” is related to a fleeting cause and is easily moved, the qualitative result is called a πάθος.

Since it is this third sense of πάθος – that of a fleeting psychological affection or emotion – that we, in a contemporary context, mostly associate with the concept of πάθος in Aristotle, and since it is this form of πάθος that offers the backdrop for understanding the acquisition of a passive or affective moral disposition, we may do well to first give a brief account of this third meaning of πάθος, after which we can analyze the first two senses of causative πάθος that are most helpful for understanding the correlation between affections and affective moral dispositions.

III.a Πάθη as temporary psychological affections (ad 3)

To illustrate Aristotle’s usage of πάθος in this particular way, the definition given in the *Nicomachean Ethics* will prove beneficial to our analysis here, especially since Aristotle in *EN* II.5 seems keen on pointing out both the difference and the connection between the affections and our moral dispositions. First, Aristotle describes the πάθη in the following way:

By πάθη I mean appetite (ἐπιθυμίαν), anger (ὀργήν), fear (φόβον), confidence (θράσος), envy (φθόνον), joy (χαράν), affection (φιλίαν), hatred (μῖσος), longing (πῶθον), jealousy (ζῆλον), pity (ἔλεον), and in general anything that is accompanied (ἔπεται) by pleasure or pain... (*EN* II.5, 1105b21-24).³¹

In this statement, different kinds of πάθη are enumerated. Although this list is not complete,³² the foregoing examples provide a rather broad spectrum of phenomena that, in a contemporary

³¹ Translation based both on M. Ostwald, Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* (1962) and on Sachs’s translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2002) with some modifications.

³² Other definitions and listings of the emotions can be found in *Eudemian Ethics* II.2 1220b11-16, in *Rhetoric* II.1 1378a20 ff, and in *Magna Moralia* I.7 1186a12-14.

framework, would be rendered as “emotions,”³³ “feelings,”³⁴ or “passions.”³⁵ Subsequently, the text that follows this initial enumeration of the πάθη in *EN* II.5 entails more clues as to the distinction between πάθος and ἔξις. For, Aristotle states that

we are said to be ‘moved’ (κινεῖσθαι) with regard to the πάθη, but with regard to our virtues and vices we are not said to be ‘moved’ but to be ‘disposed’ in a certain way (διακεῖσθαι πως) (*EN* II.5, 1106a6-7).

Similar to the third sense of πάθος outlined above in our discussion of *Categories* 8, πάθος as defined in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is related to temporarily undergoing a movement, which is to be distinguished from the stable nature of a (moral) disposition. However, Aristotle defines dispositions as conditions that are “either good or bad, in which we are in relation to the πάθη (ἔξεις καθ’ ἃς πρὸς τὰ πάθη ἔχομεν ἐν ἡ κακῶς) (*EN* II.5, 1105b26-27),³⁶ which also clearly

³³ In his analysis of ἦθος and πάθος in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Wisse remarks that the rendition of πάθη as emotions “is correct only if it is remembered that they include gentle as well as violent ones” (Wisse, 1989, 67).

³⁴ In his article “An Aristotelian Theory of the Emotions,” Cooper argues that Aristotle’s analysis of the πάθη means to discuss “states of *feeling* – passions or emotions, conditions in which one’s mind or consciousness is affected, moved, or stirred up” (J.M. Cooper, “An Aristotelian Theory of the Emotions,” 1996, 242).

