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CICERO'S ADAPTATION OF STOIC PSYCHOTHERAPY

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The explicit theses of *Tusculan Disputations* 3 and 4, respectively, are that the sage suffers neither psychological distress, nor any emotional disturbance. However it is clear that the primary motivation in defending these claims is not to elaborate and defend Stoic psychology, but rather to show how philosophy may serve to relieve us of emotional disturbance. The question about whether the sage is free of all emotion, Cicero remarks, is really more about the questioner himself. "That he [the sage] is free of emotion is something you merely believe: what you want is to be free of it yourself" (*Tusculan Disputations* [= *Tusc.*] 4.58).[1]

This practical focus, however, does not warrant the criticism that Cicero is indifferent to the consistency or cogency of the underlying theory he appeals to. He does seem to have indulged in such indifference in his no longer extant *Consolation* in which, by his own report, he made use of any approach that might work, whether Stoic, Peripatetic, Epicurean or Cyrenaic (*Tusc.* 3.76). But in the *Tusculans*, Cicero seeks a more lasting resolution. In addition to discussing techniques for the elimination of emotional distress, he also elaborates an ideal of mental health to which we might aspire.[2]

Cicero's presentation of this ideal is Stoic in inspiration, but it also reflects his skeptical reservations about the viability of Stoic ethics. Throughout the *Tusculans*, Cicero makes a point of reserving his Academic freedom to endorse whichever posi-

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of *Tusculan Disputations* 3 and 4 are from Graver (2002). Although I disagree with Graver on some key points, her insights have inspired me to think much more carefully about the position I defend here.

[2] Cicero remarks in the preface to Book 2 of *De divinatione* (2.2) that the *Tusculans* make clear the matters most necessary for living a happy life. And he presents philosophy in *Tusc.* 3.1-6 as the medicine which may produce health in the soul.

tion seems most probable (*Tusc.* 4.7, 47).[3] That is, he does not report the Stoic views *as a Stoic*. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that he does not interpret and present the Stoic position entirely as a Stoic would.[4] Thus I disagree with Graver's remark, which I take to be representative of the generally accepted view, that although "Cicero is not himself a Stoic…it is the Stoic position which he recommends to his readers in these books as the best-reasoned view…" (2002, xii).

It is well known from the *Tusculans* that the kind of therapy Chrysippus developed was designed to be effective regardless of whether the patient accepted the Stoics' philosophical views. So Stoic psychotherapy may relieve others of mental disturbances regardless of their philosophical beliefs, if any. Cicero endorses this ecumenical approach, but he parts ways with Chrysippus (without explicitly saying so) in offering an account of mental health that is far more widely attainable than the Stoic.

Cicero's modification to Chrysippus' account of mental health is necessitated by his reservations about (1) the uniformly rational nature of the mind, (2) the exclusive goodness of virtue, and (3) the possibility of attaining Stoic wisdom. These three principles are essential to the Stoic account in showing us how the extirpation of emotion is possible and why it is ethically desirable. Thus I aim to show how Cicero is able to follow the Stoics without accepting these three principles. This will reveal the ways in which Cicero is not merely reporting Chrysippus' view of psychotherapy and mental health, but is rather adapting them to suit his own Academic and practical purposes.[5]

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[3] In fact, this is his position throughout the entire work: see *Tusc.* 1.8, 17, 23; 2.5, 9; 5.11, 33, 83.

[4] The question of what sources Cicero relies on continues to overshadow the question of what Cicero himself made of these sources. To this effect, Erskine (1997, 39-40) remarks: "After a passing mention of Cicero's grief, scholars have got down to the serious business of working out what sources Cicero used. But in fact, the account of the passions in the Tusculans is so colored by Cicero's own experience that the two are virtually inseparable. It was a product of Cicero's wide reading and recent experience."

Douglas (1995, 214) offers a similar assessment: "In the *Tusculans* we see the physician of the soul trying to heal himself." Insofar as the *Tusculans* continues Cicero's project of writing philosophy as a consolation for himself (and others who have experienced the losses inevitable in a human life), the views expressed by *M* can provide consolation to Cicero only if he finds them convincing himself.

[5] In addition to his Roman sensibilities, Cicero's practical focus probably reflects the influence of Panaetius who, "avoiding the gloom and severity [of the older Stoics] approved of neither the harshness of their views nor the subtle intricacies of their discourse" (*De finibus* 4.79, see also Cicero's reference to Panaetius' consolatory letter at *Tusc.* 4.4). Panaetius' practical orientation towards Stoic ethics is nicely captured in a comment made by Seneca. "I think Panaetius gave a neat answer to a young man who asked whether the sage would be a lover: 'As to the sage we shall see. Your task and mine, who are still a great distance from the sage, is not to fall into a state that is disturbed, powerless and subservient to another'" (*Epistles* 116.5).

1. *A brief summary of the relation between Stoic ethics, psychology and Chrysippan psychotherapy*

Chrysippus defined emotion (*pathos*) as a purely rational phenomenon. It is identical to the false judgment that one either is or is about to be in possession of something good or bad.[6] In other words, one judges that some merely apparent good or evil, (which is actually a preferred or dispreferred indifferent on the Stoic view) is genuinely good or evil. Dividing the judgments with regard to present or future goods and evils yields four types of emotion. Fear arises from the belief that something bad is about to happen, distress from the belief that something bad is happening. Similarly, lust arises from the belief that something good awaits, delight from the belief that something good is present. Every other emotion, the Stoics maintained, is a species of these four (*Tusc.* 4.11-27).

