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The objects of Stoic εὐπάθειαι

Doug Reed

Abstract: The Stoics claim that the sage is free from emotions, experiencing instead εὐπάθειαι ('good feelings'). It is, however, unclear whether the sage experiences εὐπάθειαι about virtue/vice only, indifferents only, or both. Here, I argue that εὐπάθειαι are exclusively about virtue/vice by showing that this reading alone accommodates the Stoic claim that there is not a εὐπάθειαι corresponding to emotional pain. I close by considering the consequences of this view for the coherence and viability of Stoic ethics.

Keywords: Stoics, emotions, moral psychology

Two characteristic aspects of Stoic philosophy engender two corresponding challenges for interpreters of Stoicism.¹ First, Stoic philosophy is replete with paradoxes. Thus, one task of an interpreter is to begin at their paradoxical conclusions and work backwards in order to determine how and why the Stoics came to them. Anyone who can do this with a charitable spirit will be rewarded with important insights, even if ultimately disagreeing with the Stoics's reasoning. Second, Stoic philosophy is systematic, and so consists in a network of interconnected and mutually supporting claims. Because of this, during the course of unraveling one Stoic paradox a scholar often comes up against new puzzles in want of consideration. Identifying these new puzzles is, thus, a second task of an interpreter. Although this undertaking rarely pays immediate dividends, it is an indispensable part of plumbing the depths of the Stoic system. My primary aim in this paper belongs to the first sort of interpretive task, though, as is often the case, its successful conclusion constitutes the onset of the second task.

The particular issue that I set out to investigate here stems from the Stoic claim that happiness requires the extirpation of emotions (πάθη). Although certainly paradoxical, this claim does not entail that the sage—the only person who is happy and free from emotions—

is devoid of affective states. Instead, the Stoics tell us, the sage will experience what they call ‘εὐπάθειαι,’ or ‘good feelings.’ Unfortunately, our Stoic sources are unhelpful with regard to the question of what gives rise to these feelings in the sage. That is, based on the reports, we cannot be certain of what the sage will feel εὐπάθειαι about. This is an exegetical mystery because although we know that εὐπάθειαι are based in true evaluative judgments, we do not know whether εὐπάθειαι come from all such judgments, or only from some subset of them. And, since there can be true evaluative judgments about what is truly good/bad, and what is truly indifferent, we cannot be certain whether εὐπάθειαι arise in response to the presence of virtue/vice, indifferents, or either. But given the important difference between virtue/vice and indifferents, these three options offer three disparate pictures of εὐπάθειαι. Without a way to adjudicate between these three pictures, we are left with a significant blind spot in our understanding of the Stoic sage, and so, in our understanding of the entire Stoic system.² Fortunately, as I shall argue, through careful consideration of the implications of indubitable Stoic commitments we can reconstruct their solution to this interpretive puzzle. Although I will consider all three possibilities, below I shall provide conclusive arguments proving that for the Stoics, virtue and vice are the sole objects of εὐπάθειαι. As we shall see at the end of the paper, however, this conclusion does not come without a cost, or at least an apparent cost, for the appeal of Stoic ethics.

1 The problem of the objects of εὐπάθειαι

Before embarking upon our investigation into the εὐπάθειαι we must first understand the Stoic complaints with emotions. The Stoics defined emotions as “excessive impulses which

are disobedient to reason” (LS 65A). In order to appreciate this definition fully, and so see why the Stoics dismissed emotions, we must familiarize ourselves with the basics of their axiology and moral psychology. Beginning with the former, the Stoics maintained that virtue is the only true good, vice the only true evil. Everything aside from these is indifferent, although some indifferents are preferred, like health and money, and others, like illness and poverty, are dispreferred.³ Corresponding to virtue is real value, while corresponding to preferred indifferents is ‘selective value.’⁴ As for the latter, the Stoics maintained that the soul is unitary, consisting in reason alone. Accordingly, they held that motivation or impulse for action is nothing other than judgment or belief about value.⁵ Given that most of our evaluative beliefs are false—we mistake what is indifferent for what is good—they go against our human nature, and, for this reason, are irrational.⁶ Tying these two theories together, we can see that emotions are false evaluative beliefs about what is good. As a result, emotions are irrational, and, since they cannot be controlled by reason, they cause us to react more violently than we should, and so, are excessive.⁷

