



The Aim and Composition of Plutarch's  
*de Stoicorum repugnantiiis*

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D. G.

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Note: For ease and precision, references to the text of the *de Stoic. rep.* — enclosed in braces { } — will be by the page and line numbers of Pohlenz' Teubner edition (Leipzig 1952), vol. VI.2.



THE *de Stoicorum repugnantiiis* has been one of the most intensely-studied works in Plutarch's *Moralia*. Yet the nature of its material makes it one of the works in which Plutarch's talent as a thinker — even as a writer — is least readily apparent: the catalogue of Stoic self-contradictions with which it presents us seems highly derivative in itself and, anyway, thoroughly *ad hominem* in its polemical intent. For these reasons the work has been appreciated as an invaluable mine of information about the Stoicism it attacks, but the assumption has always been that it could have very little to tell us about Plutarch's positive beliefs.

There is an immediate problem with this approach and that is that, ironically, it makes Plutarch's own philosophy self-contradictory. We know that Plutarch associated himself with the Sceptical Academy, and we know that *ad hominem* polemic — even the use of self-contradiction — had been a characteristic of that school. But Plutarch, unlike his radically Sceptical predecessors, also professed a positive, systematic philosophy — in fact a form of Platonism, whose details are dimly apparent in the rest of his philosophical output. For this reason, he cannot consistently have set out to attack the Stoics with a form of argument, borrowed straight from the earlier Academy, which presupposes the fallibility of any positive attempt at a philosophical system. My aim in this thesis is to review Plutarch's attack on the Stoics, and to show that it is launched from a much more positive, and consistent, standpoint of his own.

The format for my discussion of the *de Stoic. rep.* is rather similar to that of a commentary: in section IV, at any rate, I systematically review each of Plutarch's

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arguments. However, I do not give a line-by-line interpretation of the whole work, and do not, on the whole, discuss matters of textual interest; rather, I concentrate on showing how each contradiction forms part of a polemical strategy which reflects Plutarch's philosophical interests as a whole. In order to do this, I shall show, first of all, that the motif of self-contradiction does not itself commit Plutarch to a position of radical Scepticism but that, on the contrary, it is used to structure arguments that make an implicit assertion of his Platonism — for this, see section II.

The second consideration in discussing the strategy of the *de Stoic. rep.* must be the question of whether there is any rationale governing the arrangement of its arguments or whether they are, as they seem to be, gathered together in a random body. In section III, I shall suggest that the apparent lack of structure can be explained through an examination of the way in which Plutarch used his source material. When the Academic arguments in the background of the *de Stoic. rep.* have been reconstructed, a very clear structural pattern does emerge (as we shall see in the conclusion to this study in section V). This pattern, which Plutarch must have used to guide his composition and ensure its comprehensiveness, is not obvious to the reader just because of the way in which the source-material has been transformed into contradictions: but this is a fact which Plutarch presumably welcomed — at least, he does nothing to obviate it.

It should be emphasised that I do not consider that an examination of Plutarch's source material will presuppose an indictment of his originality. On the contrary, such an examination is the only way in which we can come to see quite how original the *de Stoic. rep.* actually is. Plutarch's arguments are based on Academic material — but they make a Platonist point; his structure, likewise, is probably taken from an Academic

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source — but is so hidden under the careful artlessness with which Plutarch wants to characterise the work as not to impinge on the way a reader approaches the work at all. I ultimately hope to show that the *de Stoic. rep.* was far from being either an anomaly in Plutarch's philosophical output or a philosophical anachronism, but was an exciting and original work, very much in the vanguard of second century Platonism. In the end, even its role as a source for our knowledge of Stoicism will not be fully appreciated until we have seen it in this light.

## II

### The Accusation of Self-Contradiction.

As I suggested in the introduction, the *de Stoic. rep.* is generally considered in a light which — ironically enough — makes the broader picture we are given of Plutarch somewhat self-contradictory. Although he is acknowledged to have professed his own positive philosophical system, the claim is that with the *de Stoic. rep.* he has temporarily ‘forgotten’ this fact and, for the sake of attacking the Stoics, has adopted an essentially negative Scepticism — an approach based on the assumption that any sort of attempt at a positive philosophical system is going to say much that is untrue and will therefore quickly make itself ridiculous. But I also indicated in the introduction that my concern in this study is largely to make sense of the *de Stoic. rep.* from the point of view of Plutarch’s philosophy as a whole, and so in this case I want to start again on the whole question of the nature of the polemic in the work, and try to follow through the assumption that it must have been shaped at least as much by Plutarch’s positive philosophical beliefs as by a purely negative desire to discredit Stoicism. This means in particular that I want to look at the history of the form of argument that Plutarch uses, and to take another look at the claim that there is something *essentially* negative about the use of self-contradiction.

It is beyond doubt that Plutarch thinks of himself as working in the same tradition not just as Plato, but also as Arcesilaus and Carneades: in one way or another this is presumably what he wanted to demonstrate when he wrote his book on the unity of the Academy: *περὶ τοῦ Μίαν εἶναι τὴν ἀπὸ Πλάτωνος Ἀκαδημειῶν* (*Lamprias* 63). Although this work is lost and we have no direct knowledge of the argument it

contained, it is more than likely that Plutarch defended the 'One Academy' thesis on the grounds of a continuous tradition of Scepticism going back to Socrates.<sup>1</sup> The best evidence for this is, perhaps, the sympathy with the Sceptical Academy implicit in a number of other book-titles preserved in the *Lamprias* catalogue,<sup>2</sup> but the attitude is also apparent in works we actually possess. Note, for example, how Plutarch has set up the *de communibus notitiis* as a defence of the Sceptic Academy (and, what is more, fails in the work to attach any importance to a distinction the Stoics obviously recognised between the arguments of the earlier and later Academics: cf. 1059AB). Compare also *adversus Colotem* 1121E-1124B where, in the course of defending the Scepticism of Arcesilaus, Plutarch brands as "Sophists" all those who objected to Arcesilaus' ascription of Scepticism to Socrates and Plato (1121F-1122A), and he actually *thanks* Colotes (albeit on Arcesilaus' behalf) for bringing people's attention to the fact that Academic Scepticism has an ancient pedigree, one that includes Plato and Socrates.

Plutarch's pro-Scepticism is certainly evident in the *de Stoic. rep.* as well: he defends the actions of 'those who suspend judgement' (οἱ ἐπέχοντες — see chapter 10, esp. {11.18-21}), and implies that argument on both sides of the question is the method used by true philosophers ({9.3-8}). Furthermore, it is undeniable that the appeal to self-contradiction was itself a feature of the polemic of the Sceptical Academy. A. A. Long,

<sup>1</sup>It is important to make this point, since there are various ways in which it might have been possible to argue for the thesis that the Academy was united by Dogmatism. The anonymous commentator on Plato's *Theaetetus* takes one such interpretation of the Academy; and it is possible to think that Philo of Larissa took another (see J. Barnes: 'Antiochus of Ascalon', in *Philosophia Togata*, edd. J. Barnes and M. Griffen (Oxford University Press 1989), pp.51-96).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. esp. *Lamprias* nos. 45 (*On Arguing Both Sides*), 64 (*On the Difference Between the Pyrrhonians and the Academics*), and 71 [= 131?] (*Concerning the Fact that Prophecy is not Disproved by the Academics*).

for example, tracing Arcesilaus' methodology back to Socrates, characterises it in the following terms:<sup>3</sup>

The essence of this methodology consists in taking the position of one's opponents and showing it to be self-contradictory. The most detailed argument by Arcesilaus which survives exemplifies this very clearly.

It is largely for these reasons, then, that there has been such broad agreement that it is to the Sceptical Academy we should turn when asking about the background to Plutarch's polemic in the *de Stoic. rep.* But it is the next stage of the argument which I want to question in this section: the assumption that *because* Plutarch was arguing in the same tradition as Arcesilaus and Carneades it must be the case that he was arguing to the same negative ends as they were.<sup>4</sup>

There is a temptation for us to think of Scepticism in rather negative terms, to approach it almost as if it were an ideology, whose purpose is just to undermine positive beliefs. However, as far as the Academy at least is concerned, Scepticism is more properly thought of as a methodology — one way of dealing with the evidence brought into the

<sup>3</sup>*Hellenistic Philosophy* (London 1974), p.90. Long is referring to Arcesilaus' criticism of Stoic epistemology, and specifically the claim that κατάληψις can be an epistemic criterion: see S.E. *adv. math.* VII.150-157. Socrates' approach is summed up well at *Phaedrus* 237c: if people start to discuss what they don't *know* about then pretty soon they find that they don't agree with themselves or each other: οὔτε γὰρ ἑαυτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις ὁμολογοῦσιν.

<sup>4</sup>Those who make this assumption include J. Schröter, *Plutarchs Stellung zur Skepsis* (Leipzig 1911) esp. pp.38-41; P. H. De Lacy, 'Plutarch and the Academic Sceptics' in *The Classical Journal* 49 (1953-4), pp.79-84, esp. 84; and D. Babut, *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme* (Paris 1969) p.274. Cf. also H. Deike, *Plutarch De Stoicorum Repugnantiis 1-10: Beiträge zu einem kritischen Kommentar* (diss., Göttingen 1962), p.47; J. Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Göttingen 1978) pp.275-276; and P. Donini, 'Plutarco, Ammonio e l'Accademia' in *Miscellanea Plutarchea* (Ferrara 1986), pp.96-110, esp. pp.109-110.

philosophical arena. Put in these terms, the fundamental question facing the Sceptic is not ‘Why do you want to destroy Dogmatic beliefs?’ but ‘Why is Scepticism the best way of handling philosophical data?’ — or, better, perhaps, ‘Why do *you* adopt this method of philosophical enquiry?’ It is only in answering this question that the Sceptic reveals whether he is ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ in his outlook; and we find both kinds of answer in the Academy. Arcesilaus and Carneades, for example, seem to have emphasised the negative side of Scepticism, pointing out that it saves one from committing oneself to the kind of erroneous beliefs that Dogmatists are prone to (*Acad.* I.45, II.132-133; cf. S.E. *Pyrrh. hypot.* I.13); but later Academics, such as Metrodorus and Philo, concentrated much more on the idea that Scepticism is just the *only* method by which we could ever sort out the truth, given the data available to us (cf. Cicero *Acad.* II.60 with 78). There is ample evidence that Plutarch phrased his own Scepticism in these more positive terms. In *de Stoic. rep.* 10, for example, he defends those who argue both sides of a question in the following way ({11.18-21}):

ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὐδέτερον καταλαμβάνοντες εἰς ἑκάτερον ἐπιχειροῦσιν, ὡς εἴ τι καταληπτόν ἐστιν οὕτως ἂν μόνως ἢ μάλιστα κατάληψιν ἑαυτῆς τὴν ἀλήθειαν παρέχουσιν...

Of course the suggestion is not that Plutarch is committed to the idea that he will reach the truth; only that, viewed in these terms, complete suspension of judgement is no longer necessary, because as one investigates further, and draws nearer to the truth, answers of more and more plausibility will present themselves, and it is legitimate to

adopt these provisionally as positive philosophical beliefs.<sup>5</sup> Suspension of judgement always remains an option — and indeed is preferable to forming opinions on the basis of insufficient evidence (cf. *de prim. frig.*, with Appendix below) —; indeed, Plutarch presumably thinks that the negative conclusions drawn by Arcesilaus, for example, were due precisely to the fact that things did not ever tend to strike him as plausible enough to command his assent. But Plutarch himself found that Sceptical inquiry led him to positive conclusions and, in particular, to beliefs which we now characterise as Platonist. If the *de Stoic. rep.* seems to us to qualify as a ‘Sceptical’ work *rather than* a Platonist work, then we are missing the point. As far as Plutarch is concerned, the *de Stoic. rep.* must have been as much a function of his Platonism as his Platonism was a function of his Sceptical approach to philosophy.

Although we have seen that Plutarch’s polemical use of self-contradictions must broadly reflect his affiliation with the Academy, we are as yet a long way off being able to point to a specific prototype or genre in terms of which the *de Stoic. rep.* can be understood. To start with, when the fundamental methodological similarities between Plutarch and Arcesilaus have been noted, we are still left with significant differences in the appearance of their respective arguments which need to be explained. For example, Plutarch’s use of self-contradiction is much more overt than Arcesilaus’. When Arcesilaus showed his opponents to be self-contradictory, the evidence suggests that he did it not by contrasting two directly conflicting statements, which is Plutarch’s

<sup>5</sup>Cf. especially the image suggested by the ‘Philonian’ Licentius at Augustine *contra Academicos*, I.11: the Sceptical sage is like a traveller who is on the right road in his search for Alexandria and only fails to reach the city because he is cut off by death. The point seems to be that the (Philonian) Sceptic who is a good enough philosopher can be relatively sure he is on the right road towards the truth and, if only his life were long enough, and his powers of investigation strong enough, he might in theory reach his goal.

preferred form, but rather more subtly by drawing from his opponents' premises conclusions which were unacceptable to them, or inconsistent with their own conclusions.

This difference, which is perhaps rather superficial on its own, may be the result of a much more basic distinction between the approaches of Plutarch and Arcesilaus (or Carneades, for that matter). It seems fairly clear that Arcesilaus would never have described his method specifically as an attempt to uncover *self-contradictions* in an opponent's philosophy. As we saw, self-contradiction was very useful to him; but there is no evidence that he ever thought of it as anything other than one manifestation of an *antilogistical* approach. Cicero certainly characterises Arcesilaus' interpretation of the Socratic method not as a narrow attempt to reduce his interlocutors to self-contradiction, but much more broadly as a policy of 'antilogistic' (*de fin.* II.2):

Arcesilas eum [*i.e.* the Socratic method] revocavit instituitque ut ii qui se audire vellent non de se quaerent, sed ipsi dicerent quid sentirent; quod cum dixissent, ille contra.

Academic Sceptics could always make capital out of the self-contradictions of their opponents, but they never seem to have recognised a particular *tropos* devoted to the search.<sup>6</sup> This makes it very hard for us to think that the *de Stoic. rep.* is based on any previous Academic model. It may be possible to relate individual arguments to

<sup>6</sup>The same is true, of course, for Pyrrhonian Sceptics. Cherniss refers in his introduction to the *de Stoic. rep.* to Sextus Empiricus' claim that "even the leading philosophers make many conflicting statements [μαχομένως λέγουσιν]" (see *adv. math.* I.281 with Cherniss Loeb vol. XIII.2 p.371); and Sextus certainly makes some use of περιτροπή, or "self-refutation", as a polemical motif (cf. M. Burnyeat, 'Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Later Greek Philosophy' in *The Philosophical Review* 85 (1976) pp.44-69). But self-contradiction is not systematically appealed to, and certainly does not feature as a Pyrrhonian τρόπος τῆς ἐποχῆς.

Academic precedents in all sorts of ways but in the end Plutarch's enterprise in the *de Stoic. rep.* is, as far as we are concerned, something quite new.

What we need to do now, then, is to look for the more immediate background of the *de Stoic. rep.*, and to explain Plutarch's new approach: why does he decide to attack the Stoics quite narrowly for self-contradiction? Can we find a more specific Academic model for the form of argument he adopts?

In fact there does seem to be an argument which might constitute this 'missing link' between the arguments of the Sceptical Academy and the *de Stoic. rep.* There is a very old and well-attested Academic argument in which the Stoics, quite specifically, are accused of a fundamental and peculiar inconsistency inherent in their ethical philosophy, which is this: on the one hand they champion a rigorously absolutist ethics — in which, for example, only virtue is good, and only the perfectly wise man virtuous —; but on the other hand they admit that we have some sort of moral obligation to try to attain things like health — although they call these things 'preferable' rather than 'good'. In the argument, these two levels of ethical analysis are characterised by — or, rather, they are assimilated to — the respective philosophical positions of the unorthodox Stoic Aristo and the Peripatetics. Aristo took on board the rigorous absolutism of Zeno's ethics, but he adopted it without the qualification: if health is morally indifferent, then he would not allow it to be called 'valuable' or 'preferable' in any sense at all.<sup>7</sup> The Peripatetics, of course, held the more liberal view, according to which things like health really were good. The Academic argument, then, becomes this:

<sup>7</sup>Aristo differed from Chrysippus precisely in denying that there were things προημμένον *per se*, so that, for him, health (for example) would not have any kind of *intrinsic* moral value at all. (See further section IV.6.) Cicero is able to characterise this position as absurd (cf. *de fin.* IV.43), but at least consistent (cf. *Acad.* II.130).

Stoic ethics is inherently self-contradictory, because it tries to maintain the diametrically opposed positions of Aristo and the Peripatos simultaneously.

One form of this argument was used as early as Carneades to dismiss Stoicism as *irrelevant* because, if you looked beyond the language they used — which was the absolutist language of Aristo — all you would find would be an ethics already expounded by someone else, i.e. the Peripatetics: cf. Cicero *de fin.* III.41. But with a slight change of presentation it is possible to see how easy it would be to make the point that the Stoics waver inconsistently between an Aristonian and a Peripatetic position. And this is the argument that we find, expressed *as a contradiction*, in the concluding passage of Cicero's Academic attack on Stoic Ethics in book IV of the *de finibus* (§78):

*Quid enim est tam repugnans quam eundem dicere quod honestum sit solum id bonum esse, qui dicat appetitionem rerum ad vivendum accommodaturum a natura profectam? Ita cum ea volunt retinere quae superiori sententiae conveniunt, in Aristonem incidunt; cum id fugiunt, re eadem defendunt quae Peripatetici, verba tenent mordicus.*

It is fairly easy to see how the ethical chapters of the *de Stoic. rep.* can be explained in terms of a version of just this argument. Take, for example, chapter 30, which contains one of the most 'typical' of the ethical contradictions. The argument, in short, is this: 'The Stoics say, on the one hand, that only virtue is good; but then they also say that you would be mad not to value health and wealth, to the extent that you can even call these things "good" in a certain way.'

Now, we can explain why the Stoics would not have thought this contradictory: the Stoics, as I mentioned, make a distinction between things, like virtue, that really are

*good*, and things, like health, which are only "preferable" (but still valuable to that extent). But we do not need to conclude that Plutarch has deliberately (or ignorantly) *overlooked* this distinction in order to contrive his contradiction.<sup>8</sup> In the context of the perfectly well-informed Academic argument I have just been tracing, Plutarch would be saying something along the following lines: 'The Stoics cannot consistently hold both that health and wealth *have* no moral value, and that we should act towards them *as if they have*; if we need to refer to the Peripatetic account of the value of things to be our guide in life, then it is contradictory to make a philosophy out of the Aristonian claim that only virtue is good.'

This reading works very well, where it works; but as it stands it only works up to a certain point. The Academic argument we have been looking at was only ever supposed to be valid against Stoic ethics, where there is obvious room for an opponent of Stoicism to see a tension between its theoretical absolutism and the Peripateticism of its practical injunctions. However, the argument will not yet work against Stoic physics, for example. For one thing, there is not going to be the same sort of tension between theory and practice in a subject — like physics — which is all theory; but it is anyway true that Stoic physics is not based around a two-tiered analysis such as the one which rules their ethics in the form of the distinction between the Good and the Preferable. This means that an opponent of the Stoa who wants to attack Stoic physics has to say *either* that it is wrong, *or* that it is no different from what someone else has already written.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For this is the kind of explanation cf. C. Giesen *De Plutarchi contra Stoicos Disputationibus* (diss., Münster 1889) pp.80-82; K. von Ziegler, *Plutarchos von Chaironeia* (Stuttgart 1964), coll. 119.40 - 120.9.

<sup>9</sup>For an example of the former approach, cf. the whole of Cicero *de nat. de.* III; for the claim that Stoic physics says nothing of importance that has not been said before, see *de fin.* IV.11-13.

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It is not possible to take *both* lines at once and make a dilemma out of them as you can with their ethics. The difficulty, of course, is this: the *de Stoic. rep.* does contain contradictions taken from Stoic physics — logic as well — so that the reading I have been developing will need at least some modification if it is going to provide a plausible account of the whole work.

One obvious approach to solving the difficulty is to ask whether differences in the philosophical perspectives of Plutarch and the Sceptical Academy might allow Plutarch to use the Academic accusation of self-contradiction in a different range of ways from the Academy itself. I want to suggest that there is just such an opening in the fact that there are different possible *historical* accounts that can be given of the Stoa. The importance of this is that anyone who uses the Academic accusation of Stoic self-contradiction must take some definite stance on the issue. In particular, since the argument talks on the one side about the *innovative* language invented by Zeno, adopted rather too faithfully by Aristo, and on the other about the more *derivative* nature of their practical ethical theory, anyone who uses the argument must be ready to say quite *what* tradition he thinks Zeno was innovating *on*, and *whose* philosophy he thinks Stoicism comes to be derivative *of* in practice. These are questions to which Plutarch and Carneades would give crucially different answers.

We have seen one possible answer to the question of whose philosophy the practical ethics of the Stoics come to look like already. Carneades, in his version of the argument, said that there was no real difference between the Stoics and the *Peripatetics*. But it needs to be explained why he should choose the Peripatos over, say, the Old Academy — or even Plato himself. I think that there are at least two good reasons for his choice. Note, first of all, that Antipater (who will certainly have been forced to give

some thought to Carneades' argument) wrote a work in which he tried to trace Stoic absolutism back to Plato (*S.V.F.* III, Antipater fr. 56):<sup>10</sup>

Ἀντίπατρος μὲν οὖν ὁ Στωϊκὸς τρία συγγραψάμενος βιβλία  
περὶ τοῦ "Ὅτι κατὰ Πλάτωνα μόνον τὸ καλὸν ἀγαθόν",  
ἀποδείκνυσιν ὅτι καὶ κατ' αὐτὸν αὐτάρκης ἡ ἀρετὴ πρὸς  
εὐδαιμονίαν.

If Stoics at this time can claim (by whatever means) that Stoic ethics can be traced back to Plato, Carneades would not get very far if his argument was just this: that Stoicism reduces to Plato. The Stoics could accept the claim, by simply construing the ethics of Plato according to their own interpretation.

But there is perhaps a more fundamental reason why Carneades would not have wanted to claim that Stoicism came down to a form of Platonism. As a matter of historical fact, and despite Metrodorus, it seems fairly certain that Carneades' Scepticism was not tempered by a positive belief in any form of philosophical probabilism at all.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>This represents an important development from the position of the earlier Stoics, who justified their ethical theory on the grounds that it was truly Socratic: cf. esp. Cicero *de nat. de.* II.167: *magnis autem viris prosperae semper omnes res, siquidem satis a nostris et a principe philosophiae Socrate dictum est de ubertatibus virtutis et copiis*. Plato, they thought, had misinterpreted and enervated Socrates' teaching: see e.g. *de Stoic. rep.* 15, {19.4-6}: κατηγορῶν αὐτοῦ δοκοῦντος ἀγαθὸν ἀπολιπεῖν τὴν ὑγίαιαν κ.τ.λ. For a fuller treatment of this subject, see A. A. Long, 'Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy', *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988) pp.150-171, esp. 160-164.

<sup>11</sup>His criterion of the 'φαντασία πιθανή' (cf. *S.E. adv. math.* VII.166-175), developed *ad hominem* against the Stoic claim that assent to the truth of a proposition was necessary for action, seems to have made the point that you could *accept* the plausibility of an impression in such a way as to be able to act on it without making any sort of philosophical commitment to the belief that it did, in fact, approximate the truth. This was Clitomachus' understanding of Carneades; and he was originally followed in this even by Philo of Larissa (cf. Cicero *Acad.* II.17, Numenius fr. 28.1-5 [des Places] &c.) — although Philo later adopted, and ascribed to Carneades, the more positive form of Scepticism we have already encountered. See P. Couissin, 'The Stoicism of the New Academy', in *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. M. Burnyeat (University of California 1983) pp.31-63, and esp. 42-51 with M. Frede, 'The Skeptic's Two Kinds of Assent', *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 1987), pp.201-222.

This suggests that he would have taken an interpretation of Plato according to which he too was simply aporetic in his dialogues: i.e. he would not have thought that Plato had any sort of positive, systematic ethical doctrine at all, let alone one which could have been adopted by the Stoics. This only really leaves Carneades one plausible, and undeniably dogmatic candidate for the supposed Stoic plagiarism, and that is the Peripatos.

However, when we come to Plutarch, two things have changed. To begin with, the argument is no longer put in the form: 'Stoic ethical theory is only verbally different from [someone else]'s ethics;' but it has become a *contradiction*: 'Stoic ethical theory looks like [one person]'s ethics at one time and like [another person]'s at another.' This means that to relate Stoicism, through half of its contradictory ethics, to the Old Academy, or even to Plato is not to give it any legitimacy: on the contrary, it gives scope for the argument that it is objectionable just because it did not stop with being Old Academic, or Platonic.

Another difference by the time we come to Plutarch is that his Scepticism *is* moderated by a more positive belief in probability — something which would have been apparent in the way he interpreted Plato. (Indeed, Plutarch clearly looks to Plato as a figure of doctrinal authority.) So it does not contradict his own story about Plato if he says that Stoic ethical theory occasionally looks Platonic — although, of course, Plutarch's claim would be that it is the modified, "Peripatetic" side of Stoicism that looks like Plato, and not, as Antipater was wanting to claim, the absolutism!

That Plutarch could assimilate Stoic ethics to the Old Academy is apparent from (for example) the *de comm. not.* 23, 1069EF:<sup>12</sup>

πόθεν δ' Ἀριστοτέλης...καὶ Θεόφραστος ἄρχονται; τίνας δὲ  
Ξενοκράτης καὶ Πολέμων λαμβάνουσιν ἀρχάς; οὐχὶ καὶ  
Ζήνων τούτοις ἠκολούθησεν ὑποτιθεμένοις στοιχεῖα τῆς  
εὐδαιμονίας τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν;

But of course there is nothing to stop him going all the way and saying that Stoic ethics derives from Plato himself, and the *de Stoic. rep.* furnishes evidence that he did make this claim. In chapter 7, 1034C, Plutarch says of Zeno that he: "...admits a plurality of specifically different virtues, *as Plato did* (ὡσπερ ὁ Πλάτων)." This qualification contributes nothing to the contradiction *as such*, and anyway Plato was by no means alone in 'admitting a plurality of specifically different virtues': why not ὡσπερ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, for example? The only function that these words — ὡσπερ ὁ Πλάτων — can have, if they have any function at all, is to signal to us that when the Stoics start applying their philosophy to real life, it is, quite specifically, a more *Platonic* account of things that they find themselves pushed into.

The other question we need to consider is how Carneades and Plutarch might differ over their account of Zeno's *innovations*. The answer to this is very closely related to the answer to the last question. As we have seen, Carneades, in his version of the argument,

<sup>12</sup>Plutarch was not the first person to take this line. Antiochus, who went back to a more dogmatic interpretation of Plato expressed much the same thought: cf. Cicero *Acad.* I.43: *verum esse autem arbitror, ut Antiocho nostro familiari placebat, correctionem veteris Academiae potius quam novam aliquam disciplinam putandam*. It should be noted that, since Antiochus counts the early Peripatetics 'in' with the Old Academy, his account of the Stoa is not radically different from Carneades' — even though his account of the Academy is. (And cf. Gucker, *op. cit.* p.394.)

thinks that the innovations are purely verbal: they are not real innovations at all, just a crude attempt to disguise their plagiarism. Plutarch, on the other hand, again because he sees the argument in terms of a genuine contradiction, must see the innovations as genuinely held at some level. Now, since Plutarch thinks that the non-innovative side of Stoic ethics (the qualified form of their ethics which they keep having to come back to) is really just a form of Platonism, it follows that he will think of the Stoics' innovative absolutism very much in terms of being a deliberate innovation *on* Plato.

We can now begin to see the importance of all this in terms of how Plutarch and Carneades will differ over their use of the accusation of self-contradiction. If Plutarch can identify the absolutist elements of Stoicism with a deliberate act of divergence from Plato, then not only can he say that the Stoics fall into contradiction because their doctrines are obviously absurd and need compromising saving-clauses; but he can also say that they fall into contradiction *just where* — and so by implication *just because* — they diverge from Plato. So *here* is a version of the contradiction which will not only explain the Stoics' ethical contradiction, but can be applied to *any* point of doctrine where the Stoics' official position diverges from Plato. In *any* field, divergence from Plato is going to land you in difficulties: Stoic ethics is now just a special case of that.

Plutarch uses self-contradictions, then, not just to attack the Stoa, but in a positive, if subtle, way he uses them to promote his own Platonism. As confirmation of this reading, we can show that this kind of attack would not be an isolated example of ingenuity on Plutarch's part, but has in fact very real parallels elsewhere in the Platonist revival.

One of the features of philosophy around Plutarch's time was the growing importance of the appeal to authority — something which is presumably very closely related to the move to go back to Plato. But once the legitimacy of a philosophy becomes based on appeal to an authority, or an authoritative tradition, the question arises of what happens to people who remove themselves from that tradition. *Ex hypothesi* their philosophy is not going to be better than the established one, and it will actually be worse if it really does say anything different. This sort of claim seems to underlie Plutarch's assumption that the Stoics are going to have fallen into difficulties when they seceded from the Platonic school. These 'difficulties' may or may not be conceived of as self-contradictions as such, but the old Academic argument on Stoic ethical self-contradiction will presumably provide some incentive for the Platonist to present things in this way. Apart from the *de Stoic. rep.* there is some suggestion that Calvenus Taurus — a younger contemporary and friend of Plutarch — adopted this approach. At *N.A.* XII.5,5, Aulus Gellius presents him referring to one of his books which certainly looks as if it must have associated Stoic divergence from Plato (expressed as differences with his own philosophy) with Stoic self-contradiction:

"me autem scis cum Stoicis non bene convenire, vel cum Stoa potius; est enim pleraque et sibi et nobis incongruens, sicut libro quem super ea re composuimus declaratur."

Another very notable example of this kind of analysis — although one that does not limit the Stoics' difficulties to self-contradiction — comes in Numenius. Numenius, having demonstrated Plato's right to be considered authoritative by showing that Plato

himself was heir to a philosophical tradition going back through Pythagoras to Moses (cf. fr.8 [des Places]: τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀτυκίζων;), argued in his book "Περὶ τῆς τῶν Ἀκαδημαϊκῶν πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαστάσεως" that philosophers who secede from their source of authority are inevitably liable to fall into ruinous difficulties.<sup>13</sup> He takes Zeno as an example, and says that he might have been a great philosopher if he had not fought with Plato (fr.25, ll.117-119). Unfortunately, he says, Zeno chose instead to "forget" the Academy (in the person of his teacher Polemo), and this brought him into a fruitless and damaging conflict with Arcesilaus (*id.* ll.83-96). But, much more importantly, once the Stoics had set up in opposition to the Academy — and, in Numenius' eyes, very much *because* the Stoics had set up in opposition to the Academy — they condemned themselves to a perpetual state of internal wrangling and disagreement. As he says (fr.24, ll.37-38):

τὰ δὲ τῶν Στωϊκῶν ἐστασίασται, ἀρξάμενα ἀπὸ τῶν  
ἀρχόντων καὶ μηδέπω τελευτῶντα καὶ νῦν.

In conclusion, we can say that Plutarch attacks the Stoics because of their secession from Plato. This inevitably led to difficulties in their philosophy, something which is especially clear from their ethics: in the first place the ethical absolutism they adopt is just absurd (and this, perhaps is where the attack of the *de communibus notitiis* comes in). When they realise the absurdity — as their own attacks on Aristo show that they do — they qualify the absolutism with an ethics which may on its own be more

<sup>13</sup>Numenius fr. 24-28 [des Places], from Eusebius *praep. ev.* XIV.4,16 - 9,4 [727a - 739d].

reasonable (it is, after all, more Platonic), but which effectively constitutes a completely different and therefore contradictory philosophy to their original and characterising absolutism. Hence the *de Stoic. rep.*

I want to consider the *de primo frigido* briefly in this appendix, because it is a work that looks as if it will be fundamentally problematic for my whole thesis. I have wanted to show that Plutarch's Scepticism is a positive tool which forms the underpinning of his Platonism, and not a negative one which might challenge it, and yet the conclusion of the *de prim. frig.* (955C) appears to be that we should suspend our judgement altogether — and that over a question for which, as we shall see, there is a perfectly reasonable and uncontentious Platonic answer.<sup>14</sup>

What I want to suggest is that the conclusion of the *de prim. frig.* does not recommend ἐποχή to us in the way suggested by most commentators — at least, Plutarch does not say that "suspension of judgement is the only course open to us". Rather, what Plutarch does is to advise Favorinus, the addressee of the work, that 'If none of the options strike him as plausible, then he should consider the matter 'unclear' [ἀδηλον] and suspend his own judgement on the issue.'

Ταῦτ' ὦ Φαβωρίνε, τοῖς εἰρημένοις ὑφ' ἐτέρων παράβαλλε·  
κᾶν μήτε λείπηται τῇ πιθανότητι μήθ' ὑπερέχη πολύ,  
χαίρειν ἕα τὰς δόξας, τὸ ἐπέχειν ἐν τοῖς ἀδήλοις τοῦ  
συγκατατίθεσθαι φιλοσοφώτερον ἡγούμενος.

<sup>14</sup>This negative reading of the *de primo frigido* is almost universal: see, for example, J. Schröter, *Plutarchs Stellung zur Skepsis*, p.21; and, among more recent commentators, cf. P. Donini, 'Lo scetticismo academico, Aristotele e l'unità della tradizione platonica secondo Plutarco' in *Storiografia e dossografia nella filosofia antica*, ed. G. Cambiano, (Torino 1986), pp.203-226, esp. 209-212; J. Dillon, "'Orthodoxy" and "Eclecticism": Middle Platonists and Neo-Pythagoreans', in *The Question of "Eclecticism"* edd. J. Dillon and A. A. Long (University of California Press 1988), pp.103-126, esp. p.107 note 9. Cf. also Glucker (*Antiochus and the Late Academy* pp.287-288), who argues that the work has an Aristotelian rather than an Academic air to it.

Plutarch does not say that there is no plausible option, or that he doesn't take a stand; all he does is to advise us to suspend judgement if his own arguments were "neither less nor much more plausible" than those put forward in favour of alternative views.

None of this tackles the original point, and to an extent it only begs the questions of whether Plutarch believes there to be a plausible answer and, if he does, how he can think that Favorinus might arrive at the same conclusion after reading the *de prim. frig.* In order to answer these questions, we need to look more closely at the way in which Plutarch has set up the arguments of the work, to see (as we have done with the *de Stoic. rep.*) whether there are any grounds for thinking that one position emerges as more plausible than the others.

There is one rather striking feature of the structure of the *de prim. frig.*, and that is the tremendous imbalance in the amount of time devoted to the claims each element has to being the *primum frigidum*. Having started with air at 948D-949F, Plutarch goes on to devote twice as much space to water (949F-952C). In this time he is able not only to put forward the positive arguments in favour of water, but also to destroy the arguments adduced in favour of air, and defuse the (few) pre-emptive arguments attempted against water in the previous section. The section on water is followed by an even longer section devoted to earth: 952D-955C, three times as long as the original section on air. By this time, air is no longer treated as a serious competitor at all. Water, significantly, is handled not by pitting counter-arguments against its claim to be cold, but by the simple expediency of showing that earth is, in fact, *colder*.

On the basis of this simple analysis, we might easily be left with the impression that earth had emerged the winner, followed by water a close second. Air, we might conclude, has no real claim to be intrinsically cold at all.

The cause of air is associated throughout with the name of the Stoics, the cause of water with Empedocles and Strato: see 948CD. The "someone else" who lays out the arguments for earth is clearly Plutarch himself. This means that, according to my interpretation, it is Plutarch's arguments which win the debate. What is more, his support of earth tends to confirm the doctrine in Plato's *Timaeus*, widely reflected in Platonist writing, according to which it is precisely earth that is principally cold. According to Plato himself, water has the highest propensity for coldness after earth, while air, far from being cold, is actually supposed along with fire to partake of heat.<sup>15</sup> Among later Platonists, Atticus puts the matter most concisely at fr.5,22-24 [des Places]: εἰ μὲν γὰρ θερμόν, ἢ πῦρ ἢ ἀήρ· εἰ δὲ ψυχρόν, ὕδωρ ἢ γῆ. Cf. also Macrobius in *Somnium Scipionis* I.6,26: *terra et sicca et frigida...aer umectus et calidus est...*

So in the *de prim. frig.* Plutarch does argue both sides of a tricky question: but, while allowing that we may not be convinced, he at least does seem to think that one of the answers — his own, the Platonic answer — is 'much more plausible' than the rest. (If it should be objected that the phrase 'much more plausible' (955C) — which is a precondition for our assent to one side of the argument — sounds precisely like a requirement that Plutarch thinks will never be met, we should compare *quaest conviv.* 700B, where another controversial Platonic opinion — the thesis that drink passes through the lungs — is described in exactly these terms as being 'by far the most likely solution': εἰκότα γὰρ μακροῦ.) It cannot be denied that the *de prim. frig.* has been set up to *appear* more Sceptical than this; but there is a simple explanation, and that is that, although Plutarch wants to show us the way towards sharing his opinions, he does not

<sup>15</sup>Cf. *Timaeus* 54b5-56c7 and 61d5-62a5: earth will be cold by the same reasoning by which fire must be hot.

wish to teach them by his αὐτῶς ἔφα as true dogmata. That this is so clearly the case in the *de prim. frig.* adds credibility to my suggestion that something very similar is going on in the *de Stoic. rep.*

### III

### Source and Composition.

In section II it became evident that the purpose of the *de Stoic. rep.* and the form of argument used in it were features which, as such, could not be traced back to precedents in the New Academy. However it is beyond dispute that the *de Stoic. rep.* contains a great deal of Academic material, and this raises an intriguing question concerning the sources Plutarch was working with, and his method of composition on the basis of them. One urgent need which an examination of this question will help to satisfy is an understanding of the structural principles according to which he has marshalled his arguments. It is not immediately apparent that any such principles exist; but even if this turns out to be the case, it will only be through an understanding of the way in which Plutarch uses his sources that we could come to know the fact.

The essential originality of Plutarch's presentation of his material is occasionally obscured by an argument which is based on an identical, or near-identical, accusation of self-contradiction that we know of in Academic literature; indeed, we have seen that one of the most fundamental of all the ethical contradictions — viz. the supposed tension between an 'absolutism' and a more Platonic form of ethics — had been familiar in the Academy long before Plutarch. But such cases are in the minority, and most of Plutarch's contradictions involved a far greater reworking of the Academic material they drew on. A good example is chapter 41, in which Plutarch claims that Chrysippus contradicts his own notion that fire is the essential characteristic of life, and which very clearly contains material familiar to us from an Academic argument reported at Cicero *de natura deorum* III.35-37. But in Cicero the argument is not that the Stoic characterisation of life as fire is somehow *inconsistent*; the point is rather more simply

that it is just *implausible*. So in cases like this we have to say that Plutarch has reworked the material found in his Academic source, and turned it into a completely new argument, appropriate to the point *he* wants to make.

One thing that should be immediately clear from all of this is that Plutarch's source could not itself have been an Academic collection of Stoic self-contradictions — something that Sandbach, for example, has suggested.<sup>1</sup> It could not even have happened that Plutarch was relying on an Academic *Zwischenquelle* that had performed the transformation of old material into new contradictions for him. The only reason why someone would rework the material in this way would be if they wanted to give it a new polemical message; but the message contained in the arguments of the *de Stoic. rep.* is (as I have shown in section II) a specifically Platonising one, suggesting that a source comprising of contradictions suitable to Plutarch's purpose could not have been written in the New Academy, and hardly before Plutarch's own period at all. In fact, as we saw before, there is quite generally no evidence of any systematic interest in self-contradiction as a polemical motif before Plutarch and, although we do know of a handful of works in the later Academic/Platonist tradition which treated of Stoic self-contradictions, we find none that could have been written before the *de Stoic. rep.* The closest parallel to Plutarch's work of which we know anything is Calvenus Taurus' book "On the inconsistencies of the Stoics with themselves and with Platonists" (*N.A.* XII.5,5), and not only was this written after the *de Stoic. rep.*, but its author was someone in

<sup>1</sup>See his 'Plutarch on the Stoics', *Classical Quarterly* 34 (1940) pp.20-25, esp. 20. Cf. also M. Baldassari, *Plutarco: Gli Opuscoli contra gli Stoici* (Terento 1976) vol.I, pp.42-43. Babut gives an independent argument against the thesis (see *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme* pp.27-28). He points out that, although the *de Stoic. rep.* shares a good deal of its material with the *de comm. not.*, the way in which the two works present the material is very different, a fact that argues strongly against the idea that the immediate source for both could have been essentially constituted by a collection of Stoic self-contradictions.

Plutarch's immediate philosophical circle. We do not need to conclude from this that Taurus actually based his project on the *de Stoic. rep.* but, taking all the evidence together, it seems reasonable to suppose that the two works are the direct product of a school of thought which had not been possible earlier in the history of the Academy.<sup>2</sup>

Given that Plutarch's source could not have been a book of ready-made contradictions, we need to consider where he might have found the material he uses to construct his own arguments. If we assume (as many commentators have done) that the endpoint of our *Quellenforschung* is the discovery of a single book, we know at least that it will be an Academic work we are looking for. The question then is what the work looked like, and what period it was from. Von Arnim has argued that Plutarch's source must have been a Clitomachean account of the arguments of Carneades, largely on the grounds that Plutarch mentions no-one later than Clitomachus' contemporary Antipater (see *S.V.F.* I, *praef.* pp.XII-XIV). However, this claim becomes rather weak on inspection: it is for a start unthinkable that Plutarch would have concentrated his attack on the Older Stoics at all if their arguments were not still felt to hold force; and given that they did, why should he compromise the *gravitas* of his work by attacking younger Stoics whose enduring fame and philosophical importance was not yet established?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>We also know that Galen intended to write a book on the self-contradictions of Chrysippus — see *P.H.P.* IV.4, p.250,3-5 [De Lacy]; and it has occurred to a number of people that Plutarch might have been Galen's immediate source (von Arnim rejects the idea at *S.V.F.* I, *praef.* pp.XIII-XIV; T. Tieleman has more recently supported it: see *Argument and Refutation in the de Placitis Books II-III* (Utrecht 1992), pp.140-141 with notes 16 and 17). However, although we do know that Galen read Plutarch (cf. *P.H.P.* III.2, p.183,23-24 [De Lacy] = Plutarch fr. 125 [Sandbach]), it is again not necessary to say any more than that Plutarch must have helped to create the philosophical environment in which Galen could pursue a style of philosophy which might lead him to such a project.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Cherniss, Loeb vol. XIII.2, p.397 with note (a). It is worth noting that, even in his own terms, von Arnim's argument should allow someone like Philo of Larissa (who studied with Clitomachus and succeeded him as head of the Academy) to stand as a candidate for Plutarch's source. The fact that he is slightly later makes little difference, since no new Stoic adversaries of note arose between the death of Clitomachus c.110 B.C. and his own death in 84 (excepting Posidonius, whose idiosyncrasy made him an unsuitable target for Plutarch anyway).

Pohlenz criticised von Arnim's hypothesis, and set against it his own suggestion that Plutarch's source was a contemporary book which summarised the *Schulbetrieb* of the Academy (see 'Plutarchs Schriften gegen die Stoiker', *Hermes* 74 (1939) pp.1-33, esp. pp.13 and 26). This hypothesis in turn drew the criticism of Glucker, largely because it implied the late existence of an active Academic school which was contrary to his wider thesis (see *Antiochus and the Late Academy*, esp. pp.276-278). Glucker himself went back to the Clitomachean theory of von Arnim, but with no additional positive arguments.

All of these theories fail to be quite convincing precisely *because* of their tacit assumption that we should expect to find a single book which exhaustively constituted Plutarch's source. In fact, it is fairly clear that, even if we can show that Plutarch used a single Academic work as the *foundation* of his composition, he has supplemented it more or less with material drawn from elsewhere too. This is easiest to show in the case of his citations of Stoicism which (*pace* von Arnim) are certainly not all second-hand to Plutarch himself. As Babut argued, Plutarch often demonstrates knowledge of the context from which his quotations have been taken (see *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme* pp.28-33 and 225-238); and there are cases where we can find even more concrete reasons to suppose that Plutarch must have been personally familiar with the book he is citing. For example, he tells us at one point in the *de comm. not.* that Chrysippus' *περὶ Δικαιοσύνης* is so readily available that it is not worth his while to quote it (*ἔστι πανταχόθεν λαβεῖν* — 1070DE). It is hard to believe after that that he had not read the book himself, and that this personal acquaintance was not the 'source' of at least

some of his many other citations of the book elsewhere (as chapters 12, 13, 15, 17, 32 and 36 of the *de Stoic. rep.*). Again, in the case of the *περὶ τοῦ Δικάζειν*, which he quotes at *de Stoic. rep.* 23, Plutarch tells us that *he* has had access to a work which other people may not find easy to get hold of (see the whole of {31.7-20}):

ἃ δὲ τούτοις πάλιν αὐτὸς ἐξ ἐναντίας εἶρηκεν, οὐχ ὁμοίως  
οὕτως ἐν μέσῳ κείμενα, δι' αὐτῶν παραθήσομαι τῶν ἐκείνου  
λέξεων.

None of this entitles us to assert positively that Plutarch has read *all* of the books he refers to or quotes from: a number of his citations may well have been found in his Academic source (or sources), and we can further suppose that there was a certain corpus of *loci classici* with which he would have been familiar.<sup>4</sup> But he must certainly have read more than von Arnim gave him credit for. Von Arnim argued that, if Plutarch had had access to all of Chrysippus' books, he would not have kept citing the same passages: "nam si omnium librorum thesaurum ad manus habebat, cur ad eosdem semper locos revolvitur?" (*S.V.F.* I, *praef.* p.XIV). We can answer this quite simply by pointing out that some passages are naturally more convenient for quotation than others; but anyway, the very premise of his argument — that Plutarch 'always comes back to the same passages' — is simply not true. Of 107 different citations of Chrysippus in the *de Stoic. rep.*, 8 are repeated in that work, 18 are found also in the *de comm. not.*, and 10

<sup>4</sup>Among these we might be able to identify Chrysippus' claim that the Cosmos is animal, cited from book I of the *περὶ Προνοίας* not only by Plutarch (*de Stoic. rep.* 41), but also by Diogenes Laertius (VII.139 and 142) and Philodemus (cf. *S.V.F.* II.1023). But of course even if I am right to suggest that this was a *locus classicus* of some kind, it does not mean that Plutarch has not read the *περὶ Προνοίας* himself, and we might note that he cites different passages from it at *de Stoic. rep.* 38 and 39.

elsewhere in extant Plutarch. This means that 74% of Chrysippean citations in the *de Stoic. rep.* are, so far as our knowledge of Plutarch goes, unique to that work.

In short, although we have seen that there is very good evidence to suggest that Plutarch *has* read many of the books he refers to, it is not possible to point to a single citation in the *de Stoic. rep.* which we can say with any confidence *must* have been derived from a secondary source. This means that, even if one book played some kind of central role in the composition of the *de Stoic. rep.*, it is impossible to maintain that it was the source of all the material Plutarch uses.

If attempts to pin the source of the *de Stoic. rep.* down to one book have so far failed for want of adequate evidence, it does not become certain that Plutarch's composition was guided by nothing more than his own memory and notes. It is certainly true that Plutarch had a memory, and a good knowledge of the Academy to fill it with. We also know that he made notes — we have at least two references to his 'notebooks' (ὑπομνήματα: see Plutarch *de tranqu. an.* 464F, and, through his spokesman Fundanus, at *de cohib. ira* 457DE). But there is, as yet, no reason to reject altogether the natural suggestion that he relied on a more concrete support than his memory to guide his composition — especially given the ready availability of texts he could have used. And we should not put too much weight on the comprehensiveness of his notebooks. The fact that Plutarch used notebooks tells us nothing more than that his method of working was similar to that of scholars in any other age. His notes may have preserved particular pieces of information for his use, but were almost certainly not the complete works of reference on Academic arguments and Stoic quotations implied by Cherniss (cf. Loeb

XIII.2, pp.398-399). Plutarch himself affects disdain of scholars who make such compilations when he says the following at *de prof. in virt.* 78F:

ἔνιοι δὲ [*scil.* τῶν φιλοσοφεῖν ἀρχομένων] χρείας καὶ  
 ἱστορίας ἀναλεγόμενοι περίασιν, ὥσπερ Ἀνάχαρσις ἔλεγε  
 τῷ νομίσματι τοῦς Ἑλληνας πρὸς οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ τὸ  
 ἀριθμεῖν χρωμένους ὀράν, οὕτω τοῦς λόγους  
 παραριθμούμενοι καὶ παραμετροῦντες, ἄλλο δ' οὐδὲν εἰς  
 ὄνησιν αὐτῶν τιθέμενοι...

So far, then, the evidence has not allowed us to make any but the most basic claims about Plutarch's source. All we can say is that he *may* have relied on a single Academic work as the basis of his composition, one which acted as a guide for his choice and arrangement of arguments; but that if he did he also supplemented it with a much wider fund of material drawn from elsewhere. The only way left for us to get a clearer picture of the nature of Plutarch's source is to examine the rationale behind the way in which he has organised the arguments of the *de Stoic. rep.*, to see if we can infer anything about it on the basis of that. If we discover a structural organisation of material which presupposes a consistent, systematic approach to Stoicism from the standpoint of an identifiable philosophical position *within* Academicism (independently of the colouring given to the material in the *de Stoic. rep.* by Plutarch's own beliefs), then, but then alone, we will be in a position to claim with some confidence that Plutarch was basing himself on a single text — i.e., one which itself displayed these characteristics. In the remainder of this section I want to discuss how such a study might be possible.

As part of his argument concerning the source of the *de Stoic. rep.*, von Arnim appeals to the following principle (*S.V.F. I praef. p.XI*):

Quae vero per librum de repugnantiis regnat ratio ut partim in ordinem res digerantur, partim inordinatae et inconexae relinquuntur, eam a sani scriptoris mente abhorrere iudicamus, qui quidem in tota libri conformatione a se ipse pendeat.

In fact, von Arnim's principle seems to me not to go far enough: we should be able to expect a coherent presentation of material even from a derivative writer. It is even more surprising if a philosophical writer is lacking in this field, given the rather well-defined argument structures of ancient philosophical exposition quite generally — the systematic discussion of topics under the headings of Ethics, Physics and Logic, for example. These, needless to say, would have been even more familiar to Plutarch than they are to us, and it would have required a deliberate decision on his part to write a work which lacked rational structuring at any point: the 'default' option for composition should in no case have been a random layout of arguments.<sup>5</sup> Now it certainly is true that, to the reader, the *de Stoic. rep.* seems to lack any more than a rather sporadic structural

<sup>5</sup>Among those who have thought that Plutarch's intention in the *de Stoic. rep.* is purely negative, there have been some who have argued that the polemical force of the work lies more or less wholly in the *number* of arguments brought forward, which is supposed to blind the reader to the question of how good they are individually. These commentators tend to assume that it is irrelevant to search for a coherent structure. Cf. e.g. Giesen, *De Plutarchi contra Stoicos disputationibus*, esp. pp.111-112 ("magis rebus colligendis quam intelligendis intentus [sc. Plutarchus est]"); Ziegler, *Plutarchos von Chaironeia*, coll. 119.51 - 120.9; &c. However, this would be a surprising approach to the composition of a serious work — even a purely negative one. In fact it never occurred to the most radical of Sceptics to write philosophical attacks that lacked rational structure — Sextus Empiricus, for example, happily follows the Dogmatists' division of philosophy as an organising principle of his work, even though he will not commit himself to a belief in the *legitimacy* of such divisions: οἷς ἀκολουθήσαντες ἀδοξάστως... (*Pyrr. hypot.* II.13). I, of course, want to argue that the *de Stoic. rep.* is not a purely 'negative' work at all; and if I am right to suggest that Plutarch is trying to assert his Platonism against the Stoics, then it only becomes all the more unlikely that he would fail to make use of some definite structural pattern in the composition of his work.

arrangement; so I want to consider the possibility that there is a structure employed by Plutarch at the stage of composition which was never *meant* to direct the way in which a reader approached the work.<sup>6</sup>

So far, we have been able to say nothing about Plutarch's source other than that it consisted in one way or another of standard Academic arguments whose material Plutarch was able to use in the construction of his contradictions. This is not much to go on but it still allows us to suggest one natural way in which the source (whatever it was) might have helped shape the composition of the *de Stoic. rep.* Quite simply, we can say that, whether his source was a single book or a whole tradition, Plutarch could have organised the presentation of his contradictions according to the subject area where the material they are based on was originally found. Contradictions based on material drawn from Academic attacks on Stoic theology will be grouped together, for example. If this simple hypothesis proves fruitful in suggesting a structure according to which Plutarch was working, it will have one particular advantage. While it will allow us to make sense of Plutarch's creative process, and clear him of all suspicion of being a literary 'madman' (to use von Arnim's phrase), it will not imply that we should be able to see a prescriptive framework for the *reader*; indeed, it will even explain why it is that no such structure is consistently apparent at all. Although many of the arguments against a particular area of doctrine do tackle notions central to the characterisation of the doctrine (as, for example, many arguments against Stoic theology attack the Stoic conception of god as such), many more attack consequences or assumptions of the

<sup>6</sup>Pohlenz, Sandbach and Cherniss have all offered accounts based on the assumption that to say a work has a structure is to say that it was supposed to be *read* in a certain way. (Sandbach gives a useful tabulated summary of Pohlenz' analysis at *art. cit.* p.20, and presents his own *ib.* p.21; for Cherniss, see Loeb vol. XIII.2 pp.396-397.) Together they prove only that such an approach to the *de Stoic. rep.* is not possible, partly because of the great *διαφωνία* which emerges from their several theories; and partly because each attempt individually is so blatantly *ad hoc* as to be fundamentally implausible.

doctrine. So, for example, one important argument against Stoic theology is directed against the Stoics' claim that life is characterised by heat/fire, because on the basis of this claim they argue for the life, and so the divinity, of the Cosmos as a whole (see Cicero *de nat. de.* III.35-37 with II.23-32). If Plutarch wanted to show that the Stoic characterisation of life as fire is self-contradictory, he will most naturally place the contradiction in a broadly 'theological' grouping, just because the Academic material he is basing his argument on itself comes from a theological context.

The theological example is not randomly chosen, since chapters 31-40, which contain arguments of an obviously theological content, constitute one of most extended passages in the *de Stoic. rep.* to have a readily apparent thematic unity.<sup>7</sup> I want to suggest that it is no coincidence that the very next chapter (41) contains contradictions based around the Stoics' use of the concept of heat to explain life: this contradiction is placed where it is because the doctrine it attacks was originally attacked by the Academy in a theological context. The close correspondence with Cicero *de nat. de.* III.35-36 guarantees that Plutarch (or his source) has this in mind: Plutarch even preserves for us the original Greek of an etymology (ψυχὴ from ψῦξις {48.7-8}) which we find at *de nat. de.* III.36 (*animus* from *anima*). If, as I argue later on, chapters 42-45 can be accounted for in a similar way,<sup>8</sup> we only have chapters 46 and 47 before the end of the work. But these, being about Fate in general, and the possibility of human moral culpability in the face of divine determinism in particular, can easily be given a

<sup>7</sup>Even Pohlenz and Sandbach agree on this. Both go on to identify chapters 41-45 as concerning "miscellaneous inconsistencies in physics", and chapters 46-47 as a discussion of Fate. See Pohlenz *art. cit.* pp.12-13; Sandbach *art. cit.* p.21.

<sup>8</sup>See section IV.8. In short, 42 and 43 can be brought in on the basis of similar arguments against Chrysippus' demonstration of god as πνεῦμα (a kind of *airy* fire, or fiery *air*) which replaced Cleanthes' fire; and 44 and 45 on the basis of arguments, of which we also have reflexes, against the Stoics' proof of god as a kind of world-ἕξις.

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theological provenance. So, without making any implausible claims for how the work is to be *read*, and by supposing an approach to its composition which would actually be the most natural, it is thus almost immediately possible to explain the last seventeen chapters of the *de Stoic. rep.* as a coherent grouping dictated at the stage of composition by the structure of Plutarch's source. And it is not irrelevant to note that this constitutes roughly one third of the total work, which is just what we would expect if we were looking for something along the lines of a traditional tripartite subject division (but see further below, section V).

In the discussion that follows in section IV, it is my aim to show how each of Plutarch's arguments reflects his own Platonist stance (according to the argument of section II); but I also want to show how the presence and positioning of each argument is to be explained by the original position of the topic it dealt with (and the material it used to deal with it) in Plutarch's Academic source. In this way we can build up a picture of the structure of the basic source on which Plutarch is relying in the hope that, at the end, we will be able to say something more positive about its nature. To anticipate the conclusion of section V, it does seem to me that Plutarch has relied on a single core text as his source, and what is more that this text is one that displayed an identifiably Philonian outlook (that is to say, it had a structure and approach which presupposed the position of positive Scepticism — actually rather similar to Plutarch's own — held by Philo of Larissa in the days before he wrote his so-called 'Roman Books'). However, we are a long way off the demonstration of this; and to start with we need to establish that Plutarch has composed the *de Stoic. rep.* with any sort of structure in mind at all.

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Before starting on the discussion itself, the following methodological caveats should be noted.

Sometimes, as we have seen for example in the case of chapter 41, the approach that I have outlined in this section will require a great deal of comparison between details of Plutarch's arguments and other Academic material we know of, and inferences which take us a long way away from the literal point of the contradiction under consideration; at other times the work of reconstruction will involve very little effort or sophistication of argument — as, for example, the demonstration that chapters 2-6 reflect a political *topos* in Plutarch's source. In any case, it should be clear by now that I have no primary interest in discussing the problems raised by the contradictions as they stand. Indeed I shall, for the most part, be taking a more or less straightforward reading of them for granted. This is not because I think them somehow less worthwhile; but my hope is that, at the end of the whole study, when we know something of their original context, we will be much better equipped to come back and examine them in their own right, and to shed new light on the textual problems and details of Stoicism which I shall for the most part be passing over.

Something else which needs comment is my use of other sources of Platonism in the course of discussing Plutarch. One of the frustrating things about a study of Plutarch's philosophy — and, indeed, one of the reasons why the *de Stoic. rep.* should be taken much more seriously as a source for our knowledge of it — is that, although we have a large corpus of his *Moralia* surviving, we have very little by way of explicit statement of his positive beliefs. In the nature of what I am trying to do, it is quite often important to supply a suggestion as to what we might *expect* Plutarch's belief to have

been, when we have no direct evidence for what it was. Where this happens, my approach is as follows. I claim, for a start, that Plutarch attacks the Stoics only at points where, in his eyes, they diverge from Plato (see section II). This is something that can be demonstrated in many places where we do know what Plutarch believed, and extended as a hypothesis to the rest of the text. After that, it seems reasonable to look to see what other, near-contemporary Platonists were saying and, if this is broadly consistent with our view of Plutarch and his argument with the Stoics, to accept it cautiously as a probable representation of Plutarch's view. In doing this, I make no judgement on the homogeneity of contemporary Platonism (which was probably not very great); and I do not wish to suggest that I think that the philosophy of (e.g.) Numenius is likely on the whole to be as close to Plutarch's as that of (e.g.) Atticus. But for my immediate purposes such issues are largely irrelevant until there is a real conflict of possible attributions of thought to Plutarch over one particular issue — something which does not, in fact, happen very much. My aim is simply to make the best practical use of rather sparse material, and I am unapologetic for an occasional lack of subtlety which this results in.

Finally, a minor point which may need explaining is my apparent commitment to the traditional chapter-divisions of the *de Stoic. rep.* Although I recognise that these divisions represent a modern analysis of the arguments, it does seem to me that they make very good sense as a description of the text.<sup>9</sup> So, although I do not wish to appear

<sup>9</sup>The chapter-headings standardly used today seem to appear for the first time in Wytttenbach's edition, of which volume V.1 (containing the *de Stoic. rep.*) was published in 1800. There had been previous (and much less successful) attempts, of which the earliest I know of is a later addition to the fifteenth century MS g (Vaticanus Palatinus 170). Cf. also the 1614 (Paris) edition of Amyot's translation, *Les Oeuvres Morales et Philosophiques de Plutarque*.

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to commit myself to the legitimacy of the chapter divisions *per se*, and my arguments as to the structure of the work do not depend on them, nevertheless I very rarely have any sort of quarrel with them and, if only for pragmatic reasons, I have no hesitation in describing the structure of the *de Stoic. rep.* by reference to them.

## The Introduction.

The account of the *de Stoic. rep.* I have developed in the introductory chapters of this study suggests that it is a unique work, highly derivative in the material it draws on, but completely original in its purpose of showing that the Stoics fall into self-contradiction where they depart from Plato. It is hard to suppose that Plutarch could have written such a work without a suitable introduction, and in this section I want to consider how chapter 1 might fulfil such a role.

The opening words of the *de Stoic. rep.* ("Πρῶτον ἀξιῶ...") certainly lead us to expect that we are being given a programmatic introduction, one in which Plutarch will set out the principles according to which the work has been written. What follows is more obscure, but I want to argue that full sense can be made of it if we take it to be drawing attention to the fundamental contradiction which underlies the whole of the *de Stoic. rep.*, and which is familiar to us from section II. I don't claim that this is immediately clear to the reader; but I want to suggest that this is ultimately the only satisfactory reading of the text.

The first sentence of the *de Stoic. rep.* is as follows: Πρῶτον ἀξιῶ τὴν τῶν δογμάτων ὁμολογίαν ἐν τοῖς βίοις θεωρεῖσθαι. This is generally taken to be saying simply that Plutarch wishes to see a consistency between the lives and actions of the Stoics.<sup>1</sup> After all, it is the absence of just such a consistency that seems to be illustrated in chapter 2

<sup>1</sup>See e.g. Amyot, translation *ad loc.*, Pohlenz, 'Plutarchs Schriften gegen die Stoiker' pp.7-8; Babut, *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme*, p.24; Cherniss, Loeb vol. XIII.2, p.372; &c.