When one assents to the proposition that the money he has earned is genuinely good, for example, he will experience an excessive impulse towards keeping it and an excessive impulse away from losing it. The impulse is misguided according to the Stoics because it aims at an apparent good under the false description of 'genuine good'. The notion of excess (*pleonazousa*) indicates that *any* misguided impulse is out of bounds, improper, etc., and thus too much simply by virtue of being wrong. Such impulses are excessive also insofar as they are unrestrained, i.e., insofar as their force exceeds the control of reason (*SVF* 3.441).[7] The Stoics illustrate this point with the distinction between running and walking (*SVF* 3.462). Emotion is like a runner careening down a hill. By contrast, one who walks with measured steps can stop or change course easily.

If there were an irrational part of the soul that is able to move us against the dictates of reason, then it seems that neither virtue nor our emotional states would be entirely within our control. For it would always be possible to be moved, against ones rational judgment, to commit a vicious action. And it may appear that grief and other disruptive emotions are inevitable. On the other hand, if there were no irrational part, it may appear difficult to explain how we ever act against the dictates of reason, or how we can ever experience the conflict that Plato persuasively describes between reason and irrational desire (e.g. at *Republic* 434e-441a).

To explain how this familiar phenomenon is possible, Chrysippus employs two distinct senses of 'rational': one normative, when our judgments are in accord with nature, and the other descriptive, when we provide reasons whether good or bad.

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[6] Inwood (1985, 130-1) effectively argues that Chrysippus' identification of *pathê* with judgment is an alternate expression of Zeno's view that the *pathê* are consequences of judgments. The point is that they are both mental events that always occur together. Similarly, Strange (2004, 38) emphasizes the dual aspects of emotion for the Stoics: they are simultaneously physical and intentional. "These two aspects of the movement which is the *hormê*, the literal, spatial movement toward the object, and the intentional movement of thought, are not in any way separate: they are quite literally two ways of looking at the very same phenomenon--from the outside and from the inside, as it were…"

[7] *SVF = Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta,* edited by von Arnim (1903-1924).

We often do act against the dictates of reason in the normative sense, but in those cases we are still acting rationally, in the descriptive sense, that is, we are still issuing reasons, though bad ones. Similarly, emotions arise when our judgments are opposed to right reason; they are irrational in the first sense, opposed to nature. Nonetheless they are rational in the second sense since they are the result of assenting to propositions. So the experience of internal conflict is only apparent. At one moment we assent to some proposed course of action as the right thing to do, and immediately afterwards we assent to an opposed course of action. What appears to be instantaneous conflict is actually vacillation. And it remains the case that one never acts contrary to whatever course of action he has assented to.[8]

On the Platonic view, emotional health requires taming the irrational part to make it obedient to reason's dictates. For the Stoics, however, there is only one source of motivation, and it is rational. Thus, we can only attain emotional health by perfecting our rationality and thereby removing the tendency to assent to false evaluative propositions.[9] This also explains why we must seek to eliminate rather than merely moderate emotion. For the Stoics, *pathê* are necessarily pathological. Just as it makes no medical sense to talk of trying to have the right or moderate amount of disease, it makes no ethical sense to talk of trying to have moderate *pathê.* A moderate emotion is as potentially harmful as a wildly intense one just as the beginning of a flu is as potentially lethal as full blown pneumonia (cf. *Tusc.* 3.22, 4.41-42)

Although the Stoics never claimed that anyone had actually attained the lofty heights of virtue, they were committed to the possibility of attaining it.[10] And they described in precise detail what the mental states of the sage *would be* like. First and foremost, he has attained certainty with regard to the evaluation of goods: he knows that nothing is genuinely good except virtue, and nothing genuinely bad except vice. And since happiness requires that one have a life full of genuine goods, the sage also knows that virtue is sufficient for happiness. The goods of fortune may come and go, but they cannot affect his happiness. So the sage never experiences pathological emotional states since he never makes the false judgments necessary to produce them.

However, he is not utterly impassive. Perhaps in response to the objection that the sage's invulnerability comes at the price of an inhuman emotional impoverishment, the Stoics provided an account of healthy emotions [*eupatheiai*] that are experienced only by the sage.[11] He will experience the purely rational affect of joy rather

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[8] For detailed discussion of Chrysippus' account of *akrasia*, see Gill (1983) and Mansfeld (1991); for a thorough reconstruction of Chrysippus' psychology, see Tieleman (2003).

[9] See Strange (2004) for a very clear account of why the emotions are entirely voluntary on the Stoic view and how this connects with their psychological monism.

