

# *HORMĒ: WHAT IS IT AND WHERE IS IT? A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF THE STOIC THEORY OF ACTION*

## *HORMĒ: ¿QUÉ ES Y DÓNDE SE ENCUENTRA? UNA INTERPRETACIÓN CONTEMPORÁNEA DE LA TEORÍA ESTOICA DE LA ACCIÓN*

Ludovica Adamo<sup>1</sup>

*University of Leeds, England*

Sofia Lombardi<sup>2</sup>

*Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*

**Abstract:** The location of *hormē* (impulse) is a long-standing problem in Stoic action theory, as it is unclear whether it comes before or after the assent. In this paper, we aim to define *hormē* and locate it in the chain of mental states that, for the Stoics, bring us to action. Following both ancient and modern sources, we argue that *hormē* is best understood as an intention since it comprises a cluster of mental states that cause intentional action. We also argue that the impulse coincides with the assent because they are both activated in an agent's mind almost simultaneously after an external presentation. We, then, reject the notion of double impulse and an understanding of *hormē* as a desire. The paper highlights interesting points of connection between the ancient and contemporary action theory by showing that the Stoic view of rational, intentional action bears strong similarities to contemporary accounts of intention.

**Keywords:** Intention · *hormē* · Impulse · Bratman · Stoics

**Resumen:** No queda claro, en la teoría de la acción estoica, si la *hormē* (impulso) es anterior o posterior al asentimiento. En este artículo se tratará de definir la *hormē* y situarla en la secuencia de los estados mentales que, para los estoicos, nos llevan a la acción. Siguiendo fuentes antiguas y modernas, se argumentará que es mejor entender la *hormē* como “intención”, ya que comprende un conjunto de estados mentales que causan la acción intencional. También se argumentará que el impulso coincide con el asentimiento porque ambos se activan en la mente de un agente casi simultáneamente después de una presentación externa. Refutamos, por tanto, la noción de doble impulso y una comprensión de la *hormē* como deseo. El artículo destaca interesantes puntos de conexión entre la teoría de la acción antigua y la contemporánea, mostrando cómo la visión estoica de la acción racional e intencional presenta marcadas similitudes con los modelos contemporáneos de la intención.

**Descriptores:** Intención · *hormē* · Impulso · Bratman · Estoicos

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<sup>1</sup> E-mail: prla@leeds.ac.uk

<sup>2</sup> E-mail: slombardi@uc.cl



## INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>

A long-standing problem in the Stoic theory of action concerns the definition of *hormē* and its location in the chain of mental states that, for the Stoics, lead us to action. It is unclear whether *hormē*, which we refer to with the term ‘impulse’, comes before or after the assent. This paper aims to clarify the location of the impulse and properly define it. We use both ancient and modern sources to interpret the impulse and investigate whether it is best rendered by our contemporary understanding of desires or intentions. We argue that the Stoic concept of impulse is best understood as an intention because of how we arrive at that impulse and the role it plays in our practical reasoning. This leads us to find several points of connection between ancient and contemporary action theory.

In section 1, following different ancient sources, we present the standard Stoic theory of action, focusing on the different steps that lead an agent to act. Particularly, we focus on the impulse, the understanding of which sees some discrepancy among Stoics sources. We offer a first, tentative answer to the questions of what is *hormē* and where it is located in relation to other mental states. This allows us to identify two orders that were given to the steps that lead to action. Most of the sources place the impulse after the assent, however, some of them, position it before the assent. This last, unorthodox version of the Stoic action theory indicates the possibility of two types of impulse co-existing - one that comes before the assent, and one that follows it - a version of the theory Latin authors espoused.

In section 2, we attempt an interpretation of the two impulses the Latin authors talk about through a well-established tradition in the contemporary theory of action. We first explain how rational agents come to act according to the contemporary theory of action. We, then, analyse the nature of the two impulses mentioned by the Latin authors. We argue that the simple impulse is an instinctual urge and that the complex impulse corresponds to a specific contemporary understanding of intention, that is, the plan-theoretic notion of intention that Michael Bratman (1999) analyses. We consider whether both types of impulses can be desires and conclude that they cannot be, partly because the notion of desire is too reductive to cover the multi-faceted role of impulse in our practical reasoning.

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In section three, we go back to the analysis of ancient sources with a specific focus on Stobaeus. In *Eclogae* (II 88) Stobaeus argues that the impulse coincides with the assent. This notion of assent-impulse is a novel take on *hormē* that is not without its problems. However, we show that, when properly interpreted, this concept of assent-impulse allows us to better understand both the role of the *hormē* and the double nature Latin authors attribute to it.

In section four, following Stobaeus, we connect the notion of assent-impulse with the contemporary discourse on intentions we introduced in section two. We show that there are points of contact between Michael Bratman's (1999) plan-theoretic notion of intention and the Stoic analysis of intentional action. We present a definition of the impulse and its role in our practical reasoning that is consistent with Stobaeus' concept of assent-impulse and Bratman's understanding of intentions as plans. This account supports other interpretations of impulse as an intention (Inwood, 1999), and showcases how indebted contemporary action theory is to the Stoic analysis of intentional action and practical reasoning. We, then, offer concluding remarks.

#### THE STOIC THEORY OF ACTION AND THE NOTION OF DOUBLE IMPULSE

In dealing with Stoic philosophy, we are immediately faced with a significant obstacle, that is, the fact that their work is, unfortunately, lost. Except for a few papyri, the sources we possess are fragmentary. Most of them consist of quotations from Stoic texts that we find in other authors, who were almost always hostile to Stoic philosophy. Analysing second-hand reports in these texts is a complex endeavour, given that these other authors report parts of Stoic doctrines in a way that is detached from their original context, often to discredit them. We encounter this phenomenon in every branch of the Stoic philosophy, but the difficulties seem to multiply when it comes to Stoic Ethics. Concerning the Stoic theory of action, most of the sources we have are from centuries after the Stoa. They came from Platonic or Aristotelian sympathizers, as well as Christian authors. However, as we shall see, there are also late Latin Stoics or compendia of Stoic doctrine that, in general, are more trustworthy.