(where the Stoics advocate political involvement but fail to become politically involved themselves); and it is a charge to which we know the Stoics quite generally were susceptible: *aliter loqueris, aliter vivis*, says Seneca's imagined detractor (*de vita beata* 18.1). However, this way of taking the sentence does not do full justice to its peculiarity. Plutarch does not say "I expect to see consistency *between* doctrines and lives;" he says this:

"I expect to see the consistency *of* doctrines *in* lives."

This statement raises all sorts of other issues as well. In the first place, why should we assume that Plutarch thinks that the Stoics *do* have a 'consistency of doctrines'? It is unlikely that he does, given what we saw in section II — given also the fact that the vast majority of the contradictions in the *de Stoic. rep.* aim at showing precisely that they do not. The point — or points — that Plutarch is making must be as follows:

(a) *If* a system has a consistency of doctrines (ἢ τῶν δογμάτων ὁμολογία),

then it should be possible to confirm the fact (θεωρεῖσθαι) by seeing that philosophers who adopt these doctrines

(b) all have a consistent mode of life (ὁμολογία ἐν τοῖς βίοις)...

(c) ...which is consistent *by virtue of* their adoption of these doctrines (ἢ τῶν δογμάτων ὁμολογία ἐν τοῖς βίοις).

This immediately suggests several questions immanent in Plutarch's statement, out of which the question of the consistency *between* doctrines and lives will emerge only as one concern:

- (a) Are the Stoics' doctrines consistent (among themselves)?
  - (b) Are the Stoics' lives consistent (in themselves)?
- If so:
- (c) Is the consistency of their lives a result of following consistent doctrines?

These questions in turn presuppose a wide range of ways in which inconsistency is possible. Question (b) in particular raises some rather complex issues. What, after all, does consistency 'ἐν τοῖς βίοις' mean? In the first place, of course, it means *acting* consistently or, perhaps, doing things for consistent reasons (quite apart from the philosophical beliefs one might hold). This must be important to Plutarch, because it was so clearly important to the Stoics: they defined the end for man as τὸ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν — originally, and significantly, *without* any qualifications (D.L. VII.87). Part of what Zeno must have meant by this was that one's actions should in themselves be consistent.

However, matters do become more complicated because, after all, one's choice of philosophy and the beliefs it leads to one holding, is itself a very important part of one's βίος. Plutarch emphasises this at *de Stoic. rep.* 1 {2.5}, where he calls philosophy a 'νόμος ἀύθαρτος καὶ ἴδιος'. Again, this corresponds to an important concern in the Stoa, as is apparent in the expansions which were made of the Stoic definition of the end: after Zeno it became, for one standard example, τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν: 'to live consistently, and to do that *in accordance with* nature'. But 'nature' in this context implies a philosophical theory — in particular, a theory of what sort of thing nature is. The consistency one displays in life thus *includes* reference to the

philosophical beliefs one holds. To act inconsistently with one's philosophy just is to display an inconsistency in life.

Question (b) can thus be expanded into (at least) two requirements: (i) a consistency of *actions*; and (ii) a consistency between actions and doctrine. We can now take questions (a) and (c) together, and make sense of them along rather similar lines. The demand which gave rise to question (a) was for the doctrines of a philosophy to be consistent (*sc.* in themselves); but question (c) can be interpreted as a requirement for doctrines to be consistent in another kind of way: consistent *with* real life. What it actually says is that we should expect to see philosophers' lives consistent *owing to* their following consistent doctrines; but this demands an explanation of how it might be that a philosopher could follow consistent doctrines and still have an inconsistent life. The answer is that this is possible if the doctrines rely, for example, on untrue premises so that they fail themselves to correspond with life. Anyone trying to follow such a philosophy will thus fail in practice to live a consistent life.

This gives us four kinds of inconsistency of which Plutarch might be looking to accuse the Stoics (it will become apparent later that, if there are any other kinds, they are not relevant to Plutarch's immediate purpose in the *de Stoic. rep.*). These can be tabulated as follows:

1. Doctrinal inconsistency:
  - (i) inconsistency of doctrines *per se*;
  - (ii) inconsistency between doctrines and life (doctrines untrue).
  
2. Inconsistency in lives:
  - (i) inconsistency of actions;
  - (ii) inconsistency between actions and doctrines.

In order to see how these issues are relevant and important for Plutarch, we shall need to see what emerges from chapters 2-6, which complement chapter 1 by the illustrations (and demonstrations) of its argument they provide. But even before doing this, it is possible to make suggestions about the direction we might expect Plutarch's argument to take. We know, partly from the character of the remaining chapters of the *de Stoic. rep.*, and partly from the considerations raised in section II, that the basic *demonstrandum* of the *de Stoic. rep.* is to be the *doctrinal* inconsistency of the Stoics — point (1) above: and in fact Plutarch wants to demonstrate both kinds of doctrinal inconsistency, 1(i) and 1(ii). There are, again, various ways in which Plutarch could go about showing this, but given that, in chapters 1-6 at least, he is keen to prove the point through an examination of the Stoics' lives, there are two ways that would be most straightforward and effective. In order to show that 1(i) applies (that the Stoics' doctrines are inconsistent among themselves) he could show that the Stoics' actions were inconsistent with their doctrines (as 2(ii)), and were so *whatever they did*. This would prove the doctrines were so self-contradictory as not to allow consistency with them. In order to demonstrate 1(ii) — the inapplicability of doctrines to lives — he could show that, even insofar as the Stoics' actions *were* consistent with their doctrines, they still displayed an internal inconsistency (cf. 2(i)). In this case, he could say that the Stoics' actions were inconsistent *just because* they accurately reflected an inconsistency in doctrine. As we shall see, it is important for Plutarch that both of these arguments hold, and in what follows I want to look at how he sets about demonstrating them.

That chapters 2-6 function as illustrations pertaining to the argument in chapter 1 in the way I suggested is fairly clear. The link between chapters 1 and 2 is particularly strong:

ἐν δὲ τοῖς βίοις at {2.12} picks up ἐν τοῖς βίοις at {2.1-2}, for example. But it is also clear that chapter 2 forms one limb of a dilemma with chapter 3 (which starts: ὅσοι γε μὴν ἄλλοι...). Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 all go together, as I shall claim, so that this dilemma articulates the whole of the argument contained in these chapters. In order to see what this argument says, we thus need to consider each part of the dilemma.

In chapter 2, the inconsistency Plutarch presents is that the Stoics advocate political activity, but fail themselves to get involved in politics. This is fairly straightforwardly a case of 2(ii) in the scheme above: i.e., it is a case of the Stoics' actions failing to be consistent with their doctrines. (There is, by the way, no overt guidance on the further question of *why* the Stoics ignore their doctrines in this way — whether, for example, this is a case where the doctrine was *impossible* to follow for some reason. So the assumption must be that here there just *is* no good reason.)

Chapters 3, 5 and 6 are rather more interesting (I shall consider chapter 4 separately). The contradiction in chapter 3 is that those Stoics who *do* become politically active contradict their doctrinal belief that conventional political institutions are not 'real' and, in the 'true' (i.e. Stoic) sense of the word, are not politically valid at all. (For the theory of the 'Megalopolis' on which all of this depends, see section IV.2.) This is amplified in chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 5 Plutarch shows that to be involved in conventional politics similarly requires adopting a positive attitude towards wealth, reputation &c., treating them *as if* they are good although Stoic ethical theory does not allow that they could *be* good. In chapter 6 it is religious institutions with which the Stoics are involved despite their doctrine which says that they are worthless.

I called these chapters ‘more interesting’ than chapter 2 because they all allow — and perhaps demand — at least two understandings of quite what the nature of the Stoics’ inconsistency is. In the first place, Plutarch certainly presents the matter as a contradiction between actions and doctrine (2(ii) again) — cf. {4,1-2}: ἐναντιοῦνται τοῖς αὐτῶν δόγμασι —; the Stoics actually take seriously things which their doctrine dismisses as invalid.

But there is a second way of taking this kind of inconsistency. We could say that the Stoics *are* acting consistently with their doctrines (both in getting politically involved — cf. chapter 2 — and also in believing that political institutions are invalid); but that in doing so, their *actions* are made inconsistent (2(i) above). The ambiguity inherent in these chapters comes out in Plutarch’s summary at the end of chapter 3, where he says: "ὥστε καὶ πολιτεύομενοι μάχονται" ({2.8}). This could mean that the Stoics contradict their doctrines when they get involved in politics, but it could also mean that the nature of their political involvement is itself inconsistent.

I have not so far considered chapter 4, whose argument does not so clearly follow the pattern of 3, 5 and 6. However, I want to suggest that it can only be understood if it is considered in terms of exactly the same ambiguity.

On the face of it, chapter 4, like 3, 5 and 6, certainly puts forward the argument that Stoics’ actions were, of themselves, inconsistent. In particular, Zeno and Cleanthes acted inconsistently in valuing and retaining the citizenship of their home cities, but moving away and living in Athens. As Plutarch says (at {4.14-15}): πολλήν δὲ μάχην καὶ παράλογον ἔχει. However, this interpretation is not even superficially satisfying for chapter 4: in particular, it applies only to Zeno and Cleanthes (not, as Plutarch tells us, to Chrysippus, for example). And, unlike in chapters 3, 5 and 6, the inconsistency

does not on this reading depend on beliefs being held which are essentially Stoic. However, it turns out to be the case that we can relate the inconsistency in chapter 4 to the Stoics' doctrinal beliefs — in particular (and we have been considering this anyway), to the Stoic theory of the Megalopolis. There is a lot that is controversial about this theory, but one thing that is certain is that the Stoics believed the Megalopolis to be the *only true city* (cf. *S.V.F.* III.327). It follows from this that the Stoics will think that the only 'true' form of citizenship is citizenship of the Megalopolis, and the only 'valid' form of patriotism, patriotism towards the Megalopolis. With this background, we can construct two interpretations of chapter 4 which work exactly in parallel with the readings we have seen to be immanent in chapters 3, 5 and 6.

The first thing we can say is that Zeno and Cleanthes may, in a certain sense, be contradicting their philosophy after all. By suggesting that loyalty to one's [conventional] home city is important, they are flying in the face of a theory which says precisely that it is irrelevant.

We can go on from this to revive the accusation that the Stoics display an inconsistency of actions as well. We have seen that chapter 4 suggests this point even without reference being needed to particular Stoic beliefs; but now we can suggest a version which will be much more like the one we have seen in chapters 3, 5 and 6. Plutarch may think that the Stoics' patriotism towards their home cities is of itself inconsistent just because of beliefs they hold that cities are not politically 'valid'. Their move to Athens is not *per se* problematic, and the Stoics think of themselves as Citizens of the World anyway; but it sits uneasily with their insistent loyalty to their mother cities.

If we consider chapters 3-6 under both of their readings as the second part of an argument with chapter 2, then we end up with two versions of the dilemma which we saw must exist. One interpretation was this:

When the Stoics do one thing, their actions are inconsistent with one part  
of their doctrine; [§2 : 2(ii)]  
but when they do the opposite, their actions become inconsistent with  
another part of their doctrine. [§§3-6 : 2(ii)]

Of course, the conclusion that emerges from this is that the Stoics' doctrines must themselves be inconsistent (cf. 1(i)).

The other reading looks like this:

*Either* the Stoics' actions are inconsistent with their doctrines; [§2 : 2(ii)]  
*or* the Stoics' lives are consistent with their doctrines, but internally  
inconsistent. [§§3-6 : 2(i)]

From this we can also draw the conclusion that the Stoics' philosophy is inconsistent — this time in the sense of 1(ii): that is, since consistency with Stoicism leads to inconsistency in life, it must be the case that Stoic doctrine itself fails to reflect consistently what is true about life.

The co-existence of these two readings may seem unnecessarily complicated, but the complication is greater in exposition than in understanding. And in fact we can show that the two forms of the dilemma I reconstructed do, when taken together, perfectly reflect Plutarch's understanding of the fundamental inconsistency in Stoicism, which

comes about in the first place (as he thinks) precisely through the Stoics' attempts to reconcile their philosophy with practical exigencies. As we saw in section II, what, in the field of ethics at least, marks Stoicism out as a different system from Platonism is the Stoics' claim that *only* virtue is good. Plato was wrong, they say, to allow that health &c. could be good as well (cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 15 {19.4-10}). The problem with this (as Plutarch sees it) is that, taken literally, this philosophical claim *cannot be translated into action*. In itself it might be a perfectly consistent claim — and in fact Cicero says that Aristo, who took this doctrine at face value, did hold a consistent philosophy: see *Acad.* II.130. But such a philosophy cannot be translated into action (Cicero, *de fin.* IV.78). Cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 5 {4.24-25}, where Plutarch says this: τὰ δόγματα ταῖς χρεῖαις ἀνάρμοστα καὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν — which could mean, as we saw, that Stoic doctrines *are not* found in conformity with their actions; but it might also mean that they *could not be*. This is the polemical substance behind the first reading we were able to make of *de Stoic. rep.* 3-6: the Stoics did not follow their doctrines in practice because, if *only* virtue is good (and only the Megalopolis a true city &c.), then it makes no sense to live *as if* 'reputation and health' are good (and *as if* the conventional political and religious institutions, which rely on this belief, are valid).

The Stoics — that is, the 'orthodox' Stoics, which excludes Aristo — recognise this difficulty, and they try to meet it. They qualify their original statement by saying that health &c. are not *good*, but they are 'preferable' (προηγμένα). However, there is then a question of what it means for something to be 'preferable'; and it turns out that what the Stoics mean is that when something is 'preferable' it is *as if* it is good. But for Plutarch this is as much as to say that 'preferable' is *practically speaking* just 'good' under another name. Cf. the whole of *de comm. not.* 26 but especially 1071C. If

προηγμένα are *not* effectively ἀγαθά (Plutarch says), then the following absurdity results:

ὡς γὰρ εἰ τοξεύοντα φαίη τις οὐχὶ πάντα ποιεῖν τὰ παρ' αὐτὸν ἔνεκα τοῦ βαλεῖν τὸν σκοπὸν, ἀλλ' ἔνεκα τοῦ πάντα ποιῆσαι τὰ παρ' αὐτόν, αἰνίγμασιν ὅμοια καὶ τεράστια δόξειεν ἂν περαίνειν...

So the Stoics' attempt to meet the inconsistency *between* philosophy and life has simply resulted in the inconsistency being codified *in* their philosophy. Insofar as the Stoics follow their doctrine consistently (as Plutarch can argue) they thus find themselves adopting in practice a wide discrepancy between attitude and action. This is just the interpretation of chapters 3-6 which emerged in the second reading of the dilemma.

What Plutarch wants to end up by saying, of course, is that the Stoics' *actions* would be perfectly reasonable, if only they were performed in the framework of a philosophy which gave a true account of what the world is like. As it is, their philosophy misrepresents the moral environment, and leads to reasonable actions only through a great deal of artificiality and (of course) self-contradiction. Cf. esp. *de profectibus in virtute* 75F-76A where Plutarch says this of the Stoics:

οἱ δὲ μὴ τιθέμενοι τὰ δόγματα πρὸς τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀλλὰ τὰ πράγματα πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτῶν ὑποθέσεις ὁμολογεῖν μὴ πεφυκότα καταβιαζόμενοι κ.τ.λ.

For Plutarch, the philosophy which represents the world correctly, without 'forcing' it into an artificial theoretical framework, is Platonism; and, as we have seen in section II,

what he wants to say in the end is that the Stoics' fundamental error was precisely to reject the Platonic tradition. If they had not done this, then their *actions* would be very much the same as they are at present under the direction of Stoicism, but the *reasons* for which they performed the actions would be correct and consistent as well. Platonism (thinks Plutarch) is consistent where Stoicism is inconsistent, and thus opens the way for a good life, where Stoicism, even when measured by its own standards, fails.

In the next section, I shall discuss chapters 2-6 at slightly greater length, concentrating especially on an attempt to find Academic parallels for their material, and on showing how their arguments presuppose specific Platonist positions adopted by Plutarch. But before moving on to consider the remainder of chapter 1, there is one more question that we should raise here in connection with my interpretation of them. If, as I have claimed, Plutarch's primary interest in the *de Stoic. rep.* is to show that the Stoics fall into *doctrinal* inconsistency, why does he not simply start showing us examples of doctrinal inconsistency? Why the circuitous proofs through considerations of Stoic βῆσις? There are two answers we could give to this. For one thing, we have now seen that the doctrinal inconsistencies in Stoic ethics at least all spring in the first place from an attempt to find a way of applying Stoicism to practical life (we have seen something of this in section II, and shall see how it works in more detail later). So in order to understand what makes these contradictions an inevitable part of Stoicism, we need first to have considered the tension with real life that caused them. But secondly, we need to have some hint as to why Plutarch should think that it matters to be concerned with the consistency of Stoic theory at all. What I want to suggest is that Plutarch motivates his study in these first chapters by showing that the nature of one's theoretical doctrines

does have a very significant impact on whether one's life is a good life or not. He wants to claim that we *cannot live well* unless we pursue consistently a philosophy which is itself consistent and true, and what he argues is that the theoretical inconsistencies in Stoicism are of such a nature that they stop an adherent of Stoicism from achieving a reasonable life — a *consistent* life which, in the final irony, the Stoics themselves set up as the ideal.

We have seen how Plutarch is keen to show us that there is no consistency to the Stoics' philosophy, whose literal and distinctive terms are actually compromised by the qualifying clauses which were meant to allow them to be put into practice; and that the Stoics suffer from a corresponding form of inconsistency in their lives, since they hold one set of beliefs and values, but live *as if* they hold another — live, in fact, *as if* they were Platonists. We have seen too how this position emerges out of the many possibilities for inconsistency immanent in the first sentence of the *de Stoic. rep.* At {2.2-4}, Plutarch explains this sentence, and presumably leads us towards the conclusion he intends, by quoting Aeschines. The philosopher, he says, is under an even greater obligation to 'say the same as his law' than the orator is. This comparison has usually been taken to be an assertion of the principle that we should find consistency between what a philosopher says and what he does. It is not surprising that this interpretation has been taken: it is almost made inevitable by the usual mistranslation of the first sentence, which gives the impression that just this is what Plutarch *is* interested in. However, as a way of understanding the remark in its own terms, it lacks all plausibility: Aeschines

himself, in the passage referred to, had not been at all interested in the discrepancy between word and action. It is worth quoting the passage (*in Ctesiphonta* 16) in full:

δταν τοίνυν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἄς ὁ νομοθέτης ἀρχᾶς ὀνομάζει οὗτοι προσαγορεύουσι πραγματείας καὶ ἐπιμελείας, ὑμέτερον ἔργον ἐστὶν ἀπομνημονεύειν καὶ ἀντιτάττειν τὸν νόμον πρὸς τὴν τούτων ἀναίδειαν, καὶ ὑποβάλλειν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι οὐ προσδέχεσθε κακοῦργον σοφιστὴν, οἴομενον ῥήμασι τοῦς νόμους ἀναιρήσειν, ἀλλ' ὅσῳ ἂν τις ἄμεινον λέγῃ παράνομα γεγραφώς, τοσοῦτῳ μείζονος ὀργῆς τεύξεται· χρὴ γὰρ, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τὸ αὐτὸ φθέγγεσθαι τὸν ῥήτορα καὶ τὸν νόμον...

Aeschines was not concerned that Ctesiphon had ‘said one thing and done another’; rather, he was accusing him of having *misrepresented the law*. Specifically, he accuses Ctesiphon of having foisted meanings onto the words of the law that he knows they were never intended to bear. It is in this that we must look for the point of comparison intended by Plutarch.

We have just seen how Plutarch thinks that the fundamental inconsistency in orthodox Stoicism is the fact that its literal terms are contradicted by the qualification — and subsequent reinterpretation — we have to make of them in order to apply them in practice. This makes the reference to Aeschines singularly appropriate. Just as Aeschines condemned Ctesiphon’s reinterpreting the *law* to fit his own case, Plutarch wants to criticise the Stoics for reinterpreting the literal terms of their *philosophy* in order to make it fit *life*.

Plutarch gives his reason why the Stoics are worse than Ctesiphon at {2.4-5}:

ὁ γὰρ λόγος τοῦ φιλοσόφου νόμος ἀύθαιρετος καὶ ἰδιός ἐστιν...

Things become slightly complicated here, because Plutarch clearly intends to *equate* λόγος and νόμος in the case of the philosopher, where they had been distinct for the orator; but the point must be this. The orator is operating within the confines of a νόμος which it is (basically) beyond his control to alter. If the law appears to condemn him (or his client), then the only option open to him is to claim that we are supposed to *interpret* the law in a way that is not literal. He ends up giving an account (λόγος) of the law which is different from what it actually says — something that is dishonest, but we can understand why he does it.

The philosopher, on the other hand, operates under a law which is the product of his own, rational choice; he ought, therefore, to have no motive whatsoever for exercising casuistry in respect of it in even the way that the orator had. There is, in short, just no need or excuse for a gap to exist between the literal precepts of his philosophy and the interpretation given of them.

As we have seen, Plutarch thinks this does not happen when we come to Stoicism. If we look at the interpretation they give of their ‘law’ (that is, perhaps, if we look at their actions as such) then we find that they seem to be Platonists in essence. Yet when we look at how they present their philosophical law, it looks like something quite different — something we *would* recognise as distinctively Stoic. This is all grounds for the objection to Stoicism with which we are familiar by now: the Stoics should clearly never have left the Platonic tradition, and it is only their having done so which results in the difficulties Plutarch accuses them of in this work.

This raises a question: Why, according to Plutarch, *did* the Stoics leave the Platonic tradition? The answer to this is hinted at in the next sentence of chapter 1. At {2.5-6}, Plutarch continues:

...εἴ γε δὴ μὴ παιδιᾶν καὶ εὐρησιλογίαν ἔνεκα δόξης ἀλλ'  
ἔργον ἄξιον σπουδῆς τῆς μεγίστης, ὥσπερ ἔστιν, ἡγοῦνται  
φιλοσοφίαν.

The reason why the Stoics broke away (he says) is that they did not treat philosophy seriously, but as a game, and as something to win Zeno reputation.<sup>2</sup> Note that the three Stoics mentioned as examples of their sect almost immediately, at the beginning of chapter 2, are Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus. It is no coincidence that these are the Stoics who are most to blame, because they inaugurated the 'game' by 'inventing' Stoicism in the way that they did to start with. (The later Stoics Diogenes and Antipater, are also mentioned in chapter 2, but they are, significantly, omitted from this list.)

What I have tried to show, then, is that chapter 1, supported and illustrated by examples in chapters 2-6, introduces us to the polemic of the *de Stoic. rep.* and, more importantly, to the *demonstrandum* behind it all. Only, as we might expect in a work which is coloured to such an extent by the polemic of the Academy, Plutarch does this without at all being overtly didactic. The introduction to the *de Stoic. rep.* is, to this extent, to be compared with the conclusion of the *de primo frigido*, as discussed in the appendix to section II.

<sup>2</sup>This motif comes up elsewhere: the accusation of glory-seeking may, for example, have been implicit in Epicurus' story that 'Stoics' were originally called 'Zenonians' (*apud* D.L. VII.5). And cf. *de fin.* V.74 where Piso (presumably *p.p.* Antiochus) implies that Zeno's attempts to found a new school were motivated by unphilosophical motives: *ut reliqui fures earum rerum quas ceperunt signa commutant, sic illi ut sententiis nostris pro suis uterentur*. Later on, Galen also suggests that the sophistic way in which the Stoics used language was arrogant, and contrary to ordinary usage (which for Galen was — significantly for the parallel with Plutarch — epitomised by Plato): Ζήνων δὲ καὶ ὁ Κιτιεὺς ἔτι πρότερον ἐτόλμησε καινοτομεῖν τε καὶ ὑπερβαίνειν τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἔθος ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασιν (see the whole of *S.V.F.* I.33).

## IV.2

### Chapters 2-6:

#### Stoic Politics.

Chapters 2-6 form one of only two complete sections of argument in the *de Stoic. rep.* where we encounter no problem at all in identifying a common theme in Academic literature from whose arguments Plutarch might have drawn his material (the other being chapters 30-37, *q.v.*): all five chapters are united even at the most superficial level by their concern with aspects of Stoic political theory.

In section IV.1 we have seen already how the arguments of these chapters play a role in illustrating Plutarch's introductory remarks, and in demonstrating that Stoicism is guilty of inherent self-contradiction. We have even seen how Plutarch could explain the self-contradictory nature of Stoicism by the Stoics' ultimately specious attempt to diverge from Plato — that is, by their insistence on describing their philosophy as something new, while putting it into practice as if it was much the same as Platonism. But in this section I want to look in more detail at Plutarch's attitude towards the specifically political issues raised, and to consider what precedents for his arguments there might have been in the Academy.

The argument in chapter 2 is straightforward enough. As we saw in the previous section, one of Plutarch's requirements for a consistent life was to follow the precepts of one's philosophy. In this chapter, Plutarch shows that the Stoics, who write extensively about political involvement, do not engage in political activity themselves.

It is worth spelling out the nature of the contradiction here in more detail. It might not, after all, be immediately clear why we should expect someone who *wrote*

*about* political activity to *engage* in it himself. Plutarch certainly talks about the passages he refers to as if they were descriptive rather than explicitly prescriptive: cf. e.g. γεγραμμένα {2.10}. In particular, it seems that they described the life of the sage — at least, it is certainly the case when we come to chapter 5 that we find the sage being described as politically active, and we know that the *περὶ Βίων* (a work cited in chapter 2 at {3.3}) was preoccupied with the activity of the sage in particular.<sup>1</sup>

The reason why all of this works as an argument in the way Plutarch intends is that, according to Stoic theory, ethical ‘progress’ is achieved precisely by copying the sage. This is the whole essence of the Stoic doctrine of καθήκοντα: ‘appropriate actions’ performed by the προκόπτων in imitation of the sage.<sup>2</sup> So if Chrysippus says that the sage will involve himself in conventional politics, we would expect to find him doing the same, not indeed because we expect Chrysippus to be a sage, but because we do expect him to be ‘προκόπτων’.<sup>3</sup> The inconsistency of which the Stoics are guilty thus consists, not just in writing about a subject they are not active in, but — much more damningly — in their rejection, when it suits them, of the ethical model which they have set up; in defining the actions of the ideal man, but not caring to copy him themselves.

There is nothing about chapter 2 on this interpretation that would become clearer if we had a better knowledge of Plutarch’s sources. The question here is rather, *could* Plutarch’s source (if he was relying on a single work) itself have accused the Stoics of

<sup>1</sup>Cf. D.L. VII.121: πολιτεύσεσθαι φασὶ τὸν σοφὸν ἂν μὴ τι κωλύη, ὡς φησὶ Χρύσιππος ἐν πρώτῳ περὶ Βίων· καὶ γὰρ κακίων ἐφέξειν καὶ ἐπ’ ἀρετὴν παρορμήσειν.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Seneca *de otio* 1.5: *numquid vis amplius quam ut me similem ducibus meis praestem?*

<sup>3</sup>The other side of the coin — the Stoics’ reply — will of course be that, since the sage often has reasons *not* to engage in politics (implied at D.L. VII.121: πολιτεύσεσθαι φασὶ τὸν σοφὸν ἂν μὴ τι κωλύη), then the προκόπτων also has role-models for political *inactivity*.

living inconsistently with their doctrines? Or, in more general terms, *did* the Academy use this argument? All we can say is that there is, of course, no reason why it should not have done; we have already seen in the previous section that the accusation was made against Seneca (*aliter loqueris, aliter vivis: de vita beata* 18.1), and it seems unlikely that the Academy would have neglected a simple argument such as this one, in the specifically political field any more than in the more broadly ethical context in which Seneca was speaking.

Chapters 3-6 — which, as we saw, comprised the second half of a dilemma with chapter 2 — all turned out to present essentially the same argument, if from slightly different angles; and for all of them there were two readings — two kinds of inconsistency which they drew our attention to. According to the first reading, the Stoics who engaged in conventional politics (or — chapter 6 — religion) were acting inconsistently with their doctrine that conventional political (and religious) institutions were properly speaking worthless. According to the second reading, the Stoics' *lives* were inconsistent, precisely insofar as they followed a doctrine that, in its qualified form, itself codified an inconsistent attitude towards politics. I mentioned in section I that at the root of these inconsistencies lay the Stoic theory of the Megalopolis, and we can now look in a bit more detail at how this works.

We saw in section I that the Stoics think the Megalopolis is the *only true city* (*S.V.F.* III.327) and consequently they think that whatever validity conventional institutions and loyalties have, it is a rather second-rate form of validity. To take the list at *de Stoic. rep.* 3 {4.3-8}, for example: the Stoics condemned conventional law-courts (cf. *D.L.* VII.33), and said that only the sage is truly a general or a law-giver (cf. *S.V.F.*

III.332). However, beyond this there is some controversy over the precise nature of the Megalopolis: Is it just an ideal form of a conventional πόλις? Has it existed? Will it exist? Are all men members or only sages? &c., &c.<sup>4</sup> Many of these questions are not strictly relevant for our purposes, but one thing that it is important to note — and which we have already made use of — is the fact that a close parallel exists between Stoic political theory and Stoic ethical theory; indeed, political theory is only properly intelligible as a topic of ethics. This is clear to Plutarch, for whom the question of whether ‘wealth and reputation’ are good is bound up with the question of whether conventional political activity is possible (see *de Stoic. rep.* 5); and it should anyway be unsurprising to us, since the Stoics on the whole never distinguished politics as a different part of philosophy from ethics. (Cleanthes did make such a distinction, but was definitely the exception: cf. D.L. VII.41.)

If we take this connection between ‘politics’ and ‘ethics’ seriously, then a natural role immediately suggests itself for the theory of the Megalopolis. Perhaps the Megalopolis exists side by side with conventional cities in much the same way as ἀγαθά exist side by side with προηγμένα: both are relevant to us, but both reflect on different aspects of our existence. The point would have to be this: just as the conventional πόλις provides us with the context in which we pursue the practical necessities of life, acting *as if* wealth and reputation are good, and carving out some sort of βίος for ourselves; so the Megalopolis would be considered as the context in which

<sup>4</sup>The prevailing view has been that Zeno’s *Republic* sketched the plan for an ideal state, differing from Plato’s work of the same name only in the details of the organisation of the state. See esp. H. C. Baldry (who presents a useful summary of previous literature), ‘Zeno’s Ideal State’, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79 (1959) pp.3-15; J. Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World* (London 1975), esp. chapter 13, pp.111-121; A. Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1988); M. Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge University Press 1991). For a rare voice to the contrary (“this Republic is not political”), see F. E. Devine, ‘Stoicism on the Best Regime’ in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31 (1970) pp.232-336.

our *ethical* progress is achieved, and ultimate perfection realised.<sup>5</sup> So the Megalopolis does exist already, and is to be considered as a ‘moral’ and *not* a physical context.<sup>6</sup> (This conclusion is confirmed to some extent by the fact that most references to the Megalopolis do put it in the present tense; and, although there are many ways in which a present-tense description may fail to locate its object as something which presently exists, these possibilities are ruled out by Cicero *de fin.* IV.7. Cicero criticises the Stoics for trying to convince people, not that they *ought* to live in a world-state, but that they *already do*:

At quanta conantur! mundum hunc omnem oppidum esse nostrum.  
vides quantam rem agat ut Circeiis qui habitet totum hunc  
mundum suum municipium esse existimet.)

In the light of all this, it should be clear that the inconsistencies which Plutarch sees in Stoic ethical theory quite generally apply precisely to their political theory in particular. The theory of the Megalopolis (as Plutarch would say, and cf. Cicero as just

<sup>5</sup>This way of looking at the Megalopolis might help to solve another problem: whether *all* rational beings are members of the Megalopolis (Cicero *de fin.* III.64; &c.); or whether only sages are members along with the gods, and the rest of us are ‘exiles’ (e.g. *S.V.F.* III.328). There would, in fact, be no real contradiction between these testimonia. Just as, ethically speaking, there are many people who are Stoics — who subscribe to the philosophy of the Stoa — but there are very few *real* Stoics — sages, who live in accordance with Stoic principles —; so there are many people who come under the jurisdiction of the Megalopolis (all rational beings, in fact), but rather few (only sages) who prove themselves *real* citizens.

<sup>6</sup>It is, of course, possible — even likely — that Zeno *also* presented a picture of an ideal *conventional* community: he must, after all, have thought that the cities which actually exist present innumerable obstacles to ethical progress. For this reason, he thought that the sage, who is already king of the Megalopolis, should engage in conventional politics as well (cf. note 1). The important thing is that this ideal but temporal πόλις would in no way *replace* the Megalopolis and, although it might be conducive to ethical perfection, it would not even be presupposed by it. (The suggestion has been made before that our evidence must contain descriptions of two distinct kinds of community — but the explanation has tended to be that Zeno’s political theory changed as he went along: in particular, that he was simply not interested in Megalopolitan theory when he wrote his *Republic*. Cf. A.-H. Chroust, ‘The Ideal Polity of the early Stoics: Zeno’s Republic’, *The Review of Politics* 27 (1965) pp.173-183 and J. M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press 1969), esp. pp.64-65.)

quoted) fails to correspond to real life so that it is impossible to engage in any sort of conventional activity in the institutions of the πόλις without contradicting it. This leads to the first reading we gave of chapters 3-6 in the previous section ('the Stoics' actions are inconsistent with their doctrines'). But the Stoics try to make their political theory relevant by a series of qualifiers, and say that we can — or even that we have to — make use of conventional institutions *as if* they are valid. This would explain the second reading of chapters 3-6 that we saw ('the Stoics' lives become inconsistent when they follow their doctrines').

When we come to consider what Academic arguments Plutarch might have drawn on for his contradictions in these chapters, there is very little evidence. All we have is the passage from Cicero *de fin.* IV, from which we have already had cause to quote.

Cicero's main premise is this (*de fin.* IV.5):

a veteribus Peripateticis Academicisque, qui re consentientes vocabulis differebant, eum locum quem civilem recte appellaturi videmur (Graeci πολιτικόν) graviter et copiose tractatum.

Cicero's argument with Stoic politics is thus, as we might have expected, much the same as his argument with their ethical theory, even down to his claim that it differs more in vocabulary than substance, an argument adopted by Plutarch as the claim that the vocabulary of Stoic ethics is at *variance* with its substance in practice. We can expect Cicero to think that the Stoics' political theory added nothing to the debate because their Megalopolitan ideals were compromised (in the way we have just suggested) by qualifying clauses which allow us to live *as if* our homelands mattered. Again, Plutarch

seems simply to have adapted all of this, in exactly the way we have seen him do with the ethical argument: it is impossible to live consistently with the literal terms of Stoic doctrines, which are just absurd; and it is impossible to act consistently at all if you follow the qualified version of them.

Finally, we have to ask where we can see the Stoics' divergence from Plato in these chapters. Clearly, what we need to be able to say is that the theory of the Megalopolis, which is behind the contradictions, is non-Platonic. As a matter of fact, the existence of an explicit debate between Platonism and the Stoa on the issue is evidenced by Zeno's disagreement with Plato's *Republic*, something which Plutarch actually mentions later on (see *de Stoic. rep.* 8, {6.9-10}) and, indeed, it is not hard to see how much distance there would be between Plato and Zeno. In order to make a fair comparison of the two, we should first of all note that Plato's *Republic* may also be read as a description of the context in which a man could achieve ethical perfection. The question then is how the Stoics' vision of this context differs from Plato's. The answer is simply this: Plato (and Aristotle after him) thought that the perfection of human nature required certain behaviour within a πόλις organised according to the appropriate constitution (thus incidentally restricting the possibility of ethical perfection to the lucky few who were born into such a city — and into the right class at that).<sup>7</sup> The Stoics, on the other hand, argued that ethical perfection was available to *everyone*, because the context required for it was not bounded by conventional institutions, any more than it required a specific

<sup>7</sup>For a Middle Platonist account of Plato's *Republic* as envisaging a plan for an ideal but, in the Stoic sense, 'conventional' city, cf. e.g. Alcinous *didask.* 188.8-35.

lifestyle.<sup>8</sup> The context is rather the ‘super-political’ entity to which we all belong already: the Megalopolis.

Plutarch’s disapproval of the denigration of conventional politics implicit in the theory of the Megalopolis is palpable. He makes a series of rather heated remarks against Stoic political inactivity (cf. notably ‘ὡσπερ τινὸς λωτοῦ γευσάμενοι’ {2.15-16}, and cf. the image of the adulterer in chapter 4). In particular, though, his Platonism may show through in an unfavourable comparison between the Stoics and Socrates which he hints at. At {3.14-15} he describes the Stoics like this:

οἱ γὰρ καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν κατέλιπον πατρίδας, οὐδὲν ἐγκαλοῦντες  
κ.τ.λ.

This must be intended to recall Socrates’ belief in the tacit contract made between citizen and state. Socrates imagined the laws challenging him if he escaped, with the following words (*Crito* 50c9-d1): "τί ἐγκαλῶν ἡμῖν καὶ τῇ πόλει ἐπιχειρεῖς ἡμᾶς ἀπολλύναι;"

Finally, we can note that Plutarch himself (who was politically and religiously involved as a priest at Delphi) made a point of *not* leaving Chaeronea. See *Demosthenes* II.2: ἡμεῖς δὲ μικρὰν οἰκοῦντες πόλιν, καὶ ἵνα μὴ μικροτέρα γένηται φιλοχωροῦντες...

<sup>8</sup>This is not to say that *any* mode of life whatsoever is acceptable. We saw earlier that the Stoics wrote descriptions about the kind of lives sages would lead in their books *περὶ Βίων*, and this gives us examples to copy. What is clear, however, is that the Stoics think that it is possible for a working man to be virtuous — very much against the conclusion of Plato and Aristotle. And they assert this against the previous thinkers precisely by claiming that we inhabit *two* ‘political’ (which is to say, *ethical*) contexts: one in which we live *qua* animals with physical needs, and one in which we live *qua* rational, moral beings.

### IV.3

### Chapters 7-10:

### Κοινὸς Λόγος.

We have seen how the contradictions in *de Stoic. rep.* 2 to 6 are fairly obviously united by their common focus on features of Stoic political theory. With chapter 7 we enter into the main body of "miscellaneous inconsistencies"<sup>1</sup> among which, by contrast, little thematic unity is evident. The only approach we have towards understanding the organisation of these arguments is the reconstruction of Plutarch's source — an enterprise which was interesting and relevant in respect of previous chapters, but which now becomes quite crucial.

Although in the course of the study from now on our investigations into the source and composition underlying the arguments Plutarch uses will frequently overshadow any direct interest in the literal appearance of them, it would be perverse to start thinking that the background is more important than the work itself. If I talk very little about Plutarch's contradictions *as such* it is not because I am ignoring them, but because I am presupposing some level of familiarity with them. For this reason, it will help, before we start, to summarise the arguments of the chapters I shall be discussing. In this section I shall be concerned in particular with chapters 7-10.

<sup>1</sup>The term is taken from Sandbach's analysis of the "literary form" of the *de Stoic. rep.*: see 'Plutarch on the Stoics', p.21.

Chapter 7: Zeno wants us to believe that there is a genuine plurality (‘κατὰ διαφοράς’) of virtues, but his definitions lead us to the conclusion that they must all be ‘aspects’ (σχέσεις) of the very same virtue. Chrysippus is charged with the same inconsistency, criticising Aristo’s view, but supporting Zeno for saying something that, in Plutarch’s understanding, comes to much the same thing. Plutarch ends by showing that Cleanthes held a physical theory of virtue which tended very strongly to reinforce the ‘Aristonian’ position.

Chapter 8: Zeno has said that, once the case for something has been put, there is no need to hear the counter-arguments: they will be superfluous whether or not the case has been proved already. Yet Zeno himself argued against sophisms, and against the case put by Plato in his *Republic*.

Chapter 9 is concerned with Chrysippus’ ordering of the philosophical curriculum: notably he contradicts his advocacy of the order Logic, Ethics, Physics, Theology by suggesting elsewhere that Theology is a necessary prerequisite for a grasp of Ethics. Elsewhere again, he says that no subject can be taught in isolation, and that a strict ordering is impossible to maintain.

Chapter 10: Chrysippus contradicts himself over his attitude towards arguing the other side of questions. He says that it is a practice inimical to establishing the truth; but then he himself has argued strongly and effectively against one of the most important tenets of Stoicism.

The decision to discuss chapters 7-10 together is based on the fact that, although they have obvious differences, there are some very strong reasons to suggest that they do share something in common which distinguishes them from the rest of the *de Stoic. rep.* One thing that can be noted immediately, for example, is the similarity between the arguments of chapters 8 and 10, and the fact that they share a broadly ‘logical’ characterisation with chapter 9.

This observation only goes a certain way, of course, and it fails to account for chapter 7. A less obvious connection, but one that links all four chapters and which, if it is right, would be a much more powerful demonstration that they belong together in some way, is the fact that they all seem to rely ultimately on Chrysippean books that

appear together in the same section of Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of the works of Chrysippus. The section in question comes at D.L. VII.201-2, and is placed under the following heading:

Ἠθικοῦ τύπου περὶ τὸν κοινὸν λόγον  
καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτου συνισταμένας τέχνας καὶ ἀρετάς.

The section is itself divided into three parts (containing eight, four and five book-titles respectively), and it is possible to see immediately that the first two parts contain books that dealt with the sort of issues of dialectic which are clearly reflected in general terms in *de Stoic. rep.* 8 and 10 (cf. the *περὶ τῆς Διαλεκτικῆς*, or the *περὶ Λόγου*, for example). But in the first part there is one book in particular which should interest us: the *περὶ τῆς Χρήσεως τοῦ λόγου*. Plutarch quotes from this book twice in *de Stoic. rep.* 10 (at {10.21-25} and at {11.12-17}); and he also mentions it by name in chapter 9 (at {8.5}). We never come across this book anywhere else in extant literature.

What makes all of this remarkable is the fact that the same section of D.L.'s catalogue also provides material that can be directly related to chapter 7 — even though chapter 7 is ostensibly characterised by a rather different topic of debate to chapters 8-10. The third (and final) part of D.L.'s catalogue section includes the following titles:

περὶ τῆς Διαφορᾶς τῶν ἀρετῶν  
περὶ τοῦ Ποιᾶς εἶναι τὰς ἀρετάς.

Although chapter 7 does not itself refer by name to any of Chrysippus' books, it argues precisely that the Stoics were inconsistent over their beliefs about the differentiation of

the virtues. And there is real evidence that Plutarch (or his source) must have had these very books in mind when dealing with the topic because we learn from Galen that it was precisely here that Chrysippus' views on the subject were to be found: see *de placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* VII.1-2.<sup>2</sup> In particular, Galen tells us that Chrysippus' attack on Aristo was an important theme in both books (cf. *P.H.P.* VII, pp.430,17 - 432,5 and 438,19-23 [De Lacy]): we can hardly fail to notice that the attack on Aristo is also central to the way in which Plutarch has set up *his* argument. Cf. esp. *de Stoic. rep.* 7 {5.15-17}: 'Αρίστωνι μὲν ἐγκαλῶν κ.τ.λ.

It is, of course, not enough to establish *that* chapters 7-10 have connections with a common topic: we also need to say *how* they are connected, and that means establishing the nature of the common topic itself. Our starting point for this is obviously the heading given to our section in D.L.'s catalogue, which tells us that we are in an ethical area, one 'concerning κοινὸς λόγος and the skills and virtues constituted out of it' (περὶ τὸν κοινὸν λόγον καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτου συνισταμένας τέχνας καὶ ἀρετάς).

The phrase κοινὸς λόγος is crucial here and, to understand why, we need to consider what it conveys that would not be encapsulated by "λόγος" alone. The simple answer to this is that the phrase κοινὸς λόγος ('*common* (i.e. shared) *rationality*') makes the point that it is the *same* rationality that is shared by all men — indeed, by all rational beings. This may not strike us as a surprising claim, but it is one that the

<sup>2</sup>Specifically, see e.g. p.428,19-23 [De Lacy] for the περὶ τοῦ Ποιδᾶ εἶναι τὰς ἀρετάς, and pp.430,17 - 432,5 for the περὶ τῆς Διαφορᾶς τῶν ἀρετῶν. Extracts from *P.H.P.* VII.1-2 are printed (out of sequence) as *S.V.F.* III.256 and 259. It is no coincidence that *de Stoic. rep.* 7 {5.14-18} turns up between these two passages, as *S.V.F.* III.258.

ancients in general, and the Stoics in particular, certainly thought worthwhile making.

Cf. e.g. Marcus Aurelius IV.4:<sup>3</sup>

εἰ τὸ νοερὸν ἡμῖν κοινόν, καὶ ὁ λόγος καθ' ὃν λογικοὶ  
ἔσμεν, κοινός.

The claim that rational beings share the same rationality has a special significance for the Stoics, because they give to it a particular explanation, as follows. In the first place they define λόγος quite generally as a "collection of certain concepts and preconceptions";<sup>4</sup> but we know that there is supposed to be a standard corpus of concepts (ἔννοιαι) which are common to all rational beings: κοινὰ ἔννοιαι. So it follows that the λόγος which we all share as rational beings can be identified in quite concrete terms as something constituted in us by just these 'common concepts'. The importance of all this lies, as we shall see, in the fact that κοινὰ ἔννοιαι are not only *naturally* engendered in all rational beings, but turn out to be infallibly true as well. This means that the Stoic account of rationality comes down to the claim that we share a corpus of certain and *a priori* knowledge: their very understanding of what it means to be rational forms the basis and explanation for their Dogmatism. It is no surprise, then, if the Sceptical Academy devoted some effort to refuting this account of (κοινός)

<sup>3</sup>The idea appears in much earlier texts too: Cicero *de legibus* I.23 (*inter quos autem ratio, inter eosdem etiam recta ratio communis est*); and perhaps *S.V.F.* II.1128 (εἰς τὴν ἑστίν ὁ λόγος). This all seems to be reasonable evidence that the phrase is more likely to be Chrysippean than (at the other end of the scale of possibilities) to have been invented by Diogenes Laertius. It is true that the only certain occurrences of κοινός λόγος as a technical phrase in *S.V.F.* suggest that it was a cosmological principle (cf. *S.V.F.* II.599, 937); but then the Stoics regularly identified god and nature with rationality in various ways — as e.g. at D.L. VII.88, 136 &c.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *S.V.F.* II.841: ἐννοιῶν τῶν καὶ προλήψεων ἀθροισμα.

λόγος, and in what follows I want to suggest how *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 might reflect something of this debate.<sup>5</sup>

The contradiction Plutarch adduces in chapter 7 concerns the Stoics' approach to the division of the virtues: they claim to make the same kind of differentiation between virtues as Plato ("κατὰ διαφοράς, ὡσπερ ὁ Πλάτων": {5.7-8}); but they *define* them all as if they were all aspects of one and the same virtue, viz. φρόνησις.

It is easy to see how this difficulty could have been raised against the Stoics in the context of an attack against their theory of rationality: in the 'intellectualist' framework in which the Stoics set themselves it is clearly going to be the case that the perfection of a human being (virtue) will just be the perfection of their rationality, of (κοινὸς) λόγος. And indeed, the Stoics often talk about 'virtue' as a monolithic, intellectual quality — a certain disposition of the soul (cf. Plutarch *de virt. mor.* 441C; Seneca *ep.* 113.2) which constitutes 'right, or perfect, reason' (e.g. Cicero *de leg.* I.45, *Tusc.* IV.34) and which is in turn characterised as wisdom (cf. S.E. *adv. math.* XI.170). There does not seem to be much room for meaningful differentiation of virtues here.

Before going on to discuss how the Stoics did argue for a plurality of virtues, it will be useful to look more closely into quite what the 'perfection of reason' consists in. As we have seen, κοινὸς λόγος is constituted out of κοινὰ ἔννοιαι, but obviously

<sup>5</sup>I have, in the course of this discussion, assumed that D.L.'s catalogue of Chrysippus' books may be good evidence for the views of Chrysippus — even if it was compiled at a later date. This may not be a safe assumption; but I see no reason to doubt it, and think that it is strengthened by the very correspondence which exists with *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10: even if we do not understand the rationale behind either D.L.'s grouping of books or Plutarch's arrangement of chapters, this correspondence cannot easily be dismissed as coincidental. Cf. A. Dyroff, *Über die Anlage der stoischen Bücherkataloge (Programm des K. Neuen Gymnasiums zu Würzburg 1895/6; Würzburg 1896)*, pp.33-41.

the possession of κοινὰ ἔννοιαι is not yet sufficient for virtue (otherwise we would all be virtuous). It seems that in order for reason to become right reason, the κοινὰ ἔννοιαι have to be articulated in a certain way — in the correct, or natural way. This presumably involves a two-fold process for someone who has not arrived at virtue in the natural course of his development: on the one hand he must eradicate errors of understanding and, on the other, he must make the fullest possible use of the positive potential for understanding provided by his κοινὰ ἔννοιαι. In practical terms, he must start by understanding which of his ἔννοιαι actually are κοινὰ (and so reliable); and he must go on to work out what range of ‘theorems’ (θεωρήματα) can be deduced as immediate consequences of them. (It must be the case that some theorems can be deduced *a priori*, and therefore on the basis of κοινὰ ἔννοιαι, because theorems form the intellectual substance of virtue,<sup>6</sup> and virtue is supposed to become available to us as part of our natural development. What is more, it makes sense of the difference between the good and the bad man to suppose that the one deduces correct theorems and the other deduces incorrect theorems on the basis of ἔννοιαι which we know they have in common.) When a person has developed and isolated the fullest possible body of *a priori* knowledge, he will be in the best possible position to understand the world, and to grasp new facts about it. At this point we can say that his λόγος is ὀρθὸς λόγος, and that he is, in consequence, virtuous.<sup>7</sup>

What we need to do now, then, is to see how the Stoics were able to explain the *plurality* of virtues possessed and exhibited by the virtuous man. In fact, we might think there were two possibilities for this, based precisely on the fact that ὀρθὸς λόγος

<sup>6</sup>Virtues generally speaking are skills, and skills are collections of theorems — cf. *S.V.F.* III.214.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Simplicius *commentarium in Epicteti Encheiridion* p.259 [Schweighauser].

comprises a plurality of theorems. Given that the virtues (as I have noted) must themselves be made up of *a priori* theorems, one possibility might seem to be that each virtue was made up out of a different sub-set of the theorems available on the basis of ὀρθὸς λόγος; but in fact this is clearly *not* what the Stoics envisaged, since we know from D.L. that *each* of the virtues arises out of perfected κοινὸς λόγος *as a whole* — and that presupposes that the complete set of theorems is involved in each case.<sup>8</sup>

This leaves us the possibility that the differences between the various virtues come about through the different ways in which the theorems can be related and subordinated to one another. For evidence that this suggestion must be right, we have to turn to Stobaeus. At *ecl.* II.7, p.63,6-8 [Wachsmuth], he says the following:

πάσας δὲ τὰς ἀρετὰς ὅσαι ἐπιστήμαί εἰσι καὶ τέχναι κοινὰ  
τε θεωρήματα ἔχειν καὶ τέλος, ὡς εἴρηται, τὸ αὐτό· διὸ καὶ  
ἀχωρίστους εἶναι.

In this passage, Stobaeus makes quite clear what we have deduced already, namely that it is the same set of basic theorems which constitutes each virtue-expertise:<sup>9</sup> they "have their theorems in common" (and it is in this sense that they are 'κοινὰ θεωρήματα' — κοινός here is not of course to be confused with the sense of κοινός used in the phrase κοινὰ ἔννοιαι).

<sup>8</sup>D.L.'s section title was περὶ τὸν κοινὸν λόγον καὶ τὰς ἐκ τούτου συνισταμένας τέχνας καὶ ἀρετὰς.

<sup>9</sup>The fact that Stobaeus needs to refer to virtues as τέχναι in order to explain their constitution in the soul is not without significance. Note the presence of "τέχνας καὶ ἀρετὰς" in D.L.'s section heading; and indeed, a book-title περὶ Τέχνης καὶ ἀτεχνίας appears on the list right next to the works περὶ τῆς Διαφορᾶς τῶν ἀρετῶν and περὶ τοῦ Ποιᾶς εἶναι τὰς ἀρετὰς — works which, as we saw above, must have had a special relevance for the discussion behind *de Stoic. rep.* 7.

Stobaeus uses the fact that virtues draw on the same set of theorems to explain the inseparability of the virtues in Stoicism, just as *we* have appealed to ὀρθὸς λόγος to explain the fact that all virtues must be based on one virtue — namely wisdom. But almost immediately afterwards he draws on the same data to explain how it makes sense to keep referring to the virtues as a plurality. What he says is that the individual virtues emerge as such when a particular kind of theorem is ‘prioritised’ (cf. D.L. VII.126: κεφαλαιοῦσθαι!) as appropriate for a given kind of situation. See p.63,10-24 (and cf. all of D.L. VII.125-126):

διαφέρειν δ’ ἀλλήλων τοῖς κεφαλαίοις. φρονήσεως μὲν γὰρ εἶναι κεφάλαια τὸ μὲν θεωρεῖν καὶ πράττειν δ’ ποιητέον κ.τ.λ.

Stoic κοινὸς λόγος, and its identification as a corpus of κοινὰ ἔννοιαι thus puts us in a position to understand the apparently contradictory statements the Stoics made concerning the differentiation of the virtues. There is one rationality whose perfection in humans is virtue; but when perfected it consists of numerous theorems, which can produce a diverse range of skills and virtues, according to the way in which they are arranged.

So much for what the Stoics believed. The claim I want to make for Plutarch in this chapter is that his contradiction reflects an argument in his source which was part of an attack on the Stoic theory of rationality quite generally. We can imagine what this argument might have looked like — indeed there is no reason in this case to suppose that it was very different from Plutarch’s own contradiction: it could simply have

asserted the implausibility of the claim that rationality, which is a single thing and, when perfected, represents *one* virtue (viz. φρόνησις), could explain a whole range of *meaningfully* differentiated virtues. Support for this suggestion comes from the argument we get from Galen in *P.H.P.* VII.1-2 — a passage already referred to for its parallels with *de Stoic. rep.* 7. Galen's argument is very similar to Plutarch's contradiction as we have it, although his primary target for attack is the Stoics' monistic psychological model. Such a model, he says, cannot physically support a plurality of virtues: οὐ γὰρ ἐνδέχεται μιᾶς δυνάμεως ἀρετᾶς εἶναι πολλάς (*P.H.P.* VII.5, p.326,2-3 [De Lacy]). This must lend plausibility to the suggestion that behind Plutarch's argument was an Academic attack aimed against the very thing that characterised the Stoics' monistic psychology: κοινὸς λόγος.

We might still ask why Plutarch, Galen and the Academics would deny that the way in which the Stoics actually did distinguish between different virtues was 'meaningful'. The answer — certainly for Plutarch and Galen — lies in the radically different psychological model that they adopted. Like most Platonists, they believed that the soul had an irrational as well as a rational part. On this basis, they can make the claim which certainly has greater intuitive appeal that there is only *one* purely intellectual virtue, viz. wisdom. The *ethical* virtues can only be explained by bringing into account the irrational part of the soul as well. (Plutarch, specifically, characterises them as πάθος informed by λόγος.)<sup>10</sup> So Plutarch and Galen can argue that to reduce

<sup>10</sup>*De virtute morali* 440D: [*sc.* ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ] μάλιστα τῆς θεωρητικῆς διαφέρει τῷ τὸ μὲν πάθος ὕλην ἔχειν τὸν δὲ λόγον εἶδος. It is presumably this involvement of λόγος that allows Plutarch to keep referring to the virtues as τέχναι (cf. *an virt. doc.* 440A-C); other Platonists make more drastic distinctions: cf. e.g. Alcinous *didask.* 184.2-6: καὶ ἐπεὶ οὔτε ἐπιστήμη οὔτε τέχνη ἐν ἄλλῳ μέρει τῆς ψυχῆς συνίσταται ἢ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ λογιστικῷ, αἱ μὲν περὶ τὸ παθητικὸν ἀρεταὶ οὐχ ὑπάρχουσι διδασκαί, ὅτι μήτε τέχναι, μήτε ἐπιστήμαί εἰσιν (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἴδιον θεώρημα ἔχουσιν).

all the virtues to a function of the intellect is just to claim that φρόνησις is the only virtue.

The Academy, of course, was not interested in promoting Platonist psychology; but Plutarch's source could easily have made the claim *ad hom.* that the Stoics' intellectualist theory lacked even the intuitive plausibility of the Platonist/Peripatetic explanation of virtue. On top of this, there must be another aspect to the Academy's approach to the Stoic theory, one which we would not expect to find reflected in Galen, and that is that they would have attacked the Dogmatism — here, the Dogmatism in ethics — which it leads to: the account of virtue and the virtues which we have seen the Stoics give on the basis of the correct articulation of κοινὰ ἔννοιαι means not only that Stoic virtue is knowable for certain, and is (given the right kind of approach) knowable *a priori*, but it also means that, properly speaking, virtue is not possible at all *without* knowledge. Naturally enough, the Academics would have been keen to reject this idea (cf. esp. *Acad.* II.128-141); but in order to do so effectively, they would have had to refute the Stoics' whole account of rationality, and of the way in which the virtues were based on it. (It may have been as part of *this* enterprise that they used the argument that the Stoics could not consistently maintain a genuine differentiation of virtues if they clung to their psychological intellectualism.)

Finally, it is important to note that the argument Plutarch presents us with attacks the Stoics for falling into self-contradiction at a point where they diverge from Plato — in this case by their supposed assertion of a monistic theory of virtue. (We have seen incidentally how this theory is itself based on a psychological model that Plutarch would

think wholly un-Platonic.) In fact, in this chapter Plutarch goes out of his way to inform us that the 'Aristonian' thesis — that all virtues are really 'aspects' of one virtue — is a divergence from Plato: at least, he makes a point of telling us that view he has set up as contradictory (the differentiation of virtues κατὰ διαφοράς) is Platonic. At {5.7-8}, he says this:

'Αρετὰς ὁ Ζήνων ἀπολείπει πλείονας κατὰ διαφοράς ὥσπερ  
ὁ Πλάτων.

The comparison with Plato — ὥσπερ ὁ Πλάτων — adds nothing to the contradiction as such, and would be almost wholly redundant if it did not draw our attention to the *non-Platonic* nature of what Plutarch takes to be the standard Stoic line.

The contradictions presented in chapters 8 and 10 have a direct and obvious thematic connection with each other, in that they both address the question of how dialectic is to be used.<sup>11</sup> In chapter 8, to start with, Zeno is said to have claimed that an argument is either conclusive or not, so that counter-argument is superfluous; but to have contradicted this by arguing against sophisms and against Plato, as if he thought that their inconclusiveness (or downright falsehood) needed pointing out.

<sup>11</sup>Von Arnim took chapter 8 to be concerned with Zeno's *rhetorical* theory — at least he placed it as *S.V.F.* I.78 among the rhetorical fragments. For an independent argument that it is actually about Zeno's dialectic see N. Festa, *I Frammenti degli Stoici Antichi* (Bari 1932) vol.I pp.115-116. Commenting on Plutarch's own remarks at {6.9-10}, and especially the word ἐρωτήσας, Festa says: "In questo caso ἐρωτῶν è nel senso dialettico di dimostrare per sillogismi o per dilemmi."

From the little evidence we have for Zeno, it appears that he saw dialectic primarily as a tool, not for constructing proofs (as we shall see was the case with Chrysippus), but for protecting the conclusions of his philosophy, by defusing counter-arguments, solving sophisms &c. In other words, the position which Plutarch presents second, as the contradiction (at {6.8-15}), seems to have been Zeno's standard practice. So why does Plutarch present things this way round? One thing that will become clear is that Plutarch himself thought that dialectic should involve argument *pro* and *contra*; he would have abhorred the idea that an argument could be so conclusive as to obviate the need to hear the other side; or (correspondingly) that inquiry was hopeless if the argument in favour of a proposition did not show itself to be conclusive. This means that the first of Zeno's positions which he presents (at {6.1-8}) is, to him, the offensive one, even if it does not actually represent Zeno's standard practice. Given, then, that Plutarch's *demonstrandum* throughout the *de Stoic. rep.* is that the Stoics fall into difficulty where they depart from Plato, it obviously makes sense for him to present this offensive thesis first, as the one which *causes* Zeno to fall into contradiction with himself.

There is, of course, another way (a complementary way) in which the matter can be explained, and that is on the supposition that Plutarch's source, the Academic criticism of κοινὸς λόγος to which Plutarch referred in the composition of this section, itself attacked Zeno's claim that there is no need to hear both sides of a question before passing judgement. In this case, we need to ask how this belief — the belief that we could confidently recognise a conclusive argument as such — might have presupposed the Stoics' understanding of rationality, or 'κοινὸς λόγος'.

To tackle this question, we need to know quite how Zeno might have thought that an argument could communicate the force of its conclusiveness in the first place. The answer seems to be that an argument is (in itself) conclusive if and only if it succeeds in producing a *καταληπτική φαντασία* of its conclusion. Cf. D.L. VII.52:

ἡ δὲ κατάληψις γίνεται κατ' αὐτοῦς αἰσθήσει μὲν λευκῶν  
καὶ μελάνων κ.τ.λ., λόγῳ δὲ τῶν δι' ἀποδείξεως συν-  
αγομένων, ὥσπερ τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι, καὶ προνοεῖν τουτοῦς.

(The *καταληπτική φαντασία* is, of course, a prerequisite of *κατάληψις*; cf. e.g. S.E. *adv. math.* VII.151. The way in which an argument can produce such an impression is presumably to show how the conclusion follows through valid inferences from premises whose truth can be independently established: cf. S.E. *adv. math.* VIII.412.)