In light of these theories and the Stoic complaints about the emotions, we can begin to fill out a picture of the *εὐπάθειαι*. Based on the foregoing, it must be the case that *εὐπάθειαι*, which the sage has in place of emotions, are not excessive, and arise from true and rational judgments.⁸ Although a fine starting point, this stands in need of clarification. In particular, the notion of ‘true and rational evaluative judgment’ must be disambiguated. As we have seen, the Stoics countenance two different types of value: the (real) value of virtue and the selective value of preferred indifferents. Thus, true evaluative judgments might be about importantly different things: they might be about what is really good/bad, namely, virtue/vice, or they might be about what is really selectively valuable/disvaluable,

namely, preferred/dispreferred indifferents. We shall now endeavor to sort out which judgments constitute the εὐπάθειαι of the sage.

1.1 Three interpretations of the objects of εὐπάθειαι

Since there are two non-mutually exclusive types of evaluative judgments according to the Stoics, there are three possible interpretations of the objects of εὐπάθειαι. The first possibility is that the true judgments in question are about what is really good/bad, that is, about virtue/vice. In this case, all εὐπάθειαι would be true judgments about virtue/vice.⁹ On this view—call it the ‘virtue-only view’—an example of a positive εὐπάθεια would be a sage judging that she presently is virtuous.¹⁰ The second possibility is that the true judgments constitutive of εὐπάθειαι are about indifferents rather than about virtue/vice.¹¹ On this view—call it the ‘indifferents-only¹² view’—a sage experiences a positive εὐπάθεια when for instance, she judges that her state of sound health is a preferred indifferent (and in this situation it is appropriate).¹³ Finally, the third possibility is that the relevant true judgments can be about both what is really valuable/disvaluable and what is merely selectively valuable/disvaluable.¹⁴ Thus on this view—call it the ‘comprehensive view’—the sage would experience a positive εὐπάθεια either when she thinks about her virtue, or, for instance, she judges that her current state of sound health is a preferred indifferent (and in this situation is appropriate).

Initially each interpretation considered on its own seems plausible, as all three ascribe to the sage true, rational beliefs. Further, none of the views gives any indication that the judgments would be at all excessive. However, a moment’s reflection makes clear that the merits of the indifferents-only view end here. For although this view must be

correct in assuming that there are cases where the sage correctly judges about indifferents, which implies that she would have evaluative beliefs and, hence, εὐπάθειαι about them, it also leads to an insuperable difficulty. The problem is that if the indifferents-only view were correct—and εὐπάθειαι were exclusively about indifferents—then the sage would not have any affective responses to what is really good, virtue. Thus, the Stoics would be saddled with the view that a sage has an affective response to an indifferent—indeed something that the sage herself recognizes to be indifferent—but is left like a stone in response to virtue. Surely this cannot be correct, since a sage would judge virtue to be valuable. Hence, the sage must experience an evaluative judgment in response to virtue, which means that she would have a εὐπαθητικός response to virtue. Since the indifferents-only view cannot accommodate this, it is not a viable interpretation.

Although we have set it aside, let's take stock of how the indifferents-only view fared with an eye toward adjudicating between the two remaining interpretations. The indifferents-only view fails as a proper reading of the εὐπάθειαι because it entails that the sage does not experience affective states in response to real value. Yet, to its credit, the indifferents-only view can account for a sage's affective response to indifferents. Pulling these two results together, it looks like we need an interpretation that covers affective responses to virtue as well as to indifferents. This, of course, suggests that the comprehensive view provides the correct interpretation of the objects of εὐπάθειαι.