According to most sources, such as Cicero, Plutarch, Clement of Alexandria, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Seneca, the Stoic mechanism that leads to action is made up of different moments.<sup>4</sup> The starting point of this mechanism is the sensation

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<sup>4</sup> Sources that mention this mechanism are Cicero *Acad.* II 24-25, II 108 (*SVF* II 116, II 73); Plutarch *De Stoic. Rep.* 1057b (*SVF* III 177); Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* VI 8, 69; Alexander of Aphrodisias *Fat.* 14 (*SVF* II 980), *An.* 72, 13-16 and Seneca *De Ira* 1, 3.



(*aisthēsis*), a cognitive faculty that, when operative, involves a psychological process with which the subject encounters the world through her senses. With the aid of the *pneuma*,<sup>5</sup> this sensory perception travels from the organs of sense to the central and directive organ of the soul, the *hēgemonikon*. In this way, sensation registers in the soul what the subject encounters and, finally, deposits this perceptual image in the *hēgemonikon* in the form of presentation (*fantasia*).<sup>6</sup> Once a presentation, which informs the subject about the nature of the object, is formed in the soul, the person, through her *logos*, decides whether it is valid or not to accept it<sup>7</sup> with the mental act of the assent (*sunkatathesis*).<sup>8</sup>

Before arriving at the result of such mechanism, that is, action, the subject must go through the impulse (*hormē*), which, as we will explain, is the most problematic element of the Stoic theory of action. Let us start with its definition. According to Chrysippus, in Plutarch, an impulse is a reason that commands agents to act.<sup>9</sup> In Clement of Alexandria, the impulse is a movement of the mind toward or away from something.<sup>10</sup> In Stobaeus too, it is a movement of the soul toward something, but it is also rational (*logikē*) because it presupposes the mediation of a rational ingredient to be activated (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* II 86, 17; SVF III 169). The common element of these definitions is the movement ordered by the assent that pushes the subject towards an object and, ultimately, towards action. *Hormē* is, then, not a reactive behaviour, as it depends on the activity of reason. To sum up, following this order, a subject perceives a presentation with her senses and, with her rationality, decides to give or withhold assent to it. This decision will or will not put in motion the rational impulse that pushes the subject to the final action.

<sup>5</sup> All that is involved in this process is the body (including the soul whose substance is *pneuma*).

<sup>6</sup> Zeno speaks of an impression (*τυπῶσις*) which, modelling the soul, leaves its imprint on the *hēgemonikon* (Sextus Empiricus *M* VII 227-230, 227-230; SVF II 56). Presentation, like sensation, is a passive process caused by something external.

<sup>7</sup> The presentation has propositional content and presents judicative elements since the content of a presentation is already a proposition. (Sextus Empiricus, *M* 242-247; SVF II 65).

<sup>8</sup> The choice of assenting depends on the state in which the subject finds himself. If the subject is not in a good cognitive state, he can assent to a false presentation believing it to be true without realising it is not. For example, I perceived with my senses that there is the smell of freshly baked pizza. The external object forms a presentation in me, there is a pizza nearby, the pizza is good for me now, and, at this point, I can accept this presentation/proposition to be true or I can not accept it. If I give my assent to it, I will produce an impulse and then, an action of moving toward the pizza and eating it.

<sup>9</sup> Plutarch *De Stoic. Rep.* 1037f (SVF III 175) “ἡ ὁρμή τοῦ ἀνθρώπου λόγος ἐστὶ προσακτικὸς αὐτῷ τοῦ ποιεῖν”. In this case reason is προσακτικὸς (*prostaktikos*) from the verb προσαίσσω which means command, prescribe, order. It is a reason that push imperiously to do something.

<sup>10</sup> “Ὁρμή μὲν οὖν φερεὰ διανοίας ἐπὶ τὴ ἀπό του” (Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* II 13, 59; SVF III 377).

However, in few sources, in particular Plutarch's *Adversus Colotem* 1122b-c, Cicero's *De Fato* 40 (*SVF* II 974) and Seneca's *Epistola* 113 (*SVF* III 169) the sequence seems to change as, for these authors, the impulse comes before assent, thus, losing its rational component. Among these sources, we will focus on the Latin authors.<sup>11</sup>

In the same text (*De Fato*), Cicero presents both the orthodox version and the new order mentioned above. Concerning *De Fato* 42, Chrysippus says that assent comes after the presentation and before the impulse.<sup>12</sup> However, in paragraph 40 we read: “*Si omnia fato fiunt, omnia fiunt causa antecedente; et, si adpetitus, illa etiam, quae adpetitum secuntur: ergo etiam adsensiones*” (“If all things happen by fate, all things happen by antecedent cause; and if impulses happen in this way, then the things that follow the impulse also happen in the same way: therefore the assents too”). If we accept the transmitted text, Cicero is pointing out the possibility that assent comes after the impulse. To explain why there are two versions of the theory of action in the same text, scholars have tried to justify and normalise the different order of mental states by arguing that the theory presented in *De Fato* 40 differs from Chrysippus' theory in *De Fato* 42, or by proposing corrections to the text.<sup>13</sup>

We follow the hypothesis according to which Cicero was pointing at a new theory, which, as we shall see, we also find in Seneca. Cicero is referring to two different types of impulse that are found in two distinct places, one before and one after the assent. This idea is confirmed by the fact that Cicero used to translate the Greek *hormē* not only with *adpetitus* but also with *adpetitio*.<sup>14</sup> In the first case, the abstract noun *adpetitus* indicates a function, or, as Yon (1950) argues, a tendency of the subject that stems from her own nature; whereas *adpetitio* corresponds to the

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<sup>11</sup> This is because Plutarch presents the Academic Arcesilaus as a critic against the Stoic assent, which he considers useless, and that is not what we want to examine now.

<sup>12</sup> “*Nam quamquam adsensio non possit fieri nisi com mota viso, tamen, cum id visum proximam causam habeat, non principalem, hanc habet rationem, ut Chrysippus vult, quam dudum diximus, non ut illa quidem fieri possit nulla vi extrinsecus excitata (necesse est enim adsensionem viso commoveri)*”, *De Fato* 42.