Although the cataleptic impression of a conclusion will guarantee its truth, what we have not yet explained is how the dialectician can be sure of grasping the conclusion in such a way as to be confident that he need not go on with the debate; and I want to suggest that it is here that *ὀρθὸς λόγος* has a role to play, as a criterion by which the sage infallibly distinguishes cataleptic impressions as such.<sup>12</sup>

The difficulty with this position is simple: we are told that the cataleptic impression is *the* criterion of truth for the Stoics (e.g. S.E. *adv. math.* VII.227), so that

<sup>12</sup>Cf. esp. D.L. VII.54: ἄλλοι δὲ τινες τῶν ἀρχαιοτέρων Στωϊκῶν τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον κριτήριον ἀπολείπουσιν, ὡς ὁ Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῷ περὶ Κριτηρίου φησὶ. For explicit attributions to Chrysippus of a belief that *κοινὰ ἔννοια* were criterial, cf. S.V.F. II.473, p.154,28-30, and D.L. VII.54 (citing Chrysippus' *περὶ Λόγου* a work which, interestingly enough, is listed in the catalogue section of Chrysippus' books that we have been interested in, at D.L. VII.201).

it is not immediately clear that we should be looking for any other form of criterion.<sup>13</sup> However, although it certainly is the case that to receive a cataleptic impression of something is the only way in which we could ever be sure that that thing is true, it does not yet follow that everyone who receives a cataleptic impression of something will have knowledge of it, just because it does not yet follow that they would *not* assent to a similar but false impression, for example. We need to equip the true dialectician with a criterion which would prevent him from doing this, and would prevent him quite generally from assenting to a non-cataleptic impression believing it to be cataleptic. The most natural candidate — in fact the only candidate — for such a criterion is the corpus of infallible and *a priori* knowledge that all rational beings possess: κοινὰ ἔννοιαι. It is obvious, for example, that we will know that an impression that is inconsistent with our κοινὰ ἔννοιαι will be false; and similarly it is quite reasonable to suppose that there is a way in which an impression (i.e. a cataleptic impression) can be *consistent* with κοινὰ ἔννοιαι such that we will know that it must be true.<sup>14</sup>

The possession of κοινὰ ἔννοιαι goes a long way to help us judge whether an impression is cataleptic, more or less; but most of us make mistakes, particularly by giving assent to non-cataleptic impressions as if they had been cataleptic. It is clear that,

<sup>13</sup>Reporting Chrysippus' belief that 'αἰσθησις καὶ πρόληψις' are criteria at VII.54, Diogenes Laertius (or Diocles of Magnesia, his source for this section — cf. VII.48 —) says that Chrysippus is contradicting his usual claim that the cataleptic impression is *the* criterion, and he is followed in this belief by, e.g., D. N. Sedley: cf. 'Sextus Empiricus and the Atomist Criteria of Truth' in *Elenchos* 13 (1992), pp.21-56, esp. p.33. In fact there is no need to assume an inconsistency, either in Chrysippus' thought, or in the testimonia: as I shall suggest in what follows, both forms of criterion are needed. Cf. also I. Kidd, 'Orthos Logos as a Criterion of Truth in the Stoa', *The Criterion of Truth*, edd. P. Huby and G. Neal (Liverpool University Press 1989), pp.137-150; and especially M. Frede, 'Clear and Distinct Impressions', *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 1987), pp.151-176.

<sup>14</sup>It is the case that κοινὰ ἔννοιαι are themselves engendered in us in the first place by the cataleptic impressions we receive; but even here there is something else involved, and that is the *natural disposition* which human beings seem to have to develop a certain corpus of ἔννοιαι. It is for this reason that these ἔννοιαι are common to everybody; and it is on this basis that they are occasionally called 'innate' (Cicero *Tusc.* I.57) or 'natural' concepts (*S.V.F.* II.104, 473 [p.154, 29-31]).

in order for our κατάληψις to become real *knowledge*, we need our criterion to be much more reliable. In the end what is needed is the perfect articulation of concepts in the way that, as we have seen, brings about a perfection of our rationality. In other words, the possession of ὀρθὸς λόγος is a prerequisite for κατάληψις to become ἐπιστήμη — and it is for this reason that ὀρθὸς λόγος may properly be said to be criterial.

In short, then, the style of dialectic which Zeno advocates at the beginning of *de Stoic. rep.* 8 may work along the following lines: a sage, just because of his possession of ὀρθὸς λόγος, is in a position to judge infallibly when he has encountered a conclusive argument — one for whose conclusion the argument produces a καταληπτικὴ φαντασία. So the sage never needs to hear the counter-argument: if the argument is conclusive, he will assent to the cataleptic impression and have knowledge; if it is not, then he will cease to be interested, since he does not want to have mere opinion based on assent to an argument which may or may not be true, and is at best only *more likely* than its counter-argument: *sapiens nihil opinatur* (cf. *Acad.* II.113).

(It is worth emphasising that it must be the sage alone who is in such a strong position as to know when arguments are properly conclusive or not. We who do not have ὀρθὸς λόγος lack the criterion by which to be *completely certain* that an impression we receive is cataleptic rather than non-cataleptic. And if Zeno's original *bon mot* was aimed at the sage alone, this will explain why the way in which Zeno actually used dialectic himself was not strictly contradictory: fools *are* liable to assent to non-conclusive, and even downright false arguments, and Zeno's practice of counter-argument must have been intended to protect them from that danger.)

One thing that characterises the foregoing reconstruction of Zeno's approach to dialectic is, of course, its Dogmatism: the idea that the truth *is* naturally available to us, and we should, ideally, only be interested in what is true. This is a principle that the Academy would obviously have rejected as such: Scepticism argues precisely that knowledge is not available (or if it is it has not been found), and that we can never even in principle know if a case is conclusive without having heard the arguments on both sides. But, although the specific Academic argument on which Plutarch based his contradiction must have attacked the Stoics' Dogmatism in one way or another and, we must presume, attacked the idea that their theory of rationality justified their Dogmatic conclusions, it is not at all clear what its precise nature might have been. However, we do know that one of the central Academic arguments against Stoic Dogmatism was that there was no such thing as a *καταληπτική φαντασία* (certainly not as the Stoics defined it — i.e. as a true impression of something such that it could not be a false impression of anything —), and it may be that their argument in this case worked in the following way: even if the Stoics' characterisation of rationality were right (they might say), and even if it furnished some kind of criterion of truth for us, it would still not help in establishing a Dogmatic approach to dialectic, just because progress in the subject will also require there to be cataleptic impressions which it can judge worthy of our assent; but there are no cataleptic impressions. To put this another way: it may be the case (as Zeno claimed) that *ὀρθὸς λόγος* allows the sage to bring an inquiry to an end with a conclusive argument; but there *are* no conclusive arguments in the Stoic understanding of the word — and if Zeno's sage stopped every discussion where he judged the first speaker's argument *inconclusive* (according again to the criterion of *ὀρθὸς λόγος*), then his dialectic would get him nowhere at all. So the *actual* absence of cataleptic

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impressions prevents the sage from giving assent, while the supposed *presence* of ὀρθὸς λόγος as a criterion will prevent him from pursuing any further investigation. (The Academic sage, of course, withholds judgement on every issue, but also continues to pursue the investigation: cf. e.g. Cicero *Acad.* II.67-68, 77; Augustine *contra Academicos* I.5, 11.)

Plutarch himself subscribed to a Sceptical epistemology, as we saw in section II; and it is fairly certain that he must have thought that this represented the view held by Plato as well — not least because he believed in the unity of the Academy, and the argument over the question of whether there had been an unbroken Academic tradition from Plato revolved around precisely the question of whether Scepticism was a new departure or not. (Cf. also section IV.6, on *de Stoic. rep.* 29.) The Stoics' theory of (κοινὸς) λόγος is used as a *sine qua non* of something — namely Dogmatism, and the possibility of conclusive arguments which render counter-argument useless — which Plutarch would have thought un-Platonic; and, as I suggested above, it is from this diversion that he represents the contradiction of this chapter as coming.

In chapter 10, we turn to consider the dialectic of Chrysippus. We are told that he rejected the practice of antilogistic in philosophical inquiry — that is, of considering both sides of a question with equal seriousness *more Scepticorum* — as being dangerous, and liable to disturb the true opinions held by those who are still learning their philosophy. Yet on the other hand he filled books with convincing arguments (he

boasted that they were the best arguments ever put forward) against his own theory of *συνήθεια*.

The position attributed to Chrysippus in the first part of this contradiction must represent his usual stance on the subject, and we can explain this by reference to the way in which *he* viewed dialectic. Although Chrysippus shared much in common with Zeno — and crucially he shared Zeno's Dogmatism — it seems that he put a different emphasis on the importance of dialectic, and advocated its use primarily to construct proofs: dialectic teaches what premises to use, and how to move between them to arrive at the conclusion. If we argue according to the principles it lays down, we can therefore be certain of discovering the truth: to spend an equal amount of time constructing arguments against the conclusion could, at the very best, be superfluous; at the worst, one might find oneself with arguments which, although necessarily tending towards falsehood, might have some degree of plausibility about them which could be a distraction to someone not properly able to judge.

What is the place for *κοινὸς λόγος* here? Once again, we can note that the perfection of reason is a prerequisite of the good dialectician: the sage, in fact, is the *only* true dialectician (D.L. VII.83, *S.V.F.* II.124 &c.); and again, we can give a 'mechanical' explanation of this, based on the fact that *κοινὸς λόγος* is constituted out of *κοινὰ ἔννοιαι*. We have seen that, for Chrysippus, good dialectic must be based on premises that are certainly true; but if dialectic is the only way of demonstrating 'new' truths, any dialectician must be able to start from an *a priori* basis of indemonstrable, true premises. Furthermore, the syllogistic forms through which logical arguments proceed also need to be 'indemonstrable' (cf. e.g. D.L. VII.78-81), and are presumably

part of the same body of *a priori* knowledge. This body of knowledge, then, must be constituted by κοινὰ ἔννοιαι (according to their correct articulation, ideally) — not only because κοινὰ ἔννοιαι happen to represent the only *a priori*, indemonstrable items of knowledge available to us; but also because they are present in the κοινὸς λόγος of all rational beings, and so explain how it is that *some* capacity for dialectic is part of what it is to be a rational at all.

The original Academic argument behind Plutarch's contradiction in this chapter might have approached the issue from very much the same kind of direction as that behind chapter 8: the Stoics' theory of κοινὸς λόγος is flawed just because it reinforces a Dogmatic theory of dialectic. The Academics could have argued, for example, that it is just unlikely that we are provided with a body of certain, *a priori* knowledge which we could build upon to reach the truth. Plutarch (as I mentioned before) tells us what the Academics thought was a more realistic approach to epistemological enquiry (see {11.18-21}):

ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὐδέτερον καταλαμβάνοντες εἰς ἑκάτερον  
ἐπιχειροῦσιν, ὡς εἴ τι καταληπτόν ἐστιν οὕτως ἂν μόνως ἢ  
μάλιστα κατάληψιν ἑαυτῆς τὴν ἀλήθειαν παρέχουσιν...

As it happens, we also know that the contradiction Plutarch presents is not, in this case, wholly original, but itself goes back to the Academy. At *Acad.* II.87 Cicero refers to Chrysippus in these terms:

[Chrysippus]...de quo queri solent Stoici, dum studiose omnia conquisierit contra sensus et perspicuitatem contraque omnem consuetudinem contraque rationem, ipsum sibi respondentem inferiorem fuisse, itaque ab eo armatum esse Carneadem.

The reference to Carneades corresponds closely with *de Stoic. rep.* 10 {9.15-16}, where Carneades is said to have had frequent occasion to quote the following piece of Homer against Chrysippus: "Δαίμονιε, φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος". And the centrepiece of Plutarch's argument is the fact, also reported in Cicero, that Chrysippus had gathered together all the arguments against αἰσθησις and the theory of συνήθεια (*contra sensus &c. contraque omnem consuetudinem &c.*, as Cicero reports it), and that in doing so he provided an excellent refutation of a doctrine which was actually very dear to him. See {9.24-26}:

ἐκεῖνο δ' ἀληθές, ὅτι βουλευθεὶς αὐθις συνειπεῖν τῇ συνηθείᾳ καὶ ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν ἐνδεέστερος γέγονεν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ σύνταγμα τοῦ συντάγματος μαλακώτερον.

Cicero uses his argument very much in passing: he is concerned to show only that knowledge is not possible, and Chrysippus, champion of the most notoriously Dogmatic school, knew no more than anyone else. But there is nothing implausible in the suggestion that his remark has its roots in an attack on Chrysippus' use of dialectic, and the theory of rationality on which it is based.

It is worth considering the fact that the issue of which Chrysippus argues the 'other side' — and, by all accounts, argues it rather too well — is the doctrine of

συνήθεια. Now whatever the technical account of συνήθεια might have been (and that is not at all clear to us), one thing that is clear is that it represents ‘customary thought’ in some sense. And the Stoics would presumably say that the thing that made a mode of thought ‘customary’ (and worth consideration as well) was precisely the fact that we share a common rationality — κοινὸς λόγος. This tends to confirm the context I have reconstructed for the argument in Plutarch’s source. If I am right, the argument would be tremendously pointed: not only does the simple fact that Chrysippus argues against συνήθεια contradict his approach to dialectic based on κοινὸς λόγος; but at the very same time the point of his argument is to convince us that we should not believe in one of the fundamental consequences of our κοινὸς λόγος, namely συνήθεια!

Finally, it is clear that Plutarch’s own position — and the position which we must suppose he attributed to Plato as well — was to emphasise the importance of antilogistic: he would, in other words, see the theory of dialectic based on κοινὸς λόγος as offensive. Note, for example, how he says that Chrysippus’ dialectical method is *not that of a philosopher* ({9.3-8}).

The contradiction in chapter 9 emerges because, although Chrysippus is clear that ethics ought to be taught before physics and theology, he makes great play of the fact that theology is a prerequisite for an understanding of ethics.

One way in which we can immediately link all three curriculum divisions to a discussion of κοινὸς λόγος is to recognise the fact that logic, physics and ethics are all thought of by the Stoics as virtues: cf. esp. *de fin.* III.72-73. This is explained as

follows: virtue is constituted in the soul as a τέχνη in the first place precisely by ethical knowledge; this knowledge (and all knowledge) then needs to be protected, something that is the function of logic (cf. also D.L. VII.47); but the sage must also be a physicist because without a knowledge of physics — and especially of the plan of nature and will of the gods — correct ethical judgement is hardly possible:

nec vero potest quisquam de bonis et malis vere iudicare, nisi  
omni cognita ratione naturae et vitae etiam deorum, et utrum  
conveniat necne natura hominis cum universa.

Here, then, we can see why physics and logic are needed by someone who wants to perfect their rationality; and at the same time we can see why Chrysippus has made so much of the importance of physical and theological knowledge in the study of ethics. Can we also use Stoic beliefs about κοινὸς λόγος to explain the fact that ethics can, and perhaps should, be taught before physics?

The fact that each of the three curriculum subjects is a virtue, and therefore arises alike out of the perfect state of rationality, means that there are two ways of looking at the task facing the Stoic educationalist. On the one hand, he has three subjects to teach — logic, physics and ethics —; but on the other hand we can say that he has a single job to do, namely to ‘straighten out’ the λόγος of his pupils. So one way of approaching the question of the order in which the various subjects should be introduced to them, is to ask how the teacher could best go about improving their λόγος. The answer to this must, in the first place, be that he would try to coax, or perhaps even to force, his pupils’ κοινὰ ἔννοιαι into something closer to their natural ordering by trying to establish frameworks of true beliefs in them. To this end he may indeed start

out with logic — cf. {6.16-18} — not only to introduce the pupils to their κοινὸς λόγος and explain how they are supposed to approach their course of study but also, and perhaps much more importantly in the light of Chrysippus' views as expressed in *de Stoic. rep.* 10, to show that knowledge is possible, and that the pupils should beware of the seductive, but misleading, arguments of the Sceptics. After this preparation, the Stoic pedagogue can start to teach facts about the world — and the question then is whether he should teach ethical or physical facts first.

One thing that is clear is that, whether the pupil is young, and does not yet have a fully mature rationality at all, or whether he is simply in a state of mal-education (of positive corruption, as the Stoics see it), he will have to accept much of what he is taught on authority: the apparatus for *understanding* will take a little while to develop. Given this, there seems little point in teaching physics *rather than* ethics: the pupil would not be able to make ethical deductions from physical or theological facts (even though this is a vital part of what the sage does), although he might be able to take on board and make some immediate use of ethical precepts. Physics can, and should, be introduced later, to consolidate what he has learnt about ethics.

There is another way in which we can look at this as well: it may be that Chrysippus believed physics (and theology) was in itself a subject that should not be taught to uneducated people. This is certainly suggested in the way Chrysippus explained the etymology of τελετή (S.V.F. II.1008):

χρῆναι γὰρ τούτους τελευταίους καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι διδάσκεσθαι,  
τῆς ψυχῆς ἐχούσης ἔρμα καὶ κεκρατημένης καὶ πρὸς τοὺς  
ἀμυήτους σιωπᾶν δυναμένης· μέγα γὰρ εἶναι τὸ ἄθλον ὑπὲρ  
θεῶν ἀκοῦσαί τε ὀρθὰ καὶ ἐγκρατεῖς γενέσθαι αὐτῶν.

In this case, ethics would be introduced before physics first as a kind of ‘propaedeutic’ — the logical priority of theological knowledge to ethical knowledge is again, quite irrelevant to the immediate question

The conclusion is that, in the early stages, it is better to teach ethics by direct appeal, than to hope to demonstrate ethical truths on the basis of physical or theological teaching. And Chrysippus is quite clear that ethics *can* be taught by authority — by direct appeal to the ‘natural’ state of a person’s (κοινός) λόγος. Cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 17, {22.3-5}, quoting Chrysippus’ Προτρεπτικά:

τὸν περὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν λόγον...συμφωνότατον εἶναι  
φησὶ τῷ βίῳ καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἐμφύτων ἄπτεσθαι  
προλήψεων.

Whatever the actual context of this passage, Chrysippus must in fact have believed something stronger than the claim that ‘Stoic ethical theory fits our innate preconceptions’; he must think that Stoic ethical theory is actually the only system which makes consistent sense of our innate preconceptions. There is the suggestion in all of this that, if you can get a person to accept enough Stoic ethical precepts, then, even if they cannot explain them, they will start to appreciate the sense that they make of the world.

In the case of this chapter we have no close parallel to Plutarch’s argument that would help us in the reconstruction of his source. However, it is easy enough to imagine the derision that would meet the Stoics’ claim that not only their ethics could be accepted as true, but that it could be accepted as true without being proved from first principles.

Indeed, some of this derision is apparent in Plutarch's answer in *de Stoic. rep.* 17 to the boast we have just seen that the Stoics' theory of good and evil "fits in best with innate preconceptions". Plutarch digresses from the strict accusation of self-contradiction at this point to say that this is *simply not true* (cf. {22.9-14}), and we can imagine that the Academy argued in a similar way. What I want to suggest, then, is that the Stoics' principles of ethical education are another way in which the Academy might have attacked the intellectualism based on their theory of rationality — their belief in a 'κοινὸς λόγος' constituted from innate preconceptions.

In order to show how Plutarch is putting forward his own philosophical beliefs in chapter 9, we need to show that he would consider the curriculum order which relies on the Stoic use of κοινὸς λόγος — viz. ethics first, then physics — to be a divergence from Plato and so the basis for the Stoics' lapse into self-contradiction.

There is little direct evidence that Plutarch would have advocated the order physics-ethics over ethics-physics; but if we look at Platonist handbooks that survive, the impression we get is that this was generally the preferred order.<sup>15</sup> For example, Alcinous in the *didaskalikos* discusses his philosophy under the effective headings of logic, physics and ethics, in that order. This is confirmed and explained by comment at the beginning of his section on ethics to the effect that the subject relies to a large degree on the theological contemplation of the Form of the Good (*didask.* 179.39-42):

<sup>15</sup>It is worth noting that Aristotle's editors — to the extent that they might be counted into a broadly Platonic tradition — had already arranged *his* works in precisely the order logic, physics, ethics.

τὸ μέντοι ἡμέτερον ἀγαθὸν...ἐτίθετο ἐν τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ, ὅπερ θεὸν τε καὶ νοῦν τὸν πρῶτον προσαγορεύσαι ἄν τις.

Apuleius too, in his *de dogmate Platonis*, tackles physics (I, 190ff) before ethics (II, 219ff) — and indeed, the initial discussion of *moralis philosophia* is steeped in reference to the divine *summum bonum*. Further confirmation of this trend comes in the Middle Platonist work *de fato* (pseudo-Plutarch). At 568F, we read this:

περὶ γὰρ ταύτην [*scil.* τὴν εἰμαρμένην] τὰ πολλὰ ζητήματα φυσικά τε καὶ ἠθικά καὶ διαλεκτικά τυγχάνει ὄντα.

This citation not only suggests the order physics-ethics, but it asserts and to some extent explains the priority of physics over ethics as well.

There are some hints of Plutarch's own attitude, especially in the *de E apud Delphos*. At 385C, Ammonius (who is usually taken to be a spokesman of Plutarch) suggests that *inquiry* is the beginning of philosophy (τοῦ φιλοσοφεῖν, ἔφη, τὸ ζητεῖν ἀρχή), and uses this fact to explain why Apollo conceals things in riddles: it prompts us to seek out the *reason why* ('λόγος διὰ τί') and the *cause* ('διδασκαλία τῆς αἰτίας') — approaches which are essentially physical or metaphysical. It may not be obvious that this is evidence for his beliefs concerning the relative priority of the parts of philosophy; but Theon certainly understands it in this way. When his turn comes to speak, he is keen to assert the priority of logic, against Ammonius: cf. 387C-E, where he argues that logic is the 'tripod of truth' (τὸν τῆς ἀληθείας τρίποδα τὸν λόγον).

Theon is not to be taken as representing Plutarch's views, and in fact his speech is immediately countered by Eustrophus, who explicitly speaks with the intention of pleasing Plutarch. (His remarks are, admittedly, aimed at a young and zealous Plutarch who has 'not yet entered the Academy' (387F); but Plutarch is apologetic only for his zeal, not for his interest in the subject, and it seems reasonable to assume some sympathy on his part for the views expressed by Eustrophus.) What Eustrophus says is that Theon's exaltation of logic needs an answer from "we who repose in number all affairs together..." (387E):

ἡμᾶς τοὺς πάντα συλλήβδην πράγματα καὶ φύσεις καὶ  
ἀρχὰς θεῶν ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀνθρωπείων ἐν ἀριθμῷ τιθεμένους...

In short, he asserts a real priority of number in philosophy — which, we can take it, is an assertion of the priority of metaphysical study over ethics, and indeed everything else.

There are Platonist texts in which the tripartite division is presented with ethics preceding physics (see, for example, Atticus fr.1,8-10 [des Places]); but in these places the nature of the dependence of the parts is generally not what is under discussion — Alcinous himself talks about the divisions of philosophy in a different order to the one he clearly believes they should taken in for exposition.<sup>16</sup> The limited evidence that we have suggests that the usual order was physics, ethics, with the idea that physics really is a necessary preparation for the reception of ethics, just because physics is the basis

<sup>16</sup>Alcinous uses a different order from that already mentioned when talking about how Plato divided philosophy (see 153.25-28), and a different order again when discussing their subdivisions (153.30 - 154.5). I take it that the order he adopts for practical exposition is the most relevant evidence in this case. On the whole question, cf. also Whittaker in his Budé edition of the *didaskalikos*, note 28 on pp.78-79.

and the explanation for the subject; and it suggests that this was the rule that Plutarch too followed, allowing him to cast the Stoic position as an insupportable innovation on Plato.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>On the basis of *de Is. et Os.* 382D, P. Hadot thinks that Plutarch anticipated the Neo-Platonic division of philosophy into ethics, physics and 'epoptic' (see 'Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité', *Museum Helveticum* 36 (1979) pp.201-223). However, it seems likely that Plutarch regarded 'epoptic' more as a branch of theology than anything else, and there is no evidence to suggest that he did not accept the usual tripartition (logic, physics, ethics, in whatever order), which at the time had great currency as a Platonic discovery: see Apuleius *de dog. Plat.* I,187; D.L. III.56 &c.; and especially Aristocles, quoted from the seventh book of his *περὶ Φιλοσοφίας* by Eusebius (*pr. ev.* XI.3.6-7 = fr.1 [Heiland]): Πλάτων μέντοι κατανοήσας ὡς εἴη μία τις τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων ἐπιστήμη, πρῶτος διεῖλε, καὶ ἔφη τὴν μὲν τινα περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς φύσεως εἶναι πραγματείαν, τὴν δὲ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, τρίτην δὲ τὴν περὶ τοῦ λόγου. ἡξίου δὲ μὴ δύνασθαι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα κατιδεῖν ἡμᾶς, εἰ μὴ τὰ θεῖα πρότερον ὀφείη κ.τ.λ.

## Following Nature and the Stoic Theory of Justice.

We have seen how the contradictions of the early chapters of the *de Stoic. rep.* can be derived from arguments of a broadly political (2-6) and epistemological (7-10) nature. This makes it simple enough to say that a new section of Plutarch's composition starts with chapter 11, something which suggests itself anyway with the sudden predominance of ethical argument in it and the chapters that follow: note how it opens almost programmatically with "Τὸ κατ'ἄρθωμα..." In this section, then, I want to suggest that chapters 11-16 correspond to a common area of Academic polemic against Stoic ethics; but before showing in detail how the contradictions in these chapters can be understood in such a context, I shall, as in the previous section, first present a brief summary of the contradictions themselves.

Chapter 11: Chrysippus says that the law only has prohibitions for the fool, and prescriptions only for the sage. This makes the law self-contradictory, since it must prescribe what the fool cannot do, and prohibit what he cannot fail to do. Furthermore, the Stoics think that every prohibition *is* a form of prescription. And then, a sage can clearly prescribe 'indifferent' actions to his slaves — so why can't the law make 'indifferent' prescriptions to the fool? Finally, there seem to be prohibitions for the sage, since the sage is cautious, and caution can be characterised as prohibitive reason.

Chapter 12: Chrysippus says that nothing is 'useful' for the fool; and yet can be found to admit that even 'indifferent' things can be useful. The fool, he says, is alienated from everything — and yet he thinks that every animal naturally experiences οἰκέωσις from birth towards its limbs, and towards whatever is useful for it.

Chapter 13: There are supposed to be no degrees in vice and virtue: yet Chrysippus, suggesting that virtue would be possible if pleasure were good but not the end, intimates that it is a *worse* error to claim that pleasure is the end. (He also says that ‘virtues wax and expand’ — but that is a matter of words.) He claims that not all virtuous actions are equally praiseworthy, and says that not all vicious actions are to be judged with equal severity in a friend.

Chapter 14: Chrysippus criticises Plato for saying that one who did not know how to live was better off dead; but says himself that you should commit suicide to flee vice if necessary.

Chapter 15: Chrysippus criticises Plato for making fear of the gods a reason for justice; but himself draws attention to the gods’ punishment of vice. Chrysippus says that virtue can be saved if pleasure is good but not the end; but he criticises Plato for making pleasure a good, saying that this results in the loss of *all* virtue, and he criticises Aristotle for saying precisely that all the virtues are lost if pleasure is the end! Justice, he says, could not remain if pleasure is the end; and yet given Chrysippus’ characterisation of the virtues, he could not really think that it was possible to save *any* of the virtues without justice.

Chapter 16: Chrysippus criticises Plato for saying that injustice is *στᾶσις* in the soul: he thinks it impossible to do oneself injustice. And yet he claims that anyone who commits injustice, or is done an injustice, *ipso facto* does an injustice to themselves.

To make the suggestion that chapters 11-16 might be united by Academic source material that attacked Stoic ethical theory is easy enough, for the reason I mentioned: all of Plutarch’s arguments in this section have obvious and superficial connections with ethical topics. But it must be possible to define the ethical topic under consideration more carefully: we would not expect that Plutarch’s source made a kind of ‘blunderbuss’ attack on Stoic ethics as a whole.

The obvious starting-point for any attack on Stoic ethics is their definition of the end for man: life in consistency with nature (τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν) — this is where Cicero, for example, begins his discussion in *de fin.* IV (see 14-15), and, of course, given that Plutarch is accusing the Stoics of *inconsistency* in their lives and thought, he has a special reason to consider this definition at the beginning of his section

of ethical inconsistencies. It is this topic, then, that I shall be suggesting lies behind chapter 11 in particular. However, it soon turns out that an important part of what it means to the Stoics to ‘follow nature’ is to understand our own nature as human beings — indeed, it is only through understanding our own nature that we can come to understand Nature as a whole at all. So very quickly — by chapter 12, in fact — we arrive at the topic of οἰκείωσις, which is the mechanism by which the Stoics say we come to a proper understanding of ourselves. This development in Plutarch’s source, it should be noted, exactly parallels the direction taken by Cicero in *de fin.* IV: he too begins discussing the topic of οἰκείωσις immediately after reviewing the Stoic definition of the end (see IV.16).

There is one slight difference between Plutarch’s source and Cicero in *de fin.* IV, and that is the direction in which the respective authors take the discussion of οἰκείωσις. It turns out that the Stoic theory of οἰκείωσις had *two* uses: it was used as a developmental account of how one would (in an ideal environment) come to achieve the τέλος quite generally, and it was also used as a basis for the Stoic theory of justice (cf. *S.V.F.* I.197). Cicero, whose interest in the *de fin.* is, of course, theories of the end for man, discusses *this* aspect of οἰκείωσις at IV.16ff; but, although the topic does seem to be in the background of *de Stoic. rep.* 17-23 (see section IV.5), Plutarch’s source appears to have dealt with the Stoic theory of justice first, and it is this that is reflected in chapters 13-16.

The starting-point for all of the arguments Plutarch puts forward in *de Stoic. rep.* 11 is the Stoic claim that “The Law has many prohibitions for fools, but no prescriptions,

because the fool cannot perform right actions" ({12.2-3}). Plutarch objects to this on two main grounds: in the first place, it would mean that the fool is prohibited from doing what he cannot help doing; and, in the second place, Chrysippus thinks it is quite possible to prescribe actions for the fool anyway — just so long as it is not *virtuous* actions that are prescribed.

The first sentence of this chapter — the claim that the Law prescribes for the sage but only prohibits for the fool — is a difficult one, but we can begin to understand it if we bear in mind the suggestion I made earlier that this chapter reflects an examination of the Stoic definition of the end as ‘living consistently with nature’. What might the substance of this definition be, if not that we should follow the Laws of nature?<sup>1</sup>

It seems reasonable to suppose that our starting-point with this chapter lies, then, with the fact that the characteristic difference between the sage and the fool is that the sage *follows Nature* (and the Laws of Nature) and, in doing so, *performs right actions*, while the fool does neither.<sup>2</sup> In some way, we might hope that this distinction is meant to come out of Chrysippus’ claims about the Law. However, to press the matter seems to lead to serious difficulties. Given that fools cannot ‘perform right actions’ (οὐ γὰρ δύνανται κατορθοῦν: {12.2-3}), why is prohibition possible where injunction is impossible? We might suppose that the fool will ‘break’ the prohibitions as readily as the injunctions, and it is not clear that the one crime would be any less culpable than the other.

<sup>1</sup>For the ‘Law’ of Nature (or of the Cosmos, which is, of course, often thought of by the Stoics in political terms) see e.g. *S.V.F.* I.162, III.337 &c.

<sup>2</sup>Cicero, discussing Stoic formulations of the end, explicitly says that Zeno’s *convenienter naturae vivere* comes down to a demand for ‘right action’: *illud enim rectum est (quod κατορθωμα dicebas), contingitque sapienti soli (de fin. IV.14-15).*

In fact, all of this only points us to a more fundamental difficulty in the Stoic theory of virtue as action ‘in accordance with Nature’: it is, after all, hard to see in what way anyone at all could contravene Nature: *everything* must in some sense be ‘according to Nature’ (cf. esp. *de Stoic. rep.* 47 {56.5-7}, from which we can infer that Nature herself, by identification with god and fate, is ἀνίκητος, ἀκώλυτος, ἄτρεπτος and so on). The problem facing Chrysippus here is one of maintaining the supremacy of Nature, while asserting at the same time that there is a difference between the perfect compliance of the sage with Nature, and the fool’s perfect lack of compliance.

The characteristically paradoxical situation in which Chrysippus found himself was met (as I want to suggest) with a characteristic paradox — the paradox, in fact, which we find in this chapter: ‘The Law [i.e. Nature] has many prohibitions for fools, but no prescriptions.’ It is clear that Chrysippus was using his terms here in a more or less technical sense, and perhaps we should be more careful to distinguish in ‘Nature’ two quite separate aspects. There is a ‘causal’ aspect, in terms of which all actions must be ‘according to Nature’, since all of them form part of the causal nexus embodied in Nature; and a ‘moral’ aspect, in terms of which it makes sense to say that some actions are good (and in this sense ‘according to Nature’), and some are bad. The point, then, would be this: Nature under the former description, as the expression of god’s providence, or the working-out of his causal nexus, *cannot be transgressed*; but under the latter, ‘moral’, aspect she *is*, as we know, being disobeyed all the time.

This distinction (if it is valid) may give the key to understanding *de Stoic. rep.* 11 {11.26 - 12.3}. All we would have to say is that Nature (the Law) decrees *both* the ‘prescribed’ *and* the ‘prohibited’ acts to happen: both kinds of act equally form part of the causal nexus. But they are distinguished because those acts which Nature decrees

that the *fool* should do are acts which are morally wrong (and in that sense ‘prohibited’), while those acts which she decrees for the *sage* are morally right, or ‘prescribed’. This does, of course, leave us with the question of why Nature *qua* fate should want to — or how she could be able to — introduce morally ‘prohibited’ acts into the world at all; but we know that, as a matter of fact, the Stoics thought that this is precisely what did happen. Their discussion of *why* and *how* it happens is a matter for their theology (for which see sections IV.7-8 below).

The first argument that Plutarch advances against Chrysippus’ notion of the Law is that it is self-contradictory if it prohibits the fool from doing what he cannot help doing. (Plutarch also says — at {12.5-7} — that the Law enjoins the fool to do what he *cannot* do. This confuses the issue slightly: it is perfectly reasonable for Plutarch to say it, but only on the grounds of the argument which follows, at {12.9-14} (all prohibitions *are* forms of injunction, according to Chrysippus). However this later argument is not formally presented to bolster the first contradiction, but makes the separate point that Chrysippus has contradicted his claim that there are no injunctions for the fool!)

I have suggested above one way in which we could understand Chrysippus’ notion of the Law; and, if this was along the right lines, then Plutarch’s argument clearly does not rely on a sympathetic reading of him. In fact, as the two contradictions which follow (at {12.14-24} and {12.24 - 13.7}) also make clear, what Plutarch is doing throughout this chapter is interpreting the peculiarly Stoic notion of Law according to a more conventional understanding of what a ‘law’ is. This is not to say that his polemic has missed its mark, however: it is in many ways quite enough for him to criticise

Stoicism for introducing — or having to introduce — such absurd and idiosyncratic notions of Nature and Law in the first place.

That Plutarch would think that the Stoics' problems at this point come from their divergence from Plato is very easy to see. We know that one of the main features of Stoic ethical theory which distinguishes it from Platonism is precisely the claim that the fool is beyond the pale, *absolutely* bad and, in terms of the Law, we might say, *absolutely* criminal. Plutarch attacks this claim as such in the *de prof. in virt.* 75A-76C. But we can identify the Stoic notion of the Law as itself non-Platonic: see for example the analysis of the relationship between the wrong-doer and divine Law given by Ps.-Plutarch *de fato* at 570CD:

οὐδὲ γὰρ νόμιμα οὐδὲ κατὰ νόμον πάνθ' ὅποσα περιέληφεν  
ὁ νόμος... τὸ μὲν γὰρ δὴ νόμιμον πρόσταγμα νόμου ἐστὶ· τὸ  
δ' εἴπερ ὁ νόμος προστάττει, πῶς οὐχ ἂν ἀπειθοῖεν καὶ  
παρανομοῖεν οἱ γὰρ μὴ ἀριστεύοντες καὶ τυραννοκτονοῦντες  
καὶ ὅσοι τὰ τοιαῦτα μὴ κατορθοῦσιν;

This Platonist conception of divine Law is not artificial in the way that the Stoics' could be said to be, so nothing unusual is needed to define what it means to go against it. The Platonic Law prescribes for all, and is broken by the wicked, when they are wicked.

The next contradiction in chapter 11 (which occupies {12.14-24}) is based on the idea that, despite their claim that the fool can never be enjoined, the Stoics *do* have the mechanism to give a more 'realistic' account of moral injunction — one which can be meaningfully applied to the fool. The sage, says Chrysippus, will punish a fool for not doing *well* what he has commanded him to do. But, since the fool cannot do anything

*well* in the strict terms of Stoic ethics, we have to believe that the sage meant him to act ‘well’ in a qualified sense. In other words, the sage did not tell the fool to do a *right action*, but only to do an ‘indifferent’ action (and to do that *relatively well*): δηλός ἐστι μέσον προστάτων οὐ κατόρθωμα ({12.22}). But if the sage can do this, then there is no good reason why the Law should not be able to. If the Stoics still say it cannot, they have again proved their notion of it to be inconsistent.

Whether Plutarch has based this contradiction on an Academic argument of a similar form is again impossible to tell. But it should be noted that the underlying inconsistency is the familiar one that, having said that only the sage can do things well, the Stoics add that there is a level of analysis according to which fools can also do things ‘well’ in a certain sense: i.e. they can perform μέσσα ‘well’ or ‘badly’, at least to the extent that it makes sense to reward or punish them (cf. {12.21-22}). The strict version of Stoic ethics embodied in the former claim is compromised in a way thoroughly familiar to us by the more ‘Platonic’ form of the latter. If Plutarch is not looking to a specific precedent here, he is at least in the general area of one of the most important arguments used by the Academy against Stoic ethics.

The final contradiction Plutarch adduces in this chapter (at {12.24 - 13.7}) makes a similar point to the previous one, but makes it in a different way. Just as Plutarch could show that there was the possibility of the *fool* being made the subject of some kind of *prescription* (something denied by Chrysippus at {12.1-2}), so he now shows that the *sage* is made the subject of a certain kind of *prohibition* (implicitly denied in the same

place). The sage (as he points out) exercises 'caution' (εὐλάβεια), and this is a form of 'prohibitive reason' (λόγος ἀπαγορευτικός).<sup>3</sup>

At the bottom of the contradiction must lie the fact that Chrysippus used the term "prohibition" in a more familiar sense, alongside the strict and distinctively Stoic meaning which we saw used in {11.26 - 12.3}: in other words, the prohibition affecting the sage is not meant in the same, specialised sense in which Nature was earlier said to 'prohibit'. (In fact, if the sage is cautious, Chrysippus would presumably be able to say on the basis of the former analysis that this is because the Law *enjoins* him to do something, and perhaps to have a certain attitude towards another thing which he does not do.) The value of Plutarch's argument, however, is that it shows that the Stoics' strict and distinctive terminology only serves to land them in contradiction with themselves when they revert to more 'normal' (and more Platonic) modes of ethical analysis. In this case, we have seen that their strict terminology fails *even* to describe the case of the sage.

As we have seen in the study of chapter 11, the Stoics' understanding of what it means to 'follow nature' immediately lands them in difficulties. But an Academic could do more than simply to suggest that the notion of 'right action' it demands was in itself problematic: there is another element in all of this which is crucial for Stoic ethics and

<sup>3</sup>There is a lacuna in the text at {13.1}, but the form of the syllogism by which Plutarch demonstrated this is clear enough: ὀρμή is λόγος προστακτικός {12.25-26} and ἀφορμή is λόγος ἀπαγορευτικός {12.27}; but ἔκκλισις is <ἀφορμή εὐλογος; and εὐλάβεια is ἔκκλισις εὐλογος {13.1}>; therefore εὐλάβεια is λόγος ἀπαγορευτικός {13.1-2}. For reconstructions of the text, see Pohlenz and Cherniss *ad loc.* Neither are unreasonable, but both unnecessarily complicated — Cherniss especially loses the flow of the syllogism. Von Arnim's 'ἡ ἀφορμή λόγος ἀπαγορευτικός καὶ ἡ ἔκκλισις· <ἡ δὲ εὐλάβεια> εὐλογος ἔκκλισις' (see *S.V.F.* III.175), may be rather minimalist, but it is sufficient and sensible.

the debate conducted against it. This concerns the way in which the Stoics think that a human being comes to act 'according to nature' in the first place — the topic of οἰκείωσις. Note that, after reviewing the Stoic formulation of the end as *convenienter naturae vivere* (*de fin.* IV.14-15), this is the first topic dealt with by Cicero (*de fin.* IV.16ff). It is also the topic which formed the basis of the Stoics' own discussions of ethics,<sup>4</sup> and in fact Plutarch himself tells us rather wearily in *de Stoic. rep.* 12 that it found its way into every book on physics as well as ethics that Chrysippus wrote ({13.16-19}). It is, then, to the topic of οἰκείωσις that Plutarch now turns.

The contradiction in *de Stoic. rep.* 12 is quite straightforward: Chrysippus claims that nothing is χρήσιμον for the fool {13.12-16}; but he also claims that "utility and gratification extend to the intermediates" {13.11-12}. He says that nothing is οἰκείον or ἄρμόττον for the fool: yet he constantly asserts that we are made to experience οἰκείωσις towards ourselves, our limbs and even our offspring from the moment we are born ({13.12-25}).

The relevance of all this to the problems adduced by the Academics against the Stoic notion of κατορθώματα is the following. According to the Stoics, the pre-rational human being (who is, as such, incapable of virtue or vice) knows what it should do — what is καθήκον for it — by being made aware of what it owes to its own nature.<sup>5</sup> A child, like an animal, knows how it should act to preserve its constitution &c. just because it has been made aware of what its own nature is (so to speak) *for*. The problem comes when the child develops rationality. This change is significant because it radically

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Cicero *de fin.* III.16-17 and 20ff; D.L. VII.85-86; and Hierocles, 'Ἠθικὴ Στοιχείωσις 1.1-2: Τῆς ἠθικῆς στοιχειώ[σεως] ἀρχὴν ἀρίστην ἡγ[οῦ]μαι τὸν περὶ τοῦ πρώτου οἰκε[ίου] τῷ ζῴ[ω] λόγον.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. *S.V.F.* III.494. It does seem to be the case that Nature *makes* us aware of how to fulfil our individual natures: cf. esp. D.L. VII.85.

redefines the child's nature: it is no longer a 'mere' animal, but a rational being, and it must redirect its οἰκείωσις accordingly. So D.L. VII.86 (and cf. Seneca *ep.* 121.14-17):

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῖς λογικοῖς κατὰ τελειοτέραν προστασίαν  
δεδομένου, τὸ κατὰ λόγον ζῆν ὀρθῶς γίνεσθαι <τού>τοις  
κατὰ φύσιν· τεχνίτης γὰρ οὗτος ἐπιγίνεται τῆς ὀρμῆς.

This, then, is what it is for a mature human being to 'follow nature': he must come to understand that the defining feature of his state is rationality, and that his perfection will depend on the perfection of his rationality. If he succeeds, then his actions will not only be καθήκοντα, but κατορθώματα as well. If, however, due to the external corruption which unfortunately seems to affect us all, the mature human does not succeed in redirecting his οἰκείωσις in this way, and perfecting his λόγος, then none of his actions will strictly be 'according to nature' any more — even those which are καθήκοντα. And it is because such a person has got out of kilter with the proper demands of his nature that Chrysippus can say that, strictly speaking, nothing at all is οἰκεῖον (or χρήσιμον or ἀρμόττον) for him any more.

The Academics' objection to all of this, as we know from Cicero, is that the Stoics make too much of the change from the pre-rational to the rational state. It is as if the Stoics think that *all* that is now important is λόγος, and that a person's physical constitution, which used to count for so much, suddenly counts for nothing at all (*de fin.* IV.25-29). Now Chrysippus presumably did not mean to 'abandon the body' in quite the radical way ascribed to him by Cicero, and would say, not that the body is no longer important, but that its importance is now intelligible only in relation to a person's rational development. In fact, later formulations of the end (including one by

Chrysippus) often try to emphasise the importance of physical 'goods' in the exercise of virtue: cf. e.g. Antipater's "ζῆν ἐκλεγόμενους μὲν τὰ κατὰ φύσιν, ἀπεκλεγόμενους δὲ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν" (*S.V.F.* III, Antipater fr. 57; cf. III.12 for Chrysippus). What is more, Chrysippus' occasional admission, such as is hinted at in *de Stoic. rep.* 12, that even fools experience *some* kind of οἰκείωσις, shows that a concern for one's physical constitution is still relevant, and even important. But what Cicero does make clear to us is that polemicists are no more ready to accept that this kind of modification can be added on to the strict theory of Stoic οἰκείωσις than they are to accept it in the case of Stoic ethical analysis quite generally.

With this background, it is relatively straightforward to understand Plutarch's arguments in *de Stoic. rep.* 12. In the first argument, for example, where he points out that Chrysippus says that "utility and gratification extend to the intermediates" although he also believes that nothing is "useful" for the fool, Plutarch is presumably making the claim that the Stoics simply contradict their strict account of οἰκείωσις (whose conclusion is that nothing at all can be good or useful for the fool) by reverting to a more Platonic position — forced, he might say, by the need to make their theory fit practical realities. (We might note that Cicero is aware of this kind of conflict as well: he not only notes how unrealistic the strict account of οἰκείωσις is, but he also comments that the basic theory, insofar as it is realistic, is simply taken from the Old Academic/Peripatetic tradition anyway: *neque eam causam Zenoni desciscendi fuisse: de fin.* IV.19.)

Plutarch's second argument in *de Stoic. rep.* 12 is that it is a contradiction for Chrysippus to say that fools experience nothing at all as οἰκεῖον when we are all supposed to find ourselves, our limbs and our offspring οἰκεῖα from the moment of our birth (cf. {13.16-19}); what is more, this is a general truth that extends to all animals (except, perhaps, fish, insofar as their offspring seem able to take care of themselves: {13.19-25}).

We have seen why Chrysippus could have said all this without thinking that he had contradicted himself: Chrysippus thinks that it is *only* mature humans who are so often found to lack the strict appreciation and understanding of their constitution *qua* rational beings. In fact they fail to see that what is 'good' for their bodies is no longer good in its own right, but only in relation to the demands of their rationality. The Academic criticism of this that lies in the background of Plutarch's argument must be one that we have already come across in Cicero: if we start off with a proper sense of οἰκεῖωσις, how do we lose it so suddenly with the acquisition of rationality? The Stoics' intellectualism must (so the argument goes) give a very unrealistic view of mature humanity. As Cicero asks (*de fin.* IV.26): *quonam modo aut quo loco corpus subito deserueritis?*

It is, finally, worth commenting on Chrysippus' baffling comment at {13.18-19} that we experience οἰκεῖωσις towards our offspring *as soon as we are born* — i.e., even before we have had the chance to reproduce. There is no simple solution to the problems raised by this, but the mere fact that Plutarch reports the claim here is extremely important for us, given the direction in which he will go on to develop his discussion. While οἰκεῖωσις towards our constitution and whatever is requisite for its maintenance is the

basis from which we develop towards our natural perfection — which for us is to achieve the human end of life in accordance with nature (D.L. VII.85-6; Cicero *de fin.* III.16-22) —, the οἰκεῖωσις we experience towards our offspring seems to have been the starting-point for the Stoic theory of justice in particular.<sup>6</sup> As I have already indicated, and as we shall soon see, it is an attack on *this* use of οἰκεῖωσις that we shall see reflected in *de Stoic. rep.* 13-16.

The most important evidence we have for criticism of the Stoic theory of οἰκεῖωσις-based justice which can be traced back to the Academy is to be found in the anonymous *Commentary on the Theaetetus* ("in *Tht.*") at columns 5.18 - 7.20. The way in which the author of this commentary ("Anon.") argues is typical of what we already know of anti-Stoic polemic. He sets up a dilemma between a strict and a more liberal reading of the Stoic theory, which in this case is as follows: either the Stoics think that we should exercise οἰκεῖωσις absolutely impartially in respect of everyone, not even favouring ourselves; or they think that there is some 'favouritism' involved: "ἐπιτε[ν]εσθα[ν] τὴν οἰκεῖωσι[ν]" (6.18-19). The former case (he argues) is *per impossibile*; the latter an impossible basis for justice.

My aim in what follows is to show that Plutarch is drawing for his contradictions on the same Academic tradition as that used by Anon. But before doing this it is worth noting that there are substantial difficulties involved in understanding the theory of οἰκεῖωσις quite generally, and in establishing how effective Anon.'s arguments are in particular. For example, we do not know enough about exactly how the Stoics attempted

<sup>6</sup>Cicero *de fin.* III.62-63; and cf. Hierocles *apud Stobaeus ecl.* IV pp.671.1 - 673,11 [Wachsmuth].

to argue for οἰκείωσις-based justice for it to be clear whether they did think that one could, or that one needed to, extend οἰκείωσις to the point of *absolute* impartiality, as Anon. claims justice would demand.

The solution to these kinds of problem might come with the solution to a further problem we have of understanding how the extension of οἰκείωσις needed for justice relates to the more 'self-regarding' use of οἰκείωσις to perfect one's humanity and achieve the end. If, as seems likely, the extension of οἰκείωσις is in some way a function of the understanding of one's own nature — an understanding that what is good for me just is what is good for the whole — then there may be something we could say.<sup>7</sup> We would not need to suppose, as Anon. apparently does, that a perfect extension of οἰκείωσις means that we are supposed to treat everyone else in exactly the *same way* as we treat ourselves. Perhaps Chrysippus' point was rather just that the sage's actions towards other people will ultimately be dictated and explained by the same appreciation of *Nature* as rules his more self-interested actions — this appreciation being what is achieved by someone who attains the human τέλος. We may get some confirmation of this if we consider Anon.'s argument against the possibility of the perfect extension of οἰκείωσις at 6.3-16: we do not, he says, care about our hair to the same extent as we care about our limbs. In fact, Chrysippus probably *did* think that it is the same sense of

<sup>7</sup>For this view of οἰκείωσις see e.g. G. Striker, 'The Role of Oikeiosis in Stoic Ethics', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* I (1983), pp.145-167; B. Inwood, 'Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century A.D.' in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* II (1984) pp.151-183, esp. 179-183; T. Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis* (Aarhus University Press 1990), pp.122-126; and M. W. Blundell, 'Parental Nature and Stoic Οἰκείωσις', in *Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1990), pp.221-242. This seems more or less to be the line that Epictetus takes as well: cf. esp. *diss.* II.5, esp. 25-26. Note that Chrysippus, in the quotation from the περὶ Δικαιοσύνης at *de Stoic. rep.* 12 {13.18-19}, apparently makes no distinction between οἰκείωσις towards one's own constitution, and the extension of οἰκείωσις to one's offspring. But cf. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford University Press 1993) pp.262-276: she thinks that οἰκείωσις is a "disjunctive notion", existing in two forms; *de Stoic. rep.* 12 (she thinks) only shows that both forms are innate.

οἰκείωσις that determines our attitude towards both hair and limbs — but the οἰκείωσις is relative to Nature, and not relative to hair on the one hand, and limbs on the other. We cut our hair but try to preserve our limbs not because we feel less sense of attachment to our hair as such, but because Nature generally makes it appropriate to treat these different parts of the body in different ways. If this is a good analogy for the debate over justice, then we could say that justice as perfectly extended οἰκείωσις would not demand that we devote as much time every day to giving food to the poor as we do to eating food ourselves (for example); rather it demands simply that we are *as ready and willing* to give food to the poor as we are to feed ourselves *when Nature requires it*. As a matter of fact, Nature only sometimes demands such acts of charity, whereas she constantly requires us to see to our own constitutions. This would be consistent with the whole thrust of Stoic ethics, according to which we aim for what is προηγμένον for ourselves, but are happy only when we achieve what is good for Nature as a whole.<sup>8</sup>

If we look at things in these terms, we can start to understand Anon.'s objection more sympathetically. We have seen often enough before that the Academics do not accept the Stoics' 'two-level' explanation of ethics quite generally: either the Stoics

<sup>8</sup>D. N. Sedley has drawn attention to the possibility that there might be a conflict between the idea of justice as an extension of οἰκείωσις and justice as the science of 'aiming for each thing according to its value' (as it appears in Stobaeus, *ecl.* II pp.63.6 - 64.12 [Wachsmuth]): see his edition of and commentary on the *Commentarium in Platonis Theaetetum* in *Corpus dei Papiri Greci e Latini* vol.III (Florence, forthcoming ?1995), p.492. But this conflict might also be resolved if it is right that the use of οἰκείωσις to establish justice is a part of the general theory of how man achieves the end. The idea would be that, as we work towards the end by learning to value things according to the objective measure of Nature, so, by the very same process, we will develop an ever-widening concern for other people (leading ultimately to an objective concern for the whole community of rational beings). For example, a miser who learns the true value of money (that is, as something 'preferable', but not essentially *good* and necessary to happiness) will, just because of this, start acting with more and more regard to others: he will give some of his money to his wife and children in the first place, then to his extended family, until (following Hierocles' image of the concentric circles) he will find in the end that he is equally happy giving it to worthy charities when appropriate as he ever was hoarding it for himself.

should maintain that *only* virtue is good (they say), or they should openly accept the Peripatetic position that things conducive to our constitution are good as well. If Anon. is arguing in this tradition, then he would not after all be claiming that the Stoics themselves say that an extreme impartiality is necessary for justice; rather, what he would be saying is that the logic of their position *as Stoics* leaves no room for the ‘qualified impartiality’ they do seem to talk about. The Stoics think they have the best of both worlds: a selflessness that allows for the exercise of perfect justice, but which itself bends to the demands of Nature that we should, on the whole, take care of our own constitutions first and foremost. But Anon. thinks that the Stoics are simply prevaricating over whether things conducive to our own health and comfort are good; and he thinks that their practical acceptance that they *are* leaves no room for the right kind of impartiality at all, and thus compromises the attempt to found justice on οἰκείωσις.

In chapter 13, Chrysippus has said that there are no degrees of virtuous action or of wrong-doing; yet he talks about the ‘worse’ error involved in thinking that pleasure is the end for man, and goes on to claim (for example) that not all virtuous actions are equally praiseworthy.

It may not be immediately apparent that the topics of justice and οἰκείωσις lie behind the arguments of chapter 13; but in fact we do not have to look very hard to find them there. The subject of justice is actually very close to the surface: it is implied in the discussion of right and wrong actions, and makes an appearance itself in the title of a book — the περὶ Δικαιοσύνης — quoted at {14.10-17}. The presence of οἰκείωσις

is also suggested by the quotation from this book: we know that it dealt with οἰκείωσις because we saw we saw a text explicitly concerned with the topic cited from book I in *de Stoic. rep.* 12, {13.19-22}. More obviously than this, there is an explicit interest in what is οἰκείον at {15.5} — and cf. the corresponding ‘ἀλλοτριώσεσθαι’ at {15.11}. There are also moments of striking similarity between *de Stoic. rep.* 13 and the passage on οἰκείωσις in Anon. For example, at *in Thet.* 6.17-20, Anon. considers the consequences of allowing degrees of οἰκείωσις in terms of ‘philanthropy’:

εἰ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ φήσουσι ἐπιτεί[ν]εσθα[ι] τὴν οἰκείωσι[ν],  
ἔ[σ]ται μὲν φιλανθρ[ωπία], ἐλέγξουσι δὲ τ[ού]τ[ους] αἰ  
περιστάσεις ν[αυαγῶ]ν κ.τ.λ.

Compare *de Stoic. rep.* 13 {14.20-23}, where Plutarch considers what will happen if pleasure is allowed to be the *telos*:

ἀναιρεῖ γὰρ οὗτος τὴν δικαιοσύνην...καὶ κατὰ τοῦτον ἡ  
κοινωνία φροῦδός ἐστι καὶ ἀπόλωλεν, ὁ δὲ χρηστότητι καὶ  
φιλανθρωπία χάραν δίδωσιν.

Verbal comparison can also be made between Anon. 5.31-32 (σώζεται ἡ δικαιοσύνη) and Chrysippus *apud* Plutarch {14.16} (σώζοιμεν ἂν τὴν δικαιοσύνην).

Although we can show that justice and οἰκείωσις dominate the background to chapter 13, the Stoic doctrine which is in the immediate line of attack here is the claim that there is no qualitative differentiation to be made between different virtuous acts as

such, or between vicious acts as such.<sup>9</sup> Plutarch presents us with five arguments against Chrysippus' position. The first of them (at {14.1-23}) involves Chrysippus' thoughts about the effect on justice if we consider pleasure to be a good, while the third ({15.2-20}), fourth ({15.20 - 16.8}) and fifth ({15.8-19}) show how Chrysippus found ways of differentiating between κατορθώματα and between ἀμαρτήματα (which are, in the nature of the strict ethical theory attributed to him, supposed to be indistinguishable as such). The second argument, based on Chrysippus' comment "αὐξεσθαι τὰς ἀρετὰς καὶ διαβάλλειν" (at {14.23 - 15.2}), I shall consider separately at the end.

The first contradiction Plutarch presents us with in chapter 13 is, on the face of it, a fairly simple one: Chrysippus says at one time that there is no qualitative distinction to be made between different examples of virtue (or of vice), but then commits himself to the view that there are degrees of erring: cf. ἥττον δ' ἀμαρτάνει {14.19}. (It is strictly incidental to the present argument that Chrysippus is also caught saying that something can be a good while not being *good enough* to be the end: cf. μείζον ἀγαθόν {14.16-17}.) More important for reconstructing the argument in his source, however, is the issue over which people err more or less: the question of whether justice is a possibility in a system where pleasure is the end. In fact, one of the central features of the debate between Stoic and Epicurean ethics was over precisely this question: the Epicureans asserted that the end was constituted by pleasure, which was thus the primary impulse of every animal (Cicero *de fin.* I.30 &c.); the Stoics hotly disagreed (D.L. VII.85-86). From Anon. 6.41 - 7.1 we learn why this was the case. The Stoics appear to have

<sup>9</sup>Note, however, that Plutarch does make a point of linking this claim with the theory of οἰκείωσις: at {14.1-5} he says that it is the bedrock of what went before: καὶ τὸ δόγμα τοῦτο τοῖς κυριωτάτοις ἐπόμενον ἔστι. What did go before, of course, was the discussion of οἰκείωσις in chapter 12.

thought that to value one's own pleasure too highly compromised the objectivity needed for justice:

διὰ τί γὰρ οὐ σώζεται [*sc.* ἡ δικαιοσύνη] κατὰ τοὺς  
'Επικουρείους εἴ τις αὐτῶν πυνθάνοιτο, φήσουσι ὅτι οὐκ  
ἀπολείπουσι οἰκείωσιν πρὸς τοὺς πλησίον.

Anon. reports an Academic argument according to which the application of similar logic shows that the Stoics themselves cannot maintain justice (see the whole of 6.20 - 7.14): there are situations in which it is impossible *not* to show favouritism of a kind (as for example in the resolution of the dilemma facing two shipwrecked sages as to which should have the plank and survive); and the possibility of such favouritism similarly destroys the objectivity he says is needed for justice to be explained through οἰκείωσις.

The argument in Plutarch's source would have been similar to this, if perhaps slightly more straightforward: it would have said that, insofar as Chrysippus can entertain the idea that pleasure might be good (cf. {14.14-15}), he admits the possibility of a kind of selfishness that will destroy justice. Chrysippus' own claims that justice would be saved if 'τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ δίκαιον' were *greater* goods ({14.16-17}) not only misses the point (the question is whether οἰκείωσις-based justice could exist at all if pleasure were a good), but rests on a premise that is, as we have seen, an impossibility in Stoic ethics: that one thing can be a greater good than another.

The coherence of the last three arguments of chapter 13 with the interpretation I have been developing is supported by a continued occurrence of terminology associated with

the topic of οἰκείωσις (cf. esp. οἰκεῖον {15.5}; ἀλλοτριώσεσθαι {15.11}, as mentioned above). There is also a continued interest in κατορθώματα, which might confirm the thematic link back through to chapter 11. What is new here is an interest in the subject of praise and blame — something which is a central issue as such in (3) and (5); argument (4) deals with a similar subject insofar as it is concerned with friendship, and the conditions under which friendship becomes impossible or immoral. There is clearly no *a priori* implausibility that the material of all of these arguments might have come from an original debate over justice.

In the third argument of chapter 13 (= {15.2-20}), we are presented with a quotation in which Chrysippus says that it is not equally οἰκεῖον to praise all κατορθώματα. The contradiction which Plutarch adduces is that there must therefore be a way of making a qualitative differentiation between different right actions, contrary to what Chrysippus is reported to have said at {14.1-10}. The question we need to ask is how this argument might have been derived from an original attack on the Stoic οἰκείωσις-based theory of justice.

Anon. may once again help us to answer this question. At 5.42 - 6.8, Anon. presents another argument against the possibility of a perfectly impartial extension of οἰκείωσις. Our οἰκείωσις towards ourselves, he says, must always be stronger than that towards other people:

ἐὰν γοῦν καταγνώμεν πονηρίαν τινῶν, οὐ μόνον ψέγομεν αὐτούς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀλλοτριούμεθα πρὸς αὐτούς, αὐτοὶ δὲ ἀμαρτάνοντες οὐκ ἀποδέχονται μὲν τὰ γ' ἐχόμενα, οὐ δύναντα[ι] δὲ μισῆσαι αὐτούς κ.τ.λ.