[10] See *SVF* 3.545, 662, 668 for Chrysippus' remarks, Seneca, *Epistles* 42.1, Epictetus, *Discourses* 2.19.24-25, Cicero, *Academica* (= *Ac.*) 2.145, *Tusc.* 2.51, Diogenes Laertius (= DL) 7.91, and Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematikos* (= *M*) 9.133

[11] None of our sources for the *eupatheiai*, gathered in *SVF* 3.431-442, identify them as an innovation, nor are they identified as part of Zeno's original orthodoxy. Inwood (1985, 305, n. 207) discusses

than delight, caution instead of fear, and a rational sort of wish, volition, instead of lust. There is no fourth *eupatheia* since there is no appropriately rational form of distress (*Tusc.* 4.11-14). The sage never acknowledges that he is in the presence of genuinely bad things because he never *is* in the presence of genuinely bad things; he is invulnerable because his knowledge and conviction regarding the exclusive goodness of virtue can be shaken neither by argument nor misfortune.

There are two features that differentiate the healthy affective states from the pathological ones with which we are all familiar. First, the objects of the sage's affective states are limited to virtue and vice. When he experiences the *eupatheia* of caution, his worry is not directed towards the loss of money, for example, but rather the loss of virtue. He recognizes that losing money is not genuinely bad, but that to do so provides a prime opportunity to unwittingly shift ones focus from vice, which is genuinely bad, to financial loss, which is only apparently bad. The intentional object of the pathological emotion of fear in this case is the money itself. Second, the sage's dispositional character is such that he will not (except perhaps in cases of drunkenness or insanity) ever be inclined to value money as a genuine good. The non-sage, by contrast may, in a fit of generosity decide that money is not genuinely good and so refrain from making the false judgments that produce fear. But even so, he will not experience the healthy affective state of caution since his judgment is contingent on the circumstances. Under slightly different circumstances he will likely alter his judgment about the value of money. So he lacks the firmness and stability of disposition that characterizes the sage.

From this brief summary, it is clear how the definition of emotion as well as the goal of eliminating rather than moderating them presuppose the first two basic theses mentioned above. (1) The unitary mind is necessary to guarantee that the emotions *can* be eliminated and to explain how they are rational while still being contrary to reason. (2) The exclusive goodness of virtue is necessary to guarantee that we *should* seek to eliminate emotion. If virtue is not the only genuine good, then the loss of a loved one may be genuinely bad, and in such circumstances it would perhaps be right to feel distress, despite the Stoic claim to the contrary.[12]

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a range of speculations on the origin of this doctrine. It seems likely, however, that they were developed in response to some sort of 'emotional impoverishment' objection--I take this description of the objection from Long (1989). See also Irwin (1998) who argues persuasively for a compassionate Stoic detachment; i.e. for the consistency of *apatheia* with what we would normally recognize as a humane involvement with the suffering of others. For an illuminating discussion of the *eupatheiai* in general, see Brennan (1998) and Cooper (2004).

[12] Contemporary psychologists such as Kübler-Ross have popularized the notion that it is necessary to 'work through' various stages of grief and emotional disturbance. Unless we allow ourselves to fully feel the loss we will be suppressing these impulses only to have them erupt in some other, more harmful manner. The Stoic reply is simply to note that the Sage never experiences the negative impulses and so never needs to suppress them in the first place. Furthermore, according to Stoic psychology, neither will the moral progressor experience these impulses as long as he firmly maintains his belief that nothing genuinely valuable has been lost. Without the corresponding belief, the negative affect cannot arise.

This leads us to the third principle, the possibility of attaining Stoic wisdom. Even though no Stoic ever claimed to have achieved sagehood, they insisted that it was a distinct, if remote, possibility. What makes this possibility remote is that, in Cicero's description, we all drink in error and deception with our mothers' milk (*Tusc.* 3.2). These errors are then compounded in us individually and collectively until we are all very far from wisdom. But if it were not possible to attain it, then nature would not have acted providentially in setting up virtue and its attendant *apatheia* as the completion of our human nature. The providence of the Universe is a cornerstone of the Stoic's system and so it is necessary for them to maintain that we are all able, in principle, to attain the end established for us by nature.

In the meantime, we are all very far from virtue and equally mired in vice. One of the Stoics more paradoxical claims is that all moral errors are equally vicious and all morally right actions equally virtuous (cf. Cicero, *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 3). The basic reason offered in support of this claim is that virtue and vice must be measured not by results but rather by the character or disposition from which the actions arise. On consequentialist grounds it is obviously absurd to maintain that all immoral actions are equally vicious. But given the Stoic view that virtue is a unique, qualitative state of the *psychê*, it makes sense. One cannot be more or less virtuous, just as one cannot be more or less three-dimensional. And if we grant that the proper moral worth of an action depends exclusively on the disposition from which it arises, then the equality of all immoral actions becomes plausible.

This is not to say that the Stoics made no allowance for moral progression. Indeed, the whole point of Stoic philosophy was to promote such progress by equipping its students with the proper understanding of the world, the gods, human nature, and the goods of fortune. A necessary step towards attaining virtue is to consistently make the correct judgment when encountering some apparent good or evil. The progressor's correct judgment arises from merely true opinion and so his assessment does not exhibit virtue, which as we have seen requires an unshakable knowledge.

Having made the correct evaluative judgment, e.g. the loss of one's investment is not really bad, the moral progressor may experience *apatheia* in this instance. He won't feel anything regarding his loss, since he deems it as insignificant to his genuine well-being as the loss of a fingernail clipping. Although this state is preferable to the emotional disturbance that results from false evaluative beliefs, the progressor's tranquility is not morally praiseworthy. For the Stoics held that avoiding emotional disturbance is not itself praiseworthy, but only insofar as it arises from a disposition to invariably make correct evaluative judgments.