<sup>13</sup> Cicero presents two versions of the Stoic theory of action. It seems that the order of *De Fato* 40 is the view of an unnamed philosopher critical of Stoic doctrine (cf. Inwood 1985, p. 176), to whom Chrysippus responds with the orthodox version in *De Fato* 42 or, as Ioppolo thinks (2013, pp. 69-70), *De Fato* 40 refers to the Stoics before Chrysippus, while the version in *De Fato* 42 is the orthodox Chrysippean theory that Cicero reconstructs. On the other hand, Hamelin (1978, pp. 36-38) proposes a textual change to avoid the problem. He proposes the change from the accusative singular *adpetitum* to the nominative plural *adpetitus*. This would re-establish the most documented sequence since, in this way, *adpetitus* will follow the assent.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Yon 1950, p. XXVIII.



action itself that depends on this function. Moreover, Yon stresses that the impulse understood as action can also be found in Cicero in the plural form *adpetitus*, used as *adpetitio*, and this is the case of *De Fato* 40.<sup>15</sup> Thus, we would have two words for the same concept which leads us to suppose that the Greek word *hormē* had a double meaning in Cicero's system: *adpetitus* (singular) before the assent and *adpetitio* or *adpetitus* (plural) after the assent.

We find something similar in Seneca who, in *Ep.* 113, presents an ambiguous position for the impulse, which seems to come both before and after the assent (the same occurs in *Ep.* 71). This is a source of confusion as Seneca argues that every rational being can do nothing unless she has first been stimulated by something, where this is followed by the impulse (*impetus*) and finally the assent (*adsensio*) which confirms the impulse.<sup>16</sup> Even though Seneca emphasizes the position of the impulse before the assent (cf. the anaphora of *deinde*), he shows that the confirmation of the impulse by the assent is needed before any action occurs (Inwood 1999, p. 282, fn. 193).

We can make some clarity by looking closely at *De Ira* II 1, 4, where Seneca clarifies the double nature of the impulse by differentiating between *impetus simplex* and *impetus compositus*. Here, Seneca is analysing anger as a passion and explains that *ira* (anger) needs the soul's approval to be triggered since the first *impetus* arises without our will. The simple impulse (*impetus simplex*) is a type of involuntary impulse, while the complex impulse (*impetus compositus*) goes through different phases and cannot manifest itself if the soul has not previously given its assent.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. also Cicero *De Off.* I 29, 102 or *De Nat. De.* II 11, 29.

<sup>16</sup> “*Omne rationale animal nihil agit nisi primum specie alicuius rei irritatum est, deinde impetum cepit, deinde adsensio confirmavit hunc impetum*”. (*Ep.* 113, 18).

<sup>17</sup> “*Nobis placet nihil illam per se audere sed animo adprobante; nam speciem capere acceptae iniuriae et ultionem eius concupiscere et utrumque coniungere, nec laedi se debuisse et vindicari debere, non est eius impetus qui sine uoluntate nostra concitatur. Ille simplex est, hic compositus et plura continens: intellexit aliquid, indignatus est, damnauit, ulciscitur: haec non possunt fieri, nisi animus eis quibus tangebatur adsensus est*”. (*De Ira* II 1, 4-5) Later (II 2, 1) Seneca explains that all movements that do not happen by our will are inevitable (“*Omnes enim motus qui non uoluntate nostra fiunt inuicti et ineuitabiles sunt*”), such as shivering, gooseflesh, blushing or vertigo. Since they are not *in nostra potestate*, they cannot be controlled by reason. It is important to mention that these movements are not yet passions, they are only movements that happen without assent. In any way, Seneca shows that movement without assent is possible and, so, he accounts for involuntary everyday actions. But these actions are neither a passion, nor probably what the Stoics called *praxis*, the real and final action of the process. They could be only pre-actions or, as some have called them, pre-passions. (Inwood 1985, p. 282 fn. 193; Rist 1989, p. 2003; Graver 1999 and Stevens 2000). Seneca delves into the subject in *De Ira* II 2-4. Although this is a very interesting point, we will not discuss it here. In this paper, we limit ourselves to these differences in terminology and the concept of *hormē* as the element which leads a subject to conscious action.

Thus, in Seneca as well we find two impulses that correspond to the ones mentioned in Cicero's theory of action. Seneca's simple impulse is Cicero's *adpetitus*, while Seneca's complex impulse corresponds to what Cicero calls *adpetitio*.

According to Seneca and Cicero, it seems as though we have not one but two *hormai* in two different positions in the Stoic chain of mental states that leads to action. Of these two impulses, only one is rational as the other is instinctive. This distinction is typical in Latin sources, perhaps because they endeavoured to clarify the difficult role played by the impulse in relation to the assent. We do not find this distinction in Greek sources and what follows attempt to understand why.

### IMPULSE, DESIRE, AND INTENTION

In the last section, we discussed the building blocks of the Stoic theory of action – the sequence and different moments that lead agents to act in certain ways – and how this sequence seems to change in those (mainly Latin) sources that place the impulse before the assent. Here, we attempt an interpretation of the two impulses the Latin authors deal with through the contemporary theory of action. However, we first need to explain how rational agents come to act according to the contemporary theory of action.

There are several mental states that, combined, produce action for contemporary authors. Before delving deeper into them, it is worth specifying that the contemporary theory of action mainly focuses on the analysis of intentional action, that is, an action whose performance is guided by a representation of that action-type – or some suitable representation – in the agent's mind (Mele & Moser, 1994, p. 63).<sup>18</sup> For contemporary action theories, reasons for action, goals, desires, beliefs, intentions and plans produce intentional action. Each of these building blocks of intentional action has been defined in different ways, with several, sometimes contrasting, theories put forward for all of them. Here we offer general and (as far as possible) neutral definitions of them. Reasons for

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<sup>18</sup> The standard cases examined by the contemporary theory of action are cases of rational actions that are done intentionally. Understanding what it is to act intentionally and for a reason is the focus of contemporary action theory. However, some authors have analysed non-standard cases of acting. Maria Alvarez (2009) traces the difference between acting intentionally and acting for a reason. She challenges the common assumption that actions not done for a reason are irrational. Rosalind Hursthouse (1991) investigates 'arational' actions, those intentional actions that are explained by occurrent emotions. Brian O'Shaughnessy (1980) talks about 'subintentional' actions, those actions we perform unintentionally without any awareness that we are so acting. This is not a comprehensive list of papers that deal with non-standard cases of acting. There will be more that are relevant but non-intentional action is not the focus of our paper.



action are considerations that count in favour of, motivate, or explain the action. The first are usually called normative reasons, the second motivating reasons (Dancy, 2000), and the third explanatory reasons (Alvarez, 2017). Reasons are weighed against one another in practical deliberation when agents debate on and decide what to do. Goals are broad mental states that have an action or a state of affairs that the agent wants to perform or bring about as their object (Tuomela, 1990, pp. 2-3). Being related to what agents want, goals have a connection with desires. Desires are perhaps the most debated and controversial element in the theory of action. Somewhat simply, desires are mental states that dispose us to act; they possess a motivational aspect to them that prompts agents to act in specific ways (Schroeder, 2020). The ‘action-based’ theory of desire argues that they are mental states that dispose us to act to get the object of desire or to bring about a wanted state of affairs (Schroeder, 2020).<sup>19</sup> When we take something to be the case or see something as true, we use the term belief to designate this attitude (Schwitzgebel, 2001). Finally, intentions are mental states that function as inputs to our actions. They direct our conduct and make us act according to their content (Bratman, 1999). They can also constitute plans, which are clusters of different, interrelated intentions that allow agents to execute complex actions over time and fulfil goals in the future (Bratman, 1987).<sup>20</sup> More on intentions to come in section 4.