The important thing for us here is that Anon. makes an explicit link between ‘blame’ and ‘alienation’ — and so, by implication, between ‘praise’ and ‘appropriation’. Why should Plutarch’s source not have contained a similar argument? The Stoics (according to the Academic argument) need to maintain total impartiality in the operation of οἰκείωσις if it is to be a basis for justice; but here we can see cases where, in concessions to the realities of life, they do not. They do not, for example, praise all actions which are equally ‘right’ — and if we consider this in terms of the equivalence between ‘praise’ and ‘appropriation’ supplied for us by Anon., then we can understand this as their failure to extend οἰκείωσις with proper impartiality.

The fourth argument (= { 15.20 - 16.8) is cardinal in all this, in the sense that here our relationship with the agent rather than with the action emerges as the key issue. Chrysippus has said, in short, that there are many occasions on which we should not break friendships with people who have committed certain ἀμαρτήματα. Again, the immediate contradiction is with Chrysippus’ strict claim about the equality of all wrong actions; but we have already seen in Anon. that there is a link that exists between how we feel towards a person and the nature of his actions:

ἐὰν γοῦν καταγνώμεν πονηρίαν τινῶν, οὐ μόνον ψέγομεν αὐτοῦς ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀλλοτριούμεθα πρὸς αὐτούς.

When Chrysippus was earlier shown to concede that we do not exercise οἰκείωσις indifferently in respect of all right actions, we saw that what this implied, crucially, was that we do not treat all people impartially. And in this chapter we find the confirmation:

we do not (we are told) always break friendships with wrong-doers. In other words, our friendship for a person may prevent us from treating them as ἀλλότριος when justice demands that we should do just that. Chrysippus' concession to the Platonic position (that not all wrong actions are equally bad) sits very uneasily with the strict claims he needs to make for justice-based οἰκείωσις.

The fifth argument (= {16.8-19}) is only properly intelligible in relation to the third: Plutarch here reasserts his view of Chrysippus' absolutism in terms which presuppose the contradiction we have just seen — cf. esp. {16.14-15}.

I have, so far, passed over the second argument in chapter 13, which comes at {14.23 - 15.2} and gives another example of Chrysippus' contradicting his claim that good and bad are absolutes. What Chrysippus says is that "the virtues wax and expand". It is not clear precisely what he means by this; but presumably the point is much the same as that made by the other contradictions as such (i.e. considered independently of what their roots might have been): it shows that Chrysippus talked about Platonic grey in respect of a field that was supposed to be absolutely black and white. What it is very hard to do, however, is to suggest how this argument might have been adopted from an Academic attack on the theory of οἰκείωσις: the closest parallel to Chrysippus' statement, for example, seems to be *de fin.* III.48, and οἰκείωσις is not what is at issue there. It looks like a 'pure' argument for the supposed contradiction, in that it has none of the suggested background we could tentatively reconstruct in the others. It should be an anomaly, if my understanding of the chapter as a whole is right. So is it coincidence that, in respect of just this argument, Plutarch sanctimoniously says "ὀφτήμι"? There is no *prima facie* reason why he should be embarrassed about including this contradiction,

but he knows and acknowledges that it is irrelevant to the original context from which the material of this section has been drawn. On my reconstruction, this would be a clear example of an argument that Plutarch has added in without being guided by his main source.

In chapter 14, Plutarch sets up the following contradiction: according to the ‘strict’ Stoic account of suicide, one’s happiness (or ability to ‘live well’ — cf. {16.24}, {17.22}) does not come into the question of whether one should commit suicide or not. Chrysippus can thus criticise Plato for suggesting that a person should commit suicide just because he ‘was not learning and did not know how to live’ (i.e. was, in Stoic terms, a fool; cf. {16.22 - 17.9}). But, following the typical model of ethical contradiction, Plutarch shows that Chrysippus is also found saying that we *should* flee vice even to the extent of suicide, if necessary.

The way in which this issue might be relevant to the topic of justice is as follows. An Academic might have interpreted the strict version of Stoic suicide theory, according to which we should not seek death to escape from vice or — crucially — unhappiness, as pointing out that, if we have attained justice through the extension of *οἰκείωσις*, then we will evaluate our lives according to an ultimately objective measure, and not according to considerations of personal happiness. We will commit suicide only if Nature requires it, if it is, objectively speaking, good, but we will not do so ‘just because’ we are unhappy, any more than we would kill someone else who we knew to be unhappy. (Correspondingly, of course, a sage whom Nature intends to die will not

continue living 'just because' he is happy.) This, in fact, is what is demanded by the theory of οἰκείωσις, which insists that we should maintain our constitutions as long as Nature has a use for us. So when Chrysippus seems to concede that suicide might, after all, be a better option than vice (i.e. than unhappiness), the Academic could take it that he is doing no less than admitting that *as a matter of fact* people do, fundamentally, care about their happiness in a way that is strictly speaking selfish, that our sense of οἰκείωσις (as a Platonist might think) does *not* demand that we should judge our lives according to a purely *objective* calculation of our 'natural viability' which fails to take our personal happiness into account.

If I am right to suggest that this kind of motive was behind the argument that Plutarch is drawing on, then there is a parallel to be made once again with Anon. He also has an argument based on our attitude towards life which is meant to show that this is a matter we do not view with total objectivity. The only difference is that, whereas Plutarch's source talked about the effects on justice of the unhappy person's selfish will to die, Anon. talks about the effects on justice of the fact that most people most of the time have a selfish will to *live*. This is a fact even of the sage's life, Anon. claims, alluding at 6.20-25 to an argument which goes back to Carneades. Carneades had constructed a thought-experiment in which two sages are shipwrecked, and have between them a plank that will only allow one to be saved. If Stoic justice works as it should (says Carneades), then both of the sages will be in absolute perplexity to know which of them he would rather be saved.<sup>10</sup> For his part, Anon. seems to think that the obvious

<sup>10</sup>For the argument, see Lactantius *Inst. Div.* V.16,5-13 (referring to a lost section of Cicero *de republica*) and Cicero *de officiis* III.90 (which reports Hecato's reply to the argument).

answer is that, since οἰκείωσις does *not* operate with total impartiality, then (*ceteris paribus*) each will want himself to be saved.<sup>11</sup>

I have, more or less in passing, characterised the present contradiction, as well as those of preceding chapters, as consequent on Stoic divergence from Plato: according to the general pattern of the Stoics' ethical inconsistency, the strict version of their theory leads them into contradiction with the more Platonic version that practical reality forces them into. However, in this chapter, the 'strict' version of οἰκείωσις is explicitly guaranteed to us as non-Platonic because it is actually expressed as a criticism of Plato: cf. esp. {16.23}: τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐπιλαμβανόμενος...

I have compared chapters 13 and 14 of the *de Stoic. rep.* to the passage in which Anon. *in Thet.* attacks the Stoic theory of justice, and the argument I have suggested lies behind Plutarch's work has reflected most of the material in Anon. 5.42 - 7.14. In the last chapters of this section (*de Stoic. rep.* 15-16) I want to suggest that we can see a parallel with the end of Anon.'s passage of argument as well.

At the end of Anon.'s criticism of the Stoic theory of justice he contrasts it with the beliefs held by Plato (7.14-20). The Stoic theory has the weaknesses we have seen, he says:

ὄθεν οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκειώσεως εἰσάγει ὁ Πλάτων τὴν  
δικαιοσύνην, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῆς πρ[ὸ]ς τὸν θεὸν ὁμοιώ[σεω]ς.

<sup>11</sup>The Stoics fare no better if they claim that each of the sages wants the other to live — this would still be an example (albeit a perverse one) of partiality, viz. the groundless preference of another's life over one's own.

It seems that Plutarch, in parallel with Anon., has also gone out of his way in his manipulation of his material to make Plato's beliefs about justice an integral part of the way in which the contradictions of the last two chapters of this section of the *de Stoic. rep.* (15 and 16) have been set up.<sup>12</sup> (In a sense, of course, he has already started this process in chapter 14, where the objectionable Stoic doctrine is expressed as an attack on Plato; but note that the point on which Plato was attacked — whatever its ramifications for the Stoic discussion of justice — did not itself tell us anything about Plato's views on justice.)

Chapter 15 provides interesting retrospective confirmation of my claim that an argument which is ultimately about justice lies in the background of the preceding chapters (13-14). In the first sentence of 15, Plutarch says this: "Ἐν δὲ τοῖς πρὸς αὐτὸν Πλάτωνα περὶ Δικαιοσύνης..." (18.3). This can hardly mean 'Chrysippus [even] attacks *Plato himself* (and attacks him over the subject of justice)' (cf. Cherniss *ad loc.*), since we have already seen in chapter 14 that Chrysippus is not afraid to attack Plato: τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐπιλαμβανόμενος {16.23}. A much more likely interpretation of the Greek would be this: "In [Chrysippus'] writings against Plato's *own* views on justice..."<sup>13</sup> In

<sup>12</sup>Plutarch alludes in *de Stoic. rep.* 15-16 to a general characterisation of justice and its method of instillation rather than to the more technical definition of "ὁμοίωσις θεῶν" given by Anon. As a matter of interest, however, it seems likely that Plutarch himself would have had at least some sympathy with this definition: cf. *de ser. num.* 550D, and fr. 143.1-6 [Sandbach] (from a lost work *de silentio*). But cf. Dörrie, who suggests that Plutarch never thought of this formulation as something that characterised the human τέλος in particular ('Le Platonisme de Plutarque' pp.523-524).

<sup>13</sup>Or possibly "...in Plato's own book *On Justice*...", since all the fragments we have from Chrysippus' work πρὸς Πλάτωνα περὶ Δικαιοσύνης either can or must refer to criticism of the *Republic* (i.e. the περὶ Δικαίου) quite specifically. (Apart from the present passage, the fragments are these: *S.V.F.* III.157, cf. *Rep.* 357c.; *S.V.F.* III.288, cf. *Rep.* 351e-352a; *S.V.F.* III.455, cf. *Rep.* 335aff.) In fact Chrysippus' work is never referred to as περὶ Δικαιοσύνης πρὸς Πλάτωνα, as von Arnim has labelled it (*S.V.F.* III p.195, presumably on the model of books such as Plutarch's own περὶ Δικαιοσύνης πρὸς Χρύσιππον (*Lamprias* 59)), but rather as οἱ πρὸς Πλάτωνα περὶ Δικαιοσύνης (fr. 1, 3 above), or just οἱ πρὸς Πλάτωνα (fr. 2, 4). This gives scope for translation as something like *Against Plato's 'On Justice'* — a translation which Xylander takes to its logical conclusion when he renders the beginning of *de Stoic. rep.* 15, {18.3-4} as "Ceterum in his *quae de rep. disputat*, statim insultat..." (my italics).

other words, Plutarch is asserting in this sentence not only that the preceding chapters had been set in the context of a debate on justice, but that now we are going to hear what *Plato's own* beliefs on the matter are.

Chrysippus attacks Plato on two counts, of which the first is his belief that fear of the gods is involved in justice. Chrysippus contradicts this at {18.12-22} by suggesting that fear of divine punishment does keep us from wrong-doing.

We can hardly suppose that the Academic material with which Plutarch was working included reference to Plato at this point: the Sceptical Academy was not about to make claims concerning Plato's views on this or any other subject. What Plutarch might have found in his source, however, was a simple attack on the Stoics' acknowledgement that fear might come into an account of justice that has been expanded in this way by Plutarch. The idea might have been that this is another way in which Chrysippus shows that he recognises the existence of self-interest: if fear is a factor which induces us to be just, then justice may even require an element of self-interest. But if this is the case, then Plutarch can say that οἰκεῖωσις-based justice is shown to fail, since that presupposed an absolute *lack* of self-interest.

The second part of chapter 15 {18.22 - 20.23} contains an argument that is largely a repetition of the first argument of chapter 13. The argument there was that Chrysippus conceded, in contradiction of the strict account of his ethics, that pleasure might in some sense be good (and we saw how this might reflect an Academic argument according to which this concession would spell the end of his account of justice altogether). Here in

chapter 15, we again see Chrysippus wavering between the 'strict' and non-Platonic claim that justice is quite incompatible with pleasure-as-good, and the contrary position that they are, in some way, compatible.<sup>14</sup>

If my claim is right that Plutarch is here going out of his way to communicate Plato's beliefs about justice, and the way in which they differed from the Stoa, then we might be able to offer some explanation as to why this contradiction has been repeated in this way — and repeated so soon. In short, I want to suggest that its occurrence in chapter 13 reflected more or less straightforwardly its use as an example in some corresponding point in Academic polemic; but that in chapter 15 Plutarch is (on his own authority, so to speak) repeating and *expanding* the argument towards the end of the section in order to bring a Platonising moral out of it. It is notable, for example, that its occurrence here has many more references to Plato than it did in chapter 13 (in fact Plato was only mentioned in Chrysippus' book title there: see {15.2}). Plutarch even refers the reader to writings of his in defence of Plato {19.10-11}. We also meet Aristotle here, who was not mentioned in chapter 13 at all. (This is important since we know that Plutarch broadly accepted the legitimacy of Aristotle as a representative of

<sup>14</sup>The two further positions in chapter 15, which Plutarch claims are basically contradictory with this hypothetical concession, are perhaps to be explained by different understandings of the use of "good". Chrysippus says that if health and pleasure are good then justice and the virtues are impossible {19.4-10}: this, it may be, considers a radically 'selfish' position where προηγμένα generally are thought of as ends (and so Good in a more important sense). When Chrysippus says that 'if pleasure is good, justice may be impossible, but other virtues possible' {19.15-20.8}, "good" must again be interpreted in a stronger sense — a sense which would bring with it a case of full-blown selfishness that was really destructive to Justice in any sense. But the other virtues differ in not being socially defined, and the point may be that some limited attainment of *them* may be possible in the pursuit of pleasure, as Epicurus believed (cf. *de fin.* I.42, Athenaeus 546F). However, *pace* Epicurus (cf. *rata sententia* 31 at D.L. X.150), justice would in this case be completely ruled out.

the Platonist tradition. Indeed, here he refers to Plato and Aristotle together as *δυεῖν τῶν ἀρίστων φιλοσόφων* {20.9}.<sup>15</sup>

Chapter 16 is set up as an implicit defence of Plato's beliefs about justice in very much the way that we saw chapter 15 was. Chrysippus' claim, against Plato, that it was impossible for a person to do injustice to themselves, is contrasted with his own assertions that you wrong yourself every time you commit any act of injustice at all, and in fact every time you suffer any act of injustice as well!

We can plausibly reconstruct an Academic background to this argument too. It is clear that the Stoics must have thought that love of one's offspring was, logically speaking, the *second* step towards justice: the first step was, of course, to love oneself. (Indeed, the quotation from Chrysippus at *de Stoic. rep.* 12 {13.18-19} might even be taken to suggest that love of one's offspring is just *part* of what it is to love oneself.) Self-love (always assuming a correct view of the self) and the impossibility of alienation from the self, is thus one of the most fundamental elements underlying the Stoic attempt to found justice on *οἰκείωσις*.<sup>16</sup> Now Chrysippus would presumably not claim that this

<sup>15</sup>Plutarch is not without his disagreements with Aristotle — cf. notably *de def. or.* 424B-F —; but he does not seem to take the harshly exclusive line that Atticus, for example, does (as in fr. 1-9 [des Places]). In the present dialogue, Plutarch will be keen to present as united a front against the Stoics as possible, of course, and it is important to note that the positions attributed to Aristotle and Plato respectively in *de Stoic. rep.* 15 do not contradict each other. Plato said that health was a good {19.5-6}, Aristotle that if pleasure were the *end*, then justice and the rest of the virtues would be lost {19.16-20}. When Plutarch says of Chrysippus *ἃ τίθησιν αὐτὸς ἐγκαλῶν Ἀριστοτέλει, ταῦτ' ἀναιρεῖν πάλιν Πλάτωνος κατηγοροῦντα* {20.14-15}, it is precisely in virtue of the way in which he attacked each of the philosophers that the contradiction arises, and *not* in virtue of his attacking views which in themselves are supposed to be mutually exclusive.

<sup>16</sup>The impossibility of self-hatred is apparent in a passage from the anonymous commentary in *Th.* already quoted (5.42 - 6.8); and from the Stoics' whole biological and developmental account of animals quite generally. Compare also Antiochus who, in his own version of *οἰκείωσις* says this at *de fin.* V.28: *etsi qui potest intellegi aut cogitari esse aliquod animal quod se oderit?*

actually does amount to the necessity of ‘being *just* towards oneself’: after all, his argument against ‘doing yourself injustice’ at {21.2-3} is that the very concept of (in)justice is relative to another person: πρὸς ἕτερον οὐ πρὸς ἑαυτόν. But it would make some rhetorical sense for him to describe perfect οἰκείωσις towards the self as justice, or as quasi-justice, in this context (and, correspondingly, to describe alienation towards the self as ‘injustice’). By doing so, he would make the point very clearly that οἰκείωσις is the necessary first step towards (real) justice. However, by the same token, he also makes the objection to his theory that much easier to put across: if fools are ‘unjust’ to themselves, then it will turn out not only that all fools are unjust, but also that they lack the very capacity to become just. The Academy could thus make the polemical claim that the Stoics’ extreme denial of virtue to the fool, coupled with their οἰκείωσις-based theory of justice, leaves them in a quandary as to how the fool could ever, even in principle, acquire justice.

(It should be noted that Plato’s own notion of justice is not affected by his belief that a certain kind of ‘injustice towards the self’ is possible. In the first place, he does not base his account of justice on οἰκείωσις; but, more than this, Plato’s psychological model allows for the possibility of one’s being ‘alienated’ from oneself in a very different sense from that envisaged by the Stoa. Plato can make a distinction that Chrysippus wants to avoid between one’s ‘self’, which is the rational soul conceived of in its purified state, and one’s ‘character’, this being the disposition of the tripartite human soul which is the basis, or determining factor for action. The idea seems to be that, if the ‘Character’ is bad, then the ‘Self’ not only disapproves, but also suffers. In this sense, the Character can do injustice to the Self, and be made (in Stoic terms) ἀλλότριον to it.)

Finally, then, we need to explain the extraordinary way in which Plutarch reports Chrysippus' belief that we can wrong ourselves, which, on the face of it, is one of the most baffling pieces of testimonia in the *de Stoic. rep.*

We have seen already that the theory of οἰκεῖωσις can be analysed according to the two levels (or what the polemicists present as being two levels) inherent in Stoic ethics quite generally: it can be given a 'strict' reading, and a more liberal, 'Platonist' reading. Chrysippus is, for example, quite capable of talking about the fool as someone for whom some things are οἰκεῖον and others not, although in the stricter terms of his philosophy he believes that *nothing* is οἰκεῖον for the fool. In fact, one of the absurdities that Plutarch draws our attention to in chapter 12 is the fact that, on the more extreme view, the fool was not even οἰκεῖον to himself (see {13.14-25}). We have to distinguish, then, the 'strict' sense (Οἰκεῖον) from the 'Platonic' sense (οἰκεῖον) in which Chrysippus uses the word.

If things quite generally may be οἰκεῖον for the fool, but not Οἰκεῖον, it will presumably be possible to say that *he* is οἰκεῖον to himself, but not Οἰκεῖον; or, to put it another way, that he may be — indeed will be by definition — 'Ἀλλότριον to himself although not — ever — ἀλλότριον. This means that in *one* sense (the strict sense) he will be able to 'do himself *In*justice' (but not *in*justice in the ordinary sense). In fact we can see now that every time the fool beaks the Law (that is, as we found in chapter 11, every time he acts), he manifests his 'Ἀλλοτρίωσις in respect of two things: one is the other person affected; the other is himself.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>You can presumably wrong yourself by showing your 'Ἀλλοτρίωσις to a thing, but since *things* cannot themselves be wronged — in other words injustice cannot be done to them — they are not strictly relevant to the present context.

We can now start to understand in detail the arguments, which appear rather contorted at first sight. In the argument at {21.15-19}, Chrysippus explains Injustice in terms of ‘making yourself an accessory to a crime (against another person)’. Perhaps what this rather extraordinary analysis does is to emphasise the crucially important fact that the very same Law prescribes both your relationship to other people, and also your relationship to yourself: if you are unjust, you involve at least two people in your injustice, and you are one of them. To put this in slightly more familiar terms: if you can treat someone else as *ἀλλότριος* (and so ‘*Ἀλλότριος a fortiori*’), then you must be ‘*Ἀλλότριος*’ to yourself. If the former is defined as a case of Injustice, then there is no very good reason why the latter should not be described in these terms as well.

Similarly, in the argument of {21.20-22}, the fact that the fool acts *παρ’ ἑαυτόν*, and does so *παρὰ τὴν ἀξίαν*, points crucially to the fact that he treats himself as ‘*Ἀλλότριος*’ when he breaks the Law in any (other) way at all; and we can redescribe this, as we have seen, in terms of his ‘doing himself an Injustice’.

Finally, if you can *be injured* (the argument at {21.24-22.2}), it is only because you have not achieved perfect *Οἰκείωσις*: it is, in particular, only in virtue of seeing the injuring thing as *ἀλλότριον* that one can be injured. Again, we can say that if something (else) is *ἀλλότριον* to you (and so, *a fortiori*, ‘*Ἀλλότριον*’), we can also say that you are ‘*Ἀλλότριος*’ to yourself, so that every time you are injured (or ‘allow yourself to be injured’), you treat yourself as somehow ‘Alien’, and thereby do injustice yourself.

In short, according to Chrysippus’ stricter sense of Injustice the fool cannot help but be Unjust towards himself in all his actions. As we have seen, not only does this

show Chrysippus to be in contradiction with himself over his original criticism of Plato, it should also undermine his whole claim to be able to found justice on οἰκείωσις: the fool, at least, lacks even the necessary starting-point for the development of justice.

## The Stoic End.

I have argued that in the background to chapters 11-16 lies an Academic attack on the Stoics' use of οἰκείωσις in their ethical theory, and in particular in their theory of justice. At chapter 17, with the introduction of the claim that the Stoic theory of good and evil is confirmed by 'αἱ ἔμφυτοι προλήψεις' (cf. {22.5}), Plutarch seems to be reflecting a shift in his source to a new area — although one which, as we shall see, is closely related. But before going on to discuss this in more detail, I shall, as usual, briefly review the contradictions as they stand.

- Chapter 17: The Stoic theory of good and evil is supposed to be perfectly consistent with our innate preconceptions; and yet Chrysippus admits that it draws us away from things we normally think good, and seems beyond the reach of human nature.
- Chapter 18: Vice is said to be the essence of unhappiness; and yet Chrysippus says that it is profitable for fools to live 'because evil is better than nothing'. Apart from the fact that nothing should be profitable for the fool at all, this means unhappiness is better than not being unhappy &c. Chrysippus qualifies his statement: 'It is the possession of reason which makes an evil life better than nothing.' And yet vice just *is* reason (wrong reason), so the absurdity is not lost. Furthermore, there *is* a measure for suicide, but it is based on τὰ μέσσα — i.e. on things that are not objects of our ethical striving at all.
- Chapter 19: There is an absolute and infinite difference between vice (unhappiness) and virtue (happiness), and Chrysippus thinks vice and virtue are both perceptible properties. Yet a man who becomes a sage (changes from vice to virtue) may not perceive the change in himself at first.
- Chapter 20: Chrysippus says in one place that the sage minds his own business, and enjoys a quiet life; but in another that he will travel extraordinary distances just to make money. He says the sage needs only enough for subsistence, but gives him careful instructions on how to extract wages from a pupil and thus avoid being wronged. (In fact it should never be possible to wrong a sage at all.)

Chapter 21: Chrysippus thinks nothing should be done in the ideal city purely for the sake of pleasure — yet he approved of Diogenes' masturbating, and thinks providence has provided us with peacocks whose only 'function' is to be beautiful.

Chapter 22: Chrysippus thinks many of our taboos are not 'natural' — as is evidenced by the practice of animals. Yet he approves of other taboos, saying that the example of animals is beside the point.

Chapter 23: Chrysippus criticises 'some philosophers', whose psychology allows random choices to be made between indistinguishable items; and yet Chrysippus talks of an ἐπίκλισις, which fulfils just this role.

That idea that a new beginning is heralded by the mention of αἱ ἐμφυτοὶ προλήψεις at {22.5}, is supported by a parallel development in the *de comm. not.* In chapters 22-24 of that work, a place where the discussion very clearly embarks on a fresh start after a short piece of dialogue at 1068EF, Plutarch confronts us, in a way which is strikingly similar to *de Stoic. rep.* 17, with a notion of goodness which "has an innate origin in us": ἐν ἡμῖν σύμφυτον ἔχει τὴν γένεσιν (*de comm. not.* 24 1069F - 1070A). Now we might have been able to dismiss this similarity as mere coincidence; but it turns out that we can make very good sense of *de Stoic. rep.* 17-23 if we go on to suppose that the subject matter in the background to these chapters is much the same as the subject-matter that characterises the *de comm. not.* passage — viz the Stoic theory of the end for man. After all, having seen in section IV.4 that οἰκείωσις had two fundamental uses in Stoic ethics (as a foundation for justice, and also as a basis for the Stoic notion of the end), we only saw arguments reflecting an attack on one of its applications (as a foundation for justice) in *de Stoic. rep.* 11-16. Even without the *de comm. not.* parallel, we ought to be ready by now for contradictions reflecting an attack on the Stoic end.

We have already seen something in the previous section of how the Stoics thought that οἰκείωσις, when allowed to function properly, leads us to achieve our end. The idea is that we naturally appreciate each stage of our constitution, and what it requires; and when we become rational, we are supposed to understand that the perfection of our nature is wholly dependent on our ability to perfect our rationality. The Academic response to this (preserved in Cicero *de fin.* IV, esp. 25-29) is to say that this strict reading of Stoic ethical theory is simply untenable, and does *not* correspond with the facts of our nature. Man, says Cicero, is body as well as soul, and any account of the end which does not take both into account must be absurd. See *de fin.* IV.25:

sumus igitur homines: ex animo constamus et corpore, quae sunt  
cuiusdam modi, nosque oportet, ut prima appetitio naturalis  
postulat, haec diligere constituereque ex his finem illum summi  
boni atque ultimi...

He goes on to say that the Stoic end is more suited to a disembodied mind, and hardly even to that (*id.* 28-29).

The Stoics maintain that they do not disregard physical ‘goods’ (goods of the body) altogether: they simply see that their value was dependent on the virtuous activity of the intellect. For this reason, although physical ‘goods’ (strictly speaking: ‘preferables’) were not good as such, they could, for the most part, be treated as if they were. This answer, of course, only invites the second part of the Academics’ attack: if the Stoics mean anything at all by calling things προηγμένα, they must mean that they are *actually* ‘good’ (cf. Cicero *de fin.* IV.23) — and, as we shall see, the Academics were able to support this claim by showing that the Stoics thought the possession of

προηγμένα went much further towards making a life worthwhile than the attainment of wisdom. In this case, then, Stoic ethics comes down to nothing more than a version of the ethical theory propounded by the Peripatos and (according to Plutarch at least) Plato himself.

This is the argument that I want to claim underlies *de Stoic. rep.* 17-23, then. In particular, I want to show that chapters 17-19 reflect the first part of it — an attack on the strict intellectualism of Stoic ethics as unrealistic — while chapters 20-22 show how the Stoics were forced in practice to adopt a more Peripatetic/Platonic stance. Chapter 23 parallels Cicero *de fin.* IV.43 in forming a conclusion to the whole discussion.

Chapter 17 lends immediate plausibility to the suggestions made above about the tradition on which Plutarch is drawing for these chapters. Chrysippus is reported in this chapter to have said that the Stoic τέλος is the only account that makes sense of life, but to have contradicted this by saying (as Cicero says against him) that it seems fantastic, and even ‘super-human’.

In more detail, Chrysippus’ first claim is this: that the Stoic τέλος is the ‘most consistent with life’: συμφωνότατον τῷ βίῳ (22.4). This is, of course, exactly what we would expect him to say given his theory of οἰκείωσις. After all, the fundamental point of the theory is that it brings you to a natural understanding of yourself, or rather of how you should ‘use’ yourself to live. As Seneca says (*ep.* 121.6):

nemo aegre molitur artus suos, nemo in usu sui haesitat. hoc edita protinus faciunt; cum hac scientia prodeunt; instituta nascuntur.

Chrysippus' further claim is that his theory of good and evil "fits best with innate preconceptions" (μάλιστα τῶν ἐμφύτων ἄπτεσθαι προλήψεων {22.4-5}). In order to explain this, we have to remember what we saw in section IV.3, that there *is* a 'best' arrangement for our προλήψεις and κοινὰ ἔννοιαι — in fact this is the *natural* arrangement by which they constitute ὀρθὸς λόγος. We also know that to achieve ὀρθὸς λόγος is *eo ipso* to acquire the ethical science which is a necessary and sufficient condition for being virtuous according to the Stoics. To put this another way, it does turn out to be the case that the adoption of Stoic ethics requires the best, i.e. the most consistent, ordering of our 'innate preconceptions'.

There is a question with both of these assertions as to what Chrysippus intended to achieve by making them at all. He could not have been wanting to say that Stoic ethics is *obviously* consistent with our innate conceptions — that is something which will sound trivial to the sage, and implausible to the fool. Indeed, Chrysippus himself admits that most people find Stoic ethics counter-intuitive (in the passage which Plutarch thinks forms the contradiction: {22.16-18}). So perhaps what Chrysippus is doing in this passage — which comes, after all, from his *Protreptics* — is precisely to recognise the *prima facie* difficulty that most of us, and most of his younger pupils, might have with his teaching. The reason why Stoic ethics sounds implausible to us (says Chrysippus) is not that it is wrong, but that we ourselves are full of wrong-headed beliefs about the world. If we accepted Stoic ethical teaching on trust, in the first place, we have the promise that we *will* begin to see how well it actually does make sense of life, and how consistent it actually is with our innate preconceptions. As we saw in section IV.3 (*ad de Stoic. rep.* 9), this explanation of the passage, and all that it implies for Chrysippus'

approach to education, has the added advantage of explaining how it is that Chrysippus could think that ethics should be taught *before* physics, when physics provided the principles necessary to a proper understanding of ethics.

Plutarch, apart from a basic disagreement over Chrysippus' psychological model and the possibility of innate knowledge of the kind provided by *πρόληψεις* at all, would not, of course, agree that the Stoic end would be consistent with innate knowledge did we have it. His position here must, as I have hinted, be the same as Cicero's: the strictly intellectualist notion of the end that characterises Stoicism is ridiculous, and it is ridiculous because it ignores all the concerns of the body, when the body *along with* the mind, is what characterises humanity.<sup>1</sup> So far as this goes, Plutarch takes at face value the admission, which he makes the second limb of the contradiction: "πλάσμασι δοκοῦμεν ὁμοία λέγειν (says Chrysippus) καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν."

Chapter 18 contains two main arguments, which reinforce the idea that Stoic *telos*-theory makes a nonsense of human life. In the first (at {22.24 - 23.22}) we see that our incapacity to live what the Stoics think of as a good life should not make us despair of life altogether; while in the second (= {23.22 - 24.10}) we learn that life *does* become hopeless for someone who fails to attain sufficient *προηγμένα* — things which, we are

<sup>1</sup>Plutarch lists the following bodily concerns in particular: health, freedom from pain, soundness of sense ({22.9-14}). This list may come from Chrysippus himself. Cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 30 {36.14-16}.

told, are irrelevant to our happiness! (There is an extra jibe at Chrysippus at {23.3-4}, but I shall consider that separately at the end.)

The first argument starts by considering the case of a fool who will never achieve the Stoic *telos* — someone, that is, who has not only failed to become virtuous, but will always be thoroughly vicious. According to Chrysippus such a person would be thoroughly unhappy as well, since "vice is the essence of unhappiness" {22.24-27}. Yet Chrysippus contradicts all of this by asserting that it is 'more profitable' for the fool to live than to die: "in a certain way," he says, "evil things are better than indifferent things": τρόπον τινὰ τὰ κακὰ τῶν ἀνὰ μέσον προτερεῖν (see all of {22.27 - 23.12}).

Before considering the attack that lies behind this contradiction, we should, perhaps, try to understand what Chrysippus meant by his claim that evil things are (in whatever sense) better than indifferent things. One thing that is clear is that he was not comparing things according to their *intrinsic* value; rather, their value relative to the way in which the fool experiences them must be what is meant. This is made all but explicit at {23.13-14}, where it is not 'the evil things *per se*' that make life better than death for the fool, but the possession of reason (which, being imperfect in the fool, *causes* him to be incapable of making good use of anything: cf. esp. *de Stoic. rep.* 31). This will also explain how it is that Chrysippus can make the shift from talking about an *evil person* (a fool) in {22.27 - 23.1} to talking about someone *for whom* things are evil in {23.1-2}.

What we need to explain, then, is not how it is that evil things are better than nothing at all; but how it is that the possession of reason — however imperfect — will (*ceteris paribus*) always be better for a man than a state (such as death) in which reason

is lost. To answer this, we need to refer back to the Stoic theory of οἰκείωσις, according to which the most important fact about an animal is its perception of itself, and its understanding of and concern for its own nature. Everything an animal does is supposed to be understandable in terms of its impulse to preserve, fulfil and satisfy its nature — to attain τὰ κατὰ φύσιν for itself —; and it is only in these terms that we can understand the animal's position in Nature as a whole (Nature with a capital N, we might say). Now virtue, in a human being, represents the perfection of *man's* capacity to fulfil his place in Nature and, as such, it is a good incommensurable with the value of τὰ κατὰ φύσιν; but the way in which it performs this function is still by seeking out τὰ κατὰ φύσιν: its value is just that it allows one to evaluate them correctly and attain them to the very best of one's abilities (and also, of course, to recognise when Nature does not intend these things to be attained). As we have seen before, formulations of the end often focus on this, as e.g. Antipater's 'ζῆν ἐκλεγόμενους μὲν τὰ κατὰ φύσιν, ἀπεκλεγόμενους δὲ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν' (*S.V.F.* III, Antipater fr.57). If we view things in these terms, then it might start to become clear why it is that Chrysippus could never advise the fool to reject something 'κατὰ φύσιν' in the hope of improving his *moral* standing. Quite simply, the advice would amount to a blatant absurdity: the idea that one could perfect one's ability to preserve one's constitution at the expense of the soundness of the constitution itself. To mature human beings, rationality and life are two of the most important natural features there are, and a sage would always 'select' these things as long as Nature made them available; it is absurd to suppose that the fool could acquire virtue through rejecting these things and thus doing the opposite of what the virtue he is acquiring would demand.

This explanation may sound slightly disingenuous, but in fact we know that Chrysippus went even further than this. Not only should we hold onto life even at the cost of remaining vicious, he says; but (if the choice were presented to us in these terms) we should opt for *healthy* lives in preference to *virtuous* lives. Cf. *de comm. not.* 1064AB:<sup>2</sup>

καὶ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτῳ φασι καὶ Φερεκύδῃ καθήκειν ἄν, εἴπερ ἠδύναντο, τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀφείναι καὶ τὴν φρόνησιν ὥστε παύσασθαι φθειριῶντας καὶ ὑδρωπιῶντας· καὶ τῆς Κίρκης ἐγγεούσης δύο φάρμακα, τὸ μὲν ποιοῦν ἀφρονας ἐκ φρονίμων τὸ δ' ὀνομασθέντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων φρόνησιν δ' ἔχοντας, ὀρθῶς ἄν><sup>3</sup> τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα πειῖν τὸ τῆς ἀφροσύνης μᾶλλον ἢ μεταβαλεῖν εἰς θηρίου μορφήν τὸ εἶδος, ἔχοντα τὴν φρόνησιν...

On the basis of all of this, and given what we know from Cicero, we can see how the Academic criticism on which Plutarch is basing his contradictions must have been in much the same mould as that behind *de Stoic. rep.* 17. It is interesting to note, first of all, what the contradiction in the present chapter is *not*: Plutarch does not say, as he does in *de comm. not.* 1064AB (from where the passage referred to above is taken), that Chrysippus contradicts himself by reneging on the literal claims he makes about the end, and by bringing προηγμένα into account. On the contrary, he goes out of his way to emphasise the total irrelevance of ἀδιάφορα to the question in hand. At

<sup>2</sup>These examples are, of course, *per impossibile* just because virtue is concerned with, and defined in a human being by, selecting προηγμένα. There could never be a situation where to select a προηγμένον would involve an *ipso facto* loss of virtue — not without an uncharacteristically malign intervention on the part of god, at any rate.

<sup>3</sup>*Suppl.* Cherniss (and cf. Lactantius *inst. div.* V.11,2: *etenim, si nemo est quin emori malit quam converti in aliquam figuram bestiae, quamvis hominis mentem sit habiturus, quanto est miserius in hominis figura animo esse efferato!*).

{23.5-6} he actually says this: τῶν δ' ἀνὰ μέσον λεγομένων παρὰ τοῖς Στωϊκοῖς μήτε κακῶν ὄντων μήτ' ἀγαθῶν κ.τ.λ.

By avoiding the obvious contradiction in this way, Plutarch clearly has it to the fore of his mind to criticise the simple absurdity of the strict reading of the Stoic end. In order to do this, he points out that Chrysippus himself thinks that achieving the Stoic end — being able, supposedly, to ‘live well’ — is irrelevant to whether life is worth living or not. What is more, we know (and will see below in respect of the second contradiction of this chapter) that Chrysippus thought it was the absence of certain ‘indifferent’ things, and not the absence of virtue that was supposed to lead us to give up on life altogether. But since, in the strict terms of Chrysippus *telos*-theory, ‘indifferent’ things are actually evil for one who has not achieved wisdom, Chrysippus has to admit that things he considers to be *evil* are what make life worthwhile for the fool, and not what the Stoics suppose to be virtue at all! An Academic could easily claim that this absurdity is a direct result of Chrysippus’ intellectualism, and serves to show how the Stoics notion of the end fails to answer to the practical needs of a complete human being. It is *because* the strict account of the end does not give physical boons any status as good in their own right that even their presence is evil for the fool, and it becomes hard to explain what more there is in life for him.

At this stage in the argument, then, we have seen how the strict reading of the Stoic *telos* — the ‘disembodied mind’ reading, to borrow Cicero’s description — fails to explain what there is in life for the fool: the exaltation of reason gives him grounds for despair in his own λόγος, and brands everything else in the world as κακά for him. But if, as we have seen, this is not enough to drive him to suicide, what is? The answer (as

I have already intimated) comes in the second argument of chapter 18 (at {23.22 - 24.10}). The Stoics say that the ‘measure for suicide’ is τὰ μέσα κατὰ φύσιν: it is the absence of sufficient προηγμένα (sufficient, that is, for ‘natural’ functioning as a human) that makes a person’s life unsupportable, and not the absence of virtue.

In attacking this doctrine, Plutarch once again makes much of the fact that τὰ μέσα κατὰ φύσιν are supposed not to be objects of αἵρεσις or φυγή at all — in other words that, according to the strict reading of Stoic ethics, their attainment is irrelevant to achieving the *telos* —; he makes a point of *not* calling these things προηγμένα or ἀποπροηγμένα (words which would emphasise the value attaching to them), but μέσα {23.24} and ἀδιάφορα {24.5}. By taking this very strict interpretation, Plutarch is again able to show the *practical* irrelevance of the Stoic *telos* theory: the fact that the fool has not attained the Stoic end (and is thus miserably unhappy) is irrelevant to whether we can expect him to be suicidal or not.

We have seen along the way how Plutarch’s criticism of the strict Stoic notion of the end presupposes an attack along very similar lines to the one we have seen in Cicero in chapter 18 as well as chapter 17; we only need now to show that the doctrine attacked in this chapter represents a divergence from Platonic teaching. As a matter of fact, this becomes immediately clear if we remember *de Stoic. rep.* 14, where Plutarch actually presented Chrysippus’ belief about suicide as a criticism of Plato. What Plato had said was this: τῷ μηδὲ μαθόντι μηδ’ ἐπισταμένῳ ζῆν λυσιτελεῖ μὴ ζῆν (see {16.24-25}). To strengthen the sense that Chrysippus’ position in chapter 18 can be related to his criticism of Plato’s position in chapter 14, we might note the verbal similarities between the respective passages. Both Chrysippus and Plato talk about when

life is 'λυσιτέλες'; and the rider on Chrysippus' claim — "κἄν μηδέποτε μέλλῃ φρονήσῃν" at {22.28 - 23.1} — invites comparison with Plato's "τῷ μηδὲ μαθόντι μηδ' ἐπισταμένῳ ζῆν" at {16.24}. Chrysippus' strict view is radically different from Plato's beliefs, quite apart from the fact that Plato also allowed goods of the body to form part of the end.

There is one more argument in chapter 18 that we have so far ignored. At {23.3-4}, Plutarch says this:

ὅτι μὲν οὖν εἰρηκῶς ἐν ἑτέροις μηδὲν εἶναι τοῖς ἀφροσι  
λυσιτελεῶς ἐνταῦθα φησι λυσιτελεῖν τὸ ἀφρόνως ζῆν, ἀφίημι.

Whether or not the fool can be benefitted is something that would have been more relevant to the material underlying chapter 12, for example: it would be hard, if not impossible, to explain why Plutarch's main source would want to discuss the matter in the context of arguments against the Stoic notion of the end. Perhaps, as we have seen in another case already (chapter 13 {14.23 - 15.2}; see section IV.4, p.114), there is an admission of the interpolative nature of this argument in the word ἀφίημι?

We have seen arguments reflected in chapter 18 which show us that the Stoic end fails to account for human activity quite generally but that, in particular, it fails to explain the motivation behind the fool, who is in the depths of unhappiness. Chapter 19 seems to be based on an argument which completed this picture: one that showed how the

strict view of the Stoic end failed to make sense even for someone who had achieved it — for the sage himself. (Having done this, Plutarch's source would have been in a strong position to show how Chrysippus was forced to adopt a more 'Peripatetic' version of the end in practice — and in what follows I shall argue that this is what lies behind *de Stoic. rep.* 20-22.)

The contradiction in 19 is as follows: Chrysippus makes extreme claims for the difference that exists between good and evil, and correspondingly between happiness and unhappiness; and he claims that these qualities are perceptible. Yet he thinks that it is possible for someone to attain the Stoic end (to cross the gulf between vice and virtue) and not to realise immediately that he had done so: this is the case of the 'διαλεληθῶς σοφός'.

The Stoic explanation of the paradox of the διαλεληθῶς σοφός seems to have been along the following lines: a fool can make progress towards virtue, but that does not mean that he becomes less vicious as he does so: a man who swims up to within two inches of the surface of the water drowns as much as one six fathoms deep (*de comm. not.* 1063A). The fool's 'progress' is necessarily slow and difficult, and made through a long series of small steps. In particular, the difference between an actual sage and 'ὁ ἐπ' ἄκρον προκόπτων' is, in practical terms, almost non-existent (cf. *S.V.F.* III.510). True, only the sage has a perfect and unshakeable certainty of right action; but the προκόπτων has at least a reasonable and steady grasp of his ethical duties. So it is not hard to imagine that the last step on the road to virtue is easily missed as such: there will be little or no immediate material difference to indicate the final element of progress.

It is easy for the Academics to make a reply to this. Although the final step in ethical progress is as small as all the others, it is the only one, according to the Stoics, that creates any change in a person's moral state or in their happiness at all: with that step, absolute misery is put off and perfect happiness suddenly acquired. Unless the difference between vice and virtue were very small, it is impossible to believe that this change could go unnoticed — this, anyway, is the argument we find in Plutarch's *de profectibus in virtute* 75D-F.

There must, however, be more to Plutarch's argument in *de Stoic. rep.* 19 than we get in the *de profectibus*. For no obvious reason, Plutarch here complicates the perfectly straightforward contradiction with a reference to the Stoic claim that good and evil are perceptible, as if this is an important premise for the contradiction he wants (see {24.14-23}): it is this fact *together with* the strict division of good and evil which is supposed to lead to contradiction with the doctrine of the διαλεληθῶς σοφός. (Cf. also *de comm. not.* 1062BC where the argument is set out in a very similar way.) There is a question, then, as to quite what role this extra doctrine plays here.

If the difference between virtue and vice *is* a large one (as, on the Stoic theory, it seems to be), there is only one way in which the Academics might have thought it would be possible to defend the notion that a person could fail to notice the change from one to the other, and that is if it were possible to say that awareness of a state is not necessarily concomitant with the advent of the state itself: a person might become happy, but not become *aware* of his happiness until later, as a man might become a king with the death of his father, but not yet know that the death had occurred. In order to cut off the possibility of this defence, the Academics need to assert that it is impossible to be happy or virtuous *without* being aware of the fact. It seems to me that the appeal

to the perceptibility of virtue and vice must have been meant to show that the Stoics themselves could not maintain that it was possible. The involvement of perceptibility in this argument turns out to be quite easy to explain in this case because, according to the Stoics, self-awareness just is self-perception (cf. esp. Hierocles, 'Hθ. Στοιχ. I.34-39). If one possesses a quality, then to be aware of that quality is just to perceive it in oneself. What is more, the Stoics do not believe that there is ever a time when we are *not* 'perceiving ourselves' (so long as we are alive): Hierocles tells us that we perceive ourselves even when we are asleep: 'Hθ. Στοιχ. IV.54 - V.23. This means that there could be no situation analogous to the case of the king who has not yet found out that he has inherited the throne. Since virtue is perceptible, and since we are perceiving ourselves all the time, the acquisition of virtue could never escape our notice — unless, of course, it really was a very minor change indeed. Conclusion: if we take seriously the strict reading of the Stoic end (according to which there is a huge difference between virtue and vice), then the case of the διαλεληθῶς σοφός becomes simply unintelligible.

When we come to consider how Chrysippus' claims in this chapter relate to Platonic belief, we can say immediately that the central doctrine — the Stoic notion of the end (according to the strict reading) — is non-Platonic in the way that it restricts what can be 'good' for a person. It is slightly harder to place the doctrine which is supposed to contradict this (the case of the διαλεληθῶς σοφός). To be sure, it is distinctively Stoic, a paradox of the kind that no Platonist ever constructs or would want to construct. But Plutarch might think that, in order for it to make any sense at all in its own right, it would have to presuppose a more 'Platonic' view of ethical progress — one in which the last step towards virtue really is a small one, with a small, if definitive, effect. It is

interesting that Plutarch never ridicules the doctrine *as such* — even in the *de comm. not.* passage we have looked at, where we might have expected him to laugh at the counter-intuitive absurdity of the bare doctrine.

This is enough to establish that it is divergence from Plato with which Chrysippus becomes uncomfortable, and starts to contradict himself. For the sake of completeness, it may also be worth mentioning that the doctrine of the perceptibility of vice and virtue is repugnant to Platonists (although the idea of *self-awareness*, which I suggested it stood for in this chapter, would not of course be at all shocking to them). Plutarch himself dismisses the notion of the perceptibility of qualities quite generally as ἄτοπον at *de comm. not.* 45, 1084AB; and, among other Platonists, Alcinous for example denies the premise on which the Stoics made their claim — the *corporeality* of qualities —: οὐκ ἄρὰ σῶμα ἢ ποιότης, he says (*didask.* 166.15-38).

The source-material for *de Stoic. rep.* 17-19 aimed to show that the Stoic notion of the end, on the strict reading, fails to give a plausible or even applicable account of the human condition. This, as we have seen, would be very much in line with the argument that Cicero develops in *de fin.* IV (esp. 26-29). But we know that there is another side to the question about Stoic ethics, and that is the *practical* concessions they make to a position more closely allied to the ‘Platonic’. This is something Cicero brings up at *de fin.* IV.20-23 and 72-73, where he denies that προηγμένα can be thought of as anything different from ‘good’ if they have value at all. (He draws the conclusion that Zeno’s philosophy in these terms comes down to nothing more than Peripateticism in a new guise.) Cf. esp. IV.23:

Quid enim interest, divitias, opes, valetudinem bona dicas ane  
praeposita [*i.e.* προηγμένα], cum ille qui ista bona dicit nihilo  
plus iis tribuat quam tu qui eadem illa praeposita nominas?

With chapters 20-22, I want to show how Plutarch's source might have turned to exactly the same kind of argument, showing how the Stoics *in effect* propagated much the same kind of view of the end as the Platonic school from which they split. The way in which the source did this was to look, in the first place, at how the life of the man who had achieved the end (the sage) was described; and then to look more generally at how the Stoics described the ideal context for ethical development. In both cases (so the Academic argument would have gone) we find the presence of features which the strict Stoic view of the end could hardly explain, but which seem to presuppose a much more 'traditional' *telos* theory.

Chapter 20 embraces two arguments, strictly speaking, which between them cover all three of the career options which the Stoics opened up for the sage: the regal, the political and the intellectual life: τὸν τε βασιλικὸν καὶ τὸν πολιτικὸν καὶ τρίτον τὸν ἐπιστημονικόν (*S.V.F.* III.686). These arguments are as follows: in the first (= {25.7 - 26.19}) Chrysippus has said in one place that the sage 'minds his own business', and is untroubled by public life; but in another place he sends the sage all over the world just to make money (the *regal* or, failing that, the *political* life); and in the second argument (= {26.20 - 27.24}) he has said that money is unimportant to the sage, and yet he gives over-careful instructions to him for extracting fees from his pupils (the *intellectual* life).

The nature of the first contradiction is often radically misunderstood. It is assumed that Chrysippus' inconsistency is to have said on the one hand that the sage should lead a quiet life, but on the other that he should throw himself into the heart of political activity. But if this were Plutarch's argument, then it would not be a very good one. The Stoics are clear that political activity *is* preferable, but that it is not always possible. As Zeno says (*apud Seneca de otio* 3.2): *accedet ad rem publicam* [sc. sapiens] *nisi si quid impedieret*. So, when Chrysippus says in the *περὶ τῶν Δι' αὐτὰ αἰρετῶν* that 'the quiet life has its advantages', there is no reason why we should take him to mean that leisure is *preferable* to political activity. All he is saying is that one should not despair if one cannot take political office: there is (he says) a reasonable alternative, and a virtuous life is still possible for the person who lives a quiet life. Lines {25.14-16} (the quotation from the *περὶ τῶν Δι' αὐτὰ αἰρετῶν*) point out the 'advantages of a quiet life that most people miss' in a way that has definite overtones of consolation.

(That Plutarch himself understood Chrysippus in this way is confirmed by the comment that Plutarch inserts at {25.16-18}. This two-line argument compares the Stoic sage leading a non-political life with the Epicurean gods who, in becoming ἀπράγμονες, deprive us of their πρόνοια {25.16-18}. Now if the contradiction Plutarch wished to develop was along the lines of 'Chrysippus sometimes says that the sage will enjoy a life of leisure and at other times that he will get involved in politics', then we would expect him here to use the argument that 'The dignity of the Stoic sage is affected by his following an Epicurean way of life' — i.e. that the life of leisure is consistent with Epicurean principles but not with Stoic ones. However, instead of that, what Plutarch seems to be saying is the following: 'Chrysippus says that it is all right for the sage to live the life of a *privatus* [scil.: if circumstances prevent him from political action]; but

if the sage goes into retirement and gives up even *trying* to govern things properly, this would be an abandonment of his duties tantamount to that of the Epicurean gods. The city is deprived of the one person who knows what is best for it, just as the Epicurean world is deprived of the providence of the gods.’ Plutarch does think there are moral difficulties involved in the sage’s decision not to get involved in politics, but he does not think that there is a *prima facie* inconsistency with the Stoics’ claim that a political life is one option for the sage.)

In order to find the real nature of the contradiction intended by Plutarch in chapter 20, we need to look at the *motivation* behind what Chrysippus says the sage does; and, in the *περὶ Βίων*, the motivation for political activity is made very clear indeed: the sage will get involved in politics — indeed, he will go to the ends of the earth — *in order to make money*: cf. *χρηματιζόμενον* {25.20} and *ἕνεκα χρηματισμοῦ* {26.14}. This is what explains why Chrysippus cannot consistently recommend a quiet life to the sage: if money is ever a motive for the sage’s activity, then it is not consistent for him to say that the sage might as well stay at home and live a quiet life.

Plutarch’s argument thus comes down to the claim that Chrysippus often *effectively* includes wealth in the end for man. Now of course Chrysippus would claim that the sage will try to make money only as *προηγμένον* — cf. Seneca *de beat.vit.* 22.4-5: *ne erres itaque, inter potiora divitiae sunt*. But Plutarch and his source could say — as Cicero did at *de fin.* IV.23 — that there just is no effective difference between what the Stoics call *προηγμένον* and what everyone else calls good. The *strict* reading of the Stoic end gives no motive at all for making money, and if the sage’s activities

are ever to be directed by an enthusiasm to do this, then the actual notion of the end held by the Stoics must be much closer to the Platonic.

The second contradiction in chapter 20 (at {26.20 - 27.24}) can be explained in very similar terms to the first. According to the strict version of Chrysippus' theory, "bread and water" are supposed to be all a man needs; and the loss of a fortune should be no more important to him than the loss of a drachma. But once again Chrysippus contradicts this by making money the issue of paramount importance for the sage who decides to choose the life of a σοφιστής. This time the seriousness of the matter is compounded by the fact that the sage will suffer ἀδικία on the loss of money due to him (cf. {27.16}). But we know that the man who has achieved the absolutist Stoic end is supposed to be invulnerable to 'injustice' (which is to say 'βλάβη', as Plutarch helpfully glosses: {27.20}; and cf. *S.V.F.* III.578). In the background to this, once again, must be the accusation that Chrysippus in practice comes around to a much more 'Platonic' version of the end, despite the strict reading of the distinctive Stoic theory.

In chapter 20 the material which Plutarch was drawing on seems to have set about considering the end *effectively* adopted by the Stoics by looking at the way in which the ideal Stoic was supposed to have acted in life and society. The conclusion was that, whichever of the three βῆτοι available to him he chose, and despite the strict and literal claims made by the Stoics for the nature of their *telos*, the sage would be bound to demonstrate their practical adherence to the ethical beliefs which had always been promulgated more honestly by the Platonic school. With chapter 21, Plutarch's source

seems to have moved on from the Stoics' description of the ideal man to the Stoics' description of the ideal context for ethical action. That is, it turned to the Stoics' account of the ideal city to see what sort of things the Stoics considered important for virtue in practice. The contradiction emerges when, having said that nothing in the ideal city should be done purely for the sake of pleasure, and that 'bread and water is enough for man',<sup>4</sup> Chrysippus is caught condoning masturbation and claiming that the peacock exists purely for its beauty.

We have discussed briefly the nature of Stoic political theory, and the probable aim and content of their political writing, in section IV.2. But as far as the present chapter is concerned, the important point is only this: that Chrysippus envisaged the perfect context for ethical development and action as essentially Cynical: nothing need be included beyond what is necessary to sustain a 'natural' life (defined in terms of a minimum requirement of προηγμένα, as we saw, in passing, in respect of chapter 18, above). The idea, presumably, is that anything else that could be introduced, however 'preferable', would at best be irrelevant and at worst, perhaps, distracting. This position tends to be what we would expect the Stoic to think on the basis of the strict reading of their ethical theory.

In the face of this belief in the essential purity of the Cynical life, Plutarch (and his source) will consider his countenance of 'unnecessary' luxuries such as masturbation, and the claim that god has, in his providence, given us peacocks purely for ornamental purposes, as frankly baffling — or rather, he will consider that it shows that Chrysippus

<sup>4</sup>The quotation from Euripides at {28.4-5} is repeated from just a page ago (see chapter 20, {26.22-23}). There is, however, no need to hold this repetition against Plutarch or his source: it may somewhere along the line have been intended as a comment on Chrysippus' own tedious use of the passage — cf. πολλαχοῦ μὲν ἀποκναίει {26.20}, and also Gellius VI.16,6-7: *quibus saepissime Chrysippus...*

concedes in practice the fact that happiness requires more than the strict version of the Stoic end presupposes. (But it is worth noting that, although Plutarch will approve of the general principle that pleasure is (or can be) good, this does not imply approval of the extremes to which he presents Chrysippus as going. For example, Plutarch's disgust at Chrysippus' praise of Diogenes seems genuine, especially given the fact that he makes such an unkind interpretation of Diogenes' intention at {28.6-9}.<sup>5</sup> And he calls παραλογώτατος {28.14} the suggestion that Nature makes things for the sake of their beauty alone {28.12-15} — an attitude that is confirmed by a passage in *quaest. conviv.* III.1 (646C-648B), where the unsympathetic character Erato puts forward just this theory concerning flowers, and fails to win the approval that goes to Trypho for suggesting that, on the contrary, flowers are (medically) useful.)

The argument behind chapter 22 must also have considered the Stoic end in terms of Chrysippus' commitment to Cynicism (Cynicism being, again, what the Academic would see as the ideal presupposed by the strict reading of Stoic ethics). In this case, Chrysippus contradicts himself over whether taboos are 'natural' or (therefore) conducive to the perfect life. In the first place ({29.23 - 30.7}) he thinks that animals show us that taboos are not natural — the Cynical view, which Plutarch might suppose fits in well with the Stoic idea that *conventionally* good things are not good at all —;

<sup>5</sup>Diogenes' public display of masturbation was not a bout of pleasure-seeking, one assumes, but an attempt to teach the value of self-sufficiency. This is confirmed by Dio Chrysostom *oratio* VI.18-19. Plutarch presumably has a serious point, though: he might think that there is no *need* to engage in any form of non-reproductive sexual activity at all, and to do so indicates a streak of pure hedonism or lack of self-control.

but he contradicts that by approving of other taboos in {30.7-10}, and saying that it is besides the point to look to the example of animals {30.10-13}.

The Academic argument that might have lain behind all of this is easy enough to reconstruct once we look at the contradiction in these terms — although we have no very close parallels for the use of this particular kind of example. It is also easy enough to see where Plutarch, as a Platonist, will locate the Stoics' fatal error. We have already seen something of the Stoics' difference with Plato over the notion of the perfect state (the ideal context for human virtue): this difference, of course, is simply another way of expressing the difference between the two philosophies over the nature of the end. In particular, Plato certainly did not construct his *Republic* along Cynical lines, in the way that the Stoics did; and, although some of his views about marriage and family life were unconventional, he expressly aimed to avoid the possibility of incest — something countenanced by Chrysippus at {29.24}. Cf. esp. *Rep.* 461de (where, however, the logistics of Plato's system force him to tolerate the occasional union of brother and sister), and *Laws* 838b-d (where even this is now ruled out as an abomination of which no-one wants to be found guilty).

As to the question of piety, and whether conventional acts of piety are to be considered as really or just conventionally good: Plutarch will obviously not concur with Chrysippus' first position (taken from the Προτρεπτικά) according to which conventional religious taboos are an irrelevance. Plutarch was himself, after all, a priest; and to back up his belief in the importance of religious institutions he might have appealed, for example, to Plato *Laws* 848cd.

Finally, we need to consider Plutarch's own attitude to the general principle of appealing to animal behaviour for establishing ethical truths. Again, it is clear that he

would not have agreed with the Cynical position which Chrysippus took in the *Προτρεπτικά*. Plutarch does, in fact, display a qualified regard for the argument (*de am. prol.* 495BC), but he is careful to add that the instinct nature gives to irrational beasts is not by itself enough to base conclusions about human ethical action on: 'άτελές και ού διαρκές πρὸς δικαιοσύνην ούδὲ τῆς χρείας πορρωτέρω προερχόμενον.' He would clearly come closer to supporting the view Chrysippus puts forward in the *περὶ Φύσεως* (see {30.7-13}). There, Chrysippus himself realises that animal behaviour is not directly applicable to the human situation: *μη γάρ εἶναι πρὸς λόγον εἰ κύνες και ὄνοι τοῦτο ποιοῦσι.*

Chapter 23 is the last chapter of the *de Stoic. rep.* which we can claim is based on material taken from an Academic attack on the Stoics' ethical theory, and I want to suggest that it reflects an argument that parallels *de fin.* IV.43, a passage in which Cicero concludes *his* attack on the Stoic end by arguing that, if taken according to the strict reading, it is no different from, and therefore as absurd as, the claims made by Aristo (which even Chrysippus acknowledged to be absurd).

It is at first sight rather difficult to see how chapter 23 might have this moral in its background — but then there is a very real question over quite what the nature of the debate in 23 is at all. The contradiction is this: Chrysippus is said to have attacked "ἐνιοι τῶν φιλοσόφων" for positing an "ἐπελευστικὴ κίνησις" (see {30.15 - 31.7}); yet he himself brought in an "ἐπίκλισις" to explain otherwise unmotivated choices we sometimes have to make between apparently identical objects.

The problem we face in interpreting the argument is that we don't know who the "ἔνιοι τῶν φιλοσόφων" were, or (largely in consequence of this) quite what the "ἐπελευστική κίνησις" was supposed to be. In the past the assumption tended to be made that the philosophers in question were followers of the unorthodox Stoic Aristo, and that the ἐπελεύσεις of *de Stoic. rep.* 23 were to be equated with the *occurrentia* of Cicero's account of Aristo at *de finibus* IV.43.<sup>6</sup> But more recently there has been a swell of support amounting to almost unanimity in favour of the idea that the philosophers are not Aristonian Stoics at all, but Epicureans.<sup>7</sup> The idea is that the ἐπελευστική κίνησις represents the famous *swerve* that frees us from 'external causes' — i.e. frees us from fate. However, I want to argue in what follows that despite this consensus, the Epicurean reading of *de Stoic. rep.* 23 fails, on close inspection, even to be a possibility. There are some difficulties in reconstructing Aristo's thought, but it becomes very clear that the philosophers attacked by Chrysippus in this chapter must have been his followers. It is on this basis that the parallel with Cicero *de fin.* IV.43 becomes attractive, and this in turn adds plausibility to the whole direction in which the reconstruction of Plutarch's source material has taken in this section.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. von Arnim *ad S.V.F.* I.369; Rieth, *Grundbegriffe der stoischen Ethik*, pp.105-108; Elorduy, *Die Sozialphilosophie der Stoa* p.30.