In spite of the foregoing, which speaks in its favor, there is an immediate difficulty for the comprehensive view. The problem is that this interpretation appears to be committed to the claim that a sage would feel the same about virtue—the only true good—and about, for instance, securing some financial gain in a situation in which it is

appropriate. But it is implausible (and perhaps even psychologically impossible) that someone, a sage or otherwise, would experience the very same affective response to something that she recognizes to be truly good as she would experience to something that she recognizes to be indifferent. For instance, I am not a Stoic sage, but I, like most other people, think that some things are truly good and others are indifferent. Accordingly, I would not experience the same affective response, for instance, to learning that two dear friends are getting married to one another (something really good) as I would, for instance, to hearing that they are holding the ceremony on an even-numbered day of the month (something indifferent). Indeed, if I found out that another friend felt the same emotion (e.g., felt equally pleased) about both pieces of news, I would think she either does not really appreciate the pending union or that there is something wrong with her. Surely, the Stoics would agree with my diagnosis. Thus, the Stoics should deny that a sage would experience *εὐπάθειαι* about both virtue and indifferents. Hence, it looks like the comprehensive view cannot be correct.

A proponent of the comprehensive view might reply by suggesting that *εὐπάθειαι* can vary by degree of intensity.¹⁵ That is, the sage might have more intense *εὐπάθειαι* regarding what is truly good and less intense—but nonetheless still the same in kind—responses to preferred indifferents.¹⁶ Furthermore, although the sage would experience a more intense *εὐπάθεια* in response to virtue than to an indifferent, since she is a sage, it would fall short of being excessive.

Thus, with this response, it looks not only like the comprehensive view remains a live option, it once again appears to be superior to the virtue-only view. However, as we

now turn to the Stoic discussion of the possible εὐπάθειαι, we shall find definitive reason to favor the virtue-only view.¹⁷

1.2 εὐπαθητικός pain on the comprehensive view and the virtue-only view

In spite of falling short of sagehood themselves and apparently never knowing one, the Stoics had plenty to say about a sage's psychology. Indeed, we have several sources that set out and describe the different εὐπάθειαι a sage would experience. From these sources we know that for the most part the Stoics posited a εὐπάθεια corresponding to each emotion. The four general emotions¹⁸ they discussed are: pleasure, the emotion related to a present apparent good; pain, the emotion related to a present apparent evil; desire, the emotion related to a future apparent good; and fear, the emotion related to a future apparent evil. For the Stoics, the corresponding general εὐπάθειαι are: joy (χαρά), the εὐπάθεια related to a present good; volition (βούλησις), the εὐπάθεια related to a future good; and caution (εὐλάβεια), the εὐπάθεια related to a future evil. Notice that whereas there are four emotions, there are only three εὐπάθειαι (see figures 1 and 2 below). But why? Where is the εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain? In order to answer these questions, let's consider how both the comprehensive view and the virtue-only view must characterize the content of these judgments.

emotions

Present	Future
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Apparent good	pleasure	desire
Apparent evil	pain	fear

Fig. 1

εὐπάθειαι

	Present	Future
Good	joy	volition
Bad		caution

Fig. 2

If the comprehensive view were correct, then εὐπάθειαι would be about virtue as well as indifferents. So, positive εὐπάθειαι would be about virtue *and* preferred indifferents, while negative εὐπάθειαι would be about vice *and* dispreferred indifferents. If this were the case, the sage would feel joy in response to present virtue or a present preferred indifferent, feel volition at the prospect of future virtue or a future preferred indifferent, and finally, feel caution about the prospect of future vice or a future dispreferred indifferent. Good so far. But what about present vice or a present dispreferred indifferent? According to the comprehensive view, we would expect that the presence of either of these would give rise in the sage to the εὐπαθητικός correlate to pain. But as we have seen, according to the Stoics there is no such affective response open to the sage. While it makes sense that the virtuous sage would never have vice present in her own self,¹⁹ surely she could have dispreferred indifferents present to her. Sages are, after all, not immune to sickness, pains, financial misfortune, or any other dispreferred indifferent. Thus, it is a fact about the world that the sage will at times have dispreferred indifferents present to her. But, if we accept the comprehensive view, she would not have an affective response to them. Yet, the comprehensive view seems to