³⁵ Yet, the fact that Aristotle includes, in various writings, ἐπιθυμία, i.e. “the desire for the pleasant, for food, drink, etc.” in his definition of the πάθη indicates also that his understanding of the πάθη is more inclusive than ours. In other words, the πάθη may entail those (bodily) longings and desires that, to a contemporary understanding, are not called “emotions” but “desires.” In fact, in his definition of the πάθος of anger (ὀργή) in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines anger as an *instance of desire*, as Cooper notes, and Cooper continues by arguing that the desire at work in anger is anything but “a ‘cool’ and ‘rational’ desire.” It thus appears that anger has a very special relationship to non-rational desires (Cooper, “An Aristotelian Theory of the Emotions,” 1996, 249-250). Cf. also Leighton, 1996, 222-231 for an analysis of the difference and interplay between emotion and desire. Leighton analyzes ἐπιθυμία as a desire that “seems to expel rather than alter reasoning” (226) and thereby can be contrasted with emotion “which admits of rational persuasion” (227). Admittedly, we could also take ἐπιθυμία in a broader sense as found for instance in *EN* 1102b30-31, where one of the “irrational” (ἄλογον) parts of the soul is said to be the appetitive and desiring part, which still is able to “listen” to reason. If this part of the soul includes the πάθη, which seems to be implied in this passage, this would indicate that perhaps the ἐπιθυμία in a wider sense (i.e. “our appetitive and desiring tendencies”) are the very basis of the πάθη.

³⁶ This is Ostwald’s translation (Ostwald, 1962, p. 40), with some modifications. It is noteworthy that Aristotle focuses here, for this definition of ἔξις, solely on the πάθη. In other passages, he mentions both the πάθη and the

establishes that there is an important *connection* between our (temporary) affections and our (stable) dispositions. Unfortunately, the *Nicomachean Ethics* does not offer us specific suggestions to explain this connection, especially not in terms of the *genesis* of the passive or affective dispositions. In order to clarify how to think about our affections as possibly grounding our affective dispositions, we would do well to analyze the two cases of productive πάθος discussed in *Categories* 8 – natural and acquired πάθη as causes of particular affective qualities – to establish a basis for explaining the genesis of affective moral dispositions.

III.b Natural πάθη as causes of affective qualities (ad 1)

According to Aristotle, there are natural πάθη that can lead to particular affective qualities. The reasoning here is that, just as a natural bodily composition leads to a particular bodily qualitative state such as ruddiness, a natural psychological composition also gives rise to a particular state of the soul. In *Categories* 8, Aristotle provides two examples of psychological states that result from natural, congenital πάθη: madness (μανικὴ) and irascibility (ὀργή), leading people thusly affected to be called “mad” (μανικοί) or “irascible” (ὀργίλοι) (*Cat.* 8, 10a1-2). How should we interpret these resultant affective states – as dispositions or otherwise? Aristotle argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that virtuous (or vicious) dispositions are not given by nature (nor against nature), but are acquired (*EN* II.1, 1103a18). Thus, when Aristotle uses the term “irascible” (ὀργίλος) in *Categories* 8 for the person who has excessive anger³⁷ on a natural basis it would be problematic to argue that this anger has the form of a qualitative *disposition*, since this would run counter to both Aristotle’s argument in *EN* II.1, 1103a24-26 that neither virtues nor vices come about by nature and his argument in *Physics* VII.3, 246b12 that the virtues come about by nature. Instead, we need to assume that the psychological qualities brought about by natural πάθη are perhaps most easily understood as *temperaments* and not as dispositions.

Subsequently, within the space of Aristotle’s argument, we could argue that particular people may be *more prone* to a particular vicious or virtuous disposition on the basis of these psychological temperaments that were acquired through natural πάθη. Aristotle would be the first to point out, for instance, that our natural temperaments have individual variation and that they

πράξεις, e.g. in *EN* II.6 1106b17; 1107a5, 1107a7. For the correlation between πάθος and πράξις, see also Kosman, 1980, 104.