<sup>7</sup>M. Pohlenz, review in *Gnomon* 21 (1949), pp.347-354, esp.351-2; É. Bréhier, *Les Stoïciens* (Paris 1962), p.113, note 13; Cherniss, *Loeb* vol. XIII.2, pp.508-509 note (a); W. G. Englert, *Epicurus on the Swerve and Voluntary Action* (American Classical Studies 16; Atlanta 1987), pp.188-189, note 49; &c. J. Moreau ('Ariston et le Stoïcisme' in *Revue des Études Anciennes* 50 (1948), pp.27-48, esp. 47 with note 2) and A.-M. Ioppolo (*Aristone di Chio e lo stoicismo antico* (Rome 1980), p.183 note 32) reject the possibility that Aristo could be behind the ἐπελευστική δύναμις apparently on the grounds that it would force them to take Cicero's account of the *occurrentia* (*de fin.* IV.43) seriously. They thus find themselves siding with the Epicurean interpretation by default.

For any exposition of chapter 23, the most important sentence is the first one, which alludes to the purpose of the theory of the ἐπελευστική κίνησις {30.15-19}:

τοῦ κατηναγκάσθαι δοκοῦντες ὑπὸ τῶν ἑξωθεν αἰτιῶν ταῖς ὀρμαῖς ἀπόλυσιν πορίζειν ἔνιοι τῶν φιλοσόφων ἐπελευστικὴν τινα κίνησιν ἐν τῷ ἡγεμονικῷ κατασκευάζουσιν, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπαραλλάκτων μάλιστα γινομένην ἔκδηλον.

If we start by considering the case for the Epicurean interpretation of this passage, we will, as I said, understand the ἐπελευστική δύναμις as part of their attempt to liberate our actions from fate. But what kind of view of fate in particular would the argument as it is presented here be effective against?

One thing that is made quite clear to us is *how* the ἐπελευστική δύναμις is supposed to perform its feat of liberation: it "provides the impulses with release from the constraint of external causes" (τοῦ κατηναγκάσθαι...ὑπὸ τῶν ἑξωθεν αἰτιῶν ταῖς ὀρμαῖς ἀπόλυσιν πορίζειν). This emphasis on the effect of *external* causation on the impulses makes it quite clear whose view of fate would be under attack: it is precisely in these terms that Plutarch presents *Stoic* determinism in *de Stoic. rep.* 47. In more detail, Plutarch there claims that Stoic fate compels us to act by presenting us with impressions which demand our assent. It is assent to an impression which constitutes impulse (cf. *S.V.F.* III.169), so this is tantamount to saying that our impulse is caused by impressions. The idea would be that Epicurean psychology stops this tyranny of impressions by introducing a faculty of assent that is autonomous, that cannot be forced by the impressions it receives. Our assent depends on a random 'swerve', and the swerve may or may not go with the impression — it is not, in any case, determined *by*

the impression. 'We can see this most clearly' (as the argument goes on) in the case where we have to decide between apparently identical, but competing impressions: *ex hypothesi* these impressions do not contain in themselves any basis for a choice to be made between them, yet people still find themselves able to choose. The only way this could be so is if we had a free internal faculty of choice, and this (so the argument goes) is the ἐπελευστική κίνησις of *de Stoic. rep. 23*.

I have tried to give the fairest rendition of an Epicurean reading of *de Stoic. rep. 23* that I can, but already it should be clear that a significant proportion of Epicurean scholars could never accept such an interpretation of this passage at all. Followers of Pope, for example, will reject the possibility that Epicurus lies behind *de Stoic. rep. 23*, because they do not believe that the swerve is feature of Epicurus' psychology in the first place.<sup>8</sup> Followers of Furley will reject the account, because Furley does not think that each action, even each free action, *is* initiated by a swerve in the atoms of the soul. (In fact, he argues that there only needs to have been one swerve in the history of an individual's soul in order to make his actions free in the appropriate way — that is, free in the sense that the cause of each action "cannot be traced back beyond or outside the agent himself.")<sup>9</sup> Yet the ἐπελευστική κίνησις happens regularly — at least every time we make a choice between indistinguishable options, and in fact more frequently, since this was only the 'clearest example' of the phenomenon. Finally, supporters of a view like that put forward by Sedley will also reject the account because, according to them,

<sup>8</sup>M. Pope, 'Epicureanism and the Atomic Swerve' in *Symbolae Osloenses* 56 (1986) pp.77-97.

<sup>9</sup>D. Furley, 'Aristotle and Epicurus on Voluntary Action', study II of Furley's *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton University Press 1967), pp.159-237, esp. 232. Cf. J. M. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press 1972), p.94.

the 'swerve' does not initiate impulse, but only provides the opportunity for a truly free choice.<sup>10</sup> Yet the whole point of the ἐπελευστική δύναμις (certainly in the *aporia* example) is that it does initiate movement, and that in a situation where the choice is *too* free already.

Those who are left, those who believe that an atomic swerve initiates all actions which are properly called 'free', may themselves be left feeling uncomfortable. For the account as reconstructed makes the resolution of *aporiai* — the inexplicable choice between indistinguishable items — the paradigmatic case of free choice. Yet one presumes that not all manifestations of free-will are supposed to be *inexplicable*, however unexpected or unpredictable they may have been. Now it may well be that, as a matter of fact, Epicurus' theory of free will *was* weakened by a failure to distinguish between the two types of case — although this view is becoming increasingly unpopular —; but that just makes it all the more unlikely that Epicureans would have drawn attention to the *aporia* case. Any gain they might have made by convincing us that our assent is not always determined by impressions would be cancelled out by their demonstration that they had no satisfactory way of distinguishing the thousands of every-day decisions we deliberately make and *are* able to justify.

The final and, I think, conclusive argument against the Epicurean reading of *de Stoic. rep.* 23 revolves, however, around the simple fact that so much emphasis is put on the capacity of the ἐπελευστική δύναμις to free us from *external* causes. We shall

<sup>10</sup>D. N. Sedley, 'Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism' in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ: *studi sull' epicureismo greco e latino offerti a Marcello Gigante*, vol.I (Naples 1983), pp.11-51 (cf. 'Epicurean Anti-Reductionism', *Matter and Metaphysics*, edd. J. Barnes and M. Mignucci (Naples 1988) pp.297-327, esp.318-319). Cf. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, pp.59-60; K. Kleve, 'Id Facit Exiguum Clinamen', *Symbolae Osloenses* 55 (1980) pp.27-31; T. J. Saunders, 'Free Will and the Atomic Swerve in Lucretius', *Symbolae Osloenses* 59 (1984) pp.37-59.

soon see that this would be an uncharacteristic qualification for an Epicurean; but in the first place we should note that it would be a thoroughly unhelpful one. I suggested that the supposed Epicureans' deterministic adversaries in *de Stoic. rep.* 23 would have to be the Stoics, but it turns out that the Stoics did not conceive of their determinism as being purely a matter of *external* necessitating causes. Indeed, the external cause — the impression — is merely a 'precipitating' factor (προκαταρκτικός) and the Stoics seem to have thought of fate as being a *combination* of this external cause and the 'principal' cause which was *internal*.<sup>11</sup> Now it is true, as I said, that Plutarch does himself characterise Stoic fate as the compulsion of antecedent (and external) causes — but the comparison is not so appropriate as it might have appeared at first. As a matter of fact, Plutarch does not after all deny that the Stoics asserted that external causes were only 'procatarctic' — all he does is to deny that it makes sense for them to keep saying this in the context of a belief in strict determinism.<sup>12</sup> What is more, Plutarch is making his claims about the nature of Stoic fate in a specific polemical context: in particular, he is keen to show that, under any system of rigid determinism, the blame for men's actions must rest with the gods. Epicurus has no such agenda: he simply wants to 'break the chain of causation' (cf. Lucretius II.254), and there is no reason why he should specify

<sup>11</sup>See Plutarch *de Stoic. rep.* 47, {55.18-20} with Cicero *de fato* 41-42 and P. Donini, 'Plutarco e il Determinismo de Crisippo' in *Aspetti dello Stoicismo e dell' Epicureismo in Plutarco (Quaderni del Giornale Filologico Ferrarese* 9; Ferrara 1988), pp.21-32, esp. 30-32.

<sup>12</sup>The central concern of *de Stoic. rep.* 47 is actually the fact that fate is identified with god. On this basis Plutarch could argue that fate must be an *external* cause because the causal factors introduced by god must be external to the agent. This means that, when the Stoics say that the external cause is προκαταρκτικός, Plutarch will say that they must mean that *fate itself* is προκαταρκτικός, something which the Stoics could not accept: see {56.2-16}. (Of course the Stoics could point out that they think the whole universe is pervaded by — actually *is* — god, so that identifying god with fate does not mean that fate can only work through external, antecedent causes. In the face of this argument, though, Plutarch will just deny that it makes any sense to keep talking about human individuality, and therefore of individual moral responsibility — which is precisely the conclusion he thinks can be drawn from the Stoic theory of determinism anyway.)

that the atomic 'swerve' liberates us from external causation rather than from internal causation. The theory, insofar as it is valid at all, would be equally valid in both cases, so that there is just *no motive* for Epicurus to misrepresent the Stoic position by asserting that the causal nexus of fate operates solely through antecedent and external causes.

This leads on to the second point, which is that, if anything, the Epicureans should actually want to concentrate on refuting *internal* causation. It is true that the Stoics were the main exponents of determinism against whom later Epicureans had to assert their doctrine of free will; but the swerve performed a more immediate function, and that was to stop their own system from falling into the kind of determinism threatened by an adherence to unrefined Democritean atomism.<sup>13</sup> Yet, insofar as it is legitimate to make the distinction at all, the kind of determinism which Democritus might have been guilty of would be most readily thought of as internal — the agent's actions being made dependent on the regular and inevitable movement of the atoms comprising his soul —; and in any case would certainly not be thought of as primarily *external*.

Whoever the Epicureans targeted in their free-will offensive, it is certainly the case, when they make the distinction, that they do think it is *internal* necessity from which the atomic swerve frees us. See Cicero *de fato* 23, for example, where Epicurus is reported as saying that the basis for free choice must reside in the way atoms move, because the movement of the mind depends on the movement of its atoms. Lucretius

<sup>13</sup>For the Epicureans' 'improvement' on the determinism inherent in Democritus, see Diogenes of Oenanda fr. 33 coll. ii-iii [William]. Sedley argues that Epicurus himself was *not* in fact arguing against the Stoics, but against certain other followers of Democritus ('Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism' pp.31-3); however, see also Furley *op. cit.* pp.174-5.

explicitly distinguishes internal from external causation, and says that the weight of the atoms of the soul is itself enough to guard against the latter danger: the *swerve* is needed to free the mind from *internal* compulsion (*necessum intestinum*: see II.284-293). Cf. also Epicurus' own *de natura*, where he asserts his belief in free will against claims that the choices we make are determined either by our environment, or by our original characters ('ἡ ἐξ ἀρχῆς σύστασις': [31.27] 5-9 [Arrighetti]).<sup>14</sup>

It is clear, then, that the ἐπελευστική δύναμις does not come from Epicurus, and if so, then it must have been a feature of Aristo's philosophy instead. Unfortunately, the detail of Aristo's thought is something of a grey area for us, so there is no straightforward answer to *how* it might have fitted in. But it will, at least, help if we can make a tentative reconstruction, and show what role the ἐπελευστική δύναμις might have performed.

The one feature of Aristo's ethical theory of which we can be absolutely certain is this: while Aristo subscribed to the belief that everything except virtue and vice was strictly speaking indifferent, he disagreed with the further claim made by orthodox Stoics that, among indifferent things, some were naturally 'preferable' and some were naturally 'dispreferable'. To Aristo, *all* indifferent things came into the class of what the orthodox Stoics called 'καθάπαξ ἀδιάφορα' — indifferent *simpliciter* —,<sup>15</sup> and to make the further distinction just compromises the integrity of the claim that only virtue

<sup>14</sup>And cf. Furley *op. cit.*, esp. pp.180-182, 186-187.

<sup>15</sup>For the term, see Stobaeus *ecl.* II, p.79,9 [Wachsmuth]. Cf. also D.L. VII.104-5 and S.E. *adv. math.* XI.59-60.

is good. This is how S.E. reports him, at *adv. math.* XI.64 (and see the whole of 64-67):<sup>16</sup>

μη εἶναι δὲ προηγμένον ἀδιάφορον τὴν ὑγείαν καὶ πᾶν τὸ κατ' αὐτὴν παραπλήσιον ἔφησεν Ἀρίστων ὁ Χίος. ἴσον γὰρ ἔστι τὸ προηγμένον αὐτὴν λέγειν ἀδιάφορον τῷ ἀγαθὸν ἀξιοῦν, καὶ σχεδὸν ὄνόματι μόνον διαφέρον.

Nothing is intrinsically preferable, he goes on to say, but the value of an action or a thing is entirely contingent on the particular circumstances under which you encounter it.

The question arises, then, if Aristo seriously believes that there is no natural difference at all between things or states that will explain why we should choose one rather than the other, of how we ever come to make choices — how we manage to *live* — at all. Cicero asks this very question at *de fin.* IV.69:

admirantes quaeramus [sc. ab Aristone]...quonam modo vitam agere possimus si nihil interesse nostra putemus, valeamus aegrinesimus, vacemus an cruciemur dolore, frigus, famem propulsare possimus necne possimus.

The answer — which is not an answer that is easy to understand, and which Chrysippus and Cicero both had trouble accepting as a proper answer at all — seems to be that, when we are sages, the reasonable choice ‘occurs’ to us. Cf. Cicero *de fin.* IV.43:

<sup>16</sup>This criticism is, of course, very similar to that levelled at Stoicism by the Academy, according to which the Stoics are Peripatetics in all but vocabulary since they act towards ‘preferable’ things (health &c.) just as if they were good.

deinde Aristo, qui nihil relinquere non est ausus, introduxit autem, quibus commotus sapiens appeteret aliquid, 'quodcumque in mentem incideret' et 'quodcumque tamquam occurreret'.

It is essential to Aristo's psychology of action that this 'occurring' is a feature of our internal psychology, and not something that can be explained by an evaluation of external factors. This, says Cicero, is precisely what differentiates him from the orthodox Stoics: *they* think that we should act according to an identification of what is naturally 'preferable', while *he* thinks that we need no more than the mental event (the decision to act) itself:

ille enim 'occurrentia' nescio quae comminiscetur; hi autem ponunt illi quidem prima naturae &c.

Confirmation of all of this comes from Seneca, who discusses Aristo's rejection of moral 'precepts' in *ep.* 94. Aristo, he says, thought that precepts were unhelpful just because there are no general rules as to how one should act: each situation demands its own, unique response, and that response will always 'become apparent' to the sage: *apparebit, quid cuique debeat officio* (94.5).

It is immediately attractive to think that it is this capacity in the sage for action to 'occur' to him in the absence of any positive evaluation of the options available that is constituted by the ἐπελευστική δύναμις. For one thing, the word 'ἐπελεύσεις' (referring to the inclinations caused by the ἐπελευστική δύναμις: see {31.4}) looks like

it must be the original Greek translated by Cicero's *occurrentia*.<sup>17</sup> Plutarch also tells us, in *de Stoic. rep.* 23, that the function of the ἐπελευστική δύναμις is precisely to free us from 'external causes' which determine the way we act ({30.15-18}), and this should remind us of Aristo's claim that our actions should not be dictated by values we suppose to be immanent in things themselves. Finally, the example we are given — the choice between two apparently identical objects ({30.19-23}) — has a strong *prima facie* resemblance to the way in which Aristo seem to have viewed the world quite generally. In particular, the terminology used to describe the nature of the choice is of exactly the same kind as that used in the general case: the objects are "ἀπαράλλακτοι" ({30.18}), and of equal value and character (ἴσον δυναμένων καὶ ὁμοίως ἐχόντων: {30.19-20}). The point is strongly made that, just as with indifferents quite generally in Aristo's scheme of things, there is no feature of these objects themselves that makes one of them preferable to the other. It must also be relevant to note that the orthodox Stoics explained things that are 'καθ'ἅπαξ ἀδιάφορα' as being like indistinguishable coins: [οἶον] δυοῖν δραχμῶν ἀπαραλλάκτων κ.τ.λ. (S.E. XI.60 — note the word ἀπαραλλάκτος again). So it seems reasonable to suppose that the choice made by the ἐπελευστική δύναμις in *de Stoic. rep.* 23 must in some important sense be a paradigm for wise decision quite generally in Aristo's psychology of action.

One problem with the suggestion that the *de Stoic. rep.* 23 example is paradigmatic of all of the sage's actions is that, on the evidence we are given in this chapter, it looks as if the choice which is made in the end is random. But it cannot be the case that Aristo thought all choices made by the sage were random: as we have seen,

<sup>17</sup>The attractiveness of supposing that *occurrentia* translates ἐπελεύσεις has not gone unnoticed: see Rieth, *loc. cit.* and, arguing against the identification nevertheless, Moreau (*loc. cit.*), Ioppolo (*op. cit.* pp.171-183) and Annas (*The Morality of Happiness*, p.101).

Aristo does seem to think that, in particular circumstances, particular actions are right, and presumably the sage can be relied on to choose these just because of his wisdom. Sextus Empiricus, for example, cites an instance in which the sage is *right* to choose sickness rather than health and servitude to a tyrant.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it must also be the case that the sage acts *reasonably* — the sage would, for example, be able to say in S.E.'s example that it was more reasonable to become sick than to serve a tyrant. But this means that he must be able to justify what it is that he did — to explain *why* what he did was reasonable. Quite what this explanation would look like is not clear: it is not, for example, open to him to say that illness is naturally better than serving a tyrant. The point may ultimately be simply that to have wisdom is to 'think like Nature does' and so to understand what would contribute to the perfection of the world as a whole. (In fact, this is not so far from what the orthodox Stoics themselves think.) The sage's explanation of his action would thus look rather like god's explanation of why the sage's action contributed to the world's being the best possible world.<sup>19</sup> In any case, the fact

<sup>18</sup>S.E. *adv. math.* XI.66. Of course the point Aristo wants to make here is just that there is no general rule to say that health is naturally preferable to sickness; but the example will serve to show us that he did think one or the other will constitute the *right choice* in particular circumstances — that is, the choice which the sage should (and will) opt for, defined independently of what he does. In fact, both Cicero and Seneca suggest that Aristo believed there to be something *officium* in a given situation: cf. *de fin.* IV.43 (where the *occurrentia* constitute the *principium officii*), and Seneca *ep.* 94.5 (as just quoted: *quid cuique debeat officio*). Cf. also N. White, 'Nature and Regularity in Stoic Ethics' in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 3 (1985) pp.289-305, esp. 296-7.

<sup>19</sup>This interpretation is somewhat speculative, but it has two great advantages. On the one hand, it puts Aristo sufficiently close to orthodox Stoicism to explain what it is that makes him a Stoic at all. In fact, Chrysippus himself would admit that general rules about what is preferable do not *determine* action: reason, and an understanding of the will of Nature, are much more important, and you should not choose health (however preferable that is) if you know that it is not part of Nature's plan for you to be healthy (cf. Epictetus *diss.* II.6,10). But at the same time, it accounts for why Chrysippus objected to Aristo's kind of explanation. Chrysippus thought that, on the whole, the way in which a sage came to know the will of Nature was precisely through a correct evaluation of the world as it faced him, and this is therefore the main function of wisdom. Cf. a Chrysippean formulation of the end we have met before: ζῆν κατ' ἐμπειρίαν τῶν φύσει συμβαινόντων (*S.V.F.* III.12); also *de fin.* III.50-51, where Aristo is said to have robbed wisdom of its function, since he denied all the grounds on which it might have been able to exercise judgement between things.

that the sage relies on his ἐπελευστική δύναμις to suggest action to him emphatically does not mean that his actions are random.

If the sage's actions are never random, then there is no reason to think that the choice between the identical objects in *de Stoic. rep.* 23 is a random choice — certainly not insofar as the sage is concerned. In fact, the choice is no different from any other choice he ever has to face: he abandons himself, as usual, to his ἐπελευστική δύναμις, and that prompts him to act. As usual, the choice that he makes will be the reasonable choice. So why did *we* ever think that the ἐπελευστική δύναμις was acting in this case as some kind of randomiser? The answer to this might be quite straightforward, if we consider why Aristo could appeal to this example as being an 'especially clear' indication of the action of the ἐπελευστική δύναμις in the first place ({30.18-19}). The reason he could do this is that the choice between two identical objects is the one case where *even* fools recognise the total indifference of the choice involved, and so *even* they abandon themselves to their ἐπελευστική δύναμις. But *ex hypothesi* the fool is incapable of wise or reasonable decision as such.<sup>20</sup> He resorts to the ἐπελευστική δύναμις not because he is wise, but just because his false beliefs about the intrinsic value of things let him down at this point. So not only does the fool lack the wisdom to justify his choice, but he does not even have false opinions that will explain it and, for this reason, he may well feel that his ἐπέλευσις was random.

Aristo will assert that the ἐπέλευσις is not random — or, at the very least, that the sage's ἐπέλευσις never is —; but in any case, it was never the purpose of his

<sup>20</sup>One consequence of this is that the fool's choice is foolish even if it is exactly the same as the sage's choice. This, again, need not worry us, because orthodox Stoics think precisely this anyway: the best a fool can do (they say) is to copy the sage, even though his actions will still, strictly speaking, be vicious.

example to examine this question. The *point* of Aristo's example is the much more fundamental one of proving that there *is* a faculty of the soul that can lead us to make decisions without our needing to have beliefs about things' having natural value. Once we have conceded this to Aristo, then his account of the sage, and of ethics quite generally, becomes that much less implausible.

This conclusion will explain Chrysippus' fierce objection to the ἐπελευστική κίνησις. He wants to assert that we cannot act without being motivated by a positive evaluation of the objects involved: there *are* causes for our choice between the two *apparently* indistinguishable objects, he says (and the implication is that they are external causes too: cf. ὑποτρέχειν at {31.5}). These affect, cause and explain our decision, even if they 'escape our notice': see {30.23 - 31.6}.

The details of Aristo's philosophy are, it is worth repeating, very obscure, and I have not attempted to answer all the question raised by our testimonia, but only to suggest an outline of his psychology of action that shows how the ἐπελευστική κίνησις as we find it in *de Stoic. rep.* 23 sits comfortably enough with what we do know. I shall conclude this excursus with some terminological points which support this general — and, for my purposes, crucial — conclusion.

Firstly, and perhaps most strikingly, there are the words at the centre of the whole dispute: ἐπελευστικός, and ἐπικλίσις (the 'inclination' which the ἐπελευστική δύναμις produces). In fact, as I have mentioned, the *prima facie* plausibility of the equation of the words 'ἐπελεύσεις' and 'occurrentia' (the word which Cicero explicitly links to Aristo's psychology of action) has never been questioned; and we might note that the Latin *occurro* and the Greek ἐπέρχομαι correspond closely through the whole

spread of their meanings. For the particular meaning that interests us, cf. the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. 9 ("To present itself, occur (to a person, his mind &c.)") and L.S.J.'s *Greek Lexicon* s.v. I.d.3 ("come into one's head, occur to one"). Furthermore, neither ἐπέλευσις nor *occurrentia* are words found in surviving Epicurean literature.

Advocates of the Epicurean interpretation may prefer to focus on the word ἐπίκλισις — a word which is superficially reminiscent of the standard Epicurean designation of the 'swerve'. However, it is a word that is itself, once again, unattested in Epicurean literature. If we take just the Greek texts which Cherniss quotes as (apparently) the best evidence for the Epicurean interpretation of *de Stoic. rep.* 23 (*loc. cit.* note 7), we find the following: παρεγκλῖναι in Plutarch *de sollertia animalium* 964C, and ἐγκλῖναι in *de animae procreatione* 1015C; παρὰκλισις in Philodemus (*de signis* 36.11-17); παρεγκλιτικός in Diogenes of Oenanda fr. 33.iii.6-7 [William].<sup>21</sup> Cicero's translation of the swerve is invariably *declino*, never *inclino* (Cherniss cites *de fato* 22-23 and 46; *de natura deorum* I.69); cf. also Lucretius (Cherniss cites II.251-293).

Secondly, the way in which the "some philosophers" describe the identity of the two options in the *aporia* case of {30.15-23} looks distinctly Stoic. (It is true that the Stoics do not think that any two things *are* absolutely 'indistinguishable', but the example is a practical example, not an illustration of physics, and the Stoics do not deny that things can be *practically* indistinguishable, something which is clear from Cicero *Acad.* II.54, for example.) The phrase ὁμοίως ἐχόντων looks like it might be a

<sup>21</sup>Cherniss's reference to Plotinus (*enn.* III.1,15-16) does not include any direct designation of the swerve. Galen *P.H.P.* IV.4 (p.361,14-16 [Müller]) yields "ἀνόητον τινα κίνησιν", which looks like a more promising description of the ἐπίκλισις of *de Stoic. rep.* 23. However, Galen specifies that we know this 'uncaused movement' is uncaused, because it was not caused either by λόγος or by any other kind of δύναμις whatsoever. But we are told that the ἐπίκλισις is caused by a δύναμις — viz. the ἐπελευστική δύναμις!

particularly Stoic way of expressing similarity: cf. e.g. πῶς ἔχων ("relatively disposed", of items such as "father" and "left": *S.V.F.* II.403).<sup>22</sup>

Finally, there is an observation which would carry little enough weight on its own, but is an interesting circumstantial detail, and that is the way in which Cicero and Chrysippus *apud* Plutarch refer, the one to Aristo's *occurrentia*, the other to the ἐπελεύσεις of 'the philosophers': '*occurrentia*' *finigit* says Cicero (*de fin.* IV.43); αἱ πλαττόμεναι...ἐπελεύσεις remarks Chrysippus ({31.3-4}).

The evidence we have seen points overwhelmingly to an identification of the ἔνιοι τῶν φιλοσόφων of *de Stoic. rep.* 23 with Aristo and followers (for whom cf. *D.L.* VII.161), and the identification thus provides fascinating confirmation of my reconstruction of Plutarch's source. I have argued throughout this section that the arguments of *de Stoic. rep.* 17-23 are based on criticisms of the Stoic end comparable with Cicero's arguments in *de fin.* IV.25-43; it now appears that the final chapter (chapter 23) parallels the end of Cicero's attack on the Stoic *telos*. Cicero argues there that Chrysippus' ethics comes down to Aristo's, if it is anything different from Peripatetic ethics at all; and what Plutarch, or his source, seems to be doing here is something very similar. Chrysippus (he says) attacks Aristo for the absurdities that result from adopting literally the position that value of any kind only attaches to good and evil; but we know that this is, strictly speaking, the position he himself professes *qua* Stoic. He often tries to deny the fact, and to seek refuge in a more Platonist ethics; but here at the end of the section, we see

<sup>22</sup>But cf. Englert *op. cit.* pp.188-9 note 49. Englert explains both the Stoic terminology and also the absence of the protagonists' names in *de Stoic. rep.* 23 by the fact that Plutarch has reproduced the example as it was reported by Chrysippus.

that he admits to having the kind of psychological mechanism that would allow the strict version of his Stoicism to function. Chrysippus is thus caught between his strict position, which he acknowledges to be absurd in philosophers who are more open about it; and a position which (as we have seen in the course of this section) comes down to being much the same as Platonism.

## Stoic Certainty.

We have seen reasons to suppose that the block of chapters which were based on ethical arguments came to an end with *de Stoic. rep.* 23, which answered to the topic brought in as the capstone, so to speak, of Cicero's discussion of Stoic ethics in *de fin.* IV. I want to suggest now that chapters 24-29 rely on a new topic of Academic polemic — one implicitly heralded by Plutarch with a sudden emphasis on dialectic at the beginning of chapter 24.

The contradictions of the chapters discussed in this section can be summarised in the following way:

- Chapter 24: Chrysippus praises the use of dialectic found in Plato, Aristotle and the Old Academy; yet he endlessly criticises their most important conclusions.
- Chapter 25: In one place Chrysippus proves 'spiteful joy' non-existent, in another he assumes it does exist and even defines it.
- Chapter 26: Happiness is not supposed to increase with time, so that an instant of happiness is as good as years; yet Chrysippus says you should not bother to so much as move your finger for the sake of a mere instant of happiness.
- Chapter 27: The virtues are supposed to be inter-entailing to the extent that to act with one is to act with them all. Yet Chrysippus says that the sage is not always brave (and the fool not always cowardly).
- Chapter 28: Chrysippus defines rhetoric very prescriptively as an art concerned with the correct arrangement of speech, and even style of delivery. But he goes on to say that unclarity, solecism &c. are allowable at times.
- Chapter 29: Chrysippus suggests it is better to keep quiet than to propose a theory in the absence of proper investigation: he cites Plato's theory of drink going to the lungs as a cautionary example. But Plato's theory was held by many medics; and Chrysippus made his own mathematical pronouncements which won no support at all from mathematicians.

I have hinted that the emphasis on dialectic in chapter 24 is the key to understanding this section as such. Specifically, I want to suggest that it is an Academic attack on the Dogmatic use of dialectic which is the source for the contradiction not just of this chapter, but of the whole section. This, of course, is not immediately obvious, especially in respect of chapters 25-28. However, I want to suggest an outline for the section along the following lines. In chapter 24, Chrysippus is again arguing against Sceptical dialecticians (as we have already see him do in chapter 10) and he appeals to ancient authorities in order to assert the value of ‘serious’ — by which he will mean ‘Dogmatic’ — dialectic as a means of establishing the truth. Plutarch’s reply to Chrysippus is simple: if Dogmatic dialectic were up to the job of establishing the truth, there should be far less disagreement among its exponents; in particular Chrysippus should not be able to find so much fault with those very Dogmatists whose example in the dialectical discovery of truth he found so inspiring. Chapters 25-28 go on to illustrate this by looking at some fundamental ethical disagreements that the Stoa had with the older Platonic tradition.

In section IV.3 (chapters 7-10), which also had an epistemological discussion in its background, the response to Chrysippus’ Dogmatism had been to say that the best way of trying to approach the truth *is* through a Sceptical approach — specifically, through the use of antilogistic argument. As Plutarch said of Sceptical philosophers there (at {11.19-21}):

εἰς ἑκάτερον ἐπιχειροῦσιν, ὡς εἴ τι καταληπτόν ἐστιν οὕτως  
ἂν μόνως ἢ μάλιστα κατάληψιν ἑαυτῆς τὴν ἀλήθειαν  
παρέχουσαν.

In the present section, after showing the failure of Dogmatic dialectic, Plutarch shows in chapter 29 how positive the Sceptical approach can be in practice. While the truth may not itself be available to us, Sceptical inquiry can at least bring us somewhere near it, by showing what is *probable*.

In chapter 24, Chrysippus praises the dialectic of "Plato and Aristotle and their successors down to Polemon and Strato, and especially Socrates" — and we must assume that implicit in this approval is the claim that all of these philosophers, who between them represent what we might call the 'Platonic tradition', were Dogmatists. Yet Chrysippus accuses them of being mistaken over "the greatest and most important matters". Plutarch suggests that it is contradictory for Chrysippus to say that a philosopher could use well a method designed for getting to the truth, and yet be wholly mistaken in the primary objects of his investigation; but of course underlying this is the implication (based on a standard Sceptical argument from διαφωνία) that Dogmatic dialectic cannot be very effective at discovering the truth if Dogmatists never agree amongst themselves.

The question that we might raise immediately is why the attitude of 'Plato, Aristotle and the Old Academy' towards dialectic should affect the way in which Chrysippus thinks about it. Why, specifically, does Chrysippus need assurance that dialectic is not something which one might only think about ἐκ παρεργου {32.11}? In order to understand the concerns Chrysippus had about the misuse of dialectic, we need to go back to *de Stoic. rep.* 10, where Chrysippus warned against those who advocated

‘τοὺς εἰς τὰ ἐναντία λόγους, ὡς περισπῶντας τὴν κατάληψιν’ {10.3-4}. In his own words ({10.7-10}, from περὶ Βίων IV):

"οὐχ ὡς ἔτυχε δ' οὐδὲ τοὺς ἐναντίους ὑποδεικτέον λόγους οὐδὲ <τὰ> πρὸς τὰ ἐναντία πιθανὰ ἀλλ' εὐλαβουμένους μὴ καὶ περισπασθέντες ὑπ' αὐτῶν τὰς καταλήψεις ἀφῶσιν κ.τ.λ."

Chrysippus is very nervous about sophistic use of dialectic and, specifically, about ‘antilogistic’: in other words he despises, perhaps as ‘ἐκ παρέργου’, the Sceptical dialectic of the New Academy. But he thinks that, if the New Academics give dialectic a bad name, there are others who show that it doesn’t need to be like this: dialectic can be used positively — i.e. Dogmatically — as well. His polemical intentions can be seen in his very choice of exemplary philosophers: his list is not a disingenuous role-call of the greatest philosophical authorities, but he mentions only thinkers working in the broadly Platonic tradition. This suggests a special reproach to the Academics, who (it is implied) have been unfaithful to the intentions of their founders and heroes.<sup>1</sup>

The issue at stake, for Chrysippus, is whether dialectic can protect you from error — he, of course, thinks against the Academy that it can. So it is not coincidence that the citations from his περὶ τῆς Διαλεκτικῆς in this chapter centre around the associated idea of *being mistaken*. In the first place he says that one might "even wish to go wrong with (συνεξαμαρτάνειν) such men [as Plato &c.]" {32.9-11}; and then, a little later on, that "it is not probable that they are so mistaken [διαμαρτάνειν]" {32.14-15}. Both

<sup>1</sup>We have evidence from elsewhere of Chrysippus’ assertion that ‘the ancients’ practised a Dogmatic form of dialectic, for example in the book-title: περὶ τοῦ Ἐγκρίνειν τοὺς ἀρχαίους τὴν διαλεκτικὴν σὺν ταῖς ἀποδείξεσι (D.L. VII.201).

of these comments seem loaded with a desire to score points off the Academy: "Sceptics claim that Dogmatists always fall into error; well we say that their own philosophical ancestors, Socrates and Plato, were Dogmatists and great philosophers as well, and we are going to follow them — they can think of it as following them into error for all we care." And similarly, for {32.9-11}: "If we agree with the dialectic practices of Socrates and Plato, will the Academy dare to call *them* mistaken as well as us?"

Plutarch's answer to both of these is, as I have already said, simple. If the Dogmatic method to which Chrysippus commits himself were as good as he claims at uncovering the truth, then those who use it seriously should broadly agree on all matters to which they applied it. As it is, they disagree on just about every conclusion on even the most important matters and agree, if they agree on anything, only on the usefulness of their dialectic! Plutarch now picks up Chrysippus' words for 'error' and turns them back against him: it is contrary of Chrysippus to think that Plato, Aristotle and the rest "went wrong" (διαμαρτάνοντασ: {32.19}) everywhere except dialectic, given that the point of dialectic is precisely to get you to the truth: to *stop* you from going wrong. Chrysippus cannot mean us to think that they were only serious about dialectic *for its own sake*, allowing mistakes (ἀμαρτίασ: {32.23}) into all other areas, as if they didn't matter.

The Academic background to this chapter is clear enough to see: Plutarch is defending the Sceptical dialectic of the New Academy by showing how Chrysippus' Dogmatism must fail. What is not yet clear from this chapter is quite which epistemological position, from the many possibilities for Scepticism developed within the Academy, Plutarch or his source wishes to defend instead and — in a question that is, in this case,

closely related — which epistemological position he might want to ascribe to Plato instead. However, this is something which, as I shall show, emerges from the debate in chapter 29.

The transition to chapters 25-28 is rather abrupt. There is no apparent connection with chapters 24 or 29 (both of which treat of issues of dialectic), and very few obvious internal links either. What I want to suggest is that these chapters reflect a series of arguments in Plutarch's source which were meant to illustrate the disagreement 'ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις καὶ μεγίστοις' mentioned in *de Stoic. rep.* 24. The arguments would thus have given substance to the attack on Stoic dialectic which is reflected in that chapter, before the Academy's own (superior) approach was outlined in 29. However, this explanation raises one major problem and that is that it is not immediately clear what chapters 25-28 could say that has not already been said. After all, we have seen plenty of cases where Chrysippus disagrees with the Ancient ('Platonic') doctrine — indeed, I have been arguing that this is the whole polemical basis of the *de Stoic. rep.*

If we ask what sort of examples we would *expect* to be used to illustrate the argument behind chapter 24 as I have interpreted it, then we have two indications to go on: in the first place the doctrines should be among the most important matters in philosophy: ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις καὶ μεγίστοις ({32.18}); in the second place, they should be about what we might characterise broadly as ethics: περὶ δ' ἀρχῆς καὶ τέλους καὶ θεῶν<sup>2</sup> καὶ δικαιοσύνης ({32.20-21}). We have seen enough already to

<sup>2</sup>For the ethical importance which the Stoics — and Platonists — attached to the study of theology, cf. section IV.3, on *de Stoic. rep.* 9.

know that this can only mean that Plutarch — or his source — means to refer to the ‘innovative’ claims made in the strict version of Chrysippus’ ethical theory. But again, we have seen many occasions in the *de Stoic. rep.* on which Chrysippus’ ethical innovations have been attacked: it is still not clear what could be special or new in chapters 25-28.

In order to answer this question, we really need to know in more detail quite what Plutarch (or his source) might have thought *were* the major innovations of Stoic ethics: we would then be able to see whether there were any areas which he has so far left uncovered. To help with this, I want to refer to Cicero *Acad.* I.35-42, where Varro considers just this question, of how innovative Stoic philosophy in all its branches was. (Varro, of course, is speaking on behalf of Antiochus, and we should not suppose that Plutarch or his Academic source would have been in complete agreement with the historical picture which he wanted to put forward. Nevertheless, the question of how innovative Stoicism really was had interested the whole Academy, back to Carneades at least (see section II); and there is little *a priori* reason to suppose that Antiochus would have made claims for the Stoics’ innovations that were radically unacceptable to any other Academic. We can certainly take Varro as a starting-point; specific objections raised against the validity of his evidence for the outlook of Plutarch’s source — if there were to be any — could be tackled as exceptions.)

At *Acad.* I.35-42, then, Varro makes a distinction between Zeno’s ‘revisions’ of the Old Academy — honest attempts to get back to what Plato really meant as, for example, his elevation of the importance of virtue, and his rejection in physics of Aristotle’s Quintessence —; and those of his doctrines which, if taken seriously, really

did constitute *innovations* on Plato. In the realm of ethics, the genuinely innovative doctrines he mentions can be summarised as follows (from *Acad.* I.38-39):

- (1) the placing of all virtues in the intellect;
- (2) the claim that the virtues are inseparable, that
- (3) virtue as a state is *praeclarum per se*, but that
- (4) to have virtue entails its exercise anyway;
- (5) the claim that the sage suffers no emotions and that
- (6) emotions are diseases, and are voluntary.

When we consider more carefully the arguments we have so far reconstructed in the background to the *de Stoic. rep.*, it turns out that we have only actually tackled two areas of ethics where Plutarch thinks that the Stoics are in contradiction of Plato, viz.: the Stoic theory of justice (section IV.4) — this, of course, answers directly to nothing at all on the list above —; and the Stoics' intellectualist notion of the end (section IV.5) — this answers quite well to point (1) on Varro's list. So there are five points left (numbers (2) to (6)) which represented in the eyes of Varro at least some of the most important of Zeno's differences with Plato, and which Plutarch's source has not yet addressed at all. What better opportunity than the four chapters we are now considering?

In chapter 25, Chrysippus attacks the concept of ἐπιχαιρεκακία on the grounds that wise men do not rejoice at other people's misfortune, and fools (apparently, although some textual reconstruction is needed here) do not rejoice at all. Yet in book II of his περὶ Ἀγαθοῦ, he not only assumes the existence of ἐπιχαιρεκακία, but even defines what he takes it to be.

Some people have seen in Chrysippus' doubts about ἐπιχαιρεκακία an attack meant for Aristotle quite specifically, since it appears that the term made its first appearance with him.<sup>3</sup> However, even if it is true that antiquity associated the term with Aristotle in particular, and even if it is true that Chrysippus had Aristotle specifically in mind when he attacked the concept (something which does not necessarily follow), it is still not going to be obvious that Plutarch, or his source, intended *us* to see the argument in terms of a personal debate between Chrysippus and Aristotle. In Plutarch's source, Aristotle would simply have stood as a representative of the tradition on which the Stoa innovated, and as one of those who had been mentioned by Chrysippus as a good dialectician in chapter 24.

Besides all of this, it looks as if ἐπιχαιρεκακία actually had a role to play in Stoic ethical theory in its own right. Although the term (actually a translation of it) occurs just once more in extant Stoicism, it has an important place in an argument meant to prove in the first place that the sage will not be angry; but which fits in as part of a general proof that the sage will suffer no emotions. At Cicero *Tusc.* III.19, Dionysius of Heraclea argues at least that the sage will never be angry, on the grounds that anger implies the capacity to *rejoice at another's evil*:

Nam si irascitur, etiam concupiscit; proprium est enim irati cupere, a quo laesus videatur, ei quam maximum dolorem inurere; qui autem id concupierit, eum necesse est, si id consecutus sit, magno opere laetari; ex quo fit ut alieno malo gaudeat; quod quoniam non cadit in sapientem, ne ut irascatur quidem cadit.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Cherniss p.385 with note (c). For ἐπιχαιρεκακία in Aristotle, see e.g. *E.N.* 1107a10, 1108b5-6.

There is no reason to suppose that Chrysippus could not have argued along very similar lines. Indeed, one of Dionysius' premises (that the sage does not 'rejoice in another's evil') is exactly the same as something quoted by Plutarch at {32.25-26}: τῶν μὲν ἀστέων οὐδεὶς ἐπ' ἀλλοτρίοις κακοῖς χάρει. So it is not unreasonable to assume that the contradiction of this chapter proceeds ultimately from Chrysippus' arguments to show that the sage will suffer no emotion. But if this is right then Plutarch might be reflecting an Academic argument against what we have already met as the *fifth* innovation on Varro's list above. This, in full, was the following (*Acad.* I.38):

cumque perturbationem animi illi [*scil.* superiores] ex homine non tollerent, naturaque et condolere et concupiscere et extimescere et efferri laetitia dicerent..., hic [*i.e.* Zeno] omnibus his quasi morbis voluit carere sapientem.

The precise nature of the Academic argument on which Plutarch might have been basing his contradiction is, in this case, quite interesting to speculate about. The argument would have to have talked about ἐπιχαιρεκακία in order to explain Plutarch's contradiction at all, and it would have to have been directed against the Dionysian argument that the sage was free of emotions (in order to make the connection with the Stoic innovation). So it may, for example, have argued that Chrysippus was wrong to assert that anger implies a capacity for ἐπιχαιρεκακία. (The Academics could have suggested — with reference for example to Plato *rep.* IV, 440ff — that the sage might experience *justified* anger, which may desire punishment of the offender, but would not see this as a desire for him to suffer *evil*.) But whatever the original form of the

argument, the important point is that it could hardly have been very close to the contradiction that Plutarch gives us. This gives us a small insight into the way in which Plutarch regarded his source: he has used it here simply to suggest the subject-matter for the next contradiction; the argument itself seems wholly original to the *de Stoic. rep.*

In chapter 26, Chrysippus claims that happiness does not improve with time: the sage is *perfectly* happy in every moment (cf. *S.V.F.* III.65 &c.). Yet he also says that we should not put the smallest amount of effort (e.g. stretching a finger) into acquiring happiness that lasts only for a moment, suggesting that happiness needs to be longer-lived in order to be worthwhile at all.

Although it is no easy matter to reconstruct Chrysippus' side of the story (to explain why his doctrine was not contradictory in the way suggested by Plutarch),<sup>4</sup> it is a more straightforward matter to explain in its own terms his doctrine that happiness does not improve with time, and to link this with items found on Varro's list of Stoic innovations. In the first place, we are taken a fair way towards such an explanation by Stobaeus, who reports the Stoics in the following way at *ecl.* II p.98.14-19 [Wachsmuth]:

πάντα δὲ τὸν καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα τέλειον εἶναι  
λέγουσι διὰ τὸ μηδεμιᾶς ἀπολείπεσθαι ἀρετῆς... δι' ὃ καὶ  
πάντως εὐδαιμονεῖν αἰεὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς κ.τ.λ.

The sage is 'completely happy', we are told, because he does not fall short in virtue.

<sup>4</sup>For one attempt, cf. e.g. V. Goldschmidt in *Le Système Stoïcien et l'Idée de Temps* (Paris 1953), pp.200 and 201 with note (7).

In order to understand quite how Stobaeus' conclusion (the complete happiness of the sage) follows from the premise (the sage's perfect virtue), we need to consider what it means in Stoicism for someone 'not to fall short in virtue'. It certainly means something much stronger than simply that they *possess* all the virtues, or are capable of acting according to any of them, for example. One thing it means is that, whenever they act, they act according to *all* of them — this is point (2) on Varro's list of Stoic innovations (and see below on *de Stoic. rep.* 27).

There is no sense at all in which any of the sage's actions can be said to fall short of virtue, then. But, on top of this, the Stoics do not think that virtue — or the happiness associated with it — is somehow improved by achieving whatever the object of the virtuous action is. The virtuous action is, as such, complete in itself, as being the action demanded of the sage by nature at that point, and is complete quite independently of whether the object aimed at by the action is achieved.<sup>5</sup> In fact we can deduce that the Stoics must have thought something like this if we consider the fourth innovation on Varro's list — the claim that it is impossible to possess a virtue without exercising it. One consequence of this claim (given the inseparability of the virtues) is that the sage must be exercising all of the virtues all of the time — even, we have to suppose, when he is engaged in no activity at all —; but this is something the Stoics could only say because they did not conceive of the exercise of virtue as being importantly bound up with material achievement.

<sup>5</sup>Compare Cato's explanation of why happiness does not become *optabilior nec magis expetenda* as it is prolonged (Cicero *de fin.* III.45-48). The reason he gives is that virtue is an 'opportuneness' (εὐκαιρία) — and opportuneness is something that cannot increase with time. The idea seems to be that the sage constantly acts as is fitting, and his actions over an extended period are no *more* fitting than his actions in a moment. All of this, of course, is no more than we might expect from the definition of the end as τὸ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν — and in fact Cato links the notion of *opportunitas* with this definition in III.61.

For all of these reasons, and given that happiness is co-extensive with virtue (it is not defined by external achievement any more than virtue itself is), we can see that the quality of the sage's happiness will in no way change with the length of time in which it is enjoyed: his actions over an extended period of time could not be more virtuous, or more *appropriate* (since, as Cicero tells us, virtue is a form of appropriateness), than those over the shortest moment.

Apart from the fact that it relies on two fundamental ethical innovations made by the Stoics (the claim that to act according to one virtue is to act according to them all, and the claim that to possess a virtue entails its exercise: *Acad.* I.38), we can see why Chrysippus' claims about happiness will not appeal to the Platonist tradition. Any philosophy that takes even the smallest account of the attainment of material benefits will want to say that the happiness resulting from an extended period of ethical success will be more desirable than the happiness which comes with the *mere* possession and exercise of virtue (quite apart from the additional fact that in such an ethical system one's happiness is bound to be qualified by the fear that circumstances outside of one's control may bring material loss in the future). In particular, we might call to mind Aristotle's discussion of the subject in *E.N.* I.7-11: he considers the possibility that happiness is a term that can only be applied to a man after a review of his whole life — and possibly more than that. One swallow, he says, certainly does not make a summer.

Chapter 27 very clearly picks up one of the innovations we saw to be behind chapter 26: Chrysippus has said that the virtues are inter-entailing in the sense that to act according to one is to act according to them all. However, he contradicts this by saying that the sage is not always being brave, nor the fool always being cowardly.

The first position attributed to Chrysippus is carefully defined: it is very important that the claim Chrysippus has made is not just the simple thesis of the ἀντακολουθία of the virtues (in the sense that τὸν μίαν ἔχοντα πάσας ἔχειν {34.4}), *but* (ἀλλὰ) it is the much stronger claim that to *act* according to one virtue means *acting* according to them all: τὸν κατὰ μίαν ὀτιοῦν ἐνεργοῦντα κατὰ πάσας ἐνεργεῖν {34.4-5}. As a matter of fact, Plutarch, in common with most other philosophers based in the Platonic tradition, would readily assent to the simple ἀντακολουθία τῶν ἀρετῶν;<sup>6</sup> it is the idea that the virtues are inseparable in action which must be unacceptable to him, and which in fact is the basis of his contradiction. But this doctrine is precisely what is ascribed to Zeno as the second innovation listed by Varro. See *Acad.* I.38:

cumque illi [*scil.* superiores] ea genera virtutum quae supra dixi  
seiungi posse arbitrentur, hic [*i.e.* Zeno] nec id ullo modo fieri  
posse disserebat...

(It may not be immediately clear that Varro is referring here to action according to virtue as opposed merely to the possession of the virtues; but when we consider that,

<sup>6</sup>For Platonic statements of the ἀντακολουθία τῶν ἀρετῶν see e.g. Alcinous *didask.* 183.3; Hippolytus *ref.* I.19,18; Apuleius *de Plat.* II.6,228 &c. All were presumably ready to justify themselves on the grounds of *Protagoras* 329e2-4. For Aristotle, cf. *E.N.* 1144b33-4: [οὐ] χωρίζονται ἀλλήλων αἱ ἀρεταί.

according to the Stoics, the possession of a virtue *entails* its exercise (see *Acad.* I.38, and further below), it must be the case that the sage is *always* acting according to all the virtues — even when he is not doing anything at all!)

Chapter 28, the last of this series of chapters to reflect an argument meant to show how the Stoics disagreed with Plato on the most important points of philosophy, is undoubtedly the hardest to explain. In it, Chrysippus is shown on the one hand to have given strict and detailed stylistic prescriptions to the would-be orator, but on the other to have said that he should not be ashamed of ‘unclarity and even solecism’, if it created a better effect (τοῦ βελτιονοῦς ἐχομένου — {35.4}).

The argument that Plutarch gives us has no obvious connection with any of the recognised innovations of Zeno (in physics or logic any more than in ethics). Indeed, an attempt to explain this chapter in the same way as I have explained the last three would appear to be a *prima facie* absurdity — were it not for the fact that chapter 28 is hard to explain on *any* theory at all. The very nature of Plutarch’s contradiction is itself far from clear. The claim seems to be that Chrysippus *contradicts* his rhetorical precepts by allowing *exceptions* from them. Yet it was standard practice amongst ancient rhetorical theorists to allow for a certain degree of pragmatism in the application of stylistic rules.<sup>7</sup> What is more, the fact that Chrysippus included a discussion of ὑπόκρισις in his work (cf. {34.20 - 35.1}) is no kind of demonstration that he was an unusually zealous stylist (as Plutarch seems to imply — esp. at {35.6-7}). Such

<sup>7</sup>Cf. e.g. Cicero *or.* 77 and Gellius VI.20,6 for tolerance of hiatus; Seneca *ep.* 95.9 and Quintilian I.5.34ff for a relaxed attitude towards solecism.

discussion features importantly in Quintilian, Cicero &c.; and Plutarch knows that Demosthenes said that there were only two things more important than ὑπόκρισις: ὑπόκρισις and ὑπόκρισις (see *vit. dec. or.* 845B)!

In order to find out where, exactly, the contradiction of chapter 28 is supposed to lie, we should look very carefully at the first sentence, which seems to give Chrysippus' 'official' position on rhetoric. Unfortunately, the text is rather corrupt, but what we have is something like the following ({34.18-19}):<sup>8</sup>

Τὴν ῥητορικὴν ὀρίζεται τέχνην περὶ κόσμον καὶ εἰρομένου  
λόγου τάξιν.

Plutarch supports this claim by quoting from Chrysippus' first book <περὶ ῥητορικῆς>, in which the importance both of orderly speech and also of ὑπόκρισις was discussed. Now if this exposition *does* represent the official Chrysippean position, then we might hope (on the familiar pattern) that Plutarch identifies something here as objectionable — something which is un-Platonic, and will be shown to lead to the contradiction. However, it is not immediately clear what this might be. We certainly cannot suppose that he would have objected to the stringent stylistic rules, especially with Aristotle in the background; cf. e.g. Plutarch fr.91 [Sandbach] for his own abhorrence of solecism.

<sup>8</sup>For this reading of the text, cf. Cherniss: περὶ κόσμον εἰρομένου λόγου καὶ τάξιν. I can see no very good reason for his moving the "καὶ" away from the position it holds in the MSS. For εἰρομένου as opposed to the MSS' εἰρημένου, cf. Seneca *ep.* 89.17: *omnis oratio aut continua est aut inter respondentem et interrogantem discissa; hanc διαλεκτικὴν illam ῥητορικὴν placuit vocari*; but especially perhaps Aristotle *rhetoric* III.9, 1409a27, where εἰρομένη λέξις refers to a continuous as opposed to an antithetical style of speech.

There is, then, the question of whether Chrysippus was right to call rhetoric a τέχνη. But again, there is nothing necessarily un-Platonic about this. To be sure, if we judge the matter by the *Gorgias* alone, then Plutarch would have something to object to. But the Stoics' account is in perfect accord with what Plato says in a later dialogue, the *Phaedrus*. Indeed, it seems that the *Phaedrus* formed the basis for Stoic doctrine on the subject.<sup>9</sup> Besides all of this, it should be clear even from the way in which Plutarch has set up the contradiction that the argument is not about the question of whether rhetoric is an 'art' or not: we are never told that Chrysippus is found treating rhetoric as if it were *not* one.

If the debate is not over whether rhetoric is a τέχνη at all, there is one possibility for argument between Plutarch and the Stoics left in this first sentence: they might differ over what it *means* for rhetoric to be a τέχνη. In fact we know at least one way in which they did differ over this question: on the basis of their claim that rhetoric was a τέχνη, the Stoics also claimed it was a *virtue*.<sup>10</sup>

Before trying to explain how this understanding of the way in which *de Stoic. rep.* 28 has been set up helps to explain Plutarch's contradiction, it might be easier to

<sup>9</sup>At *S.V.F.* II.296 the Stoics are explicitly attributed with the *Phaedrus* notion of the purpose of the *epilogue*, for example.

<sup>10</sup>See e.g. Cicero *de or.* III.65 and, for the general claim that virtue was τέχνη, *S.V.F.* III.560. For Plutarch's interest in the question, cf. the book-title 'Εἰ ἀρετὴ ἡ ῥητορικὴ' (*Lamprias* 86).

*S.E. adv. math.* II.6 makes precisely the point that, although the Stoics defined rhetoric in the same way as (some) Platonists, they differed radically over their understanding of the terms involved. In the first place Sextus groups the Stoics together with Xenocrates in defining rhetoric as 'ἐπιστήμη τοῦ εὖ λέγειν'; but he goes on to say that while Xenocrates takes ἐπιστήμη 'in the old way' (ἀρχαίῳ νόμῳ) to mean 'τέχνη', the Stoics take it 'ἀντὶ τοῦ βεβαίας ἔχειν καταλήψεις'. It is important to note that 'τὸ βεβαίας ἔχειν καταλήψεις' is actually a fair description of the *Stoics'* understanding of 'τέχνη' (cf. *adv. math.* VII.372), so that this passage does not contradict claims elsewhere that the Stoics thought of rhetoric as a τέχνη. Clearly the Stoics and Xenocrates thought of rhetoric *both* as a τέχνη *and* as an ἐπιστήμη (and differed in their understanding of *both* terms). This is not surprising so far as the Stoics are concerned, at least: we know that they recognised a sense in which the terms 'ἐπιστήμη' and 'τέχνη' were interchangeable — significantly enough where virtues are concerned —: cf. *S.V.F.* III.95: τῶν δὲ ἀρετῶν τὰς μὲν ἐπιστήμας τινῶν καὶ τέχνας, τὰς δ' οὐ.

ask the other question we need to answer: how a debate over the status of rhetoric as a virtue/τέχνη might have formed part of an Academic claim that the Stoics differed from Plato over ethical κυριώτατα καὶ μέγιστα. If we consider again Varro's list, it seems to me that there is one of the Stoics' innovations which might be pertinent here, and that is number (4): the claim that it is impossible to have a virtue and not to exercise it. (Apart from the positive arguments that I shall set out below in favour of making this identification, it is worth noting that this doctrine, *plus* the doctrine of the inseparability of the virtues, together underlay the contradiction in chapter 26. Given that the inseparability of the virtues was given its own treatment in chapter 27, it would not be surprising now to find a separate treatment of the doctrine that to have a virtue is to exercise it.)

If we consider the doctrine that one must always be exercising a virtue one possesses in the context of the claim that rhetorical τέχνη is a virtue, the conclusion we are bound to arrive at immediately is that anyone who (in Stoic eyes) is a rhetorician can never fail to be employing his rhetorical skill. (Presumably, if we push this point to its extremes, even the orator's periods of silence during his daily routine will be determined according to rhetorical principles about when speech is appropriate.) Furthermore, we know that the Stoics think that τέχναι are constituted in a person by a corpus of θεωρήματα (cf. e.g. *S.V.F.* III.214), so they must have thought that an orator could never violate or ignore the theorems of rhetoric (since to do so would mean that he was not, at that moment, exercising rhetorical virtue). Now if Plutarch could take it that the 'avoidance of solecism', for example, is a rhetorical theorem, then the nature of the contradiction he would intend suddenly becomes very clear indeed: although Chrysippus is committed to the idea that it is impossible for someone both to be an

orator and to ‘ignore’ or ‘put aside’ such theorems, he shows in the quotation at {35.2-6} that he did after all think that there were occasions on which the rhetorician could — and should — ignore them: ταῦτα παρετέον τοῦ βελτίονος ἐχομένους ({35.3-4}).<sup>11</sup>

As for how this relates to Platonic ideas of rhetoric as a τέχνη: we have seen already that most writers on the subject thought it perfectly reasonable to suppose that rhetoric lays down rules for style, but that the speaker can choose not to follow them if something else will be more effective. Plato himself in the *Phaedrus* (the very dialogue in which he comes round to the idea that there is a rhetorical τέχνη) cares much less about stylistic rules than about the *appropriateness* of their employment.

So we can see that, if Plutarch’s argument works in the way I have suggested, then not only could the topic of rhetoric have made sense as part of an Academic demonstration that the Stoics were prepared to argue with ‘the ancients’ over the most important points of philosophy, but the contradiction itself would make sense as such, and would fit into the familiar pattern.

The criticism of the Dogmatic dialectic of the Stoics on which Plutarch has based his arguments is complete by chapter 28. By then, the Academic argument has shown how this dialectic, which is supposedly a route to the truth, actually leads the greatest

<sup>11</sup>It is probably not the case that Chrysippus *did* think that advice such as ‘one should avoid solecism’ constituted the theorems of rhetoric in a technical sense. However, this only raises the question of why he should ever have enunciated them as principles of rhetoric at all. If the answer is that they are general precepts, whose purpose is to help the fool make speeches, then Chrysippus will only be showing that he recognises another, more practical form of rhetoric. His strict claims about rhetoric being a virtue available to the sage alone are thus contradicted in an argument which is exactly the same as Plutarch’s main argument against the Stoic theory of virtue quite generally.

philosophers into disagreement over the most fundamental points of the most important branch of philosophy. But this διαφωνία does not seem to have led in Plutarch (or Plutarch's source) to the radically negative conclusions that Arcesilaus, for example, might have arrived at. I want to suggest that chapter 29 is based on an argument which again attacked the Stoics' Dogmatism, but this time provided a real alternative to it, a method which Plutarch could claim was truly to be ascribed to Plato.

The first impression one receives of chapter 29 is that it is concerned with the question of *precipitancy* of assent. The usual reading goes as follows: Plato is criticised by Chrysippus because he assented to a scientific φαντασία which would have proved itself under more careful examination to be ἀκατάληπτος. Chrysippus in turn is accused by Plutarch of assenting to a false mathematical proposition, not having investigated the subject with sufficient care.

One of the central difficulties of this interpretation of the chapter is the fact that, in the passage where he expounds his pulmonary theory, Plato makes it quite clear that he is not being Dogmatic, but only saying what he thought to be *likely*: this is all part of the εἰκῶς μῦθος of the *Timaeus*.<sup>12</sup> For this reason it would hardly make sense for Chrysippus to accuse him of precipitate assent: he has done just what Chrysippus himself advises when certainty was impossible and an answer needed — provided something εὐλογον (cf. e.g. D.L. VII.76).

Now *de Stoic. rep.* 29 is not the only place in which Plato is attacked for his 'wet-lung theory': a similar argument is raised against him at Plutarch *quaest. conviv.* VII.1, 698A. His detractors in that passage — Nicias and Protogenes — once again

<sup>12</sup>Cf. *Timaeus* 59d: τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο τῶν αὐτῶν περὶ τὰ ἐξῆς εἰκότα δίμεν τῆδε. See 70c and 91a for the theory itself.

seem to ignore altogether the qualified way in which Plato had presented his case and, in criticising him, say that there is no way he can be excused the doctrine, so explicitly did he state it:

ὁ δὲ φιλόσοφος οὕτως σαφῶς...γράφας διεξιέναι τὰ ποτὰ  
διὰ τοῦ πλεύμονος οὐδὲ τοῖς προθυμοτάτοις ἀμύνειν  
ἐπιχειρήσιν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πιθανὴν ἀπολέλοιπεν.

Plutarch *does* try to defend Plato in what follows, however (see *quaest. conviv.* 698Eff), and it is interesting to see the approach he takes. His defence is *not* (as we might have expected) to point out that Plato only said that his theory was a *likely* explanation, and he allowed the possibility that things actually stood otherwise. Rather, he argues that, as a matter of fact, Plato was just *right* to think that his theory was likely: εἰκότα γὰρ μακρῶ (700B). The truth, he says, is perhaps (!) unattainable in these matters: τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς ἴσως ἀληπτον ἔν γε τούτοις (*ib.*).