suggest that she would. After all, on this view the sage would have an affective response to present and future preferred indifferents as well as to future dispreferred indifferents, which, according to the comprehensive view are sufficient for joy, volition, and caution, respectively. So, by parity of reasoning it seems that since other indifferents give rise to εὐπάθειαι in the sage, so too should a present dispreferred indifferent. But, if there were such an affective response, it would have to be a εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain, which the Stoics deny exists. Thus, the comprehensive view is committed to the opposite of the Stoic claim that there is no εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain.²⁰

A proponent of the comprehensive view might try to resist this objection by pointing to what the Stoics say about the happiness of the sage. According to the Stoics, the sage, on account her virtue and wisdom, alone achieves happiness. Moreover, and more importantly for present purposes, the happiness of the sage is secure to the point of impregnability,²¹ and so, is permanent.²² Thus, on the current reply, it follows from the Stoic view of happiness that there would not be a εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain, as such a state would disrupt the sage's happiness.²³ Hence, the sage will not feel anything negative, even when she has a dispreferred indifferent present to her, as this would disrupt her happiness. This, then, explains why there is not a εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain. So, since we have an explanation for why the Stoics discount the possibility of such a state, the comprehensive view can consistently maintain that the sage would not experience any εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain even if she has a dispreferred indifferent present to her.

Although this rejoinder is correct in identifying an intimate relationship between the Stoic belief that the sage is always happy and their denial of the existence of a εὐπάθεια

corresponding to pain, it misconstrues the order of explanation between these claims. The proper order of explanation must be that the absence of a *εὐπάθεια* corresponding to pain explains why the happiness of the sage is permanent; she never experiences an affective state that would disrupt her happiness. The order of explanation cannot be that the fact that the sage is always happy explains why there is no *εὐπάθεια* corresponding to pain. This is not a genuine explanation at all; it is at best a mere stipulation. Notice, however, that this is precisely the sort of explanation that the comprehensive view relies on.

To spell out this point in another way, as we have seen, on the comprehensive view either vice or a dispreferred indifferent is sufficient for a negative evaluative judgment, and so, a negative *εὐπάθεια*. Hence, a present vice or dispreferred indifferent—the former of which is impossible for the sage while the latter is possible—would be sufficient for a *εὐπαθητικός* version of pain. Thus, the comprehensive view must account for why the Stoics, who accept that the sage would have present to her dispreferred indifferents, *and* accept that indifferents give rise to *εὐπάθειαι*, would have nonetheless denied that the sage would experience a *εὐπάθεια* about a present dispreferred indifferent. The only resource the proponent of the comprehensive has at her disposal is the claim that the happiness of the sage is unshakeable. Thus, this is why, according to the comprehensive view, there is no *εὐπαθητικός* correlate to pain. But as we have seen, this inference is wrongheaded. The correct inference is that because there is no *εὐπάθεια* corresponding to pain, the sage is always happy. Thus, the comprehensive view does not have a non-ad hoc way to explain why the Stoics denied the possibility of a *εὐπάθεια* corresponding to pain. Let's now turn to the virtue-only view to see if it fares any better.