³⁷ For this usage of ὀργίλος as embodying excessive anger, see also *EN* IV.5, 1125b29-31 and 1126a13.

are also dependent upon age and gender. For instance, with regard to age, Aristotle argues in the *Rhetoric* that young people are more prone to feel excessively confident (due to their “hotter” nature), whereas older people are more prone to feeling excessive fear based upon their “colder” nature (*Rhetoric* II.13, 1389b28-32). In respect to gender, Aristotle argues in *History of Animals* VIII.1 that, generally, males are more spirited and wilder than females and that these qualities “are more evident in humans due to the fact that their nature is more complete” (*Hist. An.* VIII.1, 608b8-9).³⁸

In overview, Aristotle’s discussion of natural, congenital πάθος can help us understand the interaction between the πάθη and passive moral dispositions, insofar as we can understand how particular natural πάθη cause temperaments which can then inform particular moral dispositions. However, this line of thought does not give a direct link from πάθος to passive ἔξις, in contrast to the next-mentioned form of πάθος.

III.c Acquired πάθη as causes of affective qualities (ad 2)

The most interesting kind of πάθος for our analysis here is that of the acquired πάθη that “are hard to get rid of (δυσπαλλάκτοι) or even completely unchangeable (ἀκίνητοι)” (*Cat.* 8, 10a4-5). Although Aristotle does not give examples of such psychological πάθη, the two examples of a bodily πάθος that he does give – long illness and sunburn (*Cat.* 8, 9b24-25) that engender pallor and darkness respectively – are instrumental to providing clues to this issue. For, similar to the continuous influence of acquired bodily πάθη such as illness or burning heat on our bodily complexion, continuous and consistent exposure to particular psychological πάθη will lead us to acquire particular kinds of affective psychological states.

But how exactly would this work? If we take the πάθος of fear as an example, we may use as a starting-point Aristotle’s idea that it is by “acting in frightening situations and getting

³⁸ Cf. *History of Animals* VIII.1, which discusses the differences in temperaments between male and female animals and argues that “all females are less spirited than the males, except the bear and leopard: in these the female is held to be braver. But in the other kinds the females are softer, more vicious, less simple, more impetuous, more attentive to the feeding of the young, while the males on the contrary are more spirited, wilder, simpler, less cunning” (*Hist. An.* VIII.1, 608a33-608b3). Aristotle goes on to argue that these qualities are more evident in humans due to the fact that their nature is more complete. As examples of human dispositions he speaks of women as more compassionate and more given to tears, more jealous and complaining, more dispirited and despondent, and more shameless and lying, more wakeful, more afraid of action, etc.

habituated (ἐθιζόμενοι) to be afraid (φοβεῖσθαι) or to be confident (θαρρεῖν), [that] some of us become courageous and others become cowards” (*EN* II.1, 1103b17-18).³⁹ In light of this passage, Aristotle seems to assume that we can *habituate* ourselves to become affected by particular events in such a way that we can acquire the passive or affective disposition of courage. What is crucial in the case of fear and confidence is to acquire the disposition of courage, which requires us to endure things that are most terrifying – most eminently of which is the prospect of sudden death brought about in war on the battlefield (*EN* III.6, 1115a33-1115b2).⁴⁰ The courageous person’s attitude toward so fearful an event as death on the battlefield is to “endure (ὑπομενεῖ) it in the right way and as reason (λόγος) directs for the sake of what is noble (τοῦ καλοῦ)” (*EN* III.7, 1115b12-13). Reminiscent of Plato’s discussion of courage and his frequent invocation of ὑπομένω in the *Laches*,⁴¹ the importance of *enduring* fearful, and thus painful, events is repeated time and again in *EN* III.7. For example, Aristotle states that the courageous person “endures (ὑπομένει) and fears as courage demands” (*EN* III.7, 1115b18), and that “the courageous person endures (ὑπομένει) and acts (πράττει) for the sake of what is noble” (*EN* III.7, 1115b23).⁴² In both these cases, it seems that the verb “ὑπομένω” stands in for the verb “being affected” (πάσχειν), which Aristotle uses in similar sentence-

³⁹ This quote shows the intertwinement and inseparability of action (πράξις) and affection (πάθος) in the *Nicomachean Ethics* – an intertwinement that strongly echoes the correlative nature of the categories of doing (ποιεῖν) and being affected (πάσχειν). We can see the connectivity between πάθος and πράξις clearly expressed in the following quote: “For a courageous man is affected (πάσχει) and acts (πράττει) according to the merits of each case and as reason guides him” (*EN* III.7, 1115b20). For more discussion of this interaction, see Jacobi, 1981, 47 and Kosman, 1980, 103-116.