By contrast, it is easy to imagine an *apatheia* produced by pharmacological means. Taking medication may be a struggle for some, but we don't offer moral praise for the chemical effects. It is also easy to imagine a Pangloss who displays an unshakable, but superficial conviction that nothing but virtue is genuinely good. His *apatheia* appears to be more of a defense mechanism than a sincere response to the apparent suffering and misery in the world. Another possibility is the *apatheia* of

the cold-hearted assassin who adopts an unfeeling stance in order to more effectively pursue his objectives—this appears to be the kind of *apatheia* Diogenes has in mind when he says that the Stoics acknowledged an immoral sense of the term (DL 7.117).

These defective forms of *apatheia* indicate that even though the merely subjective conviction that one need not suffer is effective at eliminating psychological distress, it is the truth of one's conviction that makes the *apatheia* admirable for the Stoics.

But now let us suppose, as the Academics thought they had shown, that the Stoics have not adequately defended their optimistic view that such knowledge is possible. According to the type of Academic skepticism that Cicero accepts, it is always possible to make errors in judgment, whether regarding perceptual or evaluative matters.[13] This makes the *apatheia* of the Stoic moral progressor problematic in the following way. The most important reason that consistent *apatheia* is preferable to psychological disturbance is that it indicates the progressor is making the right judgments and is on his way to acquiring the immovably firm disposition of the sage. If the possibility of attaining the end has not been established, the progressor may well be on a road to nowhere. The ethical value of his contingent and shakable *apatheia*, for the Stoics, is relative to the value of the end state, complete virtue. Thus, without the conviction that perfect virtue is attainable, it seems we must suspend judgment about the ethical value of *apatheia* in the non-sage.

An analogous example may help to illustrate this point. It is fine for the devout Christian or Jew to claim, as Job does, that all suffering must be patiently endured since God's justice is perfect and inevitable, even though hidden from us. He may grant that this cannot be known with the kind of certainty that one might wish to know it—(even though God revealed Himself to Job, He did not bother proving that He was just). Nonetheless, the religious believer may counsel others to patiently endure despite this lack of knowledge. By developing this disposition to patiently endure and correctly evaluate the good that was lost, the sufferer begins to deepen his faith, so it is worthwhile not merely for the immediate relief but also for the sake of spiritual development.

What makes the religious believer's tranquility admirable is the strength of her conviction—at least from within that religious perspective. The immediate reward for faith, so to speak, is an imperturbable tranquility. By contrast, what makes the Stoic's tranquility ethically admirable is the truth of the proposition that, e.g. the death or suffering of an innocent person is not really bad, only viciousness is genuinely bad. Unlike the religious view, this is not a conviction in the absence of conclu-

[13] Purely formal or logical judgments always present a difficult challenge to the skeptic. Cicero appears to accept and indeed rely on logical inference as an effective method in the pursuit of truth, but he remains skeptical about our ability to conclusively arrive at the truth in evaluative or empirical matters. The problem, however, is not that the world is indeterminate or unintelligible in some sense, but rather that our cognitive and linguistic abilities are too crude to satisfy our desire for precise and invariable knowledge.

sive evidence. What is admirable for the Stoics is the firm and irrefutable knowledge that things are so. If we doubt such knowledge is attainable, we undermine the ground on which the tranquility of the moral progressor is praiseworthy.

2. *Cicero's adaptation of Chrysippan psychotherapy*

Chrysippus was aware that many people do not share his view about the exclusive goodness of virtue. When these people are in the throes of some disturbing emotion it is hardly fitting to try to convince them that what they have lost is not genuinely good. Instead, the comforter may focus the patient on the falsity of a second judgment that is made in evaluating ones situation, namely, that it is natural, necessary or appropriate to experience the disturbing emotion. After initially judging that one is encountering something bad, the agent frequently makes the second judgment that it is proper to experience a certain quantity and intensity of emotional distress. The fact that people grieve for longer or shorter periods of time, and some not at all, indicates that they do so only when they assent to the proposition that they should do so. Once the patient recognizes that to grieve or not to grieve is entirely within his control, he may more easily regain his composure. If he sincerely desires to be rid of the suffering, he need not believe in the exclusive goodness of virtue.[14]

That this form of therapy may be effective regardless of what one believes about the exclusive goodness of virtue certainly appealed to Cicero who personally struggled throughout his entire philosophical life to embrace Stoic ethics. He was ultimately unable to do so because of what he deemed an excessive and impractical idealism. Nonetheless, he was perpetually drawn by this same noble and uncompromising character. For example, he seems to share with the Stoics their conviction that virtue is sufficient for happiness (*Tusc.* 5.20). But elsewhere he fears that Zeno (the originator of Stoicism) assigns more to virtue than nature will allow (*Ac.* 2.134). And he agrees that Theophrastus' maxim--"Fortune, not wisdom, rules the lives of men"--should be rejected as *languidus*, i.e. weak, feeble and sluggish (*Tusc.* 5.25); however, he does not condemn the claim as false. His suspicion that it might be true is suggested by his wish that he could be more firmly convinced of the sufficiency of virtue for a happy life (*Tusc.* 5.20). He similarly remarks that he would "*prefer* to describe it [virtue] as the only rather than the highest good" (*Tusc.* 2.46, italics added). He also wishes that the old Academics and Peripatetics would have the courage to