Now let us go back to the two kinds of impulses Cicero and Seneca distinguish. In what follows, we rely on the translation of Seneca’s terminology of simple impulse and complex impulse in referring to them. What would the contemporary theory of action say about these two kinds of impulses? We argue, tentatively, that the simple impulse is an instinctual urge, whilst the complex impulse is an intention.

We start with the simple impulse first. As Seneca argues, the simple impulse is involuntary as it comes before the assent. One might want to argue that this involuntary component makes it similar to desires, which are sometimes thought of as those things that “assail us unbidden” (Scanlon, 2000, p. 39), escaping our reflection and conflicting with our reasons. Some defined the Stoic

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<sup>19</sup> Stoics would subscribe to the ‘good-based’ theory of desire, according to which to desire  $p$  is to believe that  $p$  is good or for  $p$  to appear good to the one desiring it (Oddie, 2005; Stampe, 1987). This theory, then, states that desires are connected to judgements about what is good for agents. David Lewis (1996) famously criticised this position.

<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that, unlike the Stoic theory of action, contemporary action theory does not identify a set sequence of steps that prompt agents to act. The elements above combine in the agent’s mind in different ways to produce intentional action. They do not follow a precise order and they might not all be present when someone acts intentionally.



term *hormē* as desire. Jacob Klein (2021), following (among others) Cicero's understanding of *hormē* as an *appetitus animi*, concludes that it coincides with our understanding of desire.<sup>21</sup> However, we argue that the simple impulse cannot be a desire for three reasons. The first reason has to do with the position of the simple impulse in the Stoic sequence to intentional action. The simple impulse is involuntary and comes before the assent. For the Stoic, assent is what causes action (Inwood, 1999, p. 36). If we do not give assent to external presentations, we are not prompted to act accordingly. The location of the simple impulse itself, then, makes it so that is impossible for it to cause action.<sup>22</sup> The impossibility of causing action does not coincide with our understanding of desire. For contemporary theorists, there is a strong connection between desires and action. Desires are motivational mental states whose function is to dispose us to act to bring about states of affairs. On some theories (Millikan, 1984; Papineau, 1987), desires directly produce actions. Since we need assent to presentations to act and given that the simple impulse comes before the assent, it cannot be a cause of action in the way desires are. The simple impulse, then, cannot be a desire that brings us to act in the above sense.

Secondly, unlike the simple impulse, desires are not detached from practical reasoning. When desires dispose us to bring about states of affairs, they do not do so by bypassing the scrutiny of reason. They are embedded in our deliberation and factored in when we make decisions on what to do. Thomas Scanlon argues that, with desires, we rationalise our actions (2000, p. 38), as they track what is good about things (we desire things for a reason, because they are good or otherwise desirable). This is what makes desires different from urges, which would blindly make us pursue something we did not choose or deliberate about.<sup>23</sup> In this respect, the simple impulse is more like an urge since it lacks the evaluative component of presentations that comes from the assent.

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<sup>21</sup> We need to specify that Klein analyses *hormē* in later Greek Stoics (Epictetus) and that he does not focus on the Latin notion of simple impulse. In finding the definition of simple impulse, we are plugging in different interpretations of *hormē* (impulse) to see what works best. Klein's view might be a good fit for the notion of assent-impulse we present in section 3 (the one we subscribe to). However, we ultimately argue against the understanding of *hormē* as desire.

<sup>22</sup> It is worth specifying again that in talking about 'action', we are referring to voluntary actions. We are not dealing with those 'pre-actions' that, for instance, Seneca mentions when he refers to movement without assent (e.g. when we sneeze we perform several movements to which we do not seem to give assent. Those would be unintentional bodily movements). See also footnote 17 for a similar point.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Nagel (1978) similarly argues that we arrive at what he calls 'motivated desires' by deliberating and deciding on what to do. Michael Smith (1994) proposes that we can even acquire new desires by reasoning.



Lastly, there is a linguistic reason that favours another interpretation of the simple impulse. The Stoics had a separate (from *hormē*) term to denote desires – *orexis*. *Orexis* indicates a specific impulse towards or in pursuit of the good (Inwood, 1999, pp. 234-235) and, in this respect, is close to the idea that desires rationalise our actions by tracking the good.<sup>24</sup>

One might object that the simple impulse corresponds to a specific form of desires, that is, what Nagel calls ‘unmotivated desires’ (1979). Unmotivated desires are those that assail us, and that we do not have control over; whilst motivated desires are those we arrive at via deliberation and can be explained in terms of reasons (Montmarquet, 1982, p. 20). We say in response that the simple impulse resembles unmotivated desires closely. They are both instinctual and somehow escape the scrutiny of reason since they just present themselves to us. We also do not negate the role that unmotivated desires can play in our practical deliberation. Sometimes unmotivated desires present themselves to us and give rise to motivated desires, such as in the case of hunger that can come abruptly, causing us to deliberate on how to acquire food and giving rise to the motivated desire to go to the supermarket (Montmarquet, 1982, p. 20). However, the fact that the simple impulse is similar to unmotivated desires and can be classified as such, does not mean that it corresponds entirely with the category of desire. As argued above, not all desires are instinctual in the way unmotivated desires are. If we follow Nagel in thinking that desires can be unmotivated or motivated, we have a broader category, desire, which is split into (at least) two sub-categories. The simple impulse corresponds to a sub-category of the broader category of desire, that is, unmotivated desires. It is, then, a mistake to categorise the simple impulse as a desire *tout court* when it only shares some similarities with a particular type of desires. For this reason, we think it is wrong to say that the simple impulse is a desire.<sup>25</sup>

Where does this leave us? Taking into consideration that the simple impulse is voluntary and positioned before the assent, that unlike the simple impulse, desires are not detached from our practical reasoning, and that the Stoic used the term *orexis* to refer to desires, we conclude that impulse and desire are

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Galen’s definition of *orexis* according to Chrysippus, (*PHP* 238, 32-37) where Galen says that desire is a rational impulse towards something that provokes pleasure to the extent that it should.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Klein (2021) who argues that the distinction between *hormē* and *orexis* amounts to the distinction between standing and occurrent forms of desires. He does not distinguish between unmotivated and motivated desires when he discusses *hormē*.

not the same thing for them. It is more fitting to see it as an urge detached from the rational assent we give to presentations.<sup>26</sup>

It remains unclear, though, why the Stoics would identify *hormē* as both a simple impulse and a complex impulse. We now analyse the complex impulse and clarify this point in the next sections.