If the virtue-only view were correct, then all εὐπάθειαι would be about virtue and vice. So, the positive εὐπάθειαι would be about virtue, while the negative εὐπάθειαι would be about vice. If this is the case, then the sage would feel joy at her present virtue, volition at the prospect of her future virtue, and caution at the prospect of future vice. Now the million-dollar question: What about an affective state corresponding to pain? On the virtue-only view such a state could only arise in response to vice presently in the sage. However, the sage is perfectly virtuous and so cannot have vice present in her. Given this, it makes sense that on the virtue-only view there would be no εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain. Thus, the virtue-only view has the resources to explain why there is no εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain.²⁴ And unlike the comprehensive view, which must misappropriate the Stoic claim that the sage has permanent happiness in order to explain the absence of such a state, the virtue-only view makes sense of why the Stoics believed that there was no εὐπαθητικός version of pain to disrupt the sage's happiness. Thus, for these reasons, the virtue-only view should be accepted.

2 In defense of the virtue-only view

We have just seen that the virtue-only view alone can accommodate the Stoic claim that there is no εὐπάθεια corresponding to emotional pain. In this final section I consider and respond to the two strongest objections to the virtue-only view.²⁵

2.1 Motivation about indifferents on the virtue-only view

One concern for the virtue-only view is that since εὐπάθειαι are about virtue and vice, affective responses to indifferents are crowded out. At first this might not seem like a

problem; the sage judges indifferents to be just that, indifferent. But that it is troublesome becomes clear when we recall that for the Stoics *all* actions are motivated by evaluative judgments and impulses. That is to say, that every action is preceded by an impulse, and so, an evaluative belief. Thus, given that the sage would act in ways relating to indifferents—for instance, a sage will pursue a preferred indifferent in a situation in which doing so is appropriate—there must be a class of impulses and affective responses that relates to indifferents. But sages do not have any emotions, and if the virtue-only view is correct, then all εὐπάθειαι are about virtue and vice. Accordingly, it seems that the virtue-only view is either wrong or incomplete, since it appears to be incapable of accounting for the fact that sages act regarding indifferents.

Tad Brennan has presented what I take to be the correct response to this sort of concern (The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate, 97-110).²⁶ Brennan points to certain passages²⁷ to show that the Stoics countenanced a third class of impulses, in addition to emotions and εὐπάθειαι, regarding things that one²⁸ takes to be indifferent. We need not detail these impulses, which Brennan calls ‘selections,’ as it suffices for our purposes here to point out that they provide a response to the present concern by allowing that the sage can be moved to pursue or eschew indifferents.

2.2 The problem of caution on the virtue-only view

The more serious concern for the virtue-only view is similar in spirit to the strongest reason to favor this interpretation. Recall that the main strength of this view is that it can explain

why the Stoics did not posit a εὐπαθητικός version of pain, namely, because the sage would never have true evil present to her. The following question now arises, though. Why would the sage ever experience caution, which on the virtue-only view would be a εὐπαθητικός response to a belief about her own future evil?²⁹ This question becomes even more pressing when considered in conjunction with how the Stoics characterized the sage. Since, as we have seen, the Stoics maintained that the soul is wholly rational, they took virtue to be a type of knowledge. They also maintained that in order to have this knowledge, one must have a completely consistent set of true beliefs (see Brennan, The Stoic Life: Emotions, Duties, and Fate, ch. 6). Hence, they believed that a sage will have a ‘firm and unchangeable reason’ (LS 61B8) which will guarantee that she does everything well (LS 61G).

Even this brief characterization of the sage brings into focus the full force the present worry. Given her consistent set of true beliefs, and the fact that these beliefs guarantee good action, it is impossible that the sage would ever act viciously in the future. But, if the sage could never act viciously in the future, she would never have a belief about her own future vice. Hence, there should not be a εὐπάθεια corresponding to fear. Thus, it seems that if the virtue-only view is correct, then the Stoics ought not to have included any εὐπάθειαι relating to future evil. But, since the Stoics do have such a εὐπάθεια, it seems that the virtue-only view cannot be correct.