⁴⁰ Notably, other kinds of sufferings that we fear, such as death as brought about at sea or illness, do not so easily allow for courage to be expressed, although the courageous person would still be courageous in those situations. In both the case of drowning at sea and illness, one does not die nobly and the situation does not allow for showing one’s prowess or valor (ἄλκη) (*EN* III.6, 1115b4-5).

⁴¹ See specifically Socrates’ questioning of Laches in 192c-194c. For an insightful comparison of Plato’s analysis of courage in the *Laches* and Aristotle’s discussion of courage in the *EN*, see Fortenbaugh, 1975, 72-74. According to Fortenbaugh, Aristotle reacts to the *Laches* when recognizing “the importance of virtuous action apart from calculation” (73).

⁴² Other instances of Aristotle’s use of ὑπομένω can be found at *EN* II.2 1104a20, III.1 1110a21, 22, 26; III.6 1115b18, 23, 33, III.7 1116a12, 15, III.8 1117a17, III.9 1117a35.

constructions with similar content in this chapter, e.g. arguing that “a courageous man is affected (πάσχει) and acts (πράττει) according to the merits of each case and as reason guides him” (*EN* III.7, 1115b20).

On the basis of this parallel, Aristotle’s repetitive use of the verb “ὑπομένω” with regard to the relationship of the courageous person towards fearful events is very instructive for our understanding of the relationship between πάθος and passive dispositions. As a composite of ὑπο and μένω, the Greek verb ὑπομένω literally expresses the notion of “to remain,” or “stand,” “while being subjected.”⁴³ Endurance thus entails an interesting “passive activity” – that of *actively* holding out or withstanding, while being *passively* under the pressure of hardship or stress.⁴⁴

This notion of “endurance” grants us a firmer understanding of the formation of such a passive disposition as courage. What seems implied for the acquisition of courage is that we learn to actively habituate ourselves to stabilize the painful πάθος that emerges in dangerous situations. Similar to the case of regular exposure to sunlight resulting in a tan skin, we need to regularly make ourselves vulnerable to dangerous situations and absorb and tolerate the pain and excitement that those situations evoke. Simultaneously, similar to a proper way of tanning (especially important nowadays due to depletion of stratospheric ozone!), we need to carefully seek out the proper locations, occasions, etc. for making ourselves vulnerable. Only under active modification and endurance of fear can the πάθος of fear become a “tame,” more domesticated form of fear, i.e. the moral ἔξις of courage.

Needless to say, this process of the acquisition of a moral ἔξις such as courage demands time. With only one movement (κίνησις) or πάθος of fear, nothing will be built up, and πάθος will function solely in its meaning of a fleeting psychological affect. However, with a few similar fearful reactions (πάθη) to given circumstances perhaps something like a condition (διάθεσις) will emerge, in which one finds oneself tending towards a particular kind of affective state, while still easily being prone to change over into an opposite direction, similar to how hotness and chill or disease and health can change over into each other (*Cat.* 8, 8b37). Only under frequent, consistent and habitual exposure to particular πάθη can those πάθη serve as the

⁴³ As Liddell and Scott explain, in composites, ὑπο can “express subjection or subordination” (Liddell and Scott, 1983, 1875).

⁴⁴ Cf. the different senses for “endurance” as provided by the OED (*Online version*, 2005).

productive cause for the formation of something as stable as a passive or affective disposition. We could thus argue that, similar to how an *active* moral ἔξις develops, i.e. through “repeated and habitual action,”⁴⁵ a *passive* moral ἔξις comes about through repeated and habitual “passion” or πάθος.