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[14] White (1995) discusses this issue in detail in the context of the 'penitent's paradox.' The Stoics argue that we should never be sad or emotionally distressed since such emotion arises from false evaluative judgments, and yet Alcibiades, for example, correctly acknowledges his lack of virtue as something bad. So it seems that Alcibiades, like the rest of us, would be right to experience intense grief over our lack of the only true human good, virtue. Chrysippus' solution, as Cicero presents it, is to eliminate the second judgment that one ought to feel distressed at his lack of wisdom, rather than simply redoubling his efforts to improve himself (*Tusc.* 4.61).

say openly and loudly that virtue is sufficient for happiness and that it will withstand even torture (*Tusc.* 5.75). This view requires courage, we may suppose, because it is not known to be true (*Tusc.* 5.82), and perhaps also because it is counterintuitive. In short, Cicero admires the Stoic ideal of the complete self-sufficiency of virtue, but he suspects that it may be more than human nature can achieve.

There is a particularly relevant example of this ambivalence early in book 3 of the *Tusculans* where Cicero reports the Academic Crantor's criticism of Stoic impassivity (*analgêsia*).

> *"I cannot by any means agree with those who extol some kind of impassivity. Such a thing is neither possible nor beneficial. I do not wish to be ill, but if I am, and if some part of my body is to be cut open or even amputated, let me feel it. This absence of pain comes at a high price: it means being numb in body, and in mind scarcely human" (Tusc. 3.12).*

He then registers his sympathy with this criticism. It is very human to think this way, Cicero says, for "it's natural that there should be some soft and tender element in our minds, something that would be shaken by distress as by a storm" (*Tusc.* 3.12).[15]

On the other hand, he warns that Crantor's criticism may also lead us to regard our weaknesses with complacency. So, acknowledging our vulnerability would amount to setting our sights too low and giving up before we achieve all that we are capable of. Instead, he continues: "Let us be bold enough not only to prune away the branches of unhappiness [*miseria*], but to yank out its very roots, down to the last fiber. Yet so deep are the roots of folly [*stultitia*] that there will perhaps be something left over. But we will leave no more than is necessary" (*Tusc.* 3.13, see also 3.83). This suggests that while the Stoic ideal is the right one to aim at, it may ultimately be beyond our power; the soft and tender elements in our nature *may* be ineliminable. Furthermore, the extent to which one can in fact eliminate all *pathê* may be an empirical matter. If so, and even if we grant as Cicero does, that the *pathê* are voluntary, the Stoics would be wrong to insist on the conceptual possibility of what no one in fact has, or possibly even can, achieve.

Graver notes that this remark about something being left over is "a rather inadequate summary reference to a point which will be explained more fully later on [at 3.83] … the deep-seated beliefs which are a necessary condition for emotions

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[15] Cicero takes a shot at the Stoic sage at *Ac.* 2.101: [the Academic sage who guides his life by the probable] is not a statue carved from stone or hewn from oak. This is a clear echo of Homer's expression (*Odyssey* 19.163, and *Iliad* 22.16), also imitated by Plato (*Apology* 34d). See also Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 12.5.10: "a wise man can endure and put up with [many things such as pain which are opposed to the gentleness and mercy of nature], but he cannot exclude them altogether from his consciousness; for *analgêsia* or 'insensibility,' and *apatheia*, or 'lack of feeling', not only in my judgment…but also in that of some of the wise men of that same school (such as Panaetius, a serious and learned man) are disapproved and rejected" (translation by J.C. Rolfe 1927).

to occur are in fact to be distinguished from the residual 'bitings' which cannot be completely eradicated from the sage" (2002, 84, cf. also 125-6). These residual bitings, which are referred to by later sources as *propatheia*, do not necessarily produce any psychological disturbance, nor are they incompatible with the sage's *apatheia* since he will not allow the involuntary physical response (e.g. blushing, increased heart rate, etc.) to develop into a full-blown emotion. Cicero, however, is not referring to this orthodox Stoic view of the *propatheiai*. His remark indicates that it is not merely a morally neutral, physical response that cannot be eliminated, but rather foolishness (*stultitia*) itself. He also qualifies the statement: *perhaps* some of the roots may be left. Cicero's point is simply that we must strive to eliminate as much folly as is possible, whether or not it is completely eliminable.

This position is indicative of Cicero's inclination to accept an irrational part of the soul rather than the Stoics' monistic account;[16] for it may be possible to completely tame or habituate this part which would otherwise erupt in pathological emotions. However, since Cicero follows Chrysippus in locating the source of all psychological disturbance in rational judgment, it is not clear what role, if any, the irrational part plays in Cicero's account of the emotions. If the irrational part plays no role, it should be left out entirely. But if it does play a role, then it would seem that psychological disturbances will not be entirely voluntary, contrary to Cicero's stated view (*Tusc.* 4.65).