What about the complex impulse? There are two main views of *hormē*, one that sees it as an impulse (Inwood, 1999) and, as we explained above, one that sees it as a desire (Klein, 2021). We said that, because of its location, the simple impulse cannot be a desire understood as a mental state that causes action. Can the complex impulse, which occupies a different position in the Stoic theory of action chain, be a desire instead? To see whether it is plausible to view the complex impulse as a desire, we analyse Klein's theory of *hormē*.<sup>27</sup> Klein (2021) argues that, generally, the Stoics employ *hormē* to indicate the multi-faceted aspects of those mental states that underlie our motivations (p. 243). He distinguishes between a narrow and broad sense of *hormē*. In a narrow sense, *hormē* – rendered by the term impulse (Inwood, 1999) – indicates an activity of the mind that motivates us to act in certain ways. In this sense, Klein argues, *hormē* corresponds to occurrent desires, those desires that are at the forefront of our minds right now, and that prompt us to act as a result (Schroeder, 2020).<sup>28</sup> The narrow understanding of *hormē* as impulse sees it as an episodic motivational state, one that happens in this moment and that, as it presents itself to us, brings us to act accordingly. On a broad sense of the term, *hormē*, for

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<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is not unproblematic, and this is partially why we abandon it in section 3. The Stoics never talk of *hormē* in terms of instinctual urges (Inwood, 1999, p. 34). They considered the impulse a fundamental component of our causal and rational actions. As Inwood points out (1999, pp. 34-35), *hormē* and instincts have one thing in common: they are both movements of the mind (they would say soul) towards something. They also distinguished between rational and non-rational impulses (Inwood, 1999, pp. 127-128). Rational impulses are the products of assent and morally right. What the Stoics call 'passions' are also rational impulses, albeit of the morally wrong kind. We are swayed by passions when we give assent to the wrong presentations but, even then, we do not do so irrationally or without deliberation. The simple impulse precedes assent. From what we know, giving assent includes processing our presentations, clarifying the concepts built on them, comparing them and so forth. The simple impulse does not coincide with the Stoic concepts of passion, which are morally wrong, but still rational, impulses. The simple instinct is different because it completely escapes reason.

<sup>27</sup> Klein (2021) focuses on the analysis of intentional action in Epictetus and older stoics. In this paper, we focus on earlier Stoics (that Stobaeus refers to), so Klein's account of the Stoic theory of action might not seem relevant to us here. However, Klein argues that, contrary to popular interpretations, Epictetus uses *hormē* and *orexis* in the same way as older Stoics. What he says about Epictetus' use of these concepts hinges on his interpretation of those concepts in earlier Stoics, thus being relevant to our analysis.

<sup>28</sup> Occurrent desires differ from standing desires, which are those desires that are not actively playing a role in our minds at the moment. On the difference between standing and occurrent desires see Schroeder (2020). On occurrent mental states see Bartlett (2018), and on dispositions and occurrences see Alston (1971).



Klein, indicates a bundle of “motivational attitude-types” (Klein, 2021, p. 243, fn. 71), that is, a variety of mental cognitions that includes dispositions that motivate and explain our actions, our judgements about the goodness or badness of actions (and good and bad in general), as well as final judgments about appropriate actions to pursue (pp. 244-245). This broad sense of impulse also considers the agent’s goals in directing them to act. The broad sense of *hormē* is a complete explanation of one’s intentional actions and, according to Klein, is to be rendered by the contemporary understanding of desires.

We argue that understanding the broad sense of impulse as desire does not completely render the multi-faceted role of impulse in our practical reasoning. Klein is right in arguing that the Stoics use the term *hormē* to indicate those mental states that explain our intentional actions. We see traces of this in multiple sources.<sup>29</sup> However, we question the fact that desire is the appropriate rendition of *hormē*. The broad sense of impulse, for Klein, includes four elements: *a*) dispositions that motivate us to act, *b*) general judgements about good and bad, *c*) final judgements on a course of action, and *d*) tracking the agent’s goals. Generally, we said that desires are mental states that dispose us to act to bring about states of affairs. In this general sense, desire seems to cover *a*. It does so, though, only partially. As Nagel (1978) argues, desires’ role in motivating the agent to act is not unlimited in that they don’t account for all motivations that dispose agents to do something.<sup>30</sup> So, desires only partially cover *a*, and do not explain all our dispositions to act. If we subscribed to Scanlon’s (2000) account of motivating desires, according to which they are judgments about what we have reasons to do, desires would correspond to *c*, for they would allow the agent to weigh different courses of action and pursue the one she has most reason to do. And given that desires thus understood would prompt the agent to act in ways that bring about what she has most reason to do, they would also cover *a qua* dispositions that motivate the agents to act. Regarding the other two points, desires correspond to *b*, as judgments about good or bad actions depend on the values we ascribe to them and correspond to what we desire. Regarding *d*, desires do not always track our goals. Sometimes it is our goal to bring about a state

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Preus points out that Aristotle indicates the movement that causes action and the mental state that starts it with ‘*orexis*’ (Preus, 1981, p. 50). *Orexis* is for Aristotle what originates actions and so is for Alexander of Aphrodisia (Preus, 1981, p. 55). Preus notes that the Stoics used *hormē* in place of *orexis* to refer to those same cognitions that bring us to act (p. 51). Inwood (1999) notes that Chrysippus also uses *hormē* to define the cause of action (he identifies action with the movement of the mind that causes it) (p. 51).