It is important to note that the conceptual image of a regulated tanning regime resulting in a particular skin color, although helpful for understanding the underlying affective mechanism leading to the acquisition of the πάθη, also has its shortfalls. First of all, in the case of tanning it seems that only an external cause (the sun) can allow the resultant affective quality (enduring tan skin) to come into being, while we know from Aristotle’s works (for instance *Physics* VII.3) that dispositions might have a natural basis. Still, once we realize that in Aristotle’s example a tan skin could only have been brought about by the sun *in conjunction with* the skin’s natural susceptibility to it, perhaps Aristotle’s tanning example might still work, since it indicates that the active acquisition of the passive dispositions on the basis of the πάθη might very well be supported by a powerful underlying natural susceptibility to this formation.

Secondly, also contrariwise to the case of tanning, acquiring moral dispositions does not only involve when and how one exposes oneself to the πάθη as in the case of tanning, but it is crucially important to what *kind* of πάθη one exposes oneself. In this regard, it is important to recognize that affections are not just simply a given, but that, in seeking to become and be fully virtuous, a person needs to actively pursue and interpret situations that are well-suited to be affected by. It is through experience, as Aristotle writes, that older people have “an eye with which they can see correctly” (*EN* VI.11, 1143b12-13), thus allowing them to discern which situations demand attention and what those situations demands of them. It is, similarly, through experience that we can learn to perceive which particular facts in a situation are worth noticing and important to be affected by. In other words, the dependence of ἔξις on πάθος is not merely mechanical and passive, but requires an active engagement on our part to seek to be alert and sensitive to those situations needing our attention and care. In this context, it makes sense that Aristotle remarks that particular affections such as shame, although appropriate for young people

⁴⁵ Cf. Ostwald’s lexicon entry for ἔξις in his edition of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (Ostwald, 1962, p. 308).

(*EN* IV.9, 1128b17-19)⁴⁶ are not fitting to the virtuous person. For not only *how* something moves us, but also *what* moves us, is, to a certain degree, determined by us.

In addition to shame, Aristotle makes it very clear in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that other *πάθη* should also be excluded from our affective virtuous life, such as spite, shamelessness and envy (*EN* II.6, 1107a10). This selective process of the *πάθη* further complicates but also elucidates the formation of the passive or affective *ἕξεις* on the basis of the *πάθη*. It complicates it insofar as it adds another layer of selection to that of the timing, location, motivation, etc. of particular *πάθη*, but this added layer also elucidates the process of actively selecting the appropriate *πάθη* while making oneself immune to inappropriate, harmful *πάθη*.

Concluding Notes

The preceding has shown that the affections or *πάθη* can form the constitutive basis for our passive moral dispositions, and specifically through the process of qualitative change (taken in its broadest meaning). The qualitative changes that underlie the genesis of passive or affective moral dispositions are of two kinds, similar to the two forms of qualitative change underlying the acquisition of physical qualities outlined in *Categories* 8. First, particular natural *πάθη* cause, through qualitative change, particular affective temperaments which then form the underpinning for our passive or affective moral dispositions; this process however only provides an *indirect* connection from *πάθος* to passive *ἕξις*. Secondly, the genesis of the passive moral dispositions hinges more *directly* on the process of qualitative change set in motion by frequent, consistent and habitual exposure to certain acquired *πάθη*. Yet, as we have argued above, in this latter, more direct, form, the process of qualitative change underlying the establishment of passive moral dispositions is not merely passive, as it entails active selection, resistance and modulation of the *πάθη*. Only under active modification can the *πάθη* turn into more domesticated forms of affectivity, and ideally into virtuous passive or affective dispositions.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ According to Aristotle, the emotion of shame befits young people, since they often make errors, and through shame are kept in check (*EN* IV.9, 1128b17-19)

⁴⁷ I am thankful to Dorothea Frede for her extensive and insightful remarks on an early version of this paper and to Ron Polansky and the anonymous reviewer of *Ancient Philosophy* for their helpful suggestions in revising this article. I also benefited from the remarks offered by those present at the 2010 Townsend Center Working Group in

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