Of course, the comprehensive view has no trouble accommodating caution. After all, the sage, just like anyone else, faces the prospect of future dispreferred indifferents. Those of us fortunate enough to live awhile into the future will undoubtedly catch a cold or otherwise get sick at some point. Although this speaks in its favor, the comprehensive

view still faces the problem regarding present evils, the very reason we rejected it above. So, it seems that if we cannot find a solution to the present worry about caution for the virtue-only view, then the Stoics have a deep inconsistency in their moral psychology.

Fortunately, there is a way to explain caution on the virtue-only view. In order to articulate an account of caution for the sage, we can begin by considering its emotional counterpart, fear. Fear is the belief about a future apparent evil. Since non-sages mistake dispreferred indifferents for what is truly bad, most fears are about falling ill, losing money, and the like. Thus, if we apply this model to caution, we would expect a sage to feel caution about an actual future evil, and so, about becoming vicious someday. However, as we have noted, this does not seem possible.

It is here worth mentioning that in spite of the characteristics of the Stoic sage outlined above, in fact it may have been the case that one prominent Stoic believed that the sage *could* lose her virtue. Diogenes Laertius reports that Chrysippus maintained that a sage could become vicious by, for instance, drinking to excess, or through depression (LS 61I). Thus, if this report is correct, it seems that just as a non-sage fears falling ill, a sage might experience caution about, as it were, falling vicious. If we accept this, then it looks like there is no problem for the virtue-only view, as it seems to be possible that the sage may lose her virtue in the future. And so, the sage would have reason to be cautious even on the virtue-only view.

Setting aside questions about the veracity of Diogenes Laertius's testimony, we still have reason to doubt that the sage could experience caution about the genuine possibility of losing her virtue. In addition to the fact that Chrysippus's claim seems to conflict with the views of other Stoics on this issue, it also seems to conflict with the picture of happiness

and the characteristics of the sage central to Stoic philosophy. After all, if, as we have seen, the sage will always be happy and does everything well, it seems impossible that she could ever lose her virtue.³⁰ Hence, in spite of Chrysippus's claim, we are brought back to the opinion that the sage should never feel caution about her own future vice. Thus, we still need to find a suitable explanation for why a sage would experience caution. In order to do so, we must replace the simplistic understanding of caution with a more refined account. To this end, let's consider exactly how the simplistic understanding of caution considered so far goes wrong.

The trouble with the suggestion that the sage would feel caution about becoming vicious is that unlike catching a disease (a paradigm object of fear), which is often outside of a person's control, becoming vicious would be entirely up to the sage; it would require the sage to change her own beliefs. Even if Chrysippus were correct, for the sage to become vicious by getting drunk, she would first have to misjudge that it would be proper to drink to excess.³¹ But the sage never misjudges anything, and so, would never have any motivation to engage in such activities in the first place. Thus, we cannot accept this as an example of caution. Notice, though, that the scenario under consideration involves a sage deliberating about an activity with a manifest evil result (the loss of her virtue) where there are only two options—perform or refrain. That is, such a scenario requires that the sage actually consider engaging in an action that she realizes is evil. But, if she realizes the action is evil, then performing it will not be a live option, and so, she would not have caution about it. However, many situations involve more than two options. And in such cases few of the options *present* themselves as evil or good. Further, although a sage is wise, she is not omniscient. Thus, a sage may have to deliberate on several available

actions, and, in doing so may come to see that one of the available actions entails some evil, which though not obvious at first, is foreseeable if the scenario were played out. In response to grasping this possibility, the sage would form the judgment that such an action would be truly bad. Of course, upon so judging the sage would avoid this action. But recall that εὐπάθειαι are nothing other than evaluative judgments. In this case, since the judgment regards a future evil, it could be properly characterized as what the Stoics call ‘caution.’