<sup>30</sup> Nagel argues that desires do not explain or underlie everything we do and that the beliefs that all reasons stem from desires, and that all goals are connected to desires are wrong (1978, pp. 27-29).

of affairs even if we do not desire to do so; so, conflating the notions of desires and goals is a mistake.<sup>31</sup>

Desires, then, cover “only one” of the four elements that make up the broad understanding of impulse. The function and notion of desire do not seem to capture the bundle of motivational attitude types that form an impulse. There is a better candidate, a cluster of motivational states that covers the four elements of the broad impulse. We argue that the plan-theoretical understanding of intention (Bratman, 2014) encompasses those four elements better than the notion of desire does. Intentions as plans are mental states that organise our conduct and direct our actions in a way that allows us to fulfil our goals in the present or the future (Bratman, 2009). Thus understood, intentions motivate us to act – are what causes our actions – but also explain the process behind the formation of our intentions themselves. In deciding what to do and planning an action, we evaluate the situation we are in, taking into account our beliefs and judgements about the world. We, then, weigh different reasons for action by evaluating their pros and cons and settle on the one that best makes us respond to our balance of reasons. When we settle the matter on what to do, we decide we are going to do it and that is when we have the intention to act accordingly. This understanding of intention covers all four elements above. Intentions dispose us to act accordingly (*a*), their formation depends on our judgement of our situation and the external world (*b*), they settle the matter on what we do (we judge situations before settling on a course of action) (*c*), and they enable us to fulfil our goals (*d*).

The plan-theoretical notion of intention fully captures the multi-faceted aspects of the Stoic impulse. In this sense, we note that, from the perspective of Stoic action theory, *hormē* as intentions ‘contains’ the notion of desire (*orexis*), in the sense that impulse-intention is a broader category than intention-desire. The plan-theoretic understanding of intentions incorporates the motivating role in practical reasoning that desires also play. Desire can explain how agents are motivated or disposed to act, but intentions can capture all the other attitudes that the Stoic impulse stands for, thus being a better candidate for a proper understanding of the complex impulse.

So, we see the simple impulse introduced by the Latin author as an instinctual urge, and the complex impulse as an intention. This interpretation, as already mentioned, is not unproblematic. In sections 3 and 4, we try to solve some of these problems.

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<sup>31</sup> Those who subscribe to the Humean theory of motivation would disagree with this point, since they argue that we need desires and beliefs for our motivations to arise.



## ALL THE IMPULSES ARE ASSENTS

Going back to the ancient sources, we now focus on a text that presents an unmentioned aspect of the impulse that may help us understand both its role and why it was doubled by the Latin authors. The text we refer to is Stobaeus' *Eclogae* II 88, which is part of a summary of Stoic ethical teachings. This anthology is tentatively dated back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, but the excerpt from the Stoics is most likely based on the writings of Arius Didymus, a 1<sup>st</sup> century BC author. Stobaeus' text presents a very important aspect of the impulse that no other text explicitly mentions, that is, that the assent coincides with the impulse (*Πάσας δὲ τὰς ὁρμὰς συγκαταθέσεις εἶναι*). It is a controversial passage since it unifies two moments that had until then been distinct. Inwood (1999) understands this identification as a "short, somewhat exaggerated but effective way to say that an impulse cannot occur without assent to a hormetic proposition" (p. 61).<sup>32</sup> That is, Inwood argues that the passage does not indicate that the impulse and assent coincide because they are two ontologically different things despite having a strong connection. On the one hand, Inwood is right in saying that these are two different processes. If we do not want to (literally) identify the two moments, it seems as though assent and impulse get into action at the same time after a presentation of external stimuli. But, on the other hand, Stobaeus too has his reasons for claiming that all impulses are assents.

We argue that these two positions are not mutually exclusive, since Stobaeus is suggesting that assent and impulse are closely related and interdependent, and that action is only verified by their simultaneous presence. The idea is that, in a rational being, after a presentation, assent and impulse necessarily come into play simultaneously, and it is hardly possible to identify what comes before or after. If the assent is a cognition that presupposes recognizing the truth of a presentation, and *hormē* is what immediately results in action – and the predicate of the proposition recognised as true by the assent– then these two moments coincide in a single process. Therefore, assent and impulse, despite being (in a way) two different things, can come together and work simultaneously in the process that leads to the performance of an action.

We find a similar argument in Seneca (*Ep.* 113, 23), where we also have two closely related events that is difficult to conceive of as separate. Here the argument focuses on the nature of walking as an action. According to Cleanthes, *ambulatio*

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<sup>32</sup> The hormetic proposition corresponds to the *hormētikē phantasia*, that is the presentation that leads to action for Inwood (1999, p. 61).

is made possible by the *spiritum* moving from the *principale* (*hēgemonikon*) to the feet, while Chrysippus thinks that walking is simply a state of the *hēgemonikon* itself. Although there is no mention of impulse and assent specifically in this text, we can see that, on the one hand, Cleanthes' temporal sequence consists in a judgement that precedes action while, on the other hand, Chrysippus unifies these moments and considers them as a unity. When an agent walks, she does not enter a process where she first wants to walk and then begins to do it, but "walking is, in fact, a showing forth or state of our continuing decision" (Rist 1969, p. 30).

There is, then, a difference in these phenomena when we consider them from a temporal or theoretical point of view. From a temporal point of view, the assent coincides with the impulse because both are activated in a subject almost simultaneously after an external presentation. At a theoretical level, however, the Stoics needed to give them exact, distinct places because it is easier to conceptualise them as two different elements in the chain of mental states that leads to action. Stobaeus' claim shows that what comes after the presentation appears to be unified, and so the position of the impulse is hardly significant since it practically coincides with the assent to reach the final action.

It follows that (at least) Greek sources argued for (something along the lines of) the simultaneity of assent and impulse. There are no fragments from the early Stoa that mention the double nature of the impulse which, by contrast, is seen in the Latin sources. This is important as it indicates that, even though *hormē* could have a preliminary involuntary characteristic, it was perceived as one impulse rather than two distinct ones. However, its nature and characteristics remain ambiguous, and even ancient authors were not in agreement on this matter. Indeed, Latin authors tried to clarify why the impulse seems to figure both before and after the assent by dividing it into two parts. This Latin clarification helps to better understand the mechanism involved in the theory of action.