If we take another look at the argument that Nicias and Protogenes had against Plato, we now begin to see that they might not after all be saying: 'Plato clearly (i.e. Dogmatically) stated a theory which turns out to be false' — this interpretation would certainly raise the problems we have seen. Rather, they must have meant the following: 'Plato certainly thought (σαφῶς γράψας) that his theory was (more) likely (than our own); but he was just wrong to think that this was the best solution, because, in fact, the dry-lung theory is *certainly and demonstrably* correct.'

We can now see how Plutarch orchestrates the defence. What he cannot do is to deny that Plato came down, however tentatively, in favour of the wet-lung theory: as Nicias pointed out, Plato left no room for equivocation on this. But what he can do, and

as a non-Dogmatist what he wants to do anyway, is to deny that the truth of the matter *has* been established (so: τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς ἴσως ἀληπτον ἐν γε τούτοις). After that it just remains to show that the wet-lung theory is *the most likely* one (εἰκότα γὰρ μακρῶ).

As a sort of bridge to take us back to discussion of *de Stoic. rep.* 29, it might be worth considering what Plutarch's own epistemological position was — and as a matter of fact, this comes out more clearly in this passage than almost anywhere else in his surviving work. We have already seen strong indications that Plutarch worked with a kind of 'positive' Scepticism: cf. esp. the discussion in section II (where we saw that the whole motivation of the *de Stoic. rep.* was to promote Plutarch's Platonism by the use of Sceptical tools). This seems to be confirmed by the stand he takes on the present issue: he asserts quite confidently that, although a Dogmatic approach is unreasonable, it *is* possible and reasonable to say what is likely, and that is what Plato did. This kind of appeal to an 'objective' notion of likelihood, or plausibility, can be identified quite narrowly in terms of Academic history with one of the positions taken by Philo of Larissa.<sup>13</sup> (It is to be contrasted for example with the interpretation that Clitomachus made of Carneades: for him, plausibility was a purely *subjective* affair, capturing the way things struck a certain person at a certain time. This kind of plausibilism is consistent with a very hard-line negative Scepticism.)

<sup>13</sup>Philo's three positions are nowhere spelled out explicitly as such; only the last shift, towards a form of Dogmatism, caused great comment. However, this is the only hypothesis that makes good sense of the collection of otherwise contradictory statements that are made about him. The positions appear to have been as follows. To start with, he took a *negatively* Sceptical stance (following Clitomachus' interpretation of Carneades), and advocated complete suspension of judgement (cf. Cicero *Acad.* II.17, Numenius fr.28.1-5 [des Places], &c.). Next came his 'middle' position, in which he adopted the more positively Sceptical interpretation of Carneades (for which cf. *Acad.* II.78). Finally — with his famous, but elusive, "Roman" books — he seems to have adopted a form of Dogmatism, disagreeing with the Stoics only over the definition of knowledge (see *Acad.* II.18, S.E. *Pyrrh. hypot.*I.235).

If we take it, then, that Plutarch was what we might call a Philonian plausibilist,<sup>14</sup> we will also suppose that he attributed this position to Plato, whom he takes as his guide in matters of doctrine. And we can suppose that Plato's εἰκὼς μῦθος would have been an important piece of evidence for this claim — to be sure, it involved equating τὸ εἰκός with what he would have called τὸ πιθανόν, but that need not be a very difficult task.<sup>15</sup>

All of this makes it reasonable to suppose that the attack on Plato launched by Nicias and Protogenes in the *quaest. conviv.* was actually a way of attacking the plausibilism of philosophers such as Plutarch. But the argument used by Nicias and Protogenes looks very similar to the one used by Chrysippus in *de Stoic. rep.* 29, and this throws up a problem. Chrysippus could not have been attacking Academic plausibilism since there was never any real suggestion of systematic theories of probabilism in the Academy until some time after his death — not until Carneades at the earliest. Philo himself came to head the Academy around 170 years after Chrysippus

<sup>14</sup>This belief is, in some form, fairly universal anyway. Cf. e.g. Schröter, *Plutarchs Stellung zur Skepsis* pp.36-37; A. Weische, *Cicero und die neue Akademie* (Münster 1961), esp. p.79; Tarrant, *Scepticism or Platonism? The Philosophy of the Fourth academy*, esp. p.134; A.-M. Ioppolo, 'The Academic Position of Favorinus of Arelate', *Phronesis* 38 (1993) pp.183-213, esp. 195. Donini disagrees (cf. 'Lo scetticismo academico, Aristotele e l'unità della tradizione platonica secondo Plutarco' p.213). But his disagreement comes, I think, largely from a too-naïve statement in the first place of what it meant for Plutarch's epistemology to be influenced by Philo. (For my difference with Donini over the interpretation of the *de primo frigido*, which is also material, see appendix to section II.) One thing that is very clear is that while Plutarch was a Platonist, Philo was not. Although Plutarch believed that probability was the best we could do in this world, he also believed, *unlike* Philo, in the real knowability of Forms through recollection: cf. *quaest. Plat.* 1000DE; fr. 215-217 [Sandbach]; &c. Related to this, he would have given a rather different — and a Platonic — explanation of *why* the world was strictly unknowable. He seems not to think that it is unknowable because of the fallibility of the senses, for example, but because the world is essentially mortal and 'in the midst of birth and decay' (cf. *de E.* 392AB): it is simply not the sort of thing that *is* knowable. However, when all of this has been said, the epistemology which Plutarch uses in practice is remarkably similar to that of 'middle' Philo. In fact, Plutarch's epistemology as a whole is probably to be seen as another example of Plutarch's Platonising 'modernisation' of Academic arguments.

<sup>15</sup>In fact, the Academy seems to have found the equation of τὸ εἰκός and τὸ πιθανόν uncontroversial. Cf. Augustine *contra Academicos* II.16 (where *probabilis* seems to render the former, and *veri similis* the latter).

took the headship of the Stoa. And of course we do not even need these calculations to work out that Chrysippus was not ascribing any form of plausibilism to Plato in chapter 29, since we know from chapter 24 that he thought of him as a Dogmatist!

In fact, it is fairly clear that in discussing the dangers of ‘likelihood’, Chrysippus was not concerned with countering a particularly sophisticated or systematic epistemological position: it rather seems to be the case that he was attacking the kind of appeal that people occasionally do make to what is ‘likely’ when they haven’t given sufficient consideration to a subject (as he thinks was the case with Plato), or when accurate information is not available to them. What Chrysippus does is to point out the dangers involved in this approach, and the fact that ‘likelihood’ could be highly misleading. There was no necessary correlation between likelihood and truth, he said; or even between truth and likelihood. For example: salted fish are fresher if wetted with brine; fleeces of wool yield less easily if you tear them apart than if you part them gently; people who have fasted eat more deliberately than those who have not. These are all examples used by Chrysippus precisely against people who are lured into beliefs on the basis of what is εἰκόσ (*quaest. conviv.* I.9, 626Eff):

ταῦτα Χρύσιππος ἄλλως ἐν παραδείγματος λόγῳ προῦθετο,  
ῥαδίως ἡμῶν καὶ ἀλόγως ὑπὸ τοῦ εἰκότος ἀλισκομένων καὶ  
πάλιν ἀπιστούντων τῇ παρὰ τὸ εἰκόσ.

(As I noted above, Chrysippus himself resorted to the εὐλογον when an opinion was needed on a subject for which there was no good information; but note how very different the connotations of εὐλογον are to those of τὸ εἰκόσ. Most crucially,

"εὐλογον" does suggest an important role for reason, and is far from the unquestioning faith in appearances by which Chrysippus characterises τὸ εἰκός.)

What all of this suggests for a reading of *de Stoic. rep.* 29 is something along the following lines: Plato had expressed a belief (based on what he thought likely) that drink goes through the lungs but (says Chrysippus) he *should not have held this belief*, not because it isn't 'likely', but because it isn't *true*, and Plato would have seen that it isn't true if he had bothered to exercise sufficient ἐμπειρία καὶ ἱστορία — if he had *looked* at the trachea. Now Plutarch, who takes Plato's epistemology to be the same as his own, and thinks that the εἰκὼς μῦθος of the *Timaeus* is a good example of the method, is able to interpret Chrysippus' attack as an attack against what we can call 'Philonian plausibilism'. (Part of the reason why he can do this so easily is presumably that later Stoics, such as Nicias and Protogenes, do seem to have adopted Chrysippus' arguments for use in their own debates with the plausibilist Academy.) Plutarch's reply, then, is to defend the legitimacy of the 'likely' (or the 'plausible') as an object of epistemological enquiry. In the case of liquid nourishment, he argues, the matter has not been resolved beyond doubt, and the fact that it has not is evidenced by the number of equally respectable authorities who have held the wet-lung theory. Plato (he thinks) was therefore right to come down in cautious favour of the view that is, in fact, the most plausible. Plutarch at last gets Chrysippus back for a jibe in chapter 24 which he must have taken personally. It was not 'plausible' (Chrysippus had said) that Plato was wrong to be a Dogmatist ({32.14-15}: οὐ πιθανὸν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον διαμαρτάνειν); Plutarch has shown that Dogmatism leads to error, and that Plato himself was actually a plausibilist all along.

The arguments of chapters 30-37 can be summarised in the following way:

Chapter 30: Chrysippus thinks that wealth &c. are things that are so much to be valued we can even call them goods. But he also says that they are 'nothing' to us, and reason draws us away from them: to congratulate someone on their wealth is to congratulate them on having golden chamber-pots.

All of this reflects badly on providence: Zeus is ridiculous if he answers our prayers with boons which amount to golden chamber-pots; and Apollo is ridiculous if he delivers oracles about the same.

Chapter 31: What is more, fools use everything to their disadvantage, so that no boon can be granted them except virtue. So, either the gods are incapable of making men virtuous (and are not omnipotent), or they refuse to do so, in which case they are malignant. Anyway, god cannot benefit men any more than be benefitted by them. And since in fact all men are in a state of vice and total misery, the gods could not hurt us any more if they tried.

Chapter 32: Chrysippus thinks that the gods use wars providentially, to check surplus population in the same way as cities use colonisation. But wars are not like colonisation; and Zeus could kill people off more humanely — or indeed never allow excess populations to grow in the first place.

Chapter 33: Wars presuppose vice anyway, so the gods in causing war must cause vice. Yet Chrysippus says that gods are never accessories to shameful things.

Chapter 34: Chrysippus thinks that every last feature of the universe is determined by reason, or Zeus. This means that all vice is attributable to the gods and providence.

Chapter 35: However, Chrysippus thinks that the gods punish vice as well — although he thinks that vice is useful since, without it, good would not exist either.

Chapter 36: God opposes some vicious acts, but the total abolition of vice is not supposed to be desirable. Yet presumably Chrysippus hopes precisely to eliminate vice through his philosophy. (And note that, if god opposes *some* vicious acts, there must be an inequality in wrong-doing.)

Chapter 37: Chrysippus says that nothing is blameworthy in the universe, and explains what evil there is in terms of negligence, or its relative insignificance, or its 'necessity'. But it's hardly insignificant; negligence is no excuse; and if necessity is involved, perhaps the gods are not omnipotent after all?

The section formed by chapters 30-37 is one of the most straightforward of the whole of the *de Stoic. rep.* — there can be little doubting the coherence of these chapters around the theme of providence, and the question of the problem of evil. (I shall discuss the place of the ‘ethical’ contradiction that begins chapter 30 *ad loc.*) In fact, so close are Plutarch’s contradictions to an original Academic train of argument that it is more difficult here than anywhere else to divide them convincingly into chapters. Even Wytttenbach’s divisions, which I shall continue to follow for the sake of convenience, begin to look uncomfortable: in particular, the arguments in chapters 30 and 31 clearly belong together, as do those of chapters 32-33 and 35-36.

I have said that this section treats of the ‘problem of evil’, but before we consider the chapters individually, some careful qualification is needed of this claim. Rather than being faced with a single ‘problem of evil’, the Stoics actually distinguished two problems, based on their distinction of ἀποπροηγμένα from κακά as such: they had to explain the existence both of evil and of dispreferable things in the world. It is crucial to keep this distinction in mind, since it is a distinction which Plutarch does not agree with, and he certainly does not go out of his way to make it clear *which* of the two problems (in Stoic terms) he is addressing. The point may have been clearer in Plutarch’s source, and indeed there is some suggestion of a pattern in the way in which Plutarch’s own contradictions divide. Briefly, we can make the following observations: in the pairs 30-31 and 32-33, the first chapter of each (chapters 30 and 32) treats of the problem of ἀποπροηγμένα, the second, the problem of evil as such. (This is especially clear in the pair 32-33, where 33 actually responds to a defence on Chrysippus’ part that the wars discussed in 32 were ‘only’ dispreferable, and not actually evil.) After that, 33-36 all address the issue of *evil* (κακία); and 37 talks only about ἀποπροηγμένα (which

is clear, because the ‘misfortunes’ under discussion can happen even to sages and *evil*, we know, cannot be suffered by the sage).

It is worth outlining briefly what Chrysippus’ approach to each of these problems was, so that we can get some sense of his overall strategy, and understand the direction from which Academic attacks against him were coming. The problem of ‘dispreferables’, to start with that, seems to have been given a two-fold solution in Chrysippus’ theology, of which the first part is tremendously simple: dispreferables are not properly evil, so not properly important at all. (This seems to have been Chrysippus’ attitude towards the ‘wars’ mentioned in 32, and is what leads to the counter-attack in 33.) In other words, the gods may be responsible for them but that does not yet compromise their claim to providence.

This answer goes some way, but it is not entirely satisfactory. After all, the whole point about dispreferables is that they prevent a person, not from being virtuous or happy, but certainly from living a fully ‘natural’ life. Indeed, in some circumstances they make his life not worth living altogether. So we might hope that in an ideal universe such things would still be kept to an absolute minimum, and we might find it a genuine cause for complaint against the gods that we are surrounded by so many of them. This leads to the second part of Chrysippus’ explanation of their existence in the universe: they are, he says, the inevitable by-products of the creation of the perfect universe (given, it seems, that certain ‘design constraints’, as we might call them, were in operation — this must be the ‘necessity’ of 37 {44.13}, and cf. Aulus Gellius *N.A.* VII.1,9-13). If we object that there are still more ἀποπροηγμένα than strictly necessary, Chrysippus will not go out of his way to disagree; but the cost and effort involved in eliminating what is left, he says, would simply not be worth the benefit. This seems to

be what Chrysippus means when he suggests that (some) ἀποπροηγμένα might be ‘like husks of wheat overlooked in a large and well-run household’ ({44.8-10} — but note that this is a suggestion and not an assertion: Chrysippus does not commit himself to the view that the Necessity Argument *is* insufficient to explain all ἀποπροηγμένα.

Chrysippus’ explanation of *evil* is similarly two-fold. To start with, he uses another version of the ‘design constraint’ argument: evil, he says, is a necessary consequence of the creation of a universe which has any *goodness* in it at all: a perfect universe will necessarily encompass some evil: *si tuleris unum, abstuleris utrumque*, as Chrysippus is reported as saying (Aulus Gellius at *N.A.* VII.1,6; cf. perhaps Epictetus’ ‘συμφωνία τῶν ὄλων’ — *diss.* I.12,16).

This leaves Chrysippus with a problem which he didn’t have in respect of ἀποπροηγμένα. As we saw, the fact that ἀποπροηγμένα were somehow ‘necessary’ did not absolve god of responsibility for them. However, it hardly *mattered* that god was responsible for ‘dispreferables’ (and in chapter 32, for example, Chrysippus happily concedes that the gods are responsible for wars in the process of building a better world). It does, however, matter if god is to be held responsible for *evil* (and so Plutarch’s rejoinder to Chrysippus in chapter 33 is that, even if we think it non-culpable for god to be responsible for wars as such, he will still — and unforgivably — be responsible for the evil which is their immediate cause). The problem seems (to the Academy at least) especially tricky for Chrysippus since not only is evil an unfortunate result of god’s creation, but his thorough-going determinism means that every evil thing that happens is actually and positively a part of god’s plan for the world. The way in which Chrysippus tackled this aspect of the problem was not to deny that everything happens by fate, but to develop a notion of the way in which fate operates that

encompassed enough of a notion of free choice to shift the moral responsibility for what happens away from god and onto the shoulders of individual moral agents.<sup>1</sup> The details of how he did this need not detain us here, because they do not serve to explain the attacks made by Plutarch or his source — only the defence that Chrysippus might have made of them. We will, however, return to the subject in section IV.8, *ad de Stoic. rep.* 47, where it is precisely Chrysippus' theory of the operation of fate that is under attack. For now we should just note that Chrysippus *did* think that all moral responsibility for evil lay with individual agents, and he did believe that this was compatible with his belief that the world was arranged by providence down to the last detail.

The opening argument of chapter 30 is actually a well-developed, but absolutely typical example of the Academic criticism of Stoic ethics: according to a strict understanding of Stoic ethics (say the Academics) only virtue has any value for us at all; but in practice, things like health and wealth develop an extremely high status, so that it even makes sense to start calling these things 'good' (and to call disease and poverty, on the other hand, 'bad').

Why does this section which, as I have suggested, reflects a theological topic, begin with an ethical contradiction? The answer to this may be fairly straightforward: Plutarch — or Plutarch's source — seems to think that one of the main reasons why the Stoics run into difficulties in their account of providence is precisely the nature of their

<sup>1</sup>Cf. esp. A. A. Long, 'The Stoic Conception of Evil' *Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1968) pp.329-341; and Simplicius in *Epicteti Encheiridion* pp.297-298 [Schweighauser]: διότι τὸ κακὸν ἢ ψυχὴ ἐνεργεῖ αὐτεξουσίως, καὶ οὐχ ὁ θεός. εἰ μὲν γὰρ βίβη τὸ κακὸν ἐπραττεν ἢ ψυχῇ, τάχα ἄν τις τὸν θεὸν ἠτιάζατο.

ethical theory (according to the strict reading of that). This is not at all surprising: a theory of providence is meant to explain the distribution of good and evil in a world governed by god; but in order to do this, it needs to be able to rely on a clear and consistent account of what kind of things are good and evil in the first place. It is precisely such an account that Academic arguments against the Stoics' ethics wanted to deny to them. I want to suggest, then, that Plutarch's source for *de Stoic. rep.* 30-37 began with a reference to the contradiction inherent in the Stoic notion of good and evil — but did so precisely as a way of setting up the question of their view of providence.

The argument against the Stoic notion of providence starts at {37.16}, and continues over Wytttenbach's chapter-divide to the end of *de Stoic. rep.* 31. It comes in two parts, and is designed to show how the gods would be rendered incapable of benefitting man if the strict Stoic account of good and evil held. In the first part (at {37.15-25}), Plutarch shows that the wealth, health &c. which they give us are mere trifles at best — no more benefits than golden chamber-pots would be. In the second part (chapter 31), he points out that to the fool these things are actually harmful, since the Stoics think that a thing is only good if it is used well, and fools use everything badly (for this doctrine cf. e.g. D.L. VII.103). If the gods wanted to benefit fools, the only way they could do it would be to send them virtue (given that virtue is the only good thing there is); and this they certainly do not do. In fact, there is not a single virtuous person alive, and perhaps there never has been.

The only part of Plutarch's argument that really requires explanation comes in chapter 31, at {38.10-14}. Having shown that the gods do not or cannot benefit fools (by giving them virtue), Plutarch gives us a short, self-contained argument which apparently proves that the gods do not benefit men at large any more than men benefit

the gods: ὥστε μηδὲν μᾶλλον ὠφελεῖν ἢ ὠφελείσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ({38.13-14}). But it is far from being clear how he arrives at this conclusion, and especially what the phrase ‘τὸ κρίνειν κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχύν’, around which the argument pivots (cf. {38.10-11} and {38.12-13}) has to do with benefitting. Cherniss says this:<sup>2</sup> "As Madvig saw...Plutarch here rebuts the suggestion that the beneficence of the gods consists in their favourable judgement of human virtue" — but it is not at all clear either that this is true, or that it would help the argument if it were.

In fact, complete sense can be made of the argument, as well as the phrase in question, with the smallest of textual emendations. It is hard to explain ‘τὸ κρίνειν κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχύν’ in terms of benefitting, but we know that the Stoics did define τὸ ὠφελεῖν as ‘τὸ κινεῖν κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχειν’. Cf. D.L. VII.104:

ὠφελεῖν δὲ ἐστὶ κινεῖν ἢ ἰσχειν κατ’ ἀρετὴν, βλάπτειν δὲ κινεῖν ἢ ἰσχειν κατὰ κακίαν.

If we turn to *de Stoic. rep.* 31 {38.10-14}, we find that ἰσχύουσι already exists as an alternative reading to the second ἰσχύν, making it all the simpler to amend the passage in light of the definition of benefit we have just seen. What we would get is something like this:

τὸ δ’ ἄλλως τοὺς γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς κινεῖν <ἢ> κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχειν οὐδὲν ἐστὶ· καὶ [γὰρ] τοὺς θεοὺς οἱ ἀγαθοὶ κινούσι κατ’ ἀρετὴν καὶ ἰσχύουσι· ὥστε μηδὲν μᾶλλον ὠφελεῖν ἢ ὠφελείσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

<sup>2</sup>Loeb vol. XIII.2, pp.536-7, note (b), citing J. N. Madvig, *Adversaria Critica* (Copenhagen 1871), vol. I, pp.668-669.

A translation of the argument would go something as follows:

It amounts to nothing to affect or sustain those who have become good otherwise than by virtue, and the good affect and sustain the gods by virtue. This means that the gods do not benefit men any more than they are benefitted *by* men.

I.e. the gods can benefit sages just because they are both good; but by the same token, sages benefit the gods (who are equally good).<sup>3</sup>

This argument shows us, then, at the beginning of Plutarch's discussion of providence, that a strict reading of Stoic ethics (according to which it is only the sage who can be benefitted) makes a complete nonsense of the very idea of providence. Providence ought to be defined as a one-way relationship: the gods' concern for man; but it turns out that the gods are capable of benefitting man only to the extent that man benefits god!

There is not much we need to do to suggest what the broad outlines of the Academic argument on which Plutarch is drawing here might have been — there is no reason at all to suppose it was very different from what Plutarch himself presents us with. And now that we have entered the theological field, we have at least one valuable reference-book for Stoic arguments against which to check what we reconstruct Plutarch's source: Cicero's *de natura deorum*. We can say immediately that the argument which is reflected at the beginning of *de Stoic. rep.* 31 corresponds fairly well to the argument

<sup>3</sup>It is worth comparing Stobaeus *ecl.* II, p.95.3-8 [Wachsmuth] (= *S.V.F.* III.94), where the definition of τὸ ὠφελεῖν is used on its own to prove that only sages can benefit or be benefitted: μηδένα δὲ φαῦλον μήτε ὠφελείσθαι μήτε ὠφελεῖν. εἶναι γὰρ τὸ ὠφελεῖν ἴσχειν κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ τὸ ὠφελείσθαι κινεῖσθαι κατ' ἀρετὴν.

Cicero gives at the beginning of his discussion of Stoic providence at III.75ff. There, Cicero complains precisely that the gods, if they were able to be truly provident in the Stoic system, would give men virtue (as it is, they only give reason, which is the cause of all vice).<sup>4</sup>

In this comparison with Cicero, we can start to see very vividly how the vast amount of polemical motifs that were about in the Academy could be joined up and used in different ways. In fact, the claim that reason is no boon for man since it explains vice and rarely if ever produces virtue is actually reflected in Plutarch at *de Stoic. rep.* 18 {23.16-22}; but the material *he* uses to support the argument that the gods would give us virtue if they cared for us is that the material boons they do give us (crops, health &c.) are, according to the Stoics, trivial — something which is in turn found reflected later on in Cicero, at *de nat. de.* III.86-88. Cicero argues here that, as a matter of fact, no-one ever did thank the gods for making him good, but for giving him material comforts:

num quis quod bonus vir esset gratias dis egit umquam? at quod dives, quod honoratus, quod incolumis.

That this must be related to the argument behind *de Stoic. rep.* 30-31 is almost guaranteed by the appeal made by both Cicero and Plutarch to popular epithets of Zeus (*de nat. de.* III.87 and *de Stoic. rep.* 30 {37.19-20} respectively):

<sup>4</sup>The reason that the Stoic gods do not give virtue — any more than the Platonist's own gods give virtue, as we shall see — is simply that virtue is something that has to be earned. For the importance of personal responsibility for vice (and, correspondingly, for the acquisition of virtue), see below *ad* chapters 46-7.

Iovemque Optimum et Maximum ob eas res appellant, non quod nos iustos temperatos sapientes efficiat, sed quod salvos incolumis opulentos copiosos.

ὁ δὲ Ζεὺς γελοῖος εἰ Κτήσιος χαίρει καὶ Ἐπικάρπιος καὶ Χαριδότης προσαγορευόμενος κ.τ.λ.

Plutarch's choice of epithets makes for a rather more pointed polemic than Cicero's, since it would seem more absurd — even in the context of the Stoics' own beliefs — to call Zeus 'Κτήσιος', 'Ἐπικάρπιος' and the rest, because he granted *wisdom*, than it would be to call him *Optimus et Maximus*. This presumably reflects the fact that Cicero is attempting to make an argument that he found in the Greek suitable for a Roman audience.

There is no clear parallel for the argument at {38.10-14}, where Plutarch shows that the gods cannot benefit man more than man benefits god; but there is, again, no reason to suppose that his source would not have contained a similar argument, and the claim that the very notion of providence is impossible to uphold in the Stoics' system. There is, however, a parallel for the final argument, at the end of chapter 31, where Plutarch points out that the Stoics think all men are in the depths of madness and misery (which says little for god's concern for them). This argument appears at *de nat. de.*

III.79:

nam si stultitia consensu omnium philosophorum maius est malum quam si omnia mala et fortunae et corporis ex altera parte ponantur, sapientem autem nemo adsequitur, in summis malis omnes sumus quibus vos optime consultum a dis immortalibus dicitis.

It is also a very simple matter in this case to show how Plutarch thinks the Stoics' contradictions come from disagreement with Plato. To start with, we know that it must be the position that makes providence impossible to which Plutarch objects, just because Plutarch deduces this from the 'strict' reading — which is the non-Platonic reading — of Stoic ethics. All we need to do then is to show that Plutarch does believe in providence. This is simple. Cf. e.g. *de comm. not.* 1075E:

οὐ γὰρ ἀθάνατον καὶ μακάριον μόνον [*sc.* φασὶ οἱ Στωϊκοί],  
ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλόανθρωπον καὶ κηδεμονικὸν καὶ ὠφέλιμον  
προλαμβάνεσθαι καὶ νοεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν· ὅπερ ἀληθές ἐστίν.

(And the doctrine of a beneficent providence is undeniably Platonic: cf. e.g. *Rep.* II, 379c: τῶν μὲν ἀγαθῶν οὐδένα ἄλλον αἰτιατέον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἄλλ' ἅπτα δεῖ ζητεῖν τὰ αἴτια, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν θεόν.) Furthermore, Plutarch himself does seem to believe (what he could hardly deny!) that the gods do not give wisdom to men as readily as they give material benefits. For example, he says this in the introduction to the *de Is. et Os.*, 351D:

τἄλλα μὲν γὰρ ἀνθρώποις ὁ θεὸς ὧν δέονται δίδωσιν, νοῦ  
δὲ καὶ φρονήσεως μεταδίδωσιν, οἰκεῖα κεκτημένος ταῦτα  
καὶ χρώμενος.

So we can see that, once again, Plutarch has chosen and constructed his arguments to show that it is Chrysippus' departure from the Platonic understanding of good and evil that causes him to run into serious difficulties — this time by making it

very hard for him to assert what he wants to assert, namely the beneficence of the gods towards men.

Chapter 32 (followed by chapter 33, its partner, and chapter 34 after that) develops the idea that gods in the Stoic system, far from acting providentially towards men, must actually be responsible for harming them. This time, the approach Plutarch adopts is not to argue by reference to the Stoic account of good and evil, but broadly by reference to their belief that everything in the universe happens according to the will of the gods. This doctrine is not very close to the surface in 32 (as it is, for example, in 34), but it must be what lies behind Chrysippus' acceptance that wars are caused by the gods, and that this is something that needs to be explained. What Chrysippus says is that wars are useful — useful, that is, for maintaining human population at an optimal level. In other words, this is a version of the 'design constraint' argument we have seen: ἀποπροηγμένα are just a necessary by-product of an attempt to make a better disposition of the whole. Plutarch, reasonably enough, suggests that Zeus should be capable of more humane ways of doing this.

One thing that is worth commenting on in this chapter is the way in which Plutarch sets up his argument — viz, by a comparison between the claims Chrysippus makes about wars and the claims he makes in the *περὶ Δικαιοσύνης* about the utility of killing and eating cockerels. Although it is not immediately clear what the point of this comparison is, it does become apparent if we consider why the Pythagoreans of {39.5} were outraged by Chrysippus' attitude towards cockerels. The Pythagoreans, of course, did not approve of killing (or eating) animals, and one reason for this was that

they believed there to be a bond of justice between men and animals quite generally.<sup>5</sup> Chrysippus does not think that there is such a bond of justice — in fact this is something he argues in book I of the *περὶ Δικαιοσύνης* (see D.L. VII.129) —; and this is presumably an important part of his justification for human exploitation of animals. Indeed, Chrysippus even wants to say that animals are, in a teleological sense, *for* our use (Cicero *de nat. de.* II.160; *S.V.F.* II.1152 &c.).

The point of Plutarch's comparison between cockerel-killing and human wars must, then, be this: he wants to imply that the Stoic gods cause wars among men for the same kinds of reason as men kill cockerels. This would be some sort of reply to Chrysippus' explanation of *ἀποπροηγμένα* as being 'for the greater good': Stoic 'providence', which is identical with the Stoic god, is, it seems, prepared to allow *men* to suffer misfortune for the sake of the world at large — for the sake, in fact, of god himself.

In fact, Chrysippus did not want to maintain any such position; he actually thought that men and gods partake of the same rationality, and are capable of the same state of wisdom and virtue (and cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 13 {14.6-10}), so that a bond of justice — which is the basis of the Cosmopolis — does exist between them (Cicero *de leg.* I.23). Indeed, he thinks that men and gods sit together at the end point of world-teleology: see Cicero *de nat. de.* II.154:

principio ipse mundus deorum hominumque causa factus est,  
quaeque in eo sunt ea parata ad fructum hominum et inventa sunt.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example Plutarch *quaest. conviv.* VIII.8, 730B, Iamblichus *vit. Pyth.* XXX.169. Plutarch seems to have it both ways: he apparently thinks, at least in a weak sense, that it is possible to wrong animals (Porphyry *de abst.* III.18 = Plutarch fr.193 [Sandbach]); but on the other hand he admits the 'necessity' of culling chickens and hares: *quaest. conviv.* VIII.8, 730A.

But in order to maintain this position he needs the extra argument that ἀποπροηγμένα are not real evils anyway: it should not matter even to the people to whom they happen *that* they happen. This argument must, in fact, be presupposed for the contradiction in the next chapter, where Plutarch goes on to prove that, in the case of wars at least, ‘providence’ must *also* be inflicting genuine evil on men.

There is a sufficiently close parallel to Plutarch’s argument at *de nat. de.* III.93, where Cicero is replying to the Stoics’ own claim that ‘god doesn’t bother himself with individuals’. He says this:

non mirum: ne civitates quidem. non eas? ne nationes quidem et gentes.

There seems to be presupposed here a notion of Stoic ‘providence’ very close to the one that Plutarch imagines: a notion of a providence that does not act ‘theistically’ in caring for men as individuals. Note especially Cicero’s reference to the ‘cities and nations’ neglected by providence: this may well reflect a standard appeal in Academic literature to the destruction caused by wars.

For Plutarch’s conviction that providence is precisely defined by a readiness on the part of god to act and care for individuals, cf. chapter 30, esp. {37.19-23}; and *de fac.* 927AB, where Plutarch says that there is not even room for providence in a system which follows a rigidly defined, ‘natural’ course with which god cannot interfere.

As I suggested above, Chrysippus seems to have explained the presence of ἀποπροηγμένα in the universe — wars, paradigmatically — as necessary for the perfection of the whole. But he also needs to make the further claim to justify this apparently rather utilitarian approach to humanity, namely that ἀποπροηγμένα are not properly evil things at all: we should not allow ourselves to be upset by wars in the first place. It is this argument which is clearly in the background to chapter 33, and to which Plutarch sets out the reply: even if we accept that wars are not evil *per se*, their immediate cause usually is — wars are started through greed, or glory-seeking, for example. If the gods send wars to men, they must therefore also send evil.

The way in which Chrysippus might have answered this criticism involves, crucially, the Stoic theory of determinism. In fact, we know that, although he thinks everything happens ‘according to nature’ — everything is in some sense determined — he also thought it quite compatible to say that human agents had free moral choice (cf. Cicero *de fato* 41). This means that, although he would accept that wars, and even the evil that causes them, must be a part of the causal nexus set up by god, it does not follow that god (or providence) is morally *responsible* for the evil in the way suggested by Plutarch. Evil is supposed to remain in an important sense the free choice of moral agents.

This argument does not have nearly so clear a parallel in Cicero as others do; but it might be related to an argument we saw earlier. Behind *de Stoic. rep.* 30 and 31 we saw that there was an argument according to which god was not beneficent if he failed to grant wisdom or virtue to men, and this could be compared with Cicero *de nat. de.* III.75ff. But at 66-78 in particular, Cicero argues that it would have been better for the

gods never to have given men reason at all than not to have given them *perfect* reason. The explanation of this is straightforward: vice is constituted precisely by wrong reason. One implication of Cicero's argument — although it is only an implication, and not spelled out in the terms we have seen in Plutarch — is that providence is responsible for evil among men just because it is responsible for giving reason that it knew would be misused.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the issues that must underlie the present debate at some level — and which we are going to see more of later on — is the issue of where the blame for evil lies. Ultimately this is a cosmological question, and Plutarch is able to suggest that, because there is only one creative agent in the Stoics' universe — god alone, who is responsible for everything whatsoever — he must be made responsible for evil. Plutarch thinks that this cosmology is wrong, however, and certainly non-Platonic. He is very keen on the idea that there is a second creative source in the universe — a source specifically of evil —: this, he argues, is the 'Malevolent World Soul' posited by Plato.<sup>6</sup> See *de proc. an.* 1014DE (and cf. 1015B; *de Is. et Os.* 368F-369D):

...τὴν ἄτακτον καὶ ἀόριστον αὐτοκίνητον δὲ καὶ κινητικὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκείνην, ἣν πολλαχοῦ μὲν ἀνάγκη ἐν δὲ τοῖς Νόμοις [cf. 896d5-898c8] ἀντικρυσ ψυχὴν ἄτακτον εἶρηκε καὶ κακοποιόν.

Ultimately, it is the Stoics' 'innovative' claim that god is the only cause in the universe and is therefore the cause of everything — specifically, in the case of chapters 32-33,

<sup>6</sup>Plutarch was followed in this view by Atticus — but by few other Platonists. Cf. esp. Atticus fr. 23 [des Places].

the cause of wars, as they admit — that leads to their holding a view of providence which is hardly sustainable.

Chapter 34 picks up and develops a theme which we saw was a very important part of the background to 33, and that is the fact that every last thing that happens in the Stoic cosmos happens according to the plan and will of the gods — according to providence, which is identified, for example, with fate (cf. {41.19-21}). This, says Plutarch, is just incompatible with the claim that god is not responsible for evil (cf. {41.25}).

In chapter 33 we referred to one way in which the Stoics tried to explain the compatibility of Stoic providence with the existence of evil — namely by shifting responsibility for it onto the shoulders of individual moral agents. But this explanation leaves a question: even if god is not *morally responsible* for evil, there is still a question of why he could not have devised a universe in the first place which would avoid evil altogether (and cf. Cicero *de nat. de.* III.66-78). Chrysippus' answer constitutes the second part of the explanation he gave of evil (as I outlined it earlier): evil is a necessary consequence of good, so that the best possible universe must include some evil. Chrysippus even seems to have explained this belief by reference to Plato: see Aulus Gellius *N.A.* VII.1,6, who quotes, in translation, from Chrysippus' *περὶ Προνοίας* IV:

"Alterum enim ex altero, sicuti Plato ait [cf. *Phaedo* 60b], verticibus inter se contrariis deligatum est; si tuleris unum, abstuleris utrumque."

This is not, of course, how Plutarch interprets Plato. We have already seen that Plutarch ascribes evil to its own distinct source, based on an interpretation of the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*; the Stoics' explanation he dismisses not just as wrong, but as vacuous, 'explaining' evil *ex nihilo*. So at *de proc. an.* 1015B we read this:

αἱ γὰρ Στωϊκαὶ καταλαμβάνουσιν ἡμᾶς ἀπορίαι, τὸ κακὸν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἀναιτίως καὶ ἀγενήτως ἐπείσασθαι, ἐπεὶ τῶν γ' ὄντων οὔτε τάγαθόν οὔτε τὸ ἄποιον εἰκὸς ἐστὶ οὐσίαν κακοῦ καὶ γένεσιν παρασχεῖν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτ' Ἰλάτων οὐκ ἔπαθε κ.τ.λ.

Nature is not like a barmaid, he says elsewhere, dealing out bad with the good: there must be two opposing forces involved (see *de Is. et Os.* 369C).

Given Plutarch's principle that evil must have a definite source, and given the Stoics' refusal to provide any other creative source apart from their god, Plutarch feels himself justified in taking Chrysippus' claim, that everything comes about according to divine will, to lead inevitably to the conclusion that god is *as* deliberately and morally responsible for instances of evil as he is for any good in the world: he is just like the barmaid in Plutarch's image at *de Is. et Os.* (which was quite probably written with the Stoics in mind).

Chapter 35 develops its contradiction in the first place out of the same non-Platonic Stoic doctrine as the one that governed the contradiction in chapter 34: the belief that everything in the world conforms to god's intentions. This time, the claim that god is responsible for everything and therefore (in the strong sense in which we have seen

Plutarch would interpret the claim) for evil, is contradicted by Chrysippus' adherence to the belief that god punishes evil. In the second part of the contradiction (at {43.4-18}), Plutarch strengthens his argument by alluding to the fact that evil is supposed to be useful for the universe at large (in fact, we have just seen that Chrysippus explained the presence of evil in the universe in precisely these terms).

This contradiction can be seen as taking the argument of the last chapter a stage further still: even if we could accept Chrysippus' claim that individual agents were morally responsible for what evil there is, it is still the case that it has been included by god as part of the causal nexus that makes up the universe. So it makes no sense for god to punish evil, as if trying to rid his system of something which he needs to be there.

Chrysippus could presumably reply, correspondingly, that so long as it makes sense to talk about moral culpability at all, it will make sense to incorporate punishment into the system. (Plutarch would argue that it actually does *not* make sense to talk of individual moral culpability in Chrysippus' deterministic system: cf. esp. *de Stoic. rep.* 47.) What is more, given that Chrysippus explains *evil* as making the world at large a better place, there is no reason why he should not say that the punishment which inevitably follows makes it 'better' as well. And after all, punishment, even divine punishment — is as much a part of the causal nexus as the crime. It may be relevant to quote a story which comes at D.L. VII.23:<sup>7</sup>

δοῦλον ἐπὶ κλοπῇ, φασίν, ἐμαστίγου· τοῦ δ' εἰπόντος,  
"εἴμαρτό μοι κλέψαι," ἔφη [*sc.* ὁ Ζήνων], "καὶ δαρῆναι".

<sup>7</sup>Despite the presentation, the argument is a serious one, found as such also in, for example, the *Corpus Hermeticum* at XII.5.

Again, we have no very close parallel in Cicero for Plutarch's argument — but again the argument in his source cannot have been very different from the contradiction he passes on to us.

One argument that does come in Cicero, however, is worth considering at this point. At *de nat. de.* III.80-83, Cicero argues that the fact that there *is* no reliable divine punishment argues against Stoic providence — against any notion of providence in fact. The difference between this argument and the one presented by Plutarch is very telling indeed: Plutarch thinks (as we shall see) that the idea of divine punishment is quite reasonable, and is consistent with the concept of providence, but that it is not consistent with Stoic determinism. Cicero argues that it would be reasonable, and would be consistent with a notion of providence, but that it *simply doesn't happen*. This suggests a difference in approach of the traditions on which Cicero and Plutarch respectively are drawing, of a kind we have already seen in section IV.6: Cicero, in the *de nat. de.* III as in *Acad.* II, is drawing on a source which is much more negatively Sceptical than Plutarch or Plutarch's source.<sup>8</sup> Not only is it the case that Plutarch does believe in divine punishment; but there is no reason why *his* Scepticism should lead him to doubt it.

As to Plutarch's position on divine punishment: cf. e.g. *de Stoic. rep.* 15, where god's punishment of the wicked is explicitly ascribed to Plato as part of his attempt to scare them into being just: see esp. {18.4-8}. Cf. also the whole of the *de sera numinis*

<sup>8</sup>The basically Clitomachean nature of Cicero's source for *de nat. de.* III is unquestioned: see, for example, R. Hirzel, *Untersuchungen zu Ciceros philosophischen Schriften*, vol. I (Leipzig 1877), pp.243-4.

*vindicta*, where Plutarch discusses the question not of *whether* divine punishment operates, but *when* it does.

Chapter 36 in many ways follows on from the last argument in 35: having said there that it was contradictory to believe in divine punishment given that vice is useful, we now get an argument based on the claim that it is not *desirable* to eliminate vice. But if Chrysippus really believed this, Plutarch says, he should not have engaged in philosophy, whose aim is precisely to lead people to virtue.

As we could find no very close parallel to the contradiction in chapter 35, it should not be surprising that there is none for 36 either — although once again the original form of the Academic argument is easy enough to hypothesise.

As to Plutarch's own beliefs: he may indeed think that it is impossible to eliminate vice — see again *de Is. et Os.* 369A-D —; but he will not want to say, or countenance as Platonic, the position that we would be worse off if this came about. As we have seen, Plutarch found a way in his cosmology to claim that, although evil is a *necessary* part creation, there is no way in which it can be thought of as desirable.

If Chrysippus falls into contradiction because his account of the origin of evil is so inimical to the Platonic, at least the idea that the purpose of philosophy is for moral improvement and the elimination of vice is more acceptable to Plutarch: cf. for example, Plutarch *de lib. ed.* 7DE, and especially Plato *ap. de Stoic. rep.* 14 {16.24-25}, who says that "τῷ μηδὲ μαθόντι μηδ' ἐπισταμένῳ ζῆν λυσιτελεῖ μὴ ζῆν". Plutarch there

clearly understands him to be making a connection between living *unphilosophically* and living *wickedly*.

Finally, Plutarch has tagged an extra argument on to the end of this chapter. By saying that the gods oppose some acts of wrong-doing but not others, Chrysippus (he says) must be making a distinction among wrong-doing which contradicts the strict claim of his ethical theory according to which all evil is qualitatively identical: cf. {43.25 - 44.2}.

This argument, I want to claim, represents an example of opportunism on Plutarch's part of a kind we have seen before (cf. on chapters 13 and 18): in other words, here is an argument which was not in Plutarch's source, but which is given an opening by something that was. Like all of these arguments, it stands out for being concerned with a topic not strictly relevant to the one which characterises the origin of the other contradictions in the section — something which is very clear here —; in addition it, like the others, reads like a post-script: it is very brief, and introduced with a remark that indicates its parenthetical nature: 'πρὸς δὲ τούτοις...'

The current section of contradictions which are based on Academic arguments against the possibility of divine providence in the Stoics' system ends in chapter 37 with an attack on another of Chrysippus' attempts to explain the problem of evil given his belief that *everything* is in accordance with τὴν ἀρίστην φύσιν, and nothing, accordingly, is blameworthy on the wider scale at all. Localised examples of evil, he says, are due to insignificant 'oversights', to the action of bad daemons; or perhaps simply to 'necessity'.

In this chapter, as I mentioned earlier, the problem that Chrysippus is tackling is once again the presence of ἀποπροηγμένα. This is clear from the fact that the ‘misfortunes’ he is concerned with are of the kind that befall even ‘the virtuous and good’ {44.8} — and we know that evil as such cannot befall the sage (cf. e.g. Cicero *de fin.* III.29). Chrysippus’ strategy in respect of these kinds of misfortune is very much as we have seen. In the first place, he gives us an argument which is analogous to his explanation of evil: some ἀποπροηγμένα are just necessary — the price we have to pay for the perfection of the whole (cf. 44.12-13}). This argument is presented in a slightly fuller form by Aulus Gellius. At *N.A.* VII.1,9-13 he cites Chrysippus’ περὶ Προνοίας on the explanation of illness (a typical ἀποπροηγμένον):

eaeque <non> per naturam, sed per sequellas quasdam necessarias  
facta dicit, quod ipse appellat κατὰ παρακολούθησιν.

There does, however, seem to be a question as to whether *all* ἀποπροηγμένα can be explained in this way, and Chrysippus offers some additional possibilities. One of these (at {44.8-10}) is an argument that is closely related to the necessity argument: the claim that some ἀποπροηγμένα might be things that god ‘overlooks’, as a steward might ‘overlook’ husks of grain in a large and well-run household. The suggestion is presumably not that god does not *notice* these things; but rather that the costs involved in removing them are too high to justify doing his so. In any case, the imagery of the husks of grain reminds us that, as a matter of fact, the things we are talking about are not *evil* as such: it is only in a very qualified sense that they matter at all.

The final suggestion — at {44.11-12} —, that ‘evil daemons’ may be responsible for a certain number of ἀποπροηγμένα, must rest on the idea that daemons, like people, are morally free agents and, despite Chrysippus’ belief in determinism, the blame for any evil of which they are the cause rests firmly on their shoulders (cf. further section IV.8, on *de Stoic. rep.* 47). For Chrysippus’ daemons, which may be good or bad, and seem to be rather similar to (human) souls, see esp. Plutarch *de Is. et Os.* 360E; S.E. *adv. math.* IX.74.

The Stoic argument that evils are ‘oversights’ occupies a large section of Cicero’s attack on Stoic theodicy in *de nat. de.* III (viz. 86-93), and Cicero appeals prominently to the two main lines of attack used by Plutarch. First of all there is the denial that the things ‘overlooked’ are petty (cf. οὐ περὶ μικρὰ καὶ φαῦλα {44.6}) — cf. III.86:

...quasi ego paulo ante de fundo Formanio P. Rutilii sim questus,  
non de amissa salute!

(Cicero has typically substituted a Roman example for those used in the original argument; but he does present a list of injustices similar to that presented by Plutarch at {44.14-17}, albeit in a slightly different context. At *de nat. de.* III.80-85, Cicero discusses the lack of justice shown by the gods, and cites in common with Plutarch the cruel deaths suffered by the Eleatic Zeno, and by Socrates.)

The second aspect of the argument Cicero uses against the claim that evils are just ‘minor oversights’ seems to play on the meaning of the word which, as we saw, the Stoics presumably did not intend. Chrysippus must have wanted to say that god

*deliberately* overlooks certain things on the basis of a calculation of the costs involved in eliminating them; Cicero, in parallel with Plutarch, suggests that these ‘oversights’ are somehow due to god’s negligence, and thus remain a cause for blame. Compare {44.20}: πῶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἔγκλημα τοῦ θεοῦ; with *de nat. de.* III.90: *deo ne excusatio quidem est inscientiae.*

Plutarch, as a Platonist, will have no time for the suggestion that evils can be explained by oversight or by necessity. Oversight is just unthinkable; ‘necessity’, as we have seen before (*de proc. an.* 1015BC), is an argument *ex nihilo*.

The suggestion that evil might be due to evil daemons might, as such, be more attractive to Plutarch. Plutarch does think that opposed to the Olympian gods Plato held there to be daemons of "mixed and inconsistent nature" (*de Is. et Os.* 361AB; cf. Plato *Laws* 717a). But Plutarch does not think that daemons are created in a deterministic framework as ministers of god; his daemons have genuine free-will, so that the evil they perpetrate is explained in a way which, he thinks, is not open to the Stoics.

The arguments of the final ten chapters of the *de Stoic. rep.* are as follows:

- Chapter 38: Chrysippus criticises those who deny the gods' providence which, they say, is held universally to be part of the conception of god. Yet there are many people who don't believe the gods are provident, and none at all believe they're perishable; Chrysippus, however, believes that all but Zeus are perishable.
- Chapter 39: Chrysippus says that the Cosmos (Zeus) is not nourished, while the other gods are. Yet the cosmos is supposed to grow. The contradiction is as bad when he says that the cosmos is nourished from itself.
- Chapter 40: Our conception of the gods includes their happiness and blessedness; yet the gods that are dependent on something else for their nourishment can hardly be happy or blessed.
- Chapter 41: Chrysippus explains life in the soul by the chilling action of cold air, yet he says the soul is rarefied. What's more, the sun's life is explained by diffusion and kindling. At the ἐκπύρωσις, everything is alive; matter is only formed by chilling and condensation. Chrysippus tries to prove that the soul comes to be at birth by the similarity exhibited by children with their parents: yet this tends to show that the soul was engendered earlier than birth.
- Chapter 42: Sometimes Chrysippus calls air light and upwards-tending, sometimes neither heavy nor light.
- Chapter 43: Chrysippus thinks air is naturally dark; yet, as the ἕξις of things, he thinks it explains qualities of colour, brightness and solidity.
- Chapter 44: Chrysippus admits there is no spatial definition in an infinite void; yet he thinks the earth is 'in the middle' of the void — and would be destroyed if it were not (despite the fact that all the parts of the cosmos are supposed to cohere around their own centre).
- Chapter 45: If the cosmos would be destroyed when moved from the centre of the void, then it is only chance that keeps it intact — not fate and providence.
- Chapter 46: Chrysippus' theory of fate is self-contradictory, since he thinks many things are possible that are not destined to happen.

Chapter 47: An impression is not a sufficient cause of assent, so that our actions are not necessitated by antecedent causes. Yet, if fate is only a 'procatartic' cause, it does not make sense to say that fate is 'unimpedible' and causes everything. Perhaps Chrysippus will say that the movement of the universe as a whole is not impeded if parts of it are impeded — but that is nonsense. Impressions must be what cause our assent; so either destiny is not responsible for every impression, or every act of assent is blameless, or destiny is itself morally responsible for our actions.

We know from *de nat. de.* II.3 that the Stoics divided the 'question of the immortal gods' into four parts, namely (1) their existence (*esse deos*); (2) their character (*quales sint*); (3) their government of the world (*mundum ab iis administrari*); and (4) their concern for mankind, or their providence (*consulere eos rebus humanis*). This scheme is found in Seneca too.<sup>1</sup> What I want to suggest is that Plutarch's contradictions in these last ten chapters of the *de Stoic. rep.* reflect an Academic attack on Stoic theology which, like Cicero's attack in *de nat. de.* III, was organised according to the same scheme.

There are elements of *de Stoic. rep.* 38-47 that immediately suggest arguments which fall into one or other of these four topics. For example, chapter 38 appeals to the universal conception of god in a way that recalls the debate over one of the most important Stoic proofs of the *existence* of god (topic (1)), and the question of the *nourishment* of the gods in chapters 39-41 brings to mind Cicero's refutation of Cleanthes, discussed as part of topic (2) at *de nat. de.* III.29-37. After this, I shall suggest that the question of the coherence and stability of the universe in *de Stoic. rep.* 44-45 must be relying on arguments against the government of the universe by a Stoic

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *ep.* 95.50: *primus est deorum cultus deos credere* (1); *deinde reddere illis maiestatem suam, reddere bonitatem suam sine qua nulla maiestas est* (2); *scire illos esse qui praesident mundo, qui universa vi sua temperant* (3), *qui humani generis tutelam gerunt...* (4).

god (topic (3)), and this would bring us at last, and in order, to arguments which are obviously related to the question of moral responsibility, and the providence of god (topic (4)).

Chapter 38, as I want to suggest, is the sole representative of the first topic of argument in theological debate: the question of whether god exists. One of the central arguments in the Stoics' proof of god was a version of the *consensus omnium*: everyone has a notion of god, and the reason for this (the Stoics assert) is that the notion of god is a κοινὴ ἔννοια (in the technical sense of that phrase — cf. section IV.3). But if we know that it is a κοινὴ ἔννοια, then we also know, just because of the way in which it was caused, that it represents a true feature of nature: in other words, we know that god exists.

Plutarch's contradiction in *de Stoic. rep.* 38 is not, of course, set up around a debate as to whether everyone has a conception of god, or even whether everyone believes the gods to exist; the basis of his contradiction is rather Chrysippus' assertion against Epicurus that most people's conception of god includes the belief that they are provident. Plutarch says that this claim is not quite true because, apart from Epicurus, the Jews and Syrians believe in non-provident gods; and that anyway Chrysippus himself denies what is a much more widely-accepted part of the conception of god, namely their imperishability. This may on the face of it suggest that Plutarch's contradiction is reflecting an argument in which Chrysippus was criticised for deducing the providence of the gods from common belief, but there are various reasons why this could not be so. Not least among these is the fact that the Stoics explicitly said that we cannot deduce

anything about the character of god from common conceptions, but only the fact of his existence (*de nat. de.* II.13; *S.E. adv. math.* IX.61).

In fact, it turns out that the reason why Chrysippus was interested in the universal belief in god's providence is just that it supports his argument for the *existence* of god — something which should become clear if we consider how that argument works. Chrysippus did not say simply that 'everyone believes in god therefore god must exist'; but rather, having noted that everyone has the *concept* of god, what he argued was that this concept (ἔννοια) had the kind of causal history that meant it was engendered in such a way as to make it a 'common concept' (κοινῆ ἔννοια) in the technical sense — a concept that, in terms of the Stoic theory of rationality, is one of the privileged items of *a priori* knowledge given us by nature. So it is only in virtue of believing that the universal concept of god has *in addition* the right kind of causal history (one which guarantees its truth) that we come to believe that god exists.

If Chrysippus' argument had been simply that 'everyone believes in god, therefore god exists', it would not have cut much ice with atheists. Atheists do not at all want to deny that they, or however many other people, have a *concept* of god. They simply believe that the concept is a false one, and that god does not exist any more than Hippocentaur (of which they also have an ἔννοια) exist. And the reason why they might class their concept of god with their concept of the Hippocentaur rather than, for example, their concept of the colour white (whose truth they do not doubt) is quite simple: it is very easy to see reasons in nature which explain our concept of white: we have seen white things from the moment of our birth. However, none of us has seen a god (any more than we have seen Hippocentaur); the concept of god may therefore be

the product of the same kind of imagination that engenders concepts of mythical beasts quite generally.

The Stoics seem to have two main strategies against this argument. One is to say that the concept of god is more universal and more abiding than that of the Hippocentaur: as a matter of fact, even among people who have a concept of the Hippocentaur, most do not believe that the beast exists, whereas many people do believe in god; there must, therefore, be some difference between the concepts themselves that will explain this (*de nat. de.* II.5). But secondly, they counter the objection that we have never *seen* a god, by pointing out that, as a matter of fact, we see evidence of him every day: we see god and the operation of god throughout nature (in fact the Stoic god is identified with nature and the world itself: cf. *de nat. de.* I.39; *S.V.F.* II, p.273,25-26). There are, for example, particular features of nature which obviously betray its divinity and which *would* explain the natural formation of a concept (in the sense of κοινὴ ἐννοία) of god. These features include such things as the beauty of nature, the awe-inspiring quality of storms, the motion of the heavens &c. In fact, one of the most important of these 'indications' is the providential organisation of the world as a whole. See esp. *de nat. de.* II.13-15 (cf. also *S.V.F.* II.1009-1010; *S.E. adv. math.* IX.60-61):

Cleanthes quidem noster quattuor de causis dixit in animis hominum informatas deorum esse notiones. Primam posuit eam de qua modo dixi, quae orta esset ex praesensione rerum futurarum; alteram, quam ceperimus ex magnitudine commodorum quae percipiuntur caeli temperatione fecunditate terrarum aliarumque commoditatum conplurium copia; tertiam &c.

The argument from the providential organisation of the universe shows that no one has any reason to doubt that there is a perfectly good causal explanation in nature

which would explain the formation of our concept of god (namely the obvious features of providential organisation in the world). What is more, since it is part of nature's providence that she does not imbue us with false concepts, then we can say in addition that the concept of god which we do all develop by this means must be a κοινῆ ἔννοια, and must (therefore) be true.

It is in this way that the question of what our concept of god is *like* is an important part of the proof *that god exists*; and so it is that an Academic source attacking Stoic theology in the order it was originally laid out would pick up on the question of what features our ἔννοια of god included under the *first* heading of the debate.

Finally, we are now in a position to understand *why* the common inclusion of providence (or, for that matter, imperishability) in the notion of god is no immediate proof that the gods are provident. It is, in the first place, a different thing to talk about an ἔννοια and to talk about a κοινῆ ἔννοια, and, although Chrysippus may think that everyone's ἔννοια of god — excepting Epicurus' — includes providence (cf. {45.1-5}), that does not yet mean that providence is included as part of the κοινῆ ἔννοια of god. Instead, it seems to be a deduction — a correct deduction — on the basis of what would be consistent with our κοινὰ ἔννοια. Correspondingly, Chrysippus is *not* automatically committed to the belief that all the gods are imperishable just because most people believe that they are. He could explain this belief as an incorrect — or, more likely, as an imprecise — deduction from what we do know about the gods. (In fact, of course, there is a question as to the extent to which Chrysippus thought the gods really *were* 'perishable'. Plutarch himself tells us that he thinks Zeus — by far the most important divinity — *isn't* perishable; and the 'perishability' of the other gods is less a

kind of mortality, as Plutarch implies, but more the loss of personal identity in the ἐκπύρωσις, when all gods merge with Zeus (cf. *de comm. not.* 1075B.)

The way in which the Academy answered the Stoics' appeal to the *consensus omnium* for the existence of god was presumably to deny the claim that there are such things as κοινὰ ἔννοια whose truth is guaranteed to us; and certainly to challenge the Stoics' claim that 'what the majority thought' was relevant even as the most general indicator of what might be true. After all, the witnesses whom the Stoics call in this kind of argument are fools (they think there are no sages), so that we might expect that their opinions will count for very little: see Porphyry *de abstin.* II.40, and cf. Galen *P.H.P.* p.104,5ff [De Lacy]. What is more, the Stoics thought that the stupid masses to whom they appealed were mad to boot — and it is on the basis of this doctrine that Cicero develops his argument at *de nat. de.* III.11 (and cf. Diogenianus *apud* Eusebius *pr. ev.* VI.8 [264a9-b5]):

placet igitur tantas res opinione stultorum iudicari, vobis  
praesertim qui illos insanos esse dicatis?

Plutarch's source does not take this approach, but finds a different way of attacking the validity of an appeal to common conceptions as a basis for Dogmatic belief. The argument he adumbrates is the following: Chrysippus has tried to back up his *consensus omnium* argument in the way we have seen by showing that one of the characteristics of god (viz. providence) is evident in nature, and would explain our formation of the concept of god. But why should we assume that providence is a

characteristic of god at all? In fact, Chrysippus undermines our confidence in this assumption by denying that the gods are imperishable, when imperishability is a much more common assumption about the character of god. And, if we can no longer be confident that the gods are *provident*, then there is no reason to think that we *could* have acquired our concept of god by seeing a well-ordered universe, or (consequently) that our concept of god is a κοινὴ ἔννοια.

By taking the approach that he does, it should be noted that Plutarch (and perhaps his source — although we have no exact parallels for the approach) makes the epistemological point that the Stoics' Dogmatism and, in particular, their appeal to (κοινὰ) ἔννοια, fails to justify even the conclusion that god exists. But at the same time, he manages, unlike Cicero, to present an argument that does not commit him to holding a position, even *ad hominem*, that calls into *doubt* the existence of the gods.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, he attacks the Stoics' *method* of proof alone — and he shows that to be suspect just because it fails to uphold the orthodox belief in the imperishability of the gods.

In the contradiction as it stands, the Stoics' downfall appears to come with the non-Platonic claim that imperishability does not form part of our conception of the gods. Plutarch certainly does believe that the gods are provident (as we have seen exhaustively

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that this difference reflects a difference in the kind of Scepticism which lies behind Cicero's enterprise in *de nat. de.* III, and Plutarch's philosophy quite generally. Cicero, as we have seen (section IV.7, note 8) is drawing on a more negative, Clitomachean source, while Plutarch wants to use his Scepticism in a more positive way, to confirm his Platonism.

in section IV.7); and we might note that the phrase ‘τοὺς ἀναιροῦντας τὴν πρόνοιαν’, used at {45.2}, reflects his own view of Epicurus — he uses the same phrase again of the Epicureans *propria persona at non pos. suav.* 1102F.<sup>3</sup>

It is also clear that Plutarch thinks that imperishability is more a *sine qua non* of the notion godhead than providence is. After all, it is not just the Jews and Syrians mentioned here (at {45.6-7}) who (supposedly) believe in a non-provident god, but the large number of people for whom Plutarch wrote his work *de superstitione*. These people think precisely that "there are gods, but they cause pain and injury" (εἶναι θεοὺς, εἶναι δὲ λυπηροὺς καὶ βλαβεροὺς — 165B; and cf. Plato *Laws* XII, 948c). However, Plutarch seems to think the notion of a *perishable* god is straightforwardly a contradiction in terms: at *de sup.* 165B he actually *defines* atheism as a belief that there is nothing "blessed and imperishable" (μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον καὶ ἀφθαρτον); cf. also *de Is. et Os.* 358E. For the consensus of other Platonists on this point, cf. Atticus fr. 5.59, 7.75 [des Places]; and Alcinous *didask.* 177.34-5.

Chapters 39 and 40 I want to take together. Their arguments are closely linked even at the most superficial level: in 39, Chrysippus has said that the cosmos (i.e. Zeus) is not nourished (although elsewhere he says that it *is* nourished, but from itself); and yet he talks about its growth. In chapter 40, Plutarch adds that, since the (other) gods do

<sup>3</sup>Plutarch's daemons, who are not always philanthropic, are carefully distinguished from the gods as such: *de def. or.* 416CD, 419A; *de fac.* 942Fff. So also his Malevolent World Soul ('ψυχὴ ἄτακτος καὶ κακοποιός': *de proc. an.* 1014E) is μεταξύ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ (*ib.*), and is called a δαίμων as opposed to a god at *de Is. et Os.* 369E.

require external nourishment, they are not self-sufficient, and cannot therefore be happy or blessed in the way required by our conception of a god.