In addition to providing the virtue-only view with an explanation of the Stoics’s inclusion of a εὐπάθεια regarding future evils, this suggestion has two further strengths. First, it provides us with a way to read Chryssippus’s claim about the loss of virtue that is consistent with the Stoic orthodoxy.³² If the present suggestion is correct, then there are situations in which it is true that *if* the sage acted a certain way, *then* she would become vicious. This is Chrysippus’s claim. However, he can maintain this claim along with the following: due to the psychological makeup of a sage, she would never perform such an action. Second, this suggestion explains why the sage would never act so as to satisfy the antecedent of the conditional. Thus, this suggestion explains why the sage will enjoy permanent happiness. That is, given that the sage, after deliberating, will judge certain available actions to be bad, she will experience caution. Accordingly, she will refrain from these actions, maintaining her virtue, and with it, happiness.

Conclusion

At the start of this paper I identified two interpretive tasks for the commentator on Stoic philosophy. Let’s take stock of where we stand in regards to the first task. Faced with a puzzle about the objects of the sage’s affective states I have argued that the sage would experience εὐπάθειαι only about true goods and evils, namely, virtue and vice. The major

strength of this view is that it alone can accommodate the fact that the Stoics did not identify a *εὐπάθεια* corresponding to pain. I believe that this fact, however, also brings us to the doorstep of a new puzzle. Accordingly, I wish to close by venturing a start to the second interpretive task.

As we know, the Stoics believed that the only true good is virtue and that the only true evil is vice. Yet, as we have just seen, the Stoics also maintain that the sage never experiences any *εὐπάθεια* regarding present evil. One contributing reason for this must be—as we have been assuming all along—that the sage is only motivated by her own virtue and (counterfactual) vice.³³ Students of philosophy have long been unsettled by the fact that the pain of others, even those she loves, would not affect the sage. But the problem turns out to be worse than we have thought. For, since the Stoics believed that physical suffering, financial distress, and the like are indifferent, it should not be surprising that the sage would not be affected by these states in others. But what *is* unsettling about the Stoic view is that it appears that the sage would not be affected even when others she cares about suffer from true evil, vice. Further, this aspect of Stoicism seems to run into conflict with their theory of *οἰκεῖωσις*, which entails that humans should (and so the sage has) pull the whole of humanity into our innermost circle.³⁴ That is, it seems impossible that the sage could truly care about another human in the way that she should and still lack an affective response to viciousness in that person. This at-least-apparent inconsistency cannot be resolved by asserting that the sage would not allow her happiness to be disrupted by evil in others.³⁵ For, as we have seen, such a response gets the order of explanation wrong. The fact that a sage never experiences any negative affective state should explain why she would always be happy, not vice versa.³⁶ Thus, I offer that we need a new investigation

into why the Stoics affirmed both their theory of οἰκείωσις and their view that there is no εὐπάθεια corresponding to pain.³⁷

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² This issue is rarely considered in the secondary literature. It is, however, touched on by Sandbach (1975, 67-68) and Inwood (1985, 174-175). Brennan (1998), from which my paper has benefitted considerably, raises it in the course of a general discussion of the Stoic theory of emotions and in fact sketches an ancestor of the view I spell out and defend below.

³ The thought is that given our human nature, some things are suited to us but other things are not. Hence, for something to be a preferred indifferent is for it to be the sort of thing that is in accord with our nature as human beings. See LS 58C, as well as Long and Sedley (1987, 358) and Brennan (2005, 130-131).

⁴ I use this term following Brennan (2003, 263-4). I do so with an appreciation that there is no scholarly consensus over whether or not indifferents have any actual value (in spite of what terms the Stoics themselves may have used to try to talk about these things). See Nussbaum (1987, 133- 135).

⁵ Since the Stoics themselves apparently disagreed about whether the emotion (which is to say, impulse) *is* the judgment or the result of the judgment (see LS 65K), I agree with Striker (1983, 63), that it is safest to assume that for the Stoics πάθος, or as I have it, ‘emotion,’ refers to both. With this acknowledged, and since nothing in my interpretation rides on this issue, for the sake of simplicity, I will continue to write as if an affective state is the judgment/ belief (cf. note 10 below). We should also be safe to distinguish between judgment and impulse on the one hand and the phenomenological *feeling* of an emotion on the other hand. For a discussion of this issue, see Brennan (2005, 90-94).