The *Tusculans* do not provide any conclusive answer, and it may be the case that Cicero had not considered the apparent incompatibility of a divided soul with purely volitional emotions. On the other hand, he may be following Posidonius in allowing a role for some non-rational impulse in the formation of emotion while still maintaining the orthodox Stoic view that human motivation is purely rational. Cooper (1998) argues that Posidonius posited the existence of non-rational sources of energy in the soul, locating them in appetitive and spirited parts, in order to explain some phenomena that Chrysippus' account apparently could not, e.g. why one may experience more or less intense emotional responses, or none at all, in the same sorts of situations while making the same evaluative judgments.[17]

Whether or not Cicero was following Posidonius in the *Tusculans*, his apparent acceptance of the divided soul is not merely an unthinking blunder. On the issue of moral pedagogy, Cicero sides firmly with the Platonists (and Posidonius) against the

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[16] Cicero endorses the divided soul at *Tusc.* 2.47, 51-53, 4.10-14; apparently at *De Officiis* 1.101, and 1.132 where he speaks of the two-fold activity and motion of the soul (respectively); and *De Republica* 1.60, assuming Scipio speaks for Cicero.

[17] Graver (2000, 215-23) discusses the possible Posidonian influence on the *Tusculans* in an informative appendix. She presents a number of points that suggest if Posidonius is in the picture then Cicero is actually arguing against him and in support of Chrysippus. But it seems more likely that Cicero does not intend to engage in any scholarly controversy in the *Tusculans*. And in the meantime, he is still at liberty to engage in his Academic eclecticism, borrowing views that seem most probable, regardless of their source.

early Stoics. He clearly thought that the detailed portrayal of virtuous character is a very effective way of encouraging moral development, and his dialogues are studded with many such examples. The early Stoics, by contrast, emphasized rational precepts since, in keeping with their monistic psychology, goodness is purely a matter of intellect. But Platonic education requires more than an intellectual grasp of pertinent moral facts. Since the Platonists accept the divided soul, ethical training also requires habituation by non-rational means. The portrayal of admirable characters encourages precisely this sort of imitation.[18]

Given Cicero's reservation about the Stoics' monistic account of the soul, he cannot accept Chrysippus' definition of emotion in precisely the way Chrysippus intended it. However, he can accept an interpretation of these definitions that will serve equally well in pursuing the Stoic goal of the elimination of emotion. As Dougan and Henry note, "it is not hard to see how (e.g.) the definition '*aversa a recta ratione contra naturam animi commotio*' [a disturbance of the soul contrary to nature and adverse to right reason] might be interpreted and applied by a Platonist: how '*adpetitiones animi*' might be held to be either the *hormai* of Chrysippus or *to epithumêtikon* of Posidonius" (1905, xliv). Despite the questionable attribution of Platonism to Posidonius, there is an important insight here: we need not agree with the Stoics' psychological monism to accept Chrysippus' definition of emotion as a disturbing movement contrary to reason. Cicero may consistently believe that *pathê* are entirely voluntary, even though the soft and tender elements in our nature (= the source of Posidonius' *pathêtikai kinesis*?) may always in principle create an internal tension or disharmony despite the best possible achievements of reason.

Another crucial ambiguity is evident in the term *eulogos* in the definition of the sage's healthy emotions--it may refer either to what the perfected reason of the sage finds probable, or to what the rest of us find probable.[19] Cicero's report (*Tusc.* 4.12) is consistent with the other accounts we have (*SVF* 3.431-442). The good emotions are rational movements (*eulogos*, which Cicero translates as *cum ratione*) whereas the destructive emotions are irrational, or contrary to reason (*alogos*, Cicero has *sine ratione*). What is striking in all of these reports, however, including Cicero's, is that there is no direct mention of the sage's infallible assessment of the value of the things he seeks or avoids. The *eupatheiai* are unanimously defined by our Greek sources with the term *eulogos*. And clearly the Stoics intended this term to be understood as a description of the sage's infallible rationality, since, as we have seen, only the sage experiences *eupatheiai*. So they intended for *logos* in this case to refer to the normative conception of reason.

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[18] Sedley (1999) examines this difference in approach to moral education with reference to the early Stoics' and Academic Platonists' attitudes towards the proems in Plato's dialogues.

[19] Brennan (1996) presents a compelling case for taking *eulogos* to refer to the perfected reason of the Sage in the Stoics' definition of *kathêkon*, in *eulogos phantasia*, as well as in the definition of the *eupatheiai*.

However, as Cicero is not bound by Stoic doctrine, he may just as well interpret *logos* in a less demanding sense. In that case, *eulogos* need not imply certain knowledge, but rather only reasonable judgment. This deflationary move recalls one of Arcesilaus' challenges to Stoic ethics. Arcesilaus argued that knowledge is not necessary for morally right actions, or for a good, happy life in general. One may suspend judgment, he claimed, and still regulate his actions in accordance with 'the reasonable' [*to eulogon*]. By proceeding in this way, he will act rightly, "for happiness is acquired through prudence, and prudence resides in right actions, and right action is whatever, once it has been done, has a reasonable justification [*eulogon apologia*]…" (Sextus Empiricus *M* 7.158, tr. by Long and Sedley, 69B). So the apparently unattainable certainty required by the Stoic account of morally right action is not really necessary.