In light of the textual analysis carried out so far, we argue that indicating *hormē* as one or seeing it as two separate moments are two sides of the same coin. It seems as though the theory of the double impulse arose to explain how impulse and assent occur together. They seem to be mutually dependent, as the assent needs the impulse to be able to occur in the mind of a rational agent, and the impulse needs the assent to lead the agent to act. Assent and impulse are so closely related and interdependent, that action is only verified by their simultaneous presence. Although according to Greek sources, the two moments coincide, the Latin interpretation of the theory serves to graphically explain how the two moments occur.



Since the assent is in between the two types of impulse for the Latin authors, it appears to be surrounded by *hormē* which, as a result, has distinct nuances depending on its location. To better illustrate the Latin explanation, we follow Ildefonse's (2011) view. Ildefonse talks about a single impulse that is interrupted by the assent and, therefore, suspended between presentation and action (Ildefonse 2011, pp. 55-56). It is as though the impulse, which remains one, unfolds in two stages that have the assent in the middle. The assent, by providing its 'consent' to external presentations, allows the impulse to continue its path towards action. In a rational being, after a presentation, assent and impulse come into play necessarily together and it is hardly possible to identify what comes before or after. The idea of the impulse incorporating the assent seems to be consistent with Stobaeus' account, and can be represented as follows:

1) Sensation → 2) Presentation → 3) Impulse [*adpetitus* (sing.) or *impetus simplex*]  
-Assent-Impulse [*adpetitio/adpetitus* (pl.) or *impetus complex*] → 4) Action

A presentation is formed in the agent's mind (2) as a result of a sensation (from the outside world) (1). After the presentation is formed, impulse and assent occur as one (3), thus causing an action (4). In this way, we see how the two moments of assent and impulse are closely related, and the limit where one ends and the other begins is quite difficult to pinpoint. Thus, in practice, the assent coincides with the impulse because both are activated almost simultaneously after a presentation. However, theoretically (and graphically) they occupy different positions. We now need to see if it is possible to tie this interpretation with the contemporary discourse on intention introduced in section 2.

### ASSENT-IMPULSE AS AN INTENTION

We just explained how, following Stobaeus' and Ildefonse's interpretation of Stoic action theory, assent and impulse coincide and come together to cause intentional action. This account of assent-impulse, as we argued, is more in line with what the early Stoics say about *hormē* and can solve some of the problems of the first, tentative interpretation of impulse we presented.<sup>33</sup> In section 2, we proposed an account of the complex impulse as an intention. Now that the simple impulse is out of the picture – as we subscribed to a new account of impulse – what are we to make of assent-impulse from a contemporary theory of action perspective? How can we

<sup>33</sup> The concept of assent-impulse is compatible with the fact that the Stoics do not think of *hormē* as an irrational urge. It is also more in line with the early Stoics' account of impulse, which does not generally see it as made up of two kinds of impulses.



tie the interpretation of assent-impulse explained in section 3 with the discourse on intentions introduced before? We argue that the most fitting interpretation of assent-impulse through the lenses of contemporary action theory is (still) the plan-theoretic notion of intention (Bratman, 1999).

Why is the plan-theoretical understanding of intention to be preferred to others in explaining the impulse? This specific notion of intention is preferable because it accounts for both immediate and future action, whilst also explaining how we form intentions in our minds. Intentions are generally thought to take three forms. We can have ‘intentions with which’ someone acts, such as when I write with the further intention of explaining something to you; ‘intentions in action’ which allow us to re-describe what we are doing now in terms of reasons as to why we are acting; and intentions towards the future, such as the one I have when I intend to complete a paper by the end of next week (Anscombe, 1963). Intentions with which someone acts and intentions in action (Davidson, 1963) can explain what an agent is doing in the present, and they do so in terms of the reasons why the agent is acting that way. They do not give us a picture of how agents form those intentions and do not account for future-directed intentions, which explain how we can carry out complex activities in the future. Bratman’s (1987) account captures both present-directed and future-directed intentions, whilst also explaining the process of intention formation.

For Bratman (1987), intentions are complex mental states that allow us to plan for short-term and long-term action.<sup>34</sup> Although he focuses especially on future-directed intentions, which are not something the Stoics directly worry about,<sup>35</sup> Bratman’s account shares at least two important similarities with the Stoic theory of action. They are both interested in the functions intentions play in our practical reasoning and tell a story about how we get to intentional action. This last point of connection between them will help us clarify the notion of assent-impulse.

Bratman (1987; 2014) argues that we form an intention to act in response to some practical questions we have about how to behave. To answer these questions and reach our goals, we usually assess several courses of action by weighing up their pros and cons before finally settling on one of them (before deciding what to do). In this process, we evaluate a few alternatives before we eventually reach a positive evaluation of one of them that trumps the others. When we positively evaluate one

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<sup>34</sup> The following delves deeper into the discussion on intention started in section 2.

<sup>35</sup> According to Inwood’s (1999, p. 113) reading of Stoic texts, the Stoics have a term to indicate future-directed intentional actions. Inwood claims they use ‘*orouisis*’ to refer to those movements of the mind towards things in the future. If Inwood’s reading is correct, the Stoics were aware of the importance of being able to account for how we can intend now to do things in the future.



option, we form an intention to so act. It is worth noting that, in intending, we commit to the specific course of action we settled on and we should not (generally) reconsider that decision and our intention (Bratman, 1999).<sup>36</sup> Once we intend to do something, that intention leads us to act accordingly.

Two main elements are of interest to us in Bratman's account of intention formation: the evaluation of the different options coupled with the decision regarding what to do, and intentions' resistance to reconsideration. We argue that the evaluation and decision component of his account corresponds to the Stoic concept of assent, while the resistance to reconsideration element corresponds to the notion of impulse. As we explained, according to the Stoics, we give assent to external presentations when we act rationally. Assent is, then, our 'stamp of approval' to certain presentations that stems from an evaluation<sup>37</sup> on what we have the most reason to do (i.e., what is most rational for us to do). Before giving assent to presentations, we evaluate them against one another while reason allows us to discern the right presentations to give assent to. Once we decide on what to do, we give our assent. We need rational evaluation (or deliberation) of courses of action before assent can occur; without the scrutiny of reason, there can be no assent or impulse. So, the evaluative component of rational decision-making that we find in Bratman's theory of intention formation is also present in the Stoic model of assent-impulse.