⁶ See LS 65J: “*irrational...refer[s]* to this movement: the movement contrary to nature...” and “*irrational* must be taken to mean *disobedient to reason*” (LS 65J4, my emphasis). See Irwin (1998, 222-224).

⁷ Chrysippus puts it vividly: “When someone walks in accordance with his impulse, the movement of his legs is not excessive but commensurate with the impulse, so that he can stop or change whenever he wants to. But when people run in accordance with their impulse, this sort of thing no longer happens. The movement of their legs exceeds their impulse, so that they are carried away and unable to change obediently, as soon as they have started to do so. Something similar, I think, takes place with impulses, owing to their going beyond rational proportion” (LS 65J6-8).

⁸ While most commentators maintain that ἐπάθειαι are not emotions, Brennan (1998, 34), Graver (2007), and Becker (2004, 250) conceive of them as a subset of emotions. (Sorabji 2003, 47) thinks that some ἐπάθειαι are emotions, while some are not. I do not—and need not—take a stand on this issue.

⁹ See Inwood (1985, 174-175), cf. Sandbach (1975, 67-68). Sorabji (2003, 47-53) also seems to endorse this view, as does Striker (1983). Of the proponents of this view, the only to offer an argument for it is Brennan (see, for instance, Brennan (1998, 26-28, 54-57)).

¹⁰ There is much debate in the secondary literature over whether an emotion/ἐπάθεια requires a single judgment (e.g., *This is a good thing present to me*), as I have it here, or several judgments (e.g., (1) *This is good thing present to me*. (2) *It is appropriate for me to move my soul in such a way*). For a discussion of the first understanding, see Graver (2007, 40, 44-5). For the view that they require more than a single judgment, see Sorabji (2009, 154), Sorabji (2002, ch. 2), and Nussbaum (1987, 146). Since my view is amenable to either a single judgment or several judgments, I do not intend to take a stand on this issue. In his helpful comments at the Pacific APA 2014, Jacob Klein forwarded the reading that some Stoic sources

indicate that the emotion/εὐπάθεια is the second judgment (e.g., *It is appropriate for me to move my soul in such a way*). I am not sure I agree, but fortunately it does not affect what is really at stake or my analysis. If Klein is correct—and the content of the emotion/εὐπάθεια judgment is the appropriateness of the soul's movement—then the central question in this paper need only be reworded from 'what are the objects of εὐπάθεια' to 'what objects ultimately give rise to εὐπάθεια' with no effect on its significance or centrality to our understanding of Stoicism.

¹¹ Meyer (2008, 162-164) is a proponent of this view, as is Nussbaum (1987, 172).

¹² Brennan (2005) uses similar terminology (i.e., 'indifferents-only') to discuss the question of how the sage deliberates. My apologies to the reader for any confusion here, but I hope it is clear that we are employing the terms to different ends.

¹³ The Stoics maintained that although preferred indifferents have selective value, it is not always appropriate to pursue them. Alternatively, although dispreferred indifferents have selective disvalue, it is not always appropriate to avoid them. For instance, although money is a preferred indifferent, if a certain amount would interfere with the acquisition or maintenance of virtue, it would not be appropriate to pursue it. It is irrelevant for my purposes whether we should understand the judgment about appropriateness of the indifferent as a separate judgment (so that the sage would have two distinct judgments here: *health is a preferred indifferent* and *in this situation it is appropriate*) or whether there would be a single judgment (so that the sage would have only one judgment here: *in this situation health, a preferred indifferent, is appropriate*).

¹⁴ It is somewhat surprising that there are no obvious proponents of this view. Indeed, in setting out the options, the comprehensive view is usually disregarded (see, for instance, Sandbach (1975, 67)). The one scholar I have seen come closest to endorsing this