Similarly, we might interpret the *eulogon* in the definition of the *eupatheiai* in a less demanding way. For the requirement of reasonableness (*eulogon*) falls short of the requirement of knowledge (*katalêpsis*). And it is possible that Cicero sought to capture that sense in his translation of *eupatheia* with *constantia*.[20]

However, *constantia* is an unlikely choice to describe a movement of the mind rather than a disposition.[21] It is also a term that occurs frequently in Cicero's philosophical dialogues and his correspondence. Although he does not offer it as a precisely defined technical term, it occurs more than any other in his descriptions of what he deemed to be an ethically admirable character. In those contexts, *constantia* refers simply to a constantly maintained conviction that is appropriately proportioned to the strength of ones justification; thus it is simultaneously an ethical and epistemic virtue.[22] It is also typically balanced with some term that we may take as an expression of the 'soft and tender element' in our nature: e.g. *humanitas,* mercy, sweetness, agreeableness, benevolence, (*clementia, suavitas, lepos, benevolentia*).[23]

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[20] Sorabji (2000, 490) suggests this possibility. Graver (2002, 135) argues that Cicero "perhaps feels that an exact Latin translation for *eupatheia* would create even more confusion ("good feeling" = *bona perturbatio*?) and so opts to bring out the positive meaning of the prefix *eu-* by using a term which also refers to the Stoic *summum bonum*" [*homologia*]. Although Cicero does, via Stoic spokesmen, characterize the sage's disposition with the term *constantia,* he explicitly offers *convenientia* as his translation of *homologia* at *De finibus* 3.21.

[21] See *Tusc.* 4.27-30 for the distinction between emotion as an occurrent, dynamic state and faults as entrenched dispositions.

[22] Lagrée (2004) shows how central the virtue of constancy was for French moral philosophers of the seventeenth century. She notes that the decline of Stoic physics necessitated the search for a different foundation for this much admired virtue. She does not, however, consider the influence that Cicero's treatment of *constantia* may have had, and whether the *Tusculans* may have provided as much inspiration as Seneca's *De Constantia*.

[23] Gordis (1905) offers a wealth of examples illustrating this general point. See also *Pro Murena* 60-66 where Cicero criticizes Cato for maintaining his Stoic convictions as fixed and unalterable--they should instead, he suggests, be tempered with *humanitas.* Admittedly we must take Cicero's remarks in his defense of Murena with a large grain of salt. While this passage (60-66) is explicitly intended to sway the jury, it is also a good statement of Cicero's sincerely held belief about appropriate ethical character.

A related point about firmness of character is made later in book 4 when Cicero attacks the Peripatetic view that the emotion of anger is necessary to inspire courageous action. "It may well be that courage is not a matter of rage at all, and that this anger of yours is a sham. 'Scorn human affairs; think nothing of death; remember that pain and labor can be endured.' Once these beliefs are established as one's considered judgment [*constituta sunt iudicio atque sententia*], then and only then does real, sturdy, unwavering courage take hold" (*Tusc.* 4.50-51).[24]

What would Cicero have understood by the phrase 'established as one's considered judgment'? For the Stoics none are truly brave but the sage. But for Cicero, this would entail that none are truly brave. And this is precisely the sort of unpalatable conclusion that led him to find more acceptable formulations of Stoicism.[25] In keeping with his Philonian fallibilism, it is far more likely that "establishing as one's considered judgment" is a matter of acquiring the strongest justification and greatest conviction one can muster with regard to this Stoic assessment. In fact that is just what he is encouraging his readers (and himself) to do in the *Tusculans.*[26]

In summing up book 4, Cicero remarks: "If confidence or firm assurance of mind, is a form of knowledge [*scientia quaedam*], namely a carefully considered opinion [*opinio gravis*] on the part of one who does not assent rashly, so also is fear an opinion that some anticipated evil is impending… Thus a consistency [*constantia*] is a matter of knowledge, while an emotion [*perturbatio*] is a matter of error" (*Tusc.* 4.80). There are two contrasts drawn here. The first is between healthy and pathological affective states, i.e. between *eupatheia* (= *constantia*) and *pathê* (= *perturbatio,* cf. *Tusc.* 3.7). The second is between the epistemic conditions that underlie these affective states. Associated with *constantia* is a carefully considered opinion

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[24] Cicero makes a similar remark at *Tusc.* 4.22: temperance sedates the appetites and causes them to obey right reason and to preserve the considered judgments [*considerata iudicia*] of the mind.

[25] Cicero's discussion of friendship in the *Laelius* is a good example of this. If we were to accept the orthodox Stoic view that true friendship only exists among the virtuous, then we would have to admit that there are no true friends. Instead, Laelius asserts that he is "bound to look at things as they are in the experience of everyday life and not as they are in fancy or in hope" (18). This is a good statement of Cicero's unwillingness to go the whole way with the Stoic revisions of our intuitions. "Those who… live in such a way so as to give proof of their loyalty, integrity, fairness and generosity; who are free from all avarice, lust and insolence, and have great strength of character [*magna constantia*]…let us call such men good as they were held to be, and as they should be called because, as far as it is possible for man, they follow nature, which is the best guide for good living" (19, translations by W.A. Falconer).