Once we give assent to presentations, then, there is a movement of the mind – the impulse – that prompts us to so act. When that happens, there is no turning back: when we are guided by an impulse, we follow through with the corresponding action. Similarly, when we form an intention to do something, that intention needs to be resistant to reconsideration to properly guide our conduct. According to Bratman (1999), we form intentions as plans of action, so that we have a practical guide that

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<sup>36</sup> Bratman (1999) argues that intentions should be generally resistant to reconsideration. If we settled on something by intending to do it and re-open our deliberation on what to do, our intention would not be stable and might not lead us to act as it normally does. Reconsidering one's intentions often without a good reason for doing so, leads the agent to act irrationally.

<sup>37</sup> We use 'evaluation' here as opposed to 'deliberation' because in the Stoic fragments we have left, as Inwood notes (1999, pp. 43-44), there are no secure references to the notion of deliberation. The Stoics used something that resembles the term 'evaluation' to refer to the activity of the mind we engage in when we survey different courses of action before settling on what we want to do. Deliberation is the terminology we find in Aristotle. We do not easily find mentions of deliberations in the Stoics because acting rationally, for them, needed to fit with determinism, which they believed in. But what they say about evaluation fits with how we describe deliberation.

allows us to act as we want and reach our goals.<sup>38</sup> If we constantly re-opened our deliberation once we form an intention (once we decide what to do), we would never get to the respective action. It is important that – at least initially – intentions are not reconsidered for them to be stable in guiding us to action. Once we settle the matter on what to do, we should not (at least initially) reopen deliberation and just follow through with our initial decision (Bratman, 2014). This is in line with the Stoic idea that impulses are the immediate causes of action and that, once we give assent to presentation, a movement of the mind inevitably causes a similar movement of our body towards the object of our cognitions. Just as intentions are immediate causes of action and (in ideal cases at least) a guarantee that that action happens, impulses too guide us to behave in specific ways and the necessary and sufficient causes of our rational actions (Inwood, 1999).

The two main components of Bratman's theory of intention – the evaluation of different courses of action, and intentions' resistance to reconsideration – correspond to assent and impulse respectively in the early Stoic theory of action. This is an important similarity between the ancient and the contemporary action theory and shows that how we think about rational, intentional action, has been the same at its core since the Stoics interrogated themselves about this phenomenon.

In our account of the impulse in the early Stoic theory of action, assent and impulse are theoretically different but, from a practical standpoint, they are the same. Even on a contemporary understanding of intention, the rational evaluation of our options, the decision about what to do and the corresponding action are not separate. These elements might be temporally staggered, as it happens when we decide on and intend something we are going to do in the future, but they are practically the same. We cannot arrive at the formation of an intention that successfully guides our conduct without carefully evaluating our options, deciding what to do and settling the matter on it. This is what fundamentally causes intentional action for ancient and contemporary action theories.

## CONCLUSIONS

Following Stobaeus and Ildefonse, we argued for a unified notion of impulse according to which it coincides with the assent since they are both activated in an agent's mind almost simultaneously after an external presentation. We also argued

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<sup>38</sup> It is worth mentioning that there has been much critical literature on Bratman's work (Andreou, 2021; Franklin, 2016; Tenenbaum 2021; Velleman, 2021) and responses from Bratman himself (Bratman 2017; 2021).



that this unified notion of assent-impulse corresponds to Bratman's plan-theoretical understanding of intentions as multi-faceted cognitions that prompt agents to act in certain ways.

In section 1, we presented the Stoic theory of action with its sequence of steps that lead us to act intentionally. We explained that, in most Stoic sources, the impulse comes after the assent in the chain of mental states that leads to action. However, some (Latin authors) position the impulse before the assent, thus leading to the hypothesis that there can be two types of impulse that co-exist, the simple and the complex impulse.

In section 2, we tried to make sense of the notion of double impulse through the contemporary theory of action. We considered whether the contemporary understanding of desire can help us make sense of the simple impulse and concluded that it cannot for three main reasons. Firstly, the location of the simple impulse itself in the Stoic sequence of mental states makes it so that it is unlikely that it causes intentional action. The simple impulse comes before the assent and is involuntary, and we need the assent for intentional action to occur for the Stoics. Secondly, the simple impulse appears to be detached from practical reasoning in a way that desires – currently understood – are not. Lastly, as Inwood (1999) points out, the Stoics' equivalent of the term desire is *orexis*, and we adopt a principle of parsimony in arguing that they would not have two different terms to refer to the same concept. Therefore, we concluded that the simple impulse cannot be a desire. Due to its position in the Stoic chain of mental states, we saw it as an instinctual urge. We considered whether the complex impulse is best rendered by the notion of desire, as some authors (Klein, 2021) claim that it is. We argued that the plan-theoretical notion of intention can fully capture the multi-faceted aspects of the Stoic impulse better than desire. We, then, presented a tentative interpretation of the double impulse according to which the simple impulse is an instinctual urge, whilst the complex impulse is an intention.

This tentative interpretation is not unproblematic, and in section 3, we analysed Stobaeus' idea of assent-impulse. Stobaeus suggests that assent and impulse are interdependent, and that action can only occur when they are simultaneously present and activated. In a rational being, after a presentation, assent and impulse necessarily come into play simultaneously, and it is hardly possible to identify what comes before or after. They are unified in such a way that the impulse, which remains one, seems to unfold in two stages that have the assent in the middle (Ildefonse, 2011). In this way, the assent coincides with the impulse because both are activated almost simultaneously after a presentation.

In section 4, we compared this interpretation of assent-impulse with the plan-theoretical understanding of intention we previously employed to explain the complex impulse. We noted that two important elements of Bratman's (1999) account of intention formation, the evaluation of the different options coupled with the decision regarding what to do, and intentions' resistance to reconsideration, correspond to assent and impulse. The evaluation and decision-making component correspond to assent, while intentions' resistance to reconsideration accounts for the impulse.

This allowed us to define the Stoic impulse as a plan-theoretic intention and shed light on the question of where the impulse is located in the Stoic theory of action. If assent and impulse are unified, trying to assign a fixed location to the impulse is not as important as previously thought. The Latins distinguish two impulses to theoretically explain the functions of assent and impulse, but, in practice, they come together as one in bringing the agent to act intentionally. So, there is no need to locate a set order in which one comes before the other. Ultimately, the paper highlighted interesting points of connection between the ancient and contemporary action theory. It showed that how we see rational, intentional action is similar to how the Stoics characterised it. This opens up an interesting avenue of research that continues to explore the similarities between the ancient and contemporary theories of action.

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