I suggested earlier that the arguments in these chapters bring to mind Cicero's arguments against Cleanthes at *de nat. de.* III.37. There, the immediate question is whether god can be characterised as fire, but the real similarity comes because Cicero's attack is based precisely on the point that — as Cleanthes admits — fire needs nourishment (*pastus* — cf. τροφή at {46.17} &c.), and nourishment implies dependency of a kind that no god can be subject to. If this comparison between Plutarch and Cicero holds, then we can say that the contradictions of these chapters have been based on an Academic argument which, like Cicero, tackled the Stoics under the *second* heading of their theology — the *nature* of the gods (*quales sint*).<sup>4</sup>

The reconstruction of an Academic argument that might be in the background to *de Stoic. rep.* 39-40 is not a difficult task, especially when we have seen how Cicero argues in *de nat. de.* III.37. Appealing to an argument which itself appears to go back to Carneades (cf. III.29), he says this against Cleanthes' claim that god is characterised as fire:

non eisdem vobis placet omnem ignem pastus indigere, nec  
permanere ullo modo posse nisi alatur? ali autem solem, lunam,  
reliqua astra aquis, alia dulcibus, alia marinis? ...nunc autem

<sup>4</sup>In fact, Cleanthes' arguments based on the divine and life-bearing property of fire in *de nat. de.* II were meant to be arguments for the *existence* of god, and thus came under heading (1). The reason why Cicero can give the counter-arguments under the second heading (the quality of god) in *de nat. de.* III is presumably a certain asymmetry built into the argument itself: by showing that fire is god, Cleanthes can claim to have shown *a fortiori* that god exists. Cicero, on the other hand is only making a claim about the *quality* of god's existence if he proves that god is not fire, since god may, of course, be something else.

concludatur illud: quod interire possit id aeternum non esse natura; ignem autem interiturum esse nisi alatur; non esse igitur natura ignem sempiternum.

Cicero shows that, if the gods (as fire) need nourishment, then by implication they must be perishable.

Plutarch's source argument (if we take it to be closer to Plutarch's contradictions than to Cicero) would have used identical reasoning, but to different conclusions: in the first place, it would have criticised the idea that Zeus himself could be identified as fire on the grounds that there is nothing outside of the universe which could sustain him and, although he might be self-sustaining (somewhat along the lines suggested by Plato — cf. below), this would not explain how he can be said to grow.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, and closer to Cicero, it would have shown that divine happiness and blessedness is hardly possible for a being who requires nourishment and therefore depends on something outside its control for its very existence.

One feature of Cicero's argument which we do not find in Plutarch is the demonstration that, if god were fire, then he would be perishable. But there is, of course, a reason why Plutarch does not need to spell out this demonstration: he has already shown us in *de Stoic. rep.* 38 that Chrysippus freely admits to a belief that the gods are perishable! This difference between Cicero and Plutarch may give some force to the comment Plutarch makes at {47.4-5}: "οὐ δεῖ συλλογίζεσθαι". Carneades' argument, reflected in Cicero, *did* involve deduction (referred to as such: *nunc autem concludatur*

<sup>5</sup>By the 'growth' of the cosmos, progress towards the ἐκπύρωσις is presumably what is meant. In fact there is no real difficulty in imagining that the denser matter of the universe is converted into more rarefied cosmic fire in this process — as long, of course, as we realise that there is a cycle, and the universe contracts back at a certain point (i.e. at the beginning of each world-cycle). Cf. esp. D.L. VII.142 with *de Stoic. rep.* 41 {49.3-9}.

*illud...*); but Plutarch seems to be saying the case was stronger than Carneades realised: Chrysippus condemns himself, and deduction is not needed.<sup>6</sup>

We can, as usual, see that Chrysippus' contradictions here involve identifiable diversions from Platonic doctrine. In chapter 39, to start with, both of the doctrines making up the primary contradiction are non-Platonic, namely the doctrines that the universe grows, and that Zeus is not nourished. The secondary contradiction of the chapter involves the conflict of the last position with Chrysippus' expression of the more Platonic belief that Zeus *is* nourished, but nourished from himself. Cf. esp. *Timaeus* 33c7-8 (αὐτὸ γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τροφήν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φθίσιν παρέχον) — and note that Chrysippus' language at {47.5-9} ("τρέφεται ἐξ αὐτοῦ"), and especially Plutarch's language at {47.14} ("τὴν αὐτοῦ φθίσιν ἔχοντα τροφήν"), suggests that both writers had this very passage in mind.

In chapter 40, the errant doctrine is the claim that the (other) gods require external nourishment: it is this that involves them in dependency, and compromises their claim to happiness, blessedness &c. For the self-sufficiency of Plutarch's own gods see *de def. or.* 413F:

τοῦ δὲ μετρίου καὶ ἰκανοῦ καὶ μηδαμῆ περιττοῦ πανταχῆ δ'  
αὐτάρκους, μάλιστα τοῖς θεοῖς πρέποντος ἔργοις.

<sup>6</sup>Yet another version of the 'nourishment' argument comes up in *de comm. not.* 1075BC: Zeus displays weakness insofar as he feeds (τρέφόμενον) on destruction. Again — and surely not coincidentally — Plutarch makes a point of saying that no syllogism is needed: ταῦτα δ' οὐχ ὡς ἄλλα πολλὰ τῶν ἀτόπων συλλογίζομεθα ἔχειν τὰς ὑποθέσεις αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς δόγμασιν ἐπεσθαι, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ μέγα βοῶντες κ.τ.λ.

And with this compare Plato *Tim.* 33cd:

ἠγήσατο γὰρ αὐτὸ ὁ συνθεὶς αὐταρκες ὄν ἄμεινον ἔσεσθαι  
μᾶλλον ἢ προσδεῆς ἄλλων.

Elsewhere, and perhaps even more to the point, Plutarch criticises the Stoic doctrine that the stars (which are divinities) are fed by various ‘exhalations’: see e.g. *de comm. not.* chapter 46; *de def. or.* 400BC; and *de fac.* 921F-922AE.<sup>7</sup>

The issue in chapter 41 is the way in which Chrysippus explains life as a physical principle. In the first place he says that a human soul is engendered at birth by the effect of the first stroke of cold air on the πνεῦμα of the embryo. However, Plutarch says, not only is it hard to see how the cold could be a cause of the rarefaction needed to turn πνεῦμα into ψυχή, but Chrysippus flatly contradicts the whole idea by explaining the sun’s life as the ‘kindling’ of its fire. Furthermore, chilling and condensation are what cause the genesis of the new world-cycle *out of* the fiery and ‘wholly alive’ state of the universe at the ἐκπύρωσις.

(As a matter of fact it is fairly clear that the Stoics did associate life and soul with heat,<sup>8</sup> and it seems that the creation of soul by the action of cold air was never envisaged as a *cooling* process at all: Plutarch’s ‘ψυχόμενον’ at {48.6} might be

<sup>7</sup>See also Ps.-Plutarch *de vit. Hom.* §12: οὐ δέονται τροφῆς [*scil.* οἱ θεοὶ], ἥς δεῖται τῶν θνητῶν ζῴων τὰ σώματα· ‘οὐ γὰρ σίτον ἔδουσ’, οὐ πίνουσ’ αἶθοπα οἶνον· ἢ τοῦνεκ’ ἀναίμονές εἰσι, καὶ ἀθάνατοι λαλέονται.’

<sup>8</sup>Cf. e.g. *S.V.F.* II.775 — *Stoici animam ignem dicunt* —; Plut. *de fac.* 12, 926C; Cicero *de nat. de.* II.23ff &c.

prejudicing the issue. Rather, Chrysippus envisaged the air acting as a kind of catalyst, ‘shocking’ the πνεῦμα inherent in an embryo into the qualities needed for soul. Cf. esp. Hierocles Ἡθ. Στοιχ. I.22-27 where the change of πνεῦμα into ψυχή is compared with fire being produced on striking a stone:

καθάπε[ρ] γὰρ τὸ ἐν τοῖς λίθοις π[ν]εῦμα ταχέως ὑπὸ  
πλ[η]γῆς ἐκπυροῦται διὰ τὴν πρὸς ταύτην τὴν μεταβολὴν  
ἐτοιμότητα, τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ φύσις ἐμβρύου πέπον[ος]  
ἤδη γεγονό[τος] οὐ βραδύνει[ι τ]ὸ μεταβά[λλ]ειν εἰς ψυχὴν  
ἐμ[πεσ]οῦσα τῷ [περιέ]χοντι.

We can make a valid criticism out of Plutarch’s position, however, if we suppose that he wants in some way to assert the principle that it is not in the nature of something essentially cold to cause the creation of anything essentially hot — a principle we find in Plato, at *Phaedo* 103c1-2.)

A version of the Academic argument which I want to suggest prompted the contradiction of *de Stoic. rep.* 41 is found in *de nat. de.* III.35-36. There, still discussing the Stoics’ characterisation of the gods, Cicero shows that we cannot be sure of the most important premise of the Stoics’ arguments for the identification of god with fire: that is, we cannot be sure of the identification of fire and *life*. This, of course, suggests an immediate point of contact with the arguments we have seen in *de Stoic. rep.* 41.

The basic argument in Cicero goes as follows (*de nat. de.* III.36):

Ita voltis, opinor, nihil esse animal intrinsecus in natura atque mundo praeter ignem: qui magis quam praeter animam, unde animantium quoque constat animus, ex quo animal dicitur?

Something very like this would explain Plutarch's contradictions very well: his source may have said that Chrysippus' attempt to prove the existence of god on the basis of an identification of him with the 'heat (and so the life) of the world' failed because it is hard to maintain the identification of heat, or fire, and life. It may have said, not just (as Cicero says) that air is an equally good candidate for explaining life, but that Chrysippus himself thinks that the soul is created by the action of air.

One of the most striking similarities between Cicero and Plutarch, which is powerful support for the suggestion that their arguments come from the same background is of course the presence of the etymology adduced to link soul and air (chilling): ψυχή/ψῦξις, or *animall/(animus)/anima*.<sup>9</sup>

It is easy enough to show that Chrysippus' account of the birth of the soul is non-Platonic: any Platonist would be able to tell you that the soul is, in fact, immortal and transmigratory: see, for example, Alcinous *didask.* 177.16 - 178.25; 178.33-39; Atticus fr. 7.1-8 [des Places]; and Plutarch's own description of the posthumous fate of souls in *de fac.*, esp. 944CD.

A very direct Platonist dismissal of the Stoic position is found in Atticus fr. 7(b).5-9:

πῶς δ' οὐκ αἰσχύνης γέμων ὁ πνεῦμά πως ἔχον αὐτὴν [*i.e.*  
τὴν ψυχὴν] ἀποδιδούς ἢ πῦρ 'νοερόν', τῇ περιψύξει καὶ  
οἶον βαφῆ τοῦ ἀέρος ἀναφθὲν ἢ στομωθὲν...ἢ ὅλως ἀπὸ  
σώματος αὐτὴν γεννᾶσθαι ἀποφαινόμενος;

<sup>9</sup>It seems to be brought out on Cicero's authority in the *de nat. de.*, but to be ascribed to Chrysippus in the *de Stoic. rep.* In fact the origin of the etymology is much earlier: cf. e.g. Plato *Cratylus* 399de.

For the denial that the soul is a *physical* entity at all, cf. Alcinous *didask.* 177.21-22 and Aetius *plac.* IV.2-3, as well as Plutarch *de an. proc.* 1029D.

On the basis of all this it is also a simple matter to show that the identification of life and fire is non-Platonic: after all, if soul is basically incorporeal, it could hardly be characterised as fire. Cf. Atticus fr. 7.39: οὔτε γὰρ πνεῦμα οὔτε πῦρ οὔθ' ὄλως σῶμα.

Finally, we should consider the last part of *de Stoic. rep.* 41, {49.9-24}, where Chrysippus is said to have given as proof of his explanation of the creation of the soul the fact that a child shares similarities with its parents. Plutarch says that this is ridiculous: since the soul only comes about at the moment of birth, it could hardly have been 'shaped' by parental influences on it. (In this case, though, Plutarch ignores the fact that, although the soul *qua* soul is created *ex novo*, it is formed out of the same πνεῦμα which constituted the φύσις of the embryo and which, as such, was passed on through the father's seed.)<sup>10</sup> As to the reason why the late genesis of the soul might explain a child's similarity with its parents: the answer is probably that Chrysippus wanted to deny that the soul existed somewhere else before entering the body. A transmigrated soul, he might have felt, would bring with it its own personal characteristics, whereas a soul generated from πνεῦμα which comes ultimately from the father's seed would be dependent on the nature of that πνεῦμα for its character.<sup>11</sup> That

<sup>10</sup>For the three manifestations of πνεῦμα in different physical classes — viz. ἕξις (stones &c.), φύσις (plants, embryos &c.) and ψυχὴ see *S.V.F.* II.716; 458. For the origin of embryonic φύσις in the father's seed, cf. *S.V.F.* II.743.

<sup>11</sup>In fact, Platonists believed precisely that souls chose their characters before birth (cf. Plutarch *quaest. conviv.* IX.5; Alcinous *didask.* 179.8-10). Any connection between the characters of parent and child must, in their eyes, either be accidental, or else due to the way in which parents are assigned to the soul. In any case, the parent is not what *causes* a particular soul to have a particular character.

Chrysippus had something like this in mind is strongly suggested by the following claim made by Plutarch: if Chrysippus' idea was that the soul was engendered at birth and came to be like the parent under the influence of the body (which is the only thing Plutarch can see that has a real connection with the parents), then his proof is ruined, because *a soul which was ungenerated and entered the body might be influenced in the same way*: see {49.20-24}. It sounds as if Plutarch, at any rate, took Chrysippus' "proof" to have been meant as a refutation of transmigration which is, as we have seen, a prominent Platonist belief.

This argument, which has rather peripheral significance for the theological debate I want to claim is in the background to this chapter, may not have had a direct reflex in Plutarch's source. There is a hint of this in the way that the argument is introduced as something of an afterthought: ἀνευ δὲ τούτων ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς γενέσεως αὐτῷ λόγος μαχομένην ἔχει πρὸς τὸ δόγμα τὴν ἀπόδειξιν ({49.9-11}). Perhaps we can see here a case where Plutarch has been guided by his desire to assert his Platonism rather than a strict adherence to the Academic debate.

The subject of air forms at least a superficial link between chapters 41 and 42: in 42 Plutarch tells us that Chrysippus sometimes says that air is 'light and upwards-tending', sometimes that it is neither heavy nor light. What is far from clear at first sight is how this contradiction might in any way be related to an originally theological argument.

We saw in *de Stoic. rep.* 41 that life was characterised by the Stoics as essentially *hot*: coldness has a part to play in the genesis of the soul, but is not a constituent of it. We also saw (what will be confirmed in chapter 43) that air is closely

identified with cold by the Stoics. However, it does not follow that *air* has no part to play in the make-up of a soul. In fact, according to Chrysippus, the soul is constituted by πνεῦμα — and πνεῦμα is precisely a fiery kind of air (cf. *S.V.F.* II.786); indeed the Stoics often refer to πνεῦμα *as* air (*S.V.F.* II.471, 697).<sup>12</sup> What I want to suggest, then, is that *de Stoic. rep.* 42 would be perfectly explained by the hypothesis of an Academic attack against a theological argument of the Stoics' we do know of based on the nature of πνεῦμα.

The Stoic argument which I want to claim was tackled by the source for *de Stoic. rep.* 42 comes at *S.E. adv. math.* IX.71-74:<sup>13</sup>

καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τὰς ψυχὰς ἔνεστιν ὑπονοῆσαι κάτω  
φερομένας· λεπτομερεῖς γὰρ οὖσαι καὶ οὐχ ἥττον πυρώδεις  
ἢ πνευματώδεις εἰς τοὺς ἄνω μᾶλλον τόπους κουφο-  
φοροῦσιν κ.τ.λ.

The argument goes on to say that, because of the upwards-tendency of souls, they are not dispersed, as Epicurus had claimed, but inhabit the pure air beneath the moon. These, then, must be considered *daemones*; and if we admit the existence of *daemones* then we are led to concede the existence of god.

<sup>12</sup>For the nature of πνεῦμα, and the role it played at different stages in Stoic philosophy, cf. e.g. L. Bloos, *Probleme der stoischen Physik* (*Hamburg Studien zur Philosophie* 4, Hamburg 1973) pp.57-64; M. Lapidge, "'Archai" and "Stoicheia": a Problem in Stoic Cosmology' in *Phronesis* 18 (1973) pp.240-278 esp. 274-278; D. Hahm, *Origins of Stoic Cosmology* (Ohio State University Press 1977), p.158. For a different view of πνεῦμα, however, see R. B. Todd, who argues that it is composed of *aether* rather than air and fire: see 'Monism and Immanence: the Foundation of Stoic Physics', in *The Stoics* (ed. J. M. Rist; University of California Press 1978), pp.137-160, esp. 149.

<sup>13</sup>Compare Lactantius *de ira dei* 15.3: *nos ex duobus aequè repugnantibus compacti sumus, anima et corpore, quorum alterum caelo adscribitur, quia tenue est et intractabile...*

The Academic reply I want to reconstruct might simply have gone as follows: the Stoic argument relies for its validity on the premise that the soul, because it is 'fiery', or because it is made out of πνεῦμα (πνευματώδεις), will be borne upwards; yet Chrysippus is found saying that the constituents of πνεῦμα (fire *and* air) are 'neither light nor heavy': but if this is the case, they will not be borne upwards, and the *Sorites* itself fails to get off the ground.

It is important to note that the putative Academic counter-argument is as effective whether it talks about πνεῦμα in terms of being air, or in terms of being fire, or in terms of being both (and all three characterisations are found in Stoic texts). The reason for this is that Stoic fire falls foul of exactly the same 'contradiction' as air does: Plutarch himself tells us that it is considered as "light" and "upwards-tending" along with air (see {50.2}) and we know that Chrysippus described *both* fire and air as weightless (ἀβαρές: *S.V.F.* I.99). So if the Stoics tried to defuse Plutarch's argument even as it stands (and it may have been fuller in his source) by saying that 'air' is an insufficient characterisation of πνεῦμα, they would be missing the point, and the defence would fail.

This may prompt the question of why Plutarch does talk only about air — especially given that he is already half-way to presenting the contradiction in terms of fire as well. His choice — which need not even have been a particularly conscious choice — may have been prompted by the continuity which is now created through chapters 41-43: the topic of air is introduced in one way as an *explicans* of life in chapter 41, is used for the πνεῦμα that constitutes a soul in the argument behind 42, and stands more explicitly for the πνεῦμα that constitutes the ἔξις of every other thing as well in 43. (Interestingly, this also creates a kind of symmetry around chapter 41:

chapters 39 and 40 have *fire* in their background, chapter 41 has fire and air, and chapters 42 and 43 concentrate on the characteristics of Stoic air.)

If the underlying theological attack was made against an argument of Chrysippus' which relied on the assumptions that soul is 'airy' and that air rises, then we should be able to show both that Plutarch did not believe soul to be air (or πνεῦμα), and also that he did not believe air to be naturally 'light and upwards-tending'. In fact, we have already seen that the Platonic view of the soul is that it is not made of air or πνεῦμα (οὔτε γὰρ πνεῦμα οὔτε πῦρ οὔθ' ὄλως σῶμα: Atticus fr. 7.39); so now we just need to find out what the Platonic stance on the nature of air itself is.

In order to understand properly the position from which Plutarch wanted to criticise Chrysippus, it would, of course, be helpful to know the contexts in which Chrysippus said that air was 'light' or that it was 'weightless', and this is not an easy task. But we have one obvious starting-point for understanding the nature of the debate to which these statements must pertain in Plato himself. At *Timaeus* 62c-63e Plato says that it would be naïve to say that "light" meant 'upwards-borne', or "heavy" 'downwards-tending': the cosmos is a sphere (he says), so that there is no absolute 'up' and 'down'. To be accurate, he continues, we have to speak in terms such as 'ὁ τοῦ πάντος τόπος καθ' ὃν ἡ τοῦ πυρὸς εἴληχε μάλιστα φύσις' (63b2-3); "light" and "heavy" are intelligible only relative to a thing's 'natural' position.

Now it may be that *strictly speaking* this is what Plato thought was the truth of the matter, but it is not going to stop anyone calling fire and air κοῦφος or even ἀνωφερής for the sake of convenience: Plato, and even Plutarch might, at this level, be equally guilty of such a 'contradiction' (fire is the 'lightest' (ἐλαφρότατος) element at

*Tim.* 56b1, for example). In order for Plutarch to think that there is a non-trivial contradiction in what the Stoics say — one that Plato would not, on this account, be guilty of — he would have to think that the Stoics talked about air and fire as *actually, essentially* light and ‘upwards’-borne. If they did this, then not only would Plutarch have his contradiction, but the Stoics would have been shown to fall into difficulties in their physics and, ultimately, in their theology, just where they departed from Plato.

It seems to me that Plutarch tries to prove that the Stoics believed just this — that air is *essentially* light — in the long anti-Stoical tract at *de fac.* 925E-928D. The thrust of the argument is in many ways rather similar to Plato’s argument in *Tim.* 63b2-3: the Stoics, who would accept that the spherical nature of the cosmos precludes an absolute designation of ‘up’ and ‘down’, nevertheless do think that they can establish ‘up’ and ‘down’ as absolutes under another definition: “up” (they say) is ‘away from the centre’; “down” is ‘towards the centre’ (cf. esp. 926A). Thus ‘light’ things move away from the centre, and ‘heavy’ things towards it.<sup>14</sup> Plutarch argues against this view partly on grounds that the incorporeal centre of the cosmos now becomes the only thing that is ‘down’ at all; and partly by reference to the empirical fact that things are not always found in their ‘natural’ positions; Providence and God have a hand in placing the elements, he says (927BC).

<sup>14</sup>To take account of the fact that the Stoics are also found to say that *all* the elements tend towards the centre (*S.V.F.* I.99), we might rephrase this, bringing in the concept of density: light things tend towards the centre, but are not as effective as heavy things, which push them out of the way, out and ‘up’. The important point is only that the distinction between light and heavy is made an absolute one in terms of movement ‘up’ or ‘down’ (the movement itself may be relative or absolute: positive upwards-tending or mere upwards-displacement). Cf. D. Furley, who thinks that air and fire are “relatively centrifugal” (‘Lucretius and the Stoics’ in *The Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (University of London) 13 (1966) pp.13-33, esp. p.21); and D. Hahm, who thinks that they are absolutely centrifugal (and so create an equilibrium of forces with the ‘heavy’ elements): *Origins of Stoic Cosmology*, pp.111-112 with note 52.

The debate can be summarised with two extracts from Aetius I.12: he says this of Plato: Πλάτων μήτε βαρὺ μήτε κοῦφον εἶναι τι φύσει. According to the Stoics, on the other hand: κοῦφον...ὑπάρχει φύσει, ὃ νεύει ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου μέσου, βαρὺ δὲ τὸ εἰς μέσον.

If all of this is right, then the contradiction of chapter 42 does indeed come out of Chrysippus' adoption of a *non-Platonic* position that 'air is light and upwards-tending'. In more detail, Plutarch's argument would be this: 'The Stoics say that air is (naturally) "light" and "upwards-tending", according to their definitions of these terms; they are, however, wrong, to the extent that they think they have found a way of understanding these words absolutely. The strict truth, as we have seen in Plato, is that air is neither (absolutely) heavy nor light; and Chrysippus shows consciousness of this truth in the contradiction, where he uses the terms ascribed by Aetius to Plato: 'μήτε βαρὺ μήτε κοῦφόν.' In this concession, of course, his theological argument fails.<sup>15</sup>

In chapter 43 air is at issue again, this time for the role it plays in Stoicism to explain the ἔξις ('tenor' or 'state') of things, and therefore the qualities of everything; yet it is itself dark and rarefied — so how can it explain, for example, the brightness of silver, or the density of steel?

<sup>15</sup>It should be noted that the contrast between the 'weightlessness' of air and fire and the 'weight' of water and earth in Stoicism (cf. *S.V.F.* I.99, esp. p.27,31-32) shows that the idea of weightlessness was different in Stoic philosophy from what it was in Platonism. In particular, the Stoics could not have called air and fire 'weightless' on the grounds that 'weight' was a philosophically meaningless attribute in the first place. This understanding may hold the key to a reconciliation of the two sides of the contradiction, and certainly shows that the true Stoic doctrine is somewhat *nearer* to the idea that the elements have absolute weight. This helps confirm my analysis: it means that the 'official' position is the 'anti-Platonic' one criticised by Plutarch. (Cf. Lapidge *op. cit.* p.256: the Stoics, he says, think that air and fire were just *relatively* weightless.)

In *de Stoic. rep.* 42 we saw that 'air' may have stood in Plutarch's contradiction (and in his source's argument) for πνεῦμα. One of the confirmations of this was that it certainly does stand for πνεῦμα in the present chapter, since we know that ἔξις is properly explained as πνεῦμα in a certain state (*S.V.F.* II.368). What is more, it stands for πνεῦμα on Chrysippus' own authority here, since it is he who ascribed the ἔξις of things to 'air' in his *περὶ Ἐξέως* ({50.9-14}). The importance of this is that, once again, Plutarch's contradiction suggests a possible, even a likely, response to an extant Stoic proof of god — but a proof which, as we have it in Cicero, is phrased in terms the 'fire' which pervades everything and 'holds it together'. We need again to realise that, in this context, 'fire' and 'air' are basically interchangeable, and that both stand for πνεῦμα, so that it is legitimate to make deductions from the fact of a debate on this subject phrased in terms of fire, to the existence of essentially the same debate phrased in terms of air (or, if need be, of πνεῦμα).

At *de nat. de.* II.25-30, then, Cleanthes proves the existence of god in the following way: every part of the world is sustained by the vital element (fire), so the world as a whole is sustained by fire; god is simply to be identified with this all-pervading force which "keeps everything together" (*contineat*, which presumably renders συνέχεται — cf. esp. {50.11}).

Cicero never answers this argument as such in *de nat. de.* III except, of course, insofar as his arguments against the identification of fire and life (which we have already referred to above, on *de Stoic. rep.* 41) disprove it *a fortiori*. However, I want to suggest that Plutarch's source contained an argument that did tackle this argument, or an argument like it, head-on. It is quite simple to see how this argument would have gone: air (and once again it is important to note that the argument will work *mutatis*

*mutandis* for fire, or air-and-fire) is not capable of explaining the qualities of very many things at all: it is for example dark, so that it cannot explain white things such as silver; and it is soft, so it could not explain the hardness which is an essential quality of steel. If this is so, then *a fortiori* air [or fire or air-and-fire] is not an all-pervading vital and cohesive force in the universe, so it will not suffice to stand for god.

There is another, complementary, way in which we can approach the reconstruction of the argument behind Plutarch's contradiction as well, and that involves an argument in Sextus Empiricus designed to show that there is no such thing as *effect* which has interesting points of similarity with *de Stoic. rep.* 43. Plutarch's source, as I want to suggest, may have phrased his argument in corresponding terms: the Stoics' active principle (by which matter is affected and given quality) will not explain *cause* — will not, in fact work as an active principle at all, so that it becomes an unconvincing candidate for godhead.

Sextus' argument comes at *adv. math.* IX.272-3: there, he says that what is (τὸ ὄν) cannot quite generally be acted upon, since it cannot be made black (for example) so long as it is white... — in short, the idea of there being an *effect* of a given cause is impossible. The complementary argument on which Plutarch would be relying might have said this: the principle which the Stoics use to explain (the *causation* of) qualities should be incapable of performing its function, because it cannot make something white (or whatever) so long as it (the active principle) is black. Note that the two examples employed by Sextus are those of iron which, being hard (σκληρός), cannot become soft (μαλακυνόμενος); and of something white, which cannot become black. Plutarch (who has three examples, based on Chrysippus' text) appeals to both of these cases: the hardness (σκληρότης) of iron cannot be explained by a causal principle that is soft

(μαλθακός); and the whiteness in silver cannot be explained by a causal principle that is black.

The conclusion of Sextus' argument is that 'what is, in so far as it is, cannot be affected' (οὐ τοίνυν τὸ ὄν, ἐφ' ὅσον ὄν ἐστὶ, πάσχειν πέφυκεν) — in other words the supposed passive principle (ἡ ἀποιοῦς ὕλη — cf. *adv. math.* IX.11), turns out not to be passive at all. The argument behind *de Stoic. rep.* 43 would have had the complementary conclusion, which is actually hinted at by Plutarch: the supposed *active* principle of the Stoics, if it does not make everything the same (as itself), will end up not being *active* at all — just 'a kind of matter's matter': ὕλη τρόπον τινὰ τῆς ὕλης ({51.4}).

Whatever the exact form taken by Plutarch's source, the coincidences with Sextus as well as Cicero at least show that there is more behind his argument than a simple contradiction; and both point towards the existence of an Academic attack on the efficacy of the Stoics' active principle — and so on the Stoic proof of god by identification with this active principle.

The Stoic position which leads Chrysippus into contradiction in chapter 43 is the claim that god is identified with the ἔξις of things and ultimately with the ἔξις of the world as a whole (something that is a consequence of Chrysippus' thorough-going monistic cosmology, with which we have already seen Plutarch disagree in section IV.7). Plutarch does believe that there is a world soul but, although it has been subjected to order *by* god, so that the coherence of the world is ultimately attributable to god (ὅσον ἀμωσγέπως ἐγγέγονε τῷ κόσμῳ, τούτῳ συνδεῖ τὴν οὐσίαν κ.τ.λ.: *de E* 393F), it is

not god, whose perfection would not allow him to characterise absolutely our imperfect world (see *de proc. an.* 1014DE, and the whole of *de E* 393A-394C).

The claim of Chrysippus' that leads to the contradiction — the characterisation of air as dark and soft — is, at least so far as darkness goes, also sufficiently non-Platonic as it happens (cf. *Timaeus* 58d1-4, and esp. *de prim. frig.* 952F) — although of course this hardly matters since, however Chrysippus characterised air, it would still not have included all the qualities needed to explain the variety of objects in the world. (For this reason, the argument of Plutarch's source would have been equally effective if it had talked about *fire*, or about *πνεῦμα*.)

In chapter 44, Plutarch says that Chrysippus contradicts himself by saying that the universe is at the centre of the void — and that it would be destroyed if it were not —; yet he himself acknowledges that it is impossible to distinguish different parts of the void at all.

This is another chapter that it is very difficult to understand properly, if only because there is no simple answer to why (or even, as we shall see, whether) Chrysippus said that the universe was 'at the centre' of the void, or of what context he might have said it in. Consequently, the precise nature of Plutarch's objection to the doctrine — beyond the superficial contradiction — is not at all clear either. In order to make some suggestion as to what Academic argument might have lain behind Plutarch's contradiction here, we need to hope that we can find a theological argument that has obvious similarities with it, but whose purpose is that much clearer. I want to suggest

that such an argument is to be found in Sextus, at *adv. math.* IX.148-159. There, in the course of counter-argument against Dogmatic theology, Sextus presents the following dilemma: ‘God is either unlimited (ἄπειρον) — but then he must also be unmoving and inanimate —; or he is limited — but then he would only be a part of something greater, i.e. the unlimited.’ The part of this argument that should interest us especially is the demonstration of the first horn of the dilemma — that we would have to think of god as inanimate if he is unlimited. Sextus says that, if god were ‘sustained’ (συνέχεται) by soul, the tension set up by the soul would have to have a centre and limits between which to operate (cf. *S.V.F.* II.458, esp. p.150,2-5); but there are no distinctions of centre or boundaries in a void. Cf. *adv. math.* IX.149:

εἰ γὰρ ὑπὸ ψυχῆς συνέχεται, πάντως ἀπὸ τῶν μέσων ἐπὶ τὰ  
πέρατα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων ἐπὶ τὰ μέσα φερόμενον  
συνέχεται. ἐν δὲ ἀείρῳ οὐδὲν ἐστὶ μέσον οὐδὲ πέρασ· ὥστε  
οὐδὲ ἔμψυχόν ἐστὶ τὸ ἀπειρον.

The similarities with *de Stoic. rep.* 44 are obvious and striking — especially if we suppose that when he talked about a ‘centre’, Chrysippus *meant* the centre of the ἔξις of the world, rather than the centre of the void — which was always strictly Plutarch’s own interpretation of Chrysippus anyway. (For the details of what Chrysippus might actually have meant, see further below.) If we make this supposition, then it becomes quite a simple matter to suggest an argument along exactly the same lines as Sextus’ dilemma, which will explain perfectly the material and the approach Plutarch is relying on for his contradiction. If, to keep the reconstruction as close to Sextus as

possible, we imagine that Plutarch found a dilemma in his own source, it may have looked like this:

- (1) The Stoics talk about a world-ἐξίς; but
- (2) a ἐξίς presupposes a centre and limits.
- (3) When the Stoics talk about a centre to the world, they must mean by the world either
  - (a) something infinite (the Stoic Πᾶν); or
  - (b) something finite (the Stoic Κόσμος).
- (4) But not (a) — since something unlimited cannot have a centre or limits distinguished in it;
- (5) and not (b) — since the Stoics say that if the world were moved away from the ‘centre’ it would be destroyed (implying that the centre of the ἐξίς is defined independently from the centre of the material κόσμος).
- (6) Therefore there cannot be a world-ἐξίς and *a fortiori* god cannot be identified with a world-ἐξίς.

(The argument would be equally effective against the Stoics, and would explain Plutarch’s contradiction equally well, if it dealt only with the second limb — (b) — of the dilemma.)

The plausibility of this reconstruction of the background to *de Stoic. rep.* 44 is increased if we consider it next to what we have reconstructed behind chapter 43: there the issue was that the Stoics’ active principle — whether it is described as air, fire or πνεῦμα — could not explain the state in which most objects in the world are found, so that the Stoics’ identification of it with god on the grounds that it pervaded and ‘held together’ the *whole world* failed *a fortiori*. We can imagine how the Stoics might have answered this: they might have said that, even if we did not believe that air (or fire or

πνεῦμα) constituted the ἔξις of the world, *something* must do, and that something can be identified with god; therefore a Stoic god exists. What the argument we have reconstructed does is to show that the Stoics were not in a position to claim that there is such a thing as a world-ἔξις at all — and so were certainly not in a position to claim that this is what god must be.

Finally, there are some minor verbal clues which tend to confirm that the background to *de Stoic. rep.* 44 must have been much as I have reconstructed it: note especially the occurrence of concepts such as συνεχόμενον, in a quotation from Chrysippus' *περὶ Κινήσεως* at {53.18}; Plutarch's own exegetical ἀπολεί τὸν συνεκτικὸν τόνον {53.23-24}; and especially 45 {54.4-5} (referring back to the discussion of 44, Plutarch speaking):

τί γὰρ ἐστὶ κυριώτερον τῆς τοῦ κόσμου διαμονῆς καὶ τοῦ  
τὴν οὐσίαν ἠνωμένην τοῖς μέρεσι συνέχεσθαι πρὸς αὐτήν;

In the Stoic argument at S.E. *adv. math.* IX.78-85 (to which IX.148-150 is presumably meant to be some sort of answer), the fact that the world is ἠνωμένον is precisely what allows us to say that it has a ἔξις.

Before going on to show that Chrysippus has fallen into difficulty where he has an argument with Plato, it is worth showing how the above reconstruction of the context of Plutarch's argument helps us to make good sense of a chapter which on its own has

given rise to a certain amount of controversy.<sup>16</sup> As I suggested, the key to understanding the debate it reflects is to realise that, when Chrysippus said that the world was ‘in the centre’ (cf. {51.17}), what he meant was *not* that it was at the centre of the void, but that it was centred on its own ἐξίς. The way we can get this out of the text is as follows. Although Chrysippus does say that the cosmos is located ‘in the central τόπος’ (see {51.20}), we do not have to suppose (as Plutarch does) that the centrality of this τόπος is relative to the void. Given Chrysippus’ theory of place, there is something else it could be relative to — indeed, something else it must be relative to — and that is its χώρα: for we know that a thing’s χώρα is *larger* than its τόπος, which is contained in it.<sup>17</sup> Note that, in Plutarch’s first quotation from the περὶ Δυνατῶν, at {51.13-18}, Chrysippus attributes the indestructibility of the cosmos *not* to its τόπος, but to “the grasp the cosmos has of its χώρα — i.e. because it is in the middle (*scil.* of it)”: ἡ τῆς χώρας κατάληψις, οἷον διὰ τὸ ἐν μέσῳ εἶναι ({51.15-17}).

If this is right, then the permanence of the cosmos is attributed by Chrysippus not to any logical necessity; but to the *physical* necessity of its τόπος being located ‘in

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Furley, *op. cit.*, esp. pp.20-21: he thinks that by ‘centre’ Chrysippus just meant the centre of the cosmos — something which does not so much explain the contradiction, as make a total nonsense of Plutarch’s ever having invented it. As Hahm (*op. cit.*, esp. Appendix V, pp.260-266) also points out, Furley’s explanation ignores the fact that it is Chrysippus himself who talks about the ‘middle τόπος’ at {51.20}. But Hahm strives to outdo Furley in making Plutarch look absurd, by suggesting that the claim that the universe is ‘indestructible because of being in the central place’ is actually an opponent’s position which Chrysippus set out to refute!

<sup>17</sup>Cf. e.g. S.V.F. II.503 with K. Algra, *Concepts of Space in Classical and Hellenistic Greek Philosophy* (diss., Utrecht 1988), pp.144-156.

the middle of its *χώρα*'.<sup>18</sup> However, in order for Chrysippus to be able to talk about the relationship between the cosmos and the *χώρα* of the cosmos in these terms — terms that allow even the logical possibility of separation —, it must be the case that he thought the *χώρα* could be defined independently of the cosmos. There is only one way in which he could have done this, while at the same time ensuring that it will (as a matter of fact) always be found *with* the cosmos: the *χώρα* of the cosmos must be "the part of space which is *de facto* bounded by the working sphere of the *tonos* of the cosmos".<sup>19</sup> In other words, for the cosmos to be 'at the centre of its *χώρα*' is just for it to be centred on its *ἔξις*.

After this it is easy to make sense of Chrysippus: *naturally* the cosmos would be destroyed if it were not centred on its *ἔξις* ({51.17-18}) — it is precisely the nature of a thing's *ἔξις* to keep it together. In fact, the only reason why Chrysippus broached the strictly counter-factual possibility that the world could get off-centre with respect to its *ἔξις* at all was to show in what way the world might be considered to be destructible (cf. {51.13-15}): the answer, of course, is that it is *practically* indestructible<sup>20</sup> and the reason for this is the *practical* impossibility of its losing its *ἔξις*.

On this basis, it looks as if Plutarch's claim that Chrysippus was thinking about the world being located at the centre of the *void* is an unusually unfair misrepresentation

<sup>18</sup>For Diodorus, who defined the possible as what has happened or what will happen, logical necessity and physical necessity are not, of course, separable in this way: if the universe never will be destroyed, it is impossible that it should be. This is relevant because it was in the *περὶ Δυνάτων* — the book Plutarch quotes from here — that Chrysippus set out his attack on Diodorus (see *de Stoic. rep.* 46). The suggestion that we should think of the present 'cosmological' excerpts in the light of this debate over the notion of possibility gains force from a comparison with Aristotle: he maintained precisely that the universe was *indestructible* on the grounds that *it would never be destroyed*: cf. *de caelo* 281a28 - 282b1, esp. 282a29-30.

<sup>19</sup>Algra *op. cit.* p.172.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. *τὴν ὡς περ ἀφθαρσίαν* at {51.15-16}, and Algra, *op. cit.*, p.159 with note 62.

of the truth. But in fact it may not be, for a reason we have already touched on in passing. As we saw, Chrysippus could only talk about the logical possibility of the separation of the *χώρα* and the *τόπος* of the world on the basis that the world's *ἔξις* is definable independently of the world itself. But if this is so, then Plutarch could say that the centre from which the *ἔξις* operates must be definable independently of the world: it could not, in other words, be defined *a posteriori* as the centre of the world itself. But a *ἔξις* has no natural boundaries, and no self-defined centre, so it follows that the 'centre' of the *ἔξις*, insofar as it is independent of the cosmos, could only be the centre of its wider surroundings — namely the void.

In fact, as Plutarch himself points out in an attempt to add to the contradiction, Chrysippus does not really think that the world and its *ἔξις* could ever become separated: the parts of the world are inevitably drawn towards its centre, around which they cohere (cf. {52.19-25} with {52.29 - 53.6}); and they would even be drawn there if they were suddenly cut off by small (and, again, strictly counter-factual) pockets of void appearing in the world.

The thesis that there is a centre to the void which Plutarch deduces, however unfairly, from Chrysippus, is certainly what he thinks is damaging to Chrysippus' theology — it is this, for example, that, in the argument we reconstructed behind *de Stoic. rep.* 44, destroys the possibility of there being a world-*ἔξις* based on the *κόσμος*; but it is also this thesis that rules the immediate contradiction (which is not, as presented, essentially theological). In fact Plutarch would not have held to be Platonic Chrysippus' belief that the cosmos is surrounded by an infinite void at all. See Aetius *plac.* I.18:

οἱ ἀπὸ Θάλεω φυσικοὶ πάντες μέχρι Πλάτωνος τὸ κενὸν  
ἀπέγνωσαν.

The assumption is there in Plutarch *plat. quaest.* 1004D (with which compare Plato *Timaeus* 80c3):

πῶς ποτέ φησιν ὁ Πλάτων τὴν ἀντιπερίστασιν τῆς κινήσεως  
διὰ τὸ μηδαμοῦ κενὸν ὑπάρχειν αἰτίαν εἶναι κ.τ.λ.

At *de def. or.* 424D, Plutarch argues that the extra-cosmic void could not have a centre, but he carefully distances himself from the belief that there is an extra-cosmic void at all (he argues strictly ‘*ad hom.*’: καθ’ οὗδ’ ἔστιν [*sc.* κενόν]).

As to the more specific thesis ascribed to Chrysippus that ‘the elements tend towards the centre of the void’ (ascribed to him tentatively as the only way of making sense of the claim that the world will be destroyed if moved from the ‘centre’ at {52.3-4}, but backed up by a textual reference at {53.14-20} where, in fact, Chrysippus probably meant again that the elements tended to the centre of the ἔξις), Plutarch argues against this at *de def. or.* 424CD. There he says that Aristotle’s claim that the elements tend to find their natural positions as defined by a single ‘centre’ is “more plausible than true” (πιθανῶς μᾶλλον ἢ ἀληθῶς εἴρηται): ‘It could not mean that they tend towards the centre of an infinite void not just because Aristotle does not think there is such a thing, but also because even those who do believe in an extra-cosmic void deny that it has a centre.’

On the other hand, when Chrysippus admits that an infinite void will have no definable beginning, middle or end, he comes much closer to Platonic doctrine. Cf. for example *didask.* 159.10-12, which is based on *Parmenides* 137d4-8.

Chapter 45 follows close on the heels of chapter 44 — and may have come with it from a discussion of the third topic in Stoic theology: the government of the world by god. Plutarch says that Chrysippus must think that it is only by chance (αὐτομάτως) that the world should ever have maintained its coherence if he thinks that the world would be destroyed if it did not happen to be at the centre of the void. This gives the lie to the claim that god and providence are responsible for the maintenance of the world. (Note that this argument would work even if it were based on the more sympathetic understanding of Chrysippus' remarks about the world being 'at the centre' suggested above: Plutarch could say that, if the world would be destroyed if not placed with its ἔξις, then it is only chance — the chance that put them together — that keeps it safe!)

For the Academic precedent to Plutarch's argument, there is very little we can say: insofar as there might have been one that was at all close to Plutarch's contradiction, it would have to have been fairly similar to it, showing that the Stoics' conception of the way in which the universe was governed embraced a good deal of chance. As a matter of fact, there seems to have been rather little written quite generally against the specific thesis that the world is governed by god, and the reason for this is, presumably, that the topic is effectively covered by discussions over the quality of god (especially given that the quality of god *includes* for the Stoic his immanence in everything and

consequent control over everything), and particularly by the discussion of providence. In fact, even the Stoics seem not to have written very much that was limited to the topic (nothing specific appears in *de nat. de.* II, for example), and to have inextricably bound the question of whether god governs the world to the question of whether he governs it well (i.e. the question of providence): cf. e.g. *de nat. de.* II.81: *sequitur ut doceam omnia subiecta esse naturae eaque ab ea pulcherrime geri.*<sup>21</sup> Even Plutarch in *de Stoic. rep.* 45 makes strictly unnecessary references to *providence* having been overruled by chance as well as god.

The idea that chance would have primary importance for the maintenance of the world is clearly inimical to Plutarch's conception of providence. Even in small details, Plutarch does not seem to consider chance a better explanation than providence (cf. *de fortuna* 98BC for the explanation of human hearing and sight; and *de def. or.* 398AB for the explanation of the movement of certain statues at Delphi). What 'necessity' or 'chance' (in the sense of τὸ αὐτόματον) there is in Plutarch's cosmology is ascribed to the malevolent world soul: Plato, he says, avoided the need to attribute these things to god (cf. esp. *de an. proc.* 1015B).

In *de Stoic. rep.* 46, Plutarch turns to give a short consideration of the logical implications of Chrysippus' theory of fate. Chrysippus rejected Diodorus' definition of the possible as 'what is or what will be true', and said that there are many things that

<sup>21</sup>Cf. Lactantius *de ira dei* 10.42: Where, he asks, could such a wonderful thing as mind have come from *si vero in huius mundi...nulla providentia est quae regat, nullus deus qui administret?*

are possible but will never be true. This, says Plutarch, contradicts his claim that everything is fated: if something is fated to happen it can hardly be 'possible' that it will not happen.

This chapter reflects a movement of Plutarch's source into — I should say 'back into' — the fourth heading of the Stoics' division of theology: god's providence (*consulere eos rebus humanis*). In fact, we have already seen in section IV.7 how the Stoics' thorough-going determinism is taken by Plutarch to be the thing that most compromises their claim to believe in a provident god: if everything is due to fate and therefore to god, then evil must be god's responsibility as well.

The Stoics' response to this kind of attack was to say that, although everything did indeed happen as part of the causal nexus set up and even embodied by god, individual moral agents nevertheless had free choice — and so took on the moral responsibility for their actions. *What* they chose to do may well have been inevitable, and even fated; but this does not mean that it was in any sense *necessitated* by antecedent causes (cf. Cicero *de fato* 41). It is as part of this argument that the question of future contingency became important: Chrysippus realised that he needed to maintain future contingency — even when this meant counter-factual possibility — just so that he could say that an agent 'could always have acted differently', and was therefore responsible for their action. So the argument reflected in *de Stoic. rep.* 46 (as, even more clearly, that reflected in 47) was an attempt on the part of the Academics to dismiss this response, and to shift the responsibility for evil back onto the shoulders of the Stoic god.

For the argument Plutarch is drawing on in *de Stoic. rep.* 46, cf. esp. Cicero *de fato* 11-21. Cicero, like Plutarch, baulks at the idea that something which is fated not to happen

might nevertheless be possible. Cicero sets up his argument slightly differently from Plutarch; but not only does he argue to the same end, he even draws on a version of the same example. Cicero talks about a man who is fated not to die at sea and for whom it is therefore nonsense to say that it is possible he *will* die at sea; Plutarch talks about a man who *is* fated to die at sea, and for whom it is therefore absurd to say that it is possible he will not.

As Plutarch presents it, Chrysippus' determinism is the undoing of his theological claims, and it also constitutes the non-Platonic line that leads to the immediate contradictions. The Stoics, thinks Plutarch, in making god responsible for everything, make him responsible for too much. Cf. *de def. or.* 414F:

οἱ μὲν οὐδενὸς ἀπλῶς τὸν θεὸν οἱ δ' ὁμοῦ τι πάντων αἴτιον  
ποιοῦντες ἀστοχοῦσι τοῦ μετρίου καὶ πρέποντος.

The standard middle Platonist line on fate is found set out in ps.-Plutarch *de fato*, 570CD, and Alcinous *didask.* 179.1-19. These passages suggest that everything is 'fated' in the sense of being 'ἐν τῇ εἰμαρμένῃ', but not in the sense of being 'καθ' εἰμαρμένην'. We have free will in choosing our characters to start with (*didask.* 179.9) and also in choosing actions along the way (*ib.* 9-10); but the *consequences* of our original choice and of our actions are governed by 'laws of destiny' (τὸ δὲ ἐπόμενον τῇ πράξει καθ' εἰμαρμένην συντελεσθήσεται: 179.12-13), so that, for example, we can say that the Trojan war was 'fated', but only on the basis of the (free) choices made by Paris (179.13-15).

Plutarch's own version of this line is found at *quaest. conviv.* IX.5, 740CD, where, in a discussion of Plato *Republic* 620b (concerning the souls' drawing of lots for their future lives) he mentions Plato's 'three causes' (Fate, Chance and Free Will: cf. *Protagoras* 323d, *Laws* 709b), and adds this:

νῦν δὲ θαυμαστῶς ἦν ἔχει δύναμιν ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις  
πράγμασιν ἕκαστον ὑποδεδήλωκεν, τὴν μὲν αἵρεσιν τῶν  
βίων τῷ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἀποδιδούς (ἀρετὴ γὰρ ἀδέσποτον καὶ  
κακία), τὸ δ' εὖ βιοῦν τοὺς ὀρθῶς ἐλομένους καὶ τάναντία  
τοὺς κακῶς εἰμαρμένης ἀνάγκη συνάπτων κ.τ.λ.

Plutarch's view is more or less similar to that of Alcinous and Ps.-Plutarch, and the upshot seems to be this: we have free-will (and cf. the book-title *περὶ τοῦ 'Εφ' ἡμῖν πρὸς τοὺς Στωϊκοὺς*, *Lamprias* 154), but our exercise of it implicates us in consequences which are themselves necessitated by the 'laws' of fate (just as, perhaps, conventional laws necessitate — albeit imperfectly — our going to prison if we steal). These laws are not just physical laws, and may in themselves be quite arcane: an example is the oracle delivered to Laius, by which we know that it is a law of fate that, if he had a son, his son would kill him (*didask.* 179.17).

At least one of the reasons for this rather odd 'weaving together' of the various kinds of cause in Plutarch must be his dualistic cosmology, according to which necessity is identified with the World Soul, and freedom with the divine; this means that, even in the physical construction of the world, fate (or necessity) is played off against the freedom inherent in god's divinity. An important part of Plutarch's criticism of Stoic (over-)determinism is thus precisely the failure to keep separate these two causes:

compare *de fac.* 927AB where Lamprias says that the Stoic identification of Fate (Nature) and god obviates the need for a theistic god at all:

ἀπορῶ τί τῆς προνοίας ἔργον ἐστὶν ἢ τίνος γέγονε ποιητῆς  
καὶ πατὴρ δημιουργὸς ὁ Ζεὺς ὁ ἀριστοτέχνας.

As a matter of fact (as Lamprias goes on in this passage) the point of god's being providential is precisely that he is able to bring things about that are not "natural" in quite the crass way in which the Stoics use the term.

In chapter 46 the contradictory position is one much more closely akin to Plutarch's own, as Chrysippus shows himself to be keen to maintain a notion of contingency (which should be impossible in the shadow of his rigid determinism). For τὸ δυνατὸν as expressing a genuine contingency in middle Platonism, compare e.g. Ps.-Plutarch *de fato* 571BC (τὸ δὲ ἐνδεχόμενον δυνατὸν οὐ καὶ τὸ ἀντικείμενον δυνατὸν), and *didask.* 179.20-34 (ἡ δὲ τοῦ δυνατοῦ φύσις πέπτωκε μὲν πως μεταξὺ τοῦ τε ἀληθοῦς καὶ τοῦ ψεύδους...).

Chapter 47 is a long chapter, and the discussion somewhat involved, but it can be analysed in terms of one basic contradiction: Plutarch thinks that Chrysippus' strong theory of determinism is incompatible with his belief in individual moral responsibility. In particular, Chrysippus cannot consistently maintain that everything is fated if he thinks that the decision over whether to act — whether to assent to an impression — is free, and not necessitated by the impression.

The basis for Plutarch's contradiction is his belief that fate is unintelligible if it does not operate by a series of antecedent, necessitating causes. If our decisions to act are part of fate (as Chrysippus thinks that they are) then, says Plutarch, they must be necessitated in this way. In other words, either impressions (as the antecedent causes of assent) necessitate assent or (if they do not), assent is free, and the causal nexus is broken.

Chrysippus' answer — the way he claims to maintain a thorough-going determinism while still allowing moral freedom — is to say that, although impressions *are* antecedent causes of assent, they are *not* necessitating. This is presumably the force of the defence of Chrysippus at {55.18-20}: fate does not operate by causes that are αὐτοτελής, but causes which are προκαταρκτικός (cf. Cicero's *causae perfectae et principales* as opposed to *adiuvantes et proximae* — *de fato* 41). Although the 'procatarctic' cause (the 'precipitating cause' perhaps) still is a cause of the assent, it is, as Plutarch tells us himself, weaker than the αὐτοτελής or 'perfect' cause (cf. {56.2-4}).

This much is clear: Chrysippus thought that by making the antecedent cause of assent procatarctic, he absolved fate from blame for the assent; yet at the same time he did *not* think that the choice made was so free as to remove itself from the causal nexus. But this (as I said) is what Plutarch cannot accept; and it is also where it becomes very hard for *us* to understand Chrysippus.

It is not important for the present study that we should understand this point fully, but at least we can make a suggestion as to how Chrysippus might have maintained his position. If the impressions an agent receives are the procatarctic cause of his assent and so of his actions, it seems that the 'perfect' cause resides in his

character. That is, the impressions act as a kind of 'prompt', causing the person to act; but the action he performs (including the assent itself, when assent is given) is perfectly, i.e. sufficiently, explained by what sort of person he is. Similarly, someone who shoves a cylinder is the procatarctic cause of its rolling, but the perfect cause is its *volubilitas*, its own force and nature (*suapte vi et natura*: Cicero *de fato* 43), and this is what allows us to ascribe responsibility for the rolling as such to the cylinder rather than the person who pushed it.<sup>22</sup>

All of this explains how it is that the agent is technically free; but what stops his actions from slipping out of the causal nexus altogether is the simple fact that there is a 'determining' factor in his response, and that is the nature of his character. And although his actions are in this sense inevitable, he still takes moral responsibility for them, just because it is in virtue of his own nature that he acts as he does.

There is one final stumbling-block, and that is the question of whether fate is responsible for a person's character in the first place. It would seem that it must be, partly because it is hard to see how it could not be, and partly because it would be the only way in which fate could guarantee that the person would act in the expected way later on. But if this is so, surely fate becomes responsible for their actions again?<sup>23</sup> In fact, it turns out that this way of describing the relationship between a person and their character is fundamentally prejudicial. It is a crucial feature of Stoicism that there is no

<sup>22</sup>The literature on the subject is very large, but especially worth reading are: A. A. Long, 'Freedom and Determinism in the Stoic Theory of Human Action' in *Problems in Stoicism* (University of London 1971) pp.173-199; M. Frede, 'The Original Notion of Cause' in his *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 1987) pp.125-150; P. Donini, 'Plutarco e il Determinismo di Crisippo', in *Quaderni del Giornale Filologica Ferrarese* 9 (1988) pp.21-32; and (for a different understanding of the interplay of Chrysippus' two causes) S. Bobzien, *Determinism and Free Will in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1992) esp. pp.218-319.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. J. B. Gould, 'The Stoic Conception of Fate', *Journal for the History of Ideas* 35 (1974) pp.17-32.

psychological dualism — and this means there is no distinction to be made between the character and the individual ‘self’, as there is in Platonism, for example. It is not the case that Stoic fate forces a *person* to respond in certain ways to certain stimuli by forcing a certain *character* onto him — although this is very much how Plutarch (as a Platonist) analyses the situation. There is no innocent ‘self’ in Stoic thought which would have acted differently if it had not been coerced by its character. Instead of *making a person bad*, Stoic fate *makes a bad person*: after that, there is no reason to ascribe the moral responsibility for his actions to fate *rather than* him. It is from this difference that Plutarch’s argument with Chrysippus springs: when the sage tells untruths in order to make the fool act in a certain way, Chrysippus thinks the fault in the assent lies with the fool for *being a fool*; but Plutarch thinks it lies with the sage, because the sage (as he sees it) has somehow forced the individual who exists *behind* the foolish character to act in a way they would not, in abstraction from their character, want to act.<sup>24</sup> It is in this context important to note that the crucial moment of free choice in Platonism occurs precisely when the individual chooses the character they will play out in their next incarnation: cf. again *quaest. conviv.* IX.5, 740D, for example.

Finally, it is worth noting the argument at {56.16-26}, where Plutarch seems to anticipate a possible Stoic defence to the whole thrust of his attack. The Stoics might have claimed (along the lines of one of their theodical arguments: cf. chapter 35 {43.5-9}) that withholding assent to the occasional φαντασία amounted to an insignificant example of ‘obstruction’, and would not ‘obstruct’ fate itself, which looks to the whole cosmos. Plutarch’s pre-emptive answer is that this makes no more sense than saying that

<sup>24</sup>This point is also made by Inwood, (*Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* p.68) and C. Stough (‘Stoic Determinism and Moral Responsibility’, in *The Stoics* (ed. J. M. Rist; University of California Press 1978) pp.203-231, esp.226).

a man is not obstructed if his feet are. It is, however, unlikely that the Stoics ever would have used this argument: it is much better suited to explaining why it is, for example, that there is evil in the world and yet the world as a whole is perfectly good. There is no suggestion that anyone ever does or even could make a stand against fate and withhold assent where action was 'fated'.

For a simple Academic parallel to the argument, which does not anyway lie very far in the background of this chapter, cf. Cicero *de fato* 44:

Haec cum ita sint a Chrysippo explicata, si illi qui negant assensiones fato fieri, fateantur tamen eas sine viso antecedente fieri, alia ratio est; sed si concedunt anteire visa nec tamen fato fieri assensiones quod proxima illa et continens causa non moveat assensionem, vide ne idem dicant...

As we have already seen in respect of chapter 46, and in section IV.7 *passim*, Plutarch considers that the strongly deterministic theory of fate adopted by Chrysippus — the theory which prejudices his account of providence — is strictly un-Platonic. He thinks that some things are free, and some are subject to fate: it is impossible for something to fall into both categories at once. (Cf. Cicero *de fato* 40: before Chrysippus, he says, no-one denied that, if a thing was determined, it was determined by antecedent necessitating causes; if it was free, then it was not fated at all.)

In the course of my study of the *de Stoic. rep.*, I have tried to show that Plutarch's contradictions can be grouped together into sections according to the origin in Academic debate of the material on which they might have been based. What I want to do now is to collate the results of this study to see whether there is any guiding structure presupposed in the way in which the sections themselves fit together. If there is, then we will be in a position to ask whether Plutarch has imposed this structure on his arguments himself, or whether we can say that it must come from a single main source which Plutarch has used to guide his composition.

The topics which I have suggested lie behind the polemic in each of the sections of the *de Stoic. rep.* can be summarised as follows:

Section:	IV.1	Chapter:	1	Introduction.
	IV.2		2-6	Politics.
	IV.3		7-10	Κοινὸς λόγος.
	IV.4		11-16	Consistency with Nature and justice.
	IV.5		17-23	The Stoic end.
	IV.6		24-29	Dogmatism vs probabilism.
	IV.7		30-37	Theodicy.
	IV.8		38-47	Theology.

Clearly this on its own is not anything like satisfactory as a structural explanation of the *de Stoic. rep.* at any level, or of any single source which Plutarch might have been drawing on; but as a description it is a fair starting point.

One thing we can do immediately is to take sections IV.4 and IV.5 (chapters 11-23) together as both drawing on *ethical* topics. Similarly, IV.7 and IV.8 (chapters 30-47) both draw on essentially *theological* material (or *physical* material, to characterise it more broadly). That gives us two large blocks which articulate the overall structure, and which seem to be punctuated by smaller sections on logical topics: section IV.3 (chapter 7-10) on the Stoic theory of rationality (κοινὸς λόγος), and section IV.6 (chapters 24-29) on the possibility of Dogmatism. So we can simplify the previous sketch to this:

Section:	IV. 1	Chapter:	1	<i>Introduction.</i>
	IV. 2		2-6	Politics.
	IV. 3		7-10	Logic.
	IV.4-5		11-23	Ethics.
	IV. 6		24-29	Logic.
	IV.7-8		30-47	Physics.

It is hard to draw any immediate and comprehensive conclusions from just this, but one thing that begins to look beyond question is that, underlying the *de Stoic. rep.*, there is after all a structure, and one which suggests far too systematic and thoughtful an approach to Stoicism for it to be dismissed as a purely *ad hoc* description of the work. There are difficulties — in particular, we will need to explain the duplication of sections devoted to logic —; but the conclusion so far certainly justifies the assumption that at some level Plutarch's composition was guided by a definite structure, and the immediate question is where this particular structure might have come from.