[26] This is most apparent in Book 5 where Cicero praises philosophy for merely *promising* to provide us with a self-sufficient happiness (*Tusc.* 5.19). After this remark Cicero says that he will see another time what it in fact produces (*quod efficiat*), but that for now, he has great esteem for the fact that it even makes such a promise (*Tusc.* 5.20). It is also worth noting his use of the verb *volumus* in describing the Stoic ideal: we wish that the happy man be safe, impregnable, fenced and fortified, (*Tusc.* 5.41), we wish the wise man to show the spirit of disdain for the vicissitudes of fortune (*Tusc.* 5.42), we wish the life of virtue to be supremely happy (*Tusc.* 5.47).

which is not a matter of rashly assenting. *Perturbatio*, by contrast, is associated with error and rash assent.

The crucial questions are what sort of error gives rise to pathological emotion and what sort of knowledge or considered opinion gives rise to the healthy affective states. The Stoic answer is that the error is in believing something to be genuinely good or bad when in fact it is not. But there is another sort of error involved that Cicero draws our attention to: thinking one knows what in fact he does not.

Thus Cicero promotes a Socratic medicine that works by eliminating the vigorous opinion that some object is worthy of pursuit or avoidance, when in fact it is not. Such opinions, he adds, take the form of judging that one knows something which in fact he does not (*Tusc.* 4.24-26). Relieving mental disturbances in this manner yields a kind of health that can be found in the non-wise (*Tusc.* 4.29-30).

For the Stoics, by contrast, none but the sage is truly healthy. So Cicero is granting much greater ethical significance to the relief of psychological disturbances. His reservation about the possibility of attaining Stoic wisdom along with his admission of an irrational part of the soul require him to modify the uncompromising nature of Stoic ethics. Some people, he admits, may be irascible, pitying or envious by nature (*Tusc.* 4.80). This could not happen with the homogeneously rational soul which only acquires its imperfections through poor upbringing and repeated errors of judgment which then gradually develop into vicious dispositions. Despite the existence of such innate flaws, and the perpetual temptations of assenting to false evaluative beliefs, Cicero believes that we may still live healthy lives. And he offers no less a person than Socrates as an example of one who was cured by means of reason. Since Socrates was no Stoic sage, as far as Cicero was concerned, such health is a real possibility for all of us too.

If this is what Cicero has in mind it will help to show why *apatheia* is admirable even in the non-sage. For the healthy emotions that accompany *apatheia* would be available to all who are able to make reasonable judgments. If one is suffering from a crippling fear regarding the possible loss of money, Chrysippan therapy could certainly be effective in relieving that fear. Cicero agrees that the comforter's first responsibility is simply to relieve the suffering. He also believes that Chrysippus' method is most powerfully defended (*firmissima ad veritatem*). However he acknowledges that this approach will not work in every case since it is often difficult to convince the mourner that he is grieving because of his own choice and because he thinks he ought to. For this reason, Cicero suggests a more pragmatic approach—we should employ whatever *will* work to alleviate mental distress (*Tusc.* 3.79).

But once the fear has been removed, what should this person feel about his money? Since the Stoics limit healthy emotion to the sage, they must encourage the non-sage to feel nothing until he has acquired the necessary knowledge. But with the account of the *constantiae* I have offered, Cicero can attempt to induce the sufferer to replace the harmful emotion of fear with the reasonable affect of caution, without

giving him the whole of Stoic wisdom. This option is not available to Chrysippus who maintains that the healthy affect of caution is only available to the sage.[27]

Cicero's adaptation of Chrysippan psychotherapy thus reflects his general tendency to make Stoicism more serviceable and attractive to a larger audience of his fellow Romans. On this view, we need not strive to maintain an apparently inhuman apathy until attaining a wisdom that even the most revered Stoics refused to claim for themselves. But crucially, this does not mean that we should merely moderate the emotions. Cicero agrees with the Stoics that emotion is not necessary as a spur to virtue, and that they are essentially pathological. His version of healthy emotion is, like the Stoics', a matter of rationally judging that the goods of fortune are only conditionally good. But Cicero discerns far greater ethical significance to the removal of psychological disturbances and to the admittedly vulnerable tranquility and constancy achievable by those who fall short of Stoic wisdom.

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[27] However Cooper (2004) argues that there are, in principle, affective states intermediate between the raging *pathê* of the foolish and the perfect tranquility of the wise. Moral progressors who have correctly identified apparent goods as only preferred indifferents may experience these intermediate states even though they have not yet achieved the unshakeable certainty and firmness of the sage. Cooper does not claim that Chrysippus positively endorsed such intermediate states (or that he didn't), but that it would have been a considerable improvement on the theory had he done so. I believe this is precisely the direction that Cicero is going in the *Tusculans.* It is significant, in this regard, to point out, as Cooper does that only in Cicero do we find included in the Stoic definition of *pathê* the notion that they arise in response to *great* goods and evils, or at least those perceived as such. Cooper plausibly claims that Cicero invents this limitation in order "to help the Stoics out, by suggesting that their view was more in line with ordinary ways of thinking and speaking, where talk of emotions comes up, than in fact it was" (2004, 23-24).

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