We saw in section III that it was impossible to maintain convincingly that the *de Stoic. rep.* possessed an overall structure that was meant to guide the way in which

the work was to be read, and that all we could hope to reconstruct might be the traces of the plan according to which Plutarch *composed* the work. Now that we have some idea of what this structure might have looked like, we are in a position to see how the internal evidence confirms this conclusion. One thing we can say, for example, is that, if the structure had been meant to guide the reader, it would be more clearly reflected in the grammatical articulation of the work. Something that Sandbach suggested, and pursued in his article 'Plutarch on the Stoics', for example, is that we would be able to reconstruct the section divisions intended by Plutarch by looking at his use of connecting particles: Sandbach's basic premise was that the major topic divisions would be marked by an absence of connecting particles. If we apply this analysis to the *de Stoic. rep.* in the light of the structure we are considering, what we find is that every one of our sections does in fact begin with asyndeton (see chapters 7, 11, 24, 30 and 38). But, encouraging as this might be as confirmation of the validity of our structure, it turns out *not* to be evidence that Plutarch intended his readers to notice these divisions as such, because around half of the remaining chapters also commence without grammatical connection with what precedes. In other words, Plutarch's use of grammar in the *de Stoic. rep.* does nothing to signpost the way in which the work as a whole is to be read. (I noted in section III that Sandbach's own results were unconvincing precisely because they were so patently *ad hoc*: descriptive rather than explanatory of the text.)

Another piece of internal evidence, which is at least as significant, is the fact that the structure we have uncovered in the background to the *de Stoic. rep.* only became evident at all once we had undone all Plutarch's work of creating new contradictions out of old Academic material. In order to maintain that the structure was intended to be evident to his readers, we would have to say that Plutarch intended them to perform a

similar act of *Quellenforschung* as they went along. This might not be *quite* as ridiculous as it sounds, since his readers would (presumably) have been much more familiar with Academic material than we are, and must to some extent have noticed many of the connections anyway. But Plutarch can still not have *intended* them to do this because, as we saw in section II, the very ‘message’ of the *de Stoic. rep.* seems to be that the Stoics fall into a particular kind of difficulty through their departure from Plato — viz. self-contradiction.

Given, then, that the structure of the *de Stoic. rep.* was not meant to guide the reader, it now begins to seem surprisingly complicated. For example, the form of sections IV.3-8 — ‘logic, ethics, logic, physics’ — might make sense *a priori* as a way of analysing Stoicism (and I shall suggest a parallel for the approach later on), but it hardly makes sense as a way of *presenting* anti-Stoic material where the reader is *not* asked to appreciate this analysis himself. What we would most naturally have expected instead would have been for Plutarch to organise his composition according to a simpler, and more standard, division of topics: logic, then ethics, then physics, for example. He would have no motive to invent his own virtuoso structure under these circumstances. What all of this suggests is that the structure of the *de Stoic. rep.* is probably *not* Plutarch’s own invention, but that he has adopted it from elsewhere. This, of course, raises the question of where, and in section III we saw that there were two possible answers (given that an Academic provenance for it is all but certain): either Plutarch relied on a single text, a ‘core’ source for his composition which suggested to him at least the structure; or we can only say that he relied in the most general terms on the ‘Academic tradition’, from which he adopted one standard form of exposition. However, the latter option now falls foul of exactly the same objection as I raised against the idea

that the structure is Plutarch's own: why, if it was the case that Plutarch looked for his material in an order suggested to him by some standard pattern of argument, did he not choose a simpler — and a more familiar — pattern? He seems to have had nothing to gain from using the more complicated structure, which would have cost him more in effort. By far the easiest assumption for us is that Plutarch was following the structure of a single Academic text.

The suggestion that the structure of the *de Stoic. rep.* goes back to an Academic work is simple enough in principle, but it is not an entirely straightforward matter to say what this text would itself have looked like. Not only are there are no exact parallels in the surviving literature for the structure behind the *de Stoic. rep.* as I have just reconstructed it, but one or two points about it in particular look extremely uncomfortable. The most glaring difficulty is the duplication of logical sections in chapters 7-10 (section IV.3) and 24-29 (IV.6); but there is also a significant query over the fact that Plutarch deals with politics as a separate section from ethics. (This certainly seems to be what is happening here, since the topics are even physically separated by chapters 7-10.) This is highly unusual: generally speaking, politics is reckoned to be a sub-section of ethics, or at least to be very closely associated with it as part of 'practical philosophy'.<sup>1</sup>

In what follows, I want to show that, in fact, neither of these points need worry us unduly at all. There are specific points of correspondence between the structure of the *de Stoic. rep.* and surviving Academic literature which are so close that they cannot be dismissed as coincidental; and there is nothing about the rest which could suggest

<sup>1</sup>See *S.V.F.* III.301 (p.74,16-20) for the Stoics' account of politics as a part of ethical study; Atticus fr.1, 8-14 [des Places] for a Platonist's version. See also Alcinous *didask.* 153.38-41, with note 35 on pp.80-81 in Whittaker's Budé edition.

positive arguments *against* the idea that the structure is Academic. And it should be borne in mind that our evidence for Academic literature is extremely scanty — in fact it is confined more or less to what we can deduce from Cicero —; yet the Academy was at times a prolific school. We are told that Clitomachus, for example, wrote 400 treatises (D.L. IV.67) — all of which are now lost.

The first problem — the duplication of logical sections —, although the most disturbing problem on the face of it, is actually the easiest to explain. The way in which I want to do this is to suggest that the sections were not properly ‘logical’ sections at all, but that they were rather epistemological prefaces to the main discussions of ethics and physics respectively. This claim is supported by the close parallel that exists with Cicero’s Academic discussion at *Acad.* II.116ff. (The fact that Cicero is attacking Antiochus in this passage and not the Stoics does not compromise the value of the passage as evidence for us. Antiochus’ philosophy was very close to that of the Stoa — indeed one of the main accusations brought against him is that he is all but Stoic himself —, and this means in turn that the Academics’ approach to him will be essentially the same.)

At *Acad.* II.116, then, Cicero considers Antiochus’ philosophy as it is divided up *a plerisque et a vobismet ipsis*: in other words, he considers it under the traditional headings of physics, ethics and logic. The main body of each discussion consists of a Sceptical doxography, which argues against Antiochus’ position by showing the extent of disagreement existing among the Dogmatists. But each section also contains what we might call ‘positive’ arguments for the unknowability of things. This is important for us because, since Cicero devotes a section of his attack to ‘logic’ quite specifically (at 142ff), he must be making some kind of formal distinction between epistemological

arguments which can be used with special reference to specific subject-areas, and arguments which belong under the heading of 'logic' quite narrowly. Against this background it follows that, if we can show that the source behind chapters 7-10 and 24-29 of the *de Stoic. rep.* reflects epistemological concerns which relate to other topics, then neither section needs to be classed under a separate heading, 'logic', and there will no longer be a problem of duplication. In what follows, I shall consider the similarities between *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 and Cicero's epistemological preface to his ethical discussion; and between 24-29 and Cicero's preface to his discussion of physics.

Physics is the first area tackled by Cicero in the *Acad. II* passage — although it is the second area treated by Plutarch's source. The whole of Cicero's argument, insofar as it is relevant to us can be represented along the following lines:

- |      |         |   |
|------|---------|---|
| I.   | 116-117 | (a) it is arrogant to think that knowledge is possible<br>(b) mathematical knowledge is self-defining<br>(c) philosophers disagree among themselves about things they all 'know'. |
| II.  | 118-121 | Doxography of disagreement.   |
| III. | 122     | In fact, knowledge of cosmology is out of our reach — more so than knowledge of our own anatomy, which may itself be unattainable.  |
| IV.  | 123-128 | Doxography of disagreement. How can one choose?   |

The legitimacy of using this passage to draw conclusions about Plutarch's source becomes self-evident when we see how close it is in structure to the whole of *de Stoic.*

*rep.* 24-47 (sections IV.6-8). Written out in a similar way, these chapters look as follows:

- |      |       |  |
|------|-------|--|
| I.   | 24    | (a) knowledge is not possible<br>(b) philosophers disagree among themselves about things they have used 'correct' dialectic to discover. |
| II.  | 25-28 | Doxography of disagreement.  |
| III. | 29    | Only probability is possible — for example, where anatomy is concerned.  |
| IV.  | 30-47 | Stoic theology attacked.   |

The similarities here extend to quite specific coincidences of material: both authors appeal to the case of anatomy in part III, for example. Note also what Plutarch's contradiction in chapter 29 is: Chrysippus is caught making a false *mathematical* claim. This would certainly have had a great deal of point if, after reading *Acad.* II.116-117, we bear in mind that Plutarch's source could think that maths is one area in which knowledge *is* possible — even if the knowledge is self-defining and therefore trivial.

There are differences here as well, of course, but they do not outweigh the similarities, and they certainly do not threaten the main point of this comparison, which is to show that we can consider the material in the background to *de Stoic. rep.* 24-29 to have been the epistemological preface to the attack on Stoic physics which lies behind 30-47. It is, for example, true that Cicero differs from Plutarch's source in making the 'doxography of disagreement' in part II of his discussion function not only as an argument from *διαφωνία* for Scepticism quite generally, but also as part of his attack on Dogmatic physics in particular (the examples of disagreement adduced are all

physical examples).<sup>2</sup> But, although this may make the relationship between the epistemological arguments and the main discussion slightly less straightforward in Cicero than it would be in Plutarch's source, it does not call into question the fact of the relationship, or the value of the evidence it provides for the way in which *de Stoic. rep.* 24-29 relate to 30-47. It is also true that there is a difference in philosophical outlook evident between Cicero and Plutarch's source in part III of the argument: where Cicero affirms a doctrine of ἀκαταληψία, Plutarch's source suggests 'plausibility' as an alternative to knowledge.<sup>3</sup> But again, this difference is not what is important here. In fact, these arguments make very much the same point when considered as epistemological prefaces to a study of Dogmatic physics. Both Cicero and Plutarch's source can be understood as trying to undermine the possibility of a Dogmatic physics by suggesting that, while knowledge of anything is hard to come by, knowledge of physics is hardest of all, because this is the subject furthest removed from our own

<sup>2</sup>The fact that Plutarch's part II involves *ethical* examples may seem to distance the discussion in *de Stoic. rep.* 24-29 from the attack on Stoic physics altogether. However, we might note that something similar happens in Cicero's preface to his *ethical* discussion (*Acad.* II.128-129): this, as we shall see, revolves around ostensibly *physical* examples. It is also worth noting that *de Stoic. rep.* 24 comes almost exactly half way through the work, and comes directly after the end of what I have reconstructed as the ethical discussion. This gives a *prima facie* reason to think that it will represent some kind of fresh start in the structure Plutarch is working with, and the introduction to the physical section which dominates the second half.

<sup>3</sup>Both positions are, of course, legitimate Academic positions — the one more Clitomachean, the other more Philonian. For the 'middle Philonian' (pre-Roman Books) nature of Plutarch's source, see further below. Many commentators have taken the view that Cicero's speech in *Acad.* II is 'Roman' Philonian rather than Clitomachean (as I am suggesting): cf. e.g. Barnes, 'Antiochus of Ascalon', p.76. But against R. Hirzel's arguments for this position (*Untersuchungen zu Ciceros philosophischen Schriften*, vol.III (Leipzig 1883), pp.279-341), see Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy*, pp.391-420 (with a summary of the literature on p.406). Glucker asserts that the passage is, in a rather circuitous way, based on "orthodox Clitomachean" material (he thinks that this material comes from a reply to Antiochus' *Sosus* written, in which Philo reverted to his previous, Clitomachean stance). Cf. also D. N. Sedley, who is prepared to allow Glucker's interpretation for 109-146 at least, maintaining however that the rest of Cicero's speech in *Acad.* II (apart also from 69-71) is more straightforwardly Clitomachean: 'The End of the Academy', *Phronesis* 26 (1981), pp.67-75, esp. 74-5 note 4. (In fact, there is no evidence that Philo *did* reply to the *Sosus* — indeed, *Acad.* I.13 suggests by its silence that he did not —; so the simpler explanation seems to me to take the whole of the passage, and certainly the part of the speech that I am interested in, to be a direct reflection of broadly Clitomachean beliefs.)

immediate experience. We are left with 'mere' probability over the question of whether the drink we take in goes into our lungs or not (for example), and this is a question where ἐμπειρία καὶ ἱστορία is (in the form of anatomy) infinitely easier than questions of the nature of god and the cosmos.

On the basis of all of this, then, it seems reasonable to suppose that *de Stoic. rep.* 24-29 reflect a Sceptical preface to the physical discussion which lies behind 30-47. We now need to consider the suggestion that *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 form a Sceptical preface to the *ethical* discussion of the work (chapters 11-23). In fact, the suggestion that 7-10 belong closely together with the ethical chapters should not be at all surprising to us, since the original indication we had that chapters 7-10 were united as a section at all was their connection with an *ethical* sub-division of the logical section of the catalogue of Chrysippus' books (see section IV.3).

When we turn to Cicero, we can see that his discussion of ethics is, like his discussion of physics, clearly articulated with an epistemological preface. It starts at *Acad.* II.128, with the following sentence:

veniamus nunc ad bonorum malorumque notionem: *at paulum ante dicendum est...*

Cicero signals the end of the preface with the words *sed quod coeperam...*, before starting on the ethical doxography at II.129.

The arguments in *Acad.* II.128 are roughly as follows: according to Antiochus (very much along Stoic lines), our assent to the fact that it is daylight is no more certain

than our assent to oracles we understand from the utterances of crows; and our assent to a theory about the size of the sun is no less certain than our assent to a claim about the size of a nearby statue. But if the size of the sun is incapable of being perceived (as Cicero can argue it is), it follows that nothing at all can be.

The fact that these arguments are characterised by 'physical' material has occasionally led to the assumption that 128 actually belongs to the preceding physical section and not to the discussion of ethics at all (although this makes Cicero seem a desperately inept writer, starting off on ethics — *veniamus nunc ad bonorum notionem* — but immediately jumping back to the subject of physics without any apparent motive for the digression). This opinion is sometimes backed up by the idea that it is specifically *sense* perception that is at issue in the chapter. However, the example of the crow uttering prohibitions or injunctions proves that this, at least, can not be so. The idea is certainly not that we *hear* (or even imagine we hear) the crow utter words of advice; but rather that we interpret its squawks according to oracular rules.<sup>4</sup> This tells us that "perception" in this chapter is used, in a perfectly standard way, to refer to cognition quite generally.

The *moral* we are to draw from chapter 128 — and, as before, it is this, rather than the means by which the moral is drawn, which will decide how relevant its arguments are to the ethical discussion — is quite simply that, if all aspects of Antiochean [or Stoic] theory are equally knowable, then *a fortiori* none of it is knowable at all. Of course this argument *does* have validity against Antiochus' or the Stoics' physics, but it is equally valid for ethics as well. If we believe Antiochus' claims that

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Cicero *de divinatione* I.120: *eademque efficit in avibus divina mens...tum a dextra, tum a sinistra parte canant oscines*. For "oscines" — which include ravens, owls and wood-peckers as well as crows — cf. e.g. Festus *de verborum significatione* s.v., pp.196-7 [Müll].

the details of his ethical system are *as knowable* as the fact of there being an end for man, then our confidence in *both* might well be dented.

In fact, we may be able to do better than this, and say that Cicero thinks that his epistemological argument is *more* relevant in its application to ethics. As Cicero knows very well, Sceptics who engage in ethical debate run a serious risk of sounding morally nihilistic: cf. e.g. *Acad.* II.23-26, where Lucullus argues against them that knowledge is an *essential prerequisite* for virtue. Nihilism is not, of course, the conclusion that is hoped for by the Sceptics — if only because they do not express hopes about their conclusions at all. But they still have to face the charge; and one — wholly characteristic — way in which they could defend themselves against the suspicion would be to show how their adversaries themselves are guilty of a kind of nihilism through the very nature of their Dogmatism. So it would make sense for Cicero, who is just about to embark on a Sceptical discussion of ethics, to show us that Antiochus himself *rather than* Cicero is the one who risks undermining our confidence in virtue, and the reason for this is that he thinks we should have exactly the same confidence in the details of his ethical system — like in the details of the nature of the sun — as in the simple fact of the existence of virtue (or the simple fact of daylight).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Cf. also Cicero *de natura deorum* III.3 and 95, where Cotta (the Sceptic) is keen to avoid the charge of atheism, and does this by making a distinction between believing in god — which is relatively easy to do — and believing the Dogmatic Stoic characterisation of god — which is very much harder. (More hard-line Sceptics did not, of course, show such scruples. For example, in the field of ethics, Sextus Empiricus does not confine himself to attacking specific characterisations of the good, but tackles the very notion itself: see *Pyrrh. hypot.* III.169-178; *adv. math.* XI.21-109. Correspondingly, we are told that Favorinus argued that it is not *even* possible to have *κατάληψις* of the sun: see Galen *de optima doctrina* p.82,8-9 [Marquardt].)

It is worth noting in support of my reading of *Acad.* II.128 that Cicero introduces the topic of 'ethics' there as "*bonorum malorumque notio*" — which would make sense if the argument that follows is meant to suggest that Antiochus puts the very *notion* of virtue at risk by his Dogmatism. When ethics as such is picked up again in 129 it is in much more neutral terms: *quid habemus in rebus bonis et malis explorati?*

I have suggested, then, that the arguments in *Acad.* II.128 put us in the right epistemological frame of mind to approach the ethical section in 129ff. In a similar way, I want to claim that the argument in Plutarch's source for *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 lays the groundwork for the discussion of ethics reflected in 11-23.

The argument that lies behind *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 — the criticism of the Stoic theory of rationality — is, on the face of it, quite different from the epistemological argument that we saw in Cicero. However, we should not even have expected to find a particularly close correspondence in the nature of the arguments used by the two in this case because, as we have already seen, Plutarch and Cicero are arguing from rather different epistemological positions. Cicero attacks Antiochus from the point of view of a negative, Clitomachean Sceptic; but Plutarch (or his source) adopts a much more positive approach. He *does* have positive beliefs, including beliefs about morality, and his Scepticism is used positively to confirm these. This means that Plutarch is not at all vulnerable to the claim that his epistemology tends towards ethical nihilism, and the motive to protect himself against this attack does not exist.

Where the argument behind *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 does correspond with Cicero *Acad.* II.128 is in the much more important respect that it furnishes us with reasons for approaching the Dogmatic ethical theory of the Stoics and, in particular, their claim that knowledge is a prerequisite for virtue, with suspicion. In the case of Plutarch's source this is done by showing us the weaknesses inherent in the Stoic theory of rationality (the theory of κοινὸς λόγος) which was supposed to constitute a basis both for the Stoics' Dogmatism and for their ethical theory. As we also saw, Plutarch seemed to champion instead a Sceptical approach which, he suggests, provides the only possibility for even approaching the truth. So in the end it makes very good sense to take the source behind

*de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 as an 'epistemological preface' to the discussion of Stoic ethics reflected in 11-23, and to say that this approach mirrors very closely — in all the salient details, and given that Plutarch (or Plutarch's source) and Cicero have slightly different epistemological outlooks — the way that *Acad.* II.128 functions as an epistemological preface to Cicero's discussion of ethics in 129ff.

The comparison we have made between the *de Stoic. rep.* and *Acad.* II showed some extraordinarily close points of correspondence, and certainly explained what appeared before as a duplication of logical sections. However, the claim is not that Plutarch and Cicero were relying on exactly the same source (any more than that Plutarch was relying on Cicero): despite the similarities, too much of the material is different; and, what is more, where the *de Stoic. rep.* as a whole is structured around the topics of politics, ethics and physics (in that order), the *Acad.* II passage discusses a different selection of topics: viz. physics, ethics and logic (in that order). What the exercise does allow us to do, however, is to confirm that the structure we have posited for the *de Stoic. rep.* does correspond in substantial part, at least, to a characteristically Academic form of debate.

This just leaves us with the question of why we find a section devoted to *politics*, and none devoted to *logic* in the structure behind the *de Stoic. rep.* In fact, the first part of this question is hardly problematic any more either. Given that chapters 7-10 can now be seen to be based on a preface to the ethical topics whose discussion is reflected in 11-23, and not as an autonomous discussion of logic as they first appeared, we no longer have to think that the 'political' section is separated from the 'ethical' section at all. To be sure, the topic retains its own integrity as a distinct issue, but there

is nothing difficult or even surprising about the idea that politics constitutes an identifiable issue within ethics.<sup>6</sup>

Ultimately, then, the *de Stoic. rep.* has been composed around a two-topic structure: ethics and physics. Why is logic absent? There is no *a priori* reason why it should not be represented in this work. Cicero asserts that Stoic logic had been copied from "the ancients" much as he claims that their physics and ethics had been copied from the Peripatos (*de fin.* IV.8-9) — and if Plutarch could construct contradictions around those subjects, there would seem to be no reason why he could not equally have constructed contradictions around logic. Furthermore, there is evidence that Plutarch, like many Platonists of his time, considered Plato (rather than Aristotle) to be the father of logic, so that he could easily make the point that he wants to make, namely that the Stoics fall into contradiction in logic where they depart from Plato quite specifically.<sup>7</sup> Finally, we might note that there is *one* 'logical' contradiction reported in the *de Stoic. rep.*, albeit one whose import is for the Stoics' theology, namely Chrysippus' beliefs concerning future contingency in chapter 46.

If we need to explain the absence of a section based on logical material, then, we will have to look for the answer elsewhere. And one highly attractive possibility suggests itself. We saw in section IV.1 that Plutarch set up the *de Stoic. rep.* in such a

<sup>6</sup>For example, it is presumably the case that Cleanthes, when he made his unorthodox assertion that philosophy was divided into six (and not three) parts, of which ethics and politics constituted two, was working with divisions that already existed in a weaker form within the standard three parts (this is certainly true in respect of the other two parts of the standard division: see D.L. VII.41); and of course Zeno's *Republic* already presupposes the Stoics' recognition of a political *topos* within ethics.

<sup>7</sup>For Plato as the founder of 'Aristotelian' logic, see esp. *de an. proc.* 1023E, and cf. Alcinous *didask.* 158.5 - 160.41. Plutarch's own interest in logic is evident in titles from the *Lamprias* catalogue, such as 56 (τῶν Ἀριστοτέλους Τοπικῶν βιβλία η') and 192 (Διάλεξις περὶ τῶν δέκα κατηγοριῶν). *Lamprias* 152 is a polemical work, against Chrysippus: περὶ τοῦ Πρώτου ἐπομένου πρὸς Χρύσιππον. See Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* pp.225-228.

way as to show us that the inconsistencies in Stoic doctrine actually *matter* because they inevitably lead to inconsistency in the lives of the Stoics themselves: a Stoic cannot live a consistent life, and therefore cannot lead a good life. Now, clearly, this will be one way of explaining the inclusion of ethical self-contradictions in this work; it will also explain the inclusion of physical self-contradictions. After all, as we saw in section IV.3, Plutarch considers a grasp of physics to be an important prerequisite for someone who wants to learn about ethics. Furthermore, physics crucially involves theology, and a proper understanding of the gods is also going to be necessary for a virtuous life — indeed, the standard Middle Platonist definition of the end is ὁμοίωσις θεῶν. (It can be no coincidence that the physical contradictions of the *de Stoic. rep.* all revolve around points of theology. Even physical doctrine more narrowly defined are included only insofar as they reflect on the Stoics' beliefs about god.) However, a full understanding of logical theory may not be so important: someone with inconsistent beliefs (or no beliefs at all) about the nature of the categories may still be able to live a fully virtuous life in a way that they could not if they were ignorant about the gods. So it turns out that the absence of a logical section in the *de Stoic. rep.* can not only be explained, but might actually confirm something of what we have reconstructed of the purpose of the work.

The conclusion we arrive at for the structure with which Plutarch was working when he composed the *de Stoic. rep.* — and which probably characterised the main Academic source on which he was relying — is now something along the following lines:

Chapter	1	<i>Introduction.</i>	
	2-23	Ethics:	2-6: Politics 7-10: Epistemological preface: ethical Dogmatism based on Stoic understanding of (κοινός) λόγος fails. 11: τὸ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν 12: οἰκείωσις 13-16: justice 17-23: the human end.
	24-47	Physics:	24-29: Epistemological preface: certainty impossible, especially in physics; 30-37: theodicy 38-47: theology.

For the reasons outlined above, Plutarch must, in all likelihood, owe this structure to a single text which he used to guide his composition and whose arguments suggested the material for the greater part of his contradictions. It is perhaps irrelevant to our understanding of the *de Stoic. rep.* to say any more about this source: the purpose of this study is to understand the *de Stoic. rep.*, not its sources. However, for the sake of completeness, it might be worth making such general inferences about it as seem reasonable on the basis of what we know. In the first place, then, we can safely assume that the source was Academic. Beyond this, all we can say is that, if we take it that the arguments of *de Stoic. rep.* 7-10 and especially 24-29 were suggested by material at a corresponding position in the source (and that, after all, has been the basis of my methodology in this study), then, since those arguments presuppose a 'middle Philonian' epistemological standpoint (see *ad IV.6*), Plutarch's source would itself have been the product of 'middle' Philo, or of one of his followers.

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It was never the *purpose* of this study to reconstruct Plutarch's sources, and the claim that he was guided in his composition of the *de Stoic. rep.* by the arguments of another text is a claim about his method of composition and emphatically not an attempt to deny originality to the *de Stoic. rep.* itself. Indeed, the reconstruction of his source has shown us quite how original the *de Stoic. rep.* actually is. The work is *not* an unorganised collection of other-people's polemical fag-ends (a "polemical rag-bag", as Inwood has it);<sup>8</sup> it is a fascinating reworking of old Academic arguments against the Stoa, turned into the demonstration that their philosophy is born of an arrogant and misguided attempt to improve on the unimprovable. The *de Stoic. rep.*, in short, is a powerful reassertion of Platonism.

<sup>8</sup>Inwood, 'Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century A.D.' p.172.

## Appendix: Plutarch and his Source Material.

The appendix summarises, in what I hope is a clearer form, the conclusions we have arrived at concerning the source material with which Plutarch was working. In the right hand margin are some of the more pertinent parallels for the Academic arguments whose reconstruction was suggested. However, it is worth emphasising that this is only a summary of conclusions, and it should be read very closely with the study itself.

### The *de Stoic. rep.*

### Plutarch's Academic Source.

#### IV.2

#### *Politics*

§2 The Stoics advocate political involvement, but often fail to become politically involved themselves.

The Stoics rarely put into practise their advice to engage in politics.

§§3-6 Belief in the theory of the megalopolis is strictly inconsistent with conventional political involvement.

and in fact, their own political theory, insofar as it is not the same as the Peripatetic, singularly fails to correspond to real life.

cf. Cicero *de fin.* IV.7

#### IV.3

#### *Epistemology*

§7 The Stoics claim that there are a plurality of virtues; but they define them all in terms of one — viz. wisdom.

The Stoic account of rationality (κοινὸς λόγος) fails to account for the virtues: it should allow no room for any virtue other than wisdom. What is more, it makes virtue dependent on Dogmatic certainty.

(cf. Galen *P.H.P.* VII.5)

§8 Zeno said that there was no need for counter-arguments: but he himself argued against sophisms and against Plato.

Κοινὸς λόγος fails as a basis for Dogmatic dialectic. If it is supposed to fulfil this role by recognising cataleptic impressions (cf. Zeno) it will get nowhere, since there are none.

§9 Chrysippus says that ethics should be taught before physics, although it cannot be understood without its physical first principles.

§10 Chrysippus rejects argument on the other side of a question — but has done it himself, and presented more convincing arguments than those in favour of the Stoic doctrine he held.

#### IV.4

§11 The fool cannot perform right actions because the law [of Nature] does not have prescriptions for him. Yet:

(a) he will not obey its 'prohibitions' if he disobeys its prescriptions;

(b) it is clear that there is a sense in which prescription is possible for the fool;

(c) the sage is sometimes prohibited by nature.

§12 Nothing is 'useful' or 'οἰκεῖον' for the fool,

yet Chrysippus admits that indifferent things can be useful, and that all animals find themselves οἰκεῖον from the moment of birth.

Κοινὸς λόγος is supposed to allow us to reject false propositions just in virtue of their inconsistency with it; yet we are asked to believe that Stoic ethics, far from being rejected as hopelessly far-fetched, is actually accepted as inherently plausible!

Chrysippus thought dialectic proceeded by demonstration from first principles (explicitly not by antilogistic) — yet it is not clear that we know even these; and when Chrysippus did argue on the other side of a question, he found that he had stronger arguments against the position he actually adopted.

Cicero Acad.  
II.87

#### *Ethics*

**I:** τὸ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν.

The Stoics think that "right actions" result from achieving the end, which is "life in consistency with nature".

Cicero de fin.  
IV.14-15

It should be impossible *not* to follow nature — although the fool invariably does so.

Actions can also be guided by what is προηγμένον.

**II:** Οἰκείωσις.

To live according to nature means to understand what Nature prescribes for one's own nature. However:

(de fin.  
IV.16-19)

either the strict Stoic account of what human nature is is unrealistic and out of the reach of almost everyone;

or it comes down to the same as the Peripatetic account.

Anon. *in Tht.*  
5.18 - 7.20

### III: Justice.

Justice, on the Stoic account, requires a totally objective extension of οἰκείωσις.  
But:

§13 There are supposed to be no degrees in virtue and vice, yet:

(a) he allows that it is a *worse* error to think that pleasure is the end than to think it is good;

(b) not all virtuous actions are equally praiseworthy, and vicious actions do not always lead us to break of friendships with the perpetrator.

(a) Chrysippus allows that pleasure might be good;

(*in Tht.*  
6.29 - 7.13)

(b) praise and blame are not allotted according to a strictly objective measure of who deserves it.

*in Tht.*  
5.42 - 6.2

§14 Plato is criticised for saying that one who does not know how to live [*sc.* well] is better off dead; yet Chrysippus himself says that you should commit suicide to flee vice if necessary.

Our love for our own life and happiness is overridingly selfish.

*in Tht.*  
6.20-25

§15 Plato is criticised for making fear of the gods a reason to be just; yet Chrysippus thinks it worthwhile to draw attention to the gods' punishment of vice.

We are motivated to justice by a fear of divine punishment.

(*cf. in Tht.*  
7.14-20)

§16 Plato is criticised for talking about 'internal injustice'; yet Chrysippus thinks that the fool is constantly 'doing himself an injustice'.

Fools do not even have the proper οἰκείωσις towards themselves, so they could never start to extend it to other people.

### IV.5

§17 Chrysippus declares the Stoic end to be consistent with our innate conceptions, but admits it seems super-human.

### IV: The end.

The Stoic τέλος — their notion of the good life — is implausible and inhuman;

Cicero *de fin.*  
IV.21, 25-29

§18 Although vice is the essence of unhappiness, Chrysippus says that it is better to be alive and evil than to be dead. Death is appropriate for one who has not attained προηγμένα.

its achievement does not even have much bearing on whether life is worthwhile or not, while on the contrary, it seems that attaining προηγμένα (which *ex hypoth.* count for nothing towards the good life) does affect whether our lives are worth living.

§19 Although there is an infinite difference between vice and virtue, and although both qualities are perceptible, Chrysippus says that a man may become a sage without noticing it.

Indeed, the change from vice to virtue (and happiness) is so insignificant that it can go unnoticed — despite the fact that it is a physical change, and we are supposed to be perceiving ourselves all the time.

In practice, the Stoics adopt a 'Peripatetic' notion of the end:

*de fin.*  
IV.22-3

§20 The sage is supposed to 'mind his own business', and to need no more than bread and water; yet he is sent to the ends of the earth to make money, and thinks primarily of money when teaching.

the lives they recommend to the sage all involve making money;

§21 Nothing should be done in the city purely for the sake of pleasure; yet Chrysippus approves of masturbation, and says that the only function of peacocks is decorative.

the ideal context for ethical development encompasses pleasure for pleasure's sake...

§22 Chrysippus condemns many taboos as demonstrably 'unnatural', but approves of others of the same kind.

...as well as many purely conventional institutions.

§23 Chrysippus attacks Aristo, the absurdity of whose ethics is demonstrated by the ἐπελευστικὴ κίνησις. Yet his psychology incorporates a very similar feature.

In fact, insofar as the Stoics are Stoic at all, their ethics is as absurd as that of Aristo.

*de fin.*  
IV.43

## IV.6

§24 Chrysippus praises the [dogmatic] use of dialectic found in Plato, Aristotle and the Old Academy; yet he thinks that their most important conclusions were wrong.

§25 'Spiteful joy' is supposed not to exist — yet Chrysippus talks about it and defines it.

§26 Happiness is supposed not to increase with time — yet a moment's happiness is not worth moving your finger for.

§27 The virtues are inter-entailing in the sense that to act with one is to act with them all — yet the sage is not always being brave.

§28 Rhetoric is a skill [and so a virtue]; yet Chrysippus thinks that none of its theorems is invariably applicable.

§29 Chrysippus criticises Plato for a lack of investigation when he said that drink goes into the lungs; yet Plato's theory *was* tenable, whereas Chrysippus made mathematical claims which are thoroughly discredited.

## IV.7

§30 The gods are made to look ridiculous if the boons they grant us (health, wealth &c.) are no more goods than golden chamber-pots.

## Epistemology

Chrysippus' dogmatism fails, as can be seen by the *διαφωνία* among even the greatest philosophers over the most important points of philosophy. In particular, the Stoics innovate in the following areas:

(cf. *Acad.* II.116-128)

(cf. *Acad.* I.38-39)

- (1) they think that the sage suffers no emotion (although their argument for this begs the question of whether anger is necessarily evil).

(The fact that the sage is always exercising all virtues (see (2) and (3)), with the fact that happiness does not depend on external achievement, means that happiness does not increase with time.)

- (2) They think that the virtues are radically inseparable (so that every virtuous action is virtuous in all four respects);

- (3) they also think it is impossible to have a virtue and not to be exercising it.

The Stoics attack Plato for talking about what is 'likely' where they think that certainty is possible — yet probability is the best that is available for us.

## Physics (part 1)

We praise god as providential for giving us health, wealth &c., but not for giving us the only thing that the *Stoics* think is good: wisdom.

Cicero *de nat. de.* III.86-88

§31 For a Stoic god to be providential, he would have to grant the only good thing there is — wisdom —, which he does not do. In fact, according to the Stoics, god can only benefit sages, who benefit him equally; and fools they could not harm any more if they tried.

§32 Wars are supposed to be useful to us — to keep population in check &c. But this is not a very providential way of achieving this end.

§33 Wars presuppose vice, so god must be responsible for vice.

§34 God as fate is positively responsible for every feature of the universe anyway.

§35 God punishes vice — yet vice is supposed to be useful for the whole.

§36 In fact, if this is true, then philosophers who acknowledge the fact should not attempt to eliminate vice.

§37 There is supposed to be nothing really blameworthy in the universe: what there is is explained by its necessity, its insignificance or by minor negligence. But if it is necessary, that argues for a limitation of god's powers; it is not insignificant, and negligence is no excuse.

Since the gods do not give us wisdom, we cannot use the things they do give us well, and so derive only evil from them.

The universe is supposed to be providentially organised as the best possible universe; yet the gods do not care for individuals, or even for whole cities and nations, which they allow to be destroyed.

The Stoics cannot excuse wars on the grounds that they are only ἀποπροηγμένα, because wars presuppose evil — and providence must be responsible for evil because, as we have seen, it does not grant wisdom...

...and also because providence is identified with fate, and is therefore positively responsible for everything.

Providence may arrange for the punishment of vice — but it should still never have brought vice about in the first place. Perhaps vice is necessary for the perfection of the whole: but then it should not be right to oppose it at all!

If ἀποπροηγμένα are 'necessary', then god cannot be omnipotent; they are not, as the Stoics say, insignificant, and it is no excuse to call them 'oversights'.

*de nat. de.*  
III.93

*(de nat. de.*  
III.80-83)

*de nat. de.*  
III.86-93

§38 Chrysippus criticises the Epicureans for denying that providence is part of our conception of god; yet *he* denies that imperishability is.

§39 Zeus is not nourished — yet he is supposed to grow. The contradiction is as bad if Chrysippus says that Zeus is nourished from himself.

§40 The other gods are nourished from outside — but that involves them in dependency, which compromises their blessedness.

§41 Chrysippus explains the creation of the soul by means of cold air, yet says that life is characterised by heat.

§42 Sometimes Chrysippus calls air light and upwards-tending, sometimes neither heavy nor light.

§43 Air is supposed to be naturally dark [as well as soft &c.]; yet Chrysippus uses it to explain qualities such as brightness and hardness.

### I: The Existence of the gods.

The Stoics' appeal to the *consensus omnium* for the existence of god relies on our thinking that we could have developed a notion of god from seeing his providence at work in the world. However, Chrysippus' denial that the gods are imperishable throws into doubt the assumption that god is provident.

(*de nat. de.*  
III.11)

### II: Their nature.

If Zeus were fire then he would need external nourishment to sustain him and allow him to grow;

*de nat. de.*  
III.37

but a god who depended for his existence on external nourishment could hardly be blessed, and we can deduce that he would be perishable.

Fire is not a sufficient *explicans* of life anyway: air, for example, is as good a candidate.

*de nat. de.*  
III.35-36

The Stoic proof of god based on the characterisation of life as  $\piνεϋμα$ , which tends towards a natural home in the lunar sphere, fails because  $\piνεϋμα$  cannot properly speaking be 'light and upwards tending'.

S.E.  
*adv. math.*  
IX.71-74

### III: Their government of the world.

God as  $\piνεϋμα$  might be the active cause that characterises things in the world: but, whatever the characterisation of  $\piνεϋμα$ , it cannot account for all the features of the world: if it is soft, it will not account for hard things &c.

*adv. math.*  
IX.272-73

§44 Chrysippus admits that there is no spatial differentiation in an infinite void, yet attributes the permanence of the world to its being 'in the middle place'.

God cannot be the ἔξις of the world, since the (infinite) void in which the world is placed allows no independently-defined centre or limits for its operation. Since Chrysippus says that the ἔξις is theoretically separable from the world, its centre cannot be defined by reference to the world.

*adv. math.*  
IX.158-159

§45 If the world would have been destroyed if located anywhere other than the 'middle place', then it is only chance that keeps it together.

If the world and its ἔξις are even theoretically separable, then it must be chance that ensures the permanence of the world, and not providence.

§46 The Stoic theory of fate includes the contradictory claim that many things are possible that are destined not to happen.

#### **IV: Their providence.**

Chrysippus' compatibilist attempt to make men morally responsible for evil in a system of rigid determinism, relies in part on his definition of future contingency, which allows things that are fated not to happen nevertheless to be "possible". But this is absurd.

*Cicero de fato*  
11-21

§47 If impressions do not cause our assent then fate is not the unimpedable force Chrysippus says it is; if they do, then individual agents are not morally responsible for their action.

Chrysippus maintains that assent is free: yet fate elicits assent when appropriate by presenting the agent with appropriate impressions. If the agent actually could withhold assent, then fate would not be unimpedible.

*de fato* 44

In the course of this study, I have cited the full details for each work mentioned only on its first appearance. Apart from a few books of general interest, these works are placed below in the section corresponding to their first citation. Other literature not mentioned in the text, but which is particularly pertinent has been added.

### GENERAL.

#### i. Editions of the *de Stoicorum repugnantiis*.

The best modern texts are undoubtedly those of Cherniss, and Pohlenz (which, for convenience of reference, I have used throughout this thesis) — although this may well change when D. Babut publishes his Budé edition, with translation and commentary (currently in progress). It should be noted that Pohlenz' *apparatus* is riddled with mistakes, which Cherniss, on the whole, has corrected.

The following are the editions and translations of the *de Stoic. rep.* which are of most value to the modern scholar:

AMYOT, J., *Les Oeuvres Morales et Meslées de Plutarque*, vol. II (Paris 1572). French translation.

CHERNISS, H., *Plutarch's Moralia* vol. XIII.2 (Loeb; Harvard University Press 1976). With English translation and notes.

HOLZMANN, W. ('Xylander'), *Plutarchi Chaeronensis omnium quae exstant*, vol. II, (Frankfurt 1599). With Latin translation.

POHLENZ, M., *Plutarchi Moralia* vol. VI.2 (Teubner; Leipzig 1952).

WYTTENBACH, D., *Plutarchis Chaeronensis Moralia* vol. V.2 (Oxford 1800). With Latin translation (based on Holzmann *q.v.*).

Other important editions of the *Moralia* include those of: Aldus (Venice, 1509); G. N. Bernardakis (Leipzig 1888-96 — vol. VI (1895), containing the *de Stoic. rep.*, superseded by Pohlenz); Fr. Dübner (Paris 1841); J. G. Hutten (Tubingen 1791-1804); J. J. Reiske (Leipzig 1774-86).

Selected articles relating to specific textual issues are mentioned below as relevant to each section; but cf. also:

RASMUS, E., *In Plutarchi librum qui inscribitur DE STOICORUM REPUGNANTIIS coniecturae* (Jahres-Bericht über das vereinigte alt- und neustädische Gymnasium zu Brandenburg von Ostern 1879 bis Ostern 1880; Brandenburg 1880), pp.1-12.

ii. Plutarch and the *de Stoic. rep.*

- BABUT, D., *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme* (Paris 1964).  
DILLON, J., *The Middle Platonists* (London 1977). Chapter 7 for Plutarch.  
GIESEN, C., *De Plutarchi contra Stoicos Disputationibus*. (diss., Münster 1889).  
HELMBOLD, W. C. & O'NEIL, E. N., *Plutarch's Quotations* (The American Philological Association, 1959).  
POHLENZ, M., 'Plutarchs Schriften gegen die Stoiker' *Hermes* 74 (1939) pp.1-33.  
RUSSELL, D. A., (a) *Plutarch* (London 1972).  
(b) 'On reading Plutarch's *Moralia*', in *Greece and Rome* 15 (1968), pp.130-146.  
SANDBACH, F. H., 'Plutarch on the Stoics', *Classical Quarterly* 34 (1940) pp.20-25.  
ZIEGLER, K. von, 'Plutarchos von Chaironeia' in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft*, vol. XXI.1 (Stuttgart 1951), coll. 636-962. Separately published, Stuttgart 1949; revised 1964.

Also relevant are von Arnim, *S.V.F. I* (*op. cit. infra*), preface pp.X-XV; and many of the works cited *infra ad I-III*.

iii. The Stoics.

Texts:

- ARNIM, H. von, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* [S.V.F.] (voll. I-III: Stuttgart 1903-1905; vol. IV — containing indexes compiled by M. Adler — Stuttgart 1924).  
FESTA, N., *I Frammenti degli Stoici Antichi* (Bari 1932 (vol.I) and 1935 (vol.II)).  
LONG, A. A. and SEDLEY, D. N., *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge University Press 1987). §§26-67 for the Stoics.  
PEARSON, A. C., *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes* (London 1891).  
  
HIEROCLES: 'Ἠθικὴ Στοιχείωσις, edited with translation and commentary by A. A. Long and G. Bastianini, in *Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici Greci e Latini* vol. I.I\*\* pp.268-451 (text at 296-367) (Florence 1992).

#### Studies:

- BONHÖFFER, A., (a) *Epictet und die Stoa — Untersuchungen zur stoischen Philosophie* (Stuttgart 1890).  
(b) *Die Ethik des stoikers Epictet* (Stuttgart 1894).
- BRÉHIER, É., *Chrysippe et l'Ancien Stoïcisme* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1957).
- DYROFF, A., *Die Ethik der Alter Stoa (Berliner Studien für classische Philologie und Archäologie II; Berlin 1897).*
- ELORDUY, E., *Die Sozialphilosophie der Stoa* (Gräfenhainichen 1936).
- GOLDSCHMIDT, V., *Le Système Stoïcien et l'Idée de Temps* (Paris 1953).
- GOULD, J. B., *The Philosophy of Chrysippus (Philosophia Antiqua 17; Leiden 1970).*
- LONG, A. A., (a) *Hellenistic Philosophy* (London 1974).  
(b) (ed.) *Problems in Stoicism* (London 1971).
- POHLENZ, M., (a) *Die Stoa: Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung* (2 voll., Göttingen 1948-1949).  
(b) *Grundfragen der stoischen Philosophie (Abhandlungen der Wissenschaft zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse iii.26; Göttingen 1970).*
- RIST, J. M., *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press 1969).
- RIETH, O., *Grundbegriffe der stoischen Ethik* (Berlin 1933).
- SANDBACH, F. H., *The Stoics* (London 1975).
- STRAATEN, M. van, *Panétius, sa Vie, ses Écrites et sa Doctrine* (Amsterdam 1946).

#### iv. Other Texts.

The following editions of texts relevant to this study are especially valuable:

- ALCINOUS: *Didaskalikos*, edited and translated with excellent introduction and notes by J. Whittaker (Paris *Belles Lettres* 1990).
- ANONYMOUS: *Commentarium in Platonis Theaetetum*, edited with translation and commentary by D. N. Sedley in *Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici Greci e Latini* vol.III, pp.227-562 (text at 262-479) (Florence, expected 1995).
- ATTICUS: Fragments edited and translated with introduction and notes by É. des Places (Paris *Belles Lettres* 1977).
- GALEN: *de placitis Hippocratis et Platonis [P.H.P.]*, edited with translation and commentary by P. H. De Lacy for the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* (Berlin: voll. I (1978), II (1980), III (1984)).
- NUMENIUS: Fragments edited and translated with introduction and notes by É. des Places (Paris *Belles Lettres* 1973).

## SECTIONS I-III

- BALDASSARI, M., *Plutarco: Gli Opuscoli contra gli Stoici* (Terento 1976).
- BARNES, J. 'Antiochus of Ascalon', in *Philosophia Togata*, edd. J. Barnes and M. Griffen (Oxford University Press 1989), pp.51-96.
- BURNYEAT, M., 'Protagoras and Self-Refutation in Later Greek Philosophy' in *The Philosophical Review* 85 (1976) pp.44-69.
- COUISSIN, P., 'The Stoicism of the New Academy', in *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. M. Burnyeat (University of California Press 1983) pp.31-63.
- DEIKE, H., *Plutarchus, De Stoicorum Repugnantibus, 1-10: Beiträge zu einem kritischen Kommentar* (diss., Göttingen 1962).
- DE LACY, P., 'Plutarch and the Academic Sceptics' in *The Classical Journal* 49 (1953-4), pp.79-84.
- DILLON, J., "'Orthodoxy" and "Eclecticism": Middle Platonists and Neo-Pythagoreans' in *The Question of "Eclecticism"* edd. J. Dillon & A. A. Long (University of California Press 1988), pp.103-126.
- DÖRRIE, M. H., 'Le Platonisme de Plutarque', in *Actes du VIIIe Congrès Association Guillaume Budé* (Paris 1969), pp.519-529 (with especially valuable comment by Cuvigny on pp.529-530).
- DONINI, P., (a) 'Lo scetticismo academico, Aristotele e l'unità della tradizione platonica secondo Plutarco' in *Storiografia e dossografia nella filosofia antica*, ed. G. Cambiano (Torino 1986), pp.203-226.  
(b) 'Plutarco, Ammonio e l'Academia' in *Miscellanea Plutarchea* (Ferrara 1986) pp.97-110.
- FREDE, M., 'The Skeptic's Two Kinds of Assent and the Question of the Possibility of Knowledge', in his *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 1987), pp.201-222.
- GLUCKER, J., *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Göttingen 1978).
- JONES, R. M., *The Platonism of Plutarch* (diss., Chicago 1916).
- LONG, A. A., 'Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy', *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988) pp.150-171.
- SCHRÖTER, J., *Plutarchs Stellung zur Skepsis* (Leipzig 1911).
- TARRANT, H., *Scepticism or Platonism? The Philosophy of the Fourth Academy* (Cambridge University Press 1985).
- TIELEMAN, T., *Argument and Refutation in the de Placitis Books II-III* (Utrecht 1992).

## SECTIONS IV.1 - IV.2

### Text:

- §2, {3.20-21} WILHELM, A., 'NENNOΣ', *Hermes* 35 (1900), pp.669-670.  
§6, {4.26-28} CASTIGLIONI, L., review of vol. VI.2 of the Teubner *Moralia* (Leipzig 1952) — *q.v. supra* —, *Gnomon* 26 (1954), pp.80-82.

### Stoic Political Theory:

- BALDRY, H. C., (a) 'Zeno's Ideal State', *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 79 (1959) pp.3-15.  
(b) *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* (Cambridge University Press 1965). Chapter V for the Early Stoics.  
CHROUST, A.-H., 'The Ideal Polity of the Early Stoics: Zeno's Republic', *The Review of Politics* 27 (1965) pp.173-183.  
DEVINE, F. E., 'Stoicism on the Best Regime', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31 (1970), pp.323-336.  
ERSKINE, A., *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action* (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford 1988).  
FERGUSON, J., *Utopias of the Classical World* (London 1975).  
HADOT, I., 'Tradition Stoïcienne et Idées Politiques au Temps des Gracques' in the *Revue des Études Latines* 48 (1970) pp.133-179.  
RAMAROSON, L., 'Contre les "Temples Faits de Mains de l'Homme"', in *Revue de Philologie* 43 (1969) pp.217-238.  
SCHOFIELD, M., *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge University Press 1991).

For the βίος of the sage, cf. especially:

- GRILLI, A., *Il Problema della Vita Contemplativa nel Mondo Greco-Romano* (Milan 1953). Chapter 2 for the Stoa.  
JOLY, R., *Le Thème Philosophique des Genres de Vie dans L'Antiquité Classique* (*Académie Royale de Belgique; classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques* XXIX.3; Brussels 1956).

### SECTION IV.3

#### Text:

- §7, {5.10-12} ABEL, K., 'Plutarch "Stoic. Repugn." 1034C' in *Hermes* 113 (1985), pp.125-126.
- §10, {8.25- 9.1} BORGEAUD, W. & ROUSSEL, M., 'Sur un Text des "Contradictions Stoïciennes" de Plutarque', in *Revue des Études Grecques* 82 (1969), pp.71-75.
- {9.4-9} FÄHSE, M. G., *Observationes Criticae in Plutarchi Opera quae Inscribuntur Moralia et in Hesychii Lexicon* (Leipzig 1820).
- {9.19} *id.*
- {11.2} APELT, O., 'Bemerkungen zu Plutarchs Moralia', *Philologus* 62 (1903), pp.276-291.

#### For the epistemological issues raised:

- GOLDSCHMIDT, V., 'Remarques sur l'Origin Epicurienne de la "Prénotion"' in *Les Stoïciens et leur Logique*, ed. J. Brunschwig (Paris 1978), pp.155-169.
- KIDD, I., 'Orthos Logos as a Criterion of Truth in the Stoa', *The Criterion of Truth*, edd. P. Huby and G. Neal (Liverpool University Press 1989), pp.137-150.
- SANDBACH, F. H., 'ENNOIA and ΠΡΟΛΗΨΙΣ in the Stoic Theory of Knowledge', *Classical Quarterly* 24 (1930) pp.44-51.
- SEDLEY, D. N., 'Sextus Empiricus and the Atomist Criteria of Truth', in *Elenchos* 13 (1992) pp.21-56.

#### For the Stoic use of Dialectic (§§8, 10):

- FREDE, M., *Die stoische Logik (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen III.88; Göttingen 1974)*.
- IOPPOLO, A.-M., *Opinione e Scienza — Il dibattito tra Stoici e Academicici nel III e nel II secolo a.C. (Elenchos — Collano di testi e studi sul pensiero antico 12; Naples 1986)*.

For Stoic curriculum-division (§9):

- BOYANCÉ, P., 'Cicéron et les Parties de la Philosophie' in *Revue des Études Latines* 49 (1971) pp.127-154.  
BRUNSCHWIG, J., 'On a Book-Title by Chrysippus: "On the Fact that the Ancients Admitted Dialectic Along with Demonstrations"' in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* suppl. vol. 1991, pp.81-95.  
HADOT, P., 'Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité', *Museum Helveticum* 36 (1979) pp.201-223.  
IERODIAKONOU, K., 'The Stoic Division of Philosophy' in *Phronesis* 38 (1993) pp.57-74.

For Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of Chrysippus' works:

- DYROFF, A., *Über die Anlage der stoischen Bücherkataloge (Programm des K. Neuen Gymnasiums zu Würzburg 1895/6; Würzburg 1896)*.

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Text:

- |      |            |  |
|------|------------|--|
| §12, | {13.17}    | WESTMAN R., 'Kritisches zu Plutarchs Moralia 1033A-1130E' <i>Acta Academiae Aboensis Humaniora</i> 34.2 (1959) pp.33-47.                     |
| §13, | {14.23}    | Fähse 1820 (v. ad IV.3).   |
|      | {15.9}     | <i>id.</i>   |
|      | {15.12-14} | KRONENBERG, A. J. 'Ad Plutarchi Moralia', <i>Mnemosyne</i> (series 3) 10 (1941).   |
|      | {15.17-18} | Castiglioni 1954 (v. ad IV.1-2).   |
| §14, | {17.4}     | Westman <i>op. cit.</i> and <i>Eranos</i> , 1961 ( <i>art. cit. infra</i> ).   |
| §16, | {20.24}    | GOSSAGE, A. J., review of voll. VI.1-3 of the Teubner <i>Moralia &amp;c.</i> in the <i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i> 76 (1956) pp.117-118. |
|      | {21.9-10}  | Apelt 1903 (v. ad IV.3).   |

On chapter 13, see especially:

ALGRA, K., 'Chrysippus on Virtuous Abstention from Ugly Old Women', *Classical Quarterly* 40 (1990), pp.450-458.

On chapter 14:

WESTMAN, R., 'Chrysipp III.761 und der Dialog Kleitophon' in *Eranos* 59 (1961) pp.89-100.

There is a large literature on the Stoic theory of οἰκείωσις. Cf. esp.:

ANNAS, J., *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford University Press 1993).

BLUNDELL, M. W., 'Parental Nature and Stoic Οἰκείωσις' in *Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1990) pp.221-242 (with extensive bibliography on pp.240-242).

BRINK, C. O., 'Οἰκείωσις and Οἰκειότης: Theophrastus and Zeno on Nature in Moral Theory' in *Phronesis* I (1955-6), pp.123-145.

ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, T., (a) *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis* (Aarhus University Press 1990);

(b) 'Discovering the Good: Oikeiosis and Kathekonta in Stoic Ethics', in *The Norms of Nature*, edd. M. Schofield and G. Striker (Cambridge University Press 1986), pp.145-183.

GÖRGEMANNS, H., 'Oikeiosis in Arius Didymus', in *On Stoic and Peripatetic Ethics. The Work of Arius Didymus*, ed. W. W. Fortenbaugh (New Brunswick/London 1983), pp.165-189 (with valuable comments by B. Inwood pp.190-210).

INWOOD, B., 'Hierocles: Theory and Argument in the Second Century A.D.' in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* II (1984) pp.151-183.

PEMBROKE, S. G., 'Oikeiosis' in *Problems in Stoicism*, ed. A. A. Long (London 1971), pp.114-149.

STRIKER, G., 'The Role of Oikeiosis in Stoic Ethics', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* I (1983), pp.145-167.

WHITE, N., 'The Basis of Stoic Ethics' in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 83 (1970) pp.143-178.

## SECTION IV.5

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- §20, {27.11-12} SHOREY, P., 'Note on Diogenes Laertius ix.108',  
*Classical Philology* 11 (1916), p.465.
- §21, {29.4} Apelt 1903 (v. *ad* IV.3).
- §23, {31.15} SANDBACH, F. H., 'Some Textual Notes on Plutarch's  
Moralia', *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1941)  
pp.110-118.
- {31.17} *id.*; also Gossage 1956 (v. *ad* IV.4)

For οἰκεῶσις and the Stoic end, see works cited *ad* IV.4. For the Cynical elements in Stoic political theory (cf. §§21-22), see the works cited *ad* IV.2, and also:

DUDLEY, D. R., *A History of Cynicism — from Diogenes to the 6th Century A.D.* (London 1937).

On chapter 23: see the following for Epicurus' 'swerve':

- ENGLERT, W. G., *Epicurus on the Swerve and Voluntary Action* (*American Classical Studies* 16; Atlanta 1987).
- FURLEY, D., 'Aristotle and Epicurus on Voluntary Action', study II of his *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton University Press 1967), pp.159-237.
- ISNARDI PARENTE, M., 'Stoici, Epicurei e il "Motus Sine Causa"' in *Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia* 35 (1980) pp.22-31.
- KLEVE, K., 'Id Facit Exiguum Clinamen', *Symbolae Osloenses* 55 (1980) pp.27-31.
- POPE, M. 'Epicureanism and the Atomic Swerve' in *Symbolae Osloenses* 56 (1986) pp.77-97
- RIST, J. M., *Epicurus: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press 1972).
- SAUNDERS, T. J., 'Free Will and the Atomic Swerve in Lucretius', *Symbolae Osloenses* 59 (1984) pp.37-59.
- SEDLEY, D. N. (a) 'Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism' in *ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ: studi sull'epicureismo greco e latino offerti a Marcello Gigante* (Naples 1983), pp.11-51.  
(b) 'Epicurean Anti-Reductionism', *Matter and Metaphysics*, edd. J. Barnes and M. Mignucci (Naples 1988) pp.297-327.

For the philosophy of Aristo:

- IOPPOLO, A.-M., *Aristone di Chio e lo stoicismo antico* (Rome 1980).  
MOREAU J., 'Ariston et le Stoïcisme' in *Revue des Études Anciennes* 50 (1948), pp.27-48.  
POHLENZ, M., (review of S. Soury's *La Démonologie de Plutarque*) in *Gnomon* 21 (1949), pp.347-354.  
WHITE, N., 'Nature and Regularity in Stoic Ethics' in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 3 (1985) pp.289-305.

Also relevant are the following:

- BRÉHIER, É., *Les Stoïciens* (Paris 1962).  
DONINI, P., 'Plutarco e il Determinismo de Crisippo' in *Aspetti dello stoicismo e dell'epicureismo in Plutarco (Quaderni del Giornale Filologico Ferrarese 9; Ferrara 1988)*, pp.21-32.  
FREDE, M., 'Stoics and Skeptics on Clear and Distinct Impressions' in *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 1987), pp.151-176.  
INWOOD, B., *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford University Press 1985).

## SECTIONS IV.6

Text:

§27,	{34.10}	Sandbach 1941 (v. ad IV.5).
§28,	{34.18}	Fähse 1820 (v. ad IV.3).
§29,	{35.18}	Westman 1959 (v. ad IV.4).
	{35.18}	Castiglioni 1954 (v. ad IV.1-2).

- ATHERTON, C., 'Hand Over Fist: the Failure of Stoic Rhetoric' in *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988), pp.392-427.  
IOPPOLO, A.-M., 'The Academic Position of Favorinus of Arelate', *Phronesis* 38 (1993) pp.183-213.  
WEISCHE, A., *Cicero und die neue Academie* (Münster 1961).

## SECTION IV.7

Text:

§33, {40.13}

Castiglioni 1954 (v. *ad* IV.1-2).

For the source of Cicero *de natura deorum* III:

HIRZEL, R., *Untersuchungen zu Ciceros philosophischen Schriften*, vol. I (Leipzig 1877).

For the way in which fate entered the Stoics' theodicy, see articles cited below *ad* IV.8; but for an overview of the Stoics' thought on evil, see:

KERFERD, G.B., 'The Origin of Evil in Stoic Thought', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 60 (1978) pp.483-494.

LONG, A. A., 'The Stoic Conception of Evil' *Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1968) pp.329-341.

## SECTION IV.8

For Stoic proofs of god:

DRAGONA-MONACHOU, M., *The Stoic Arguments for the Existence and Providence of the Gods* (Athens 1976).

OBBINK, D., 'What All Men Believe — Must Be True': Common Conceptions and Consensus Omnium in Aristotle and Hellenistic Philosophy' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1992) pp.193-231.

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- TODD, R. B., 'Monism and Immanence: the Foundation of Stoic Physics' in *The Stoics*, ed. J. M. Rist (University of California Press 1978), chapter 6, pp.137-160.

For the logical question in §46 see Frede 1974 (*supra ad IV.3*), and the following:

- BARREAU, H., 'Cléanthe et Chrysippe face au Maître Argument de Diodore', in *Les Stoiciens et leur Logique* (Actes de Chantilly), ed. J. Brunschwig (Paris 1978), pp.21-40.
- BOBZIEN, S., *Determinism and Free Will in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis 1992).
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For the Stoic attempt at compatibilism (§47), see Bobzien 1992 (*op. cit. supra*), Donini 1988 (*ad IV.5*) and:

- FREDE, M., 'The Original Notion of Cause', *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford University Press 1987) pp.125-150.
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## SECTION V

Much of the bibliography relevant to section I-III is also relevant here, but for the sources of Cicero's speech in *Academica* II see especially Barnes 1989 and Glucker 1978, with the following:

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*The Aim and Composition of Plutarch's de Stoicorum repugnantiiis.*

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The purpose of this thesis is largely to consider the *de Stoicorum repugnantiiis* in sympathetic terms as part of Plutarch's wider philosophical output. It argues that Plutarch's approach in the work could not be that of a negative Sceptic, since Plutarch held his own positive beliefs (a form of Platonism) and, although he draws heavily on the arguments of the Sceptical Academy, he saw Scepticism itself as a positive tool.

Section II of the thesis traces the history of the polemical motif of self-contradiction, which turns out to be based on a specific argument used by the Academy against Stoic ethics. Plutarch adopts this argument as it stands and uses it extensively; but he also identifies the Stoic inconsistencies he uncovers as symptomatic of the Stoics' doctrinal diversion from Plato, and on this basis he sets out to show that when the Stoics diverge from Plato in *any* area of doctrine (logical or physical as well as ethical) they likewise fall into self-contradiction.

If it is right to think that Plutarch has not *chosen* his arguments randomly, it becomes increasingly unlikely that he has *presented* them randomly. So section III considers the idea that Plutarch might have organised his arguments following a standard Academic pattern. Section IV presents a study of each of Plutarch's arguments in the *de Stoic. rep.* not only to confirm his Platonising interests, but also to demonstrate that the contradictions fall into 'sections', each of which deals with topics drawn from a common area in standard Academic polemic. Section V considers the conclusions that can be drawn from the themes that underlie each section: in fact, it happens that a structure emerges which presupposes a distinctive outlook within Academic literature, and so suggests that Plutarch has made use of a particular work to guide his process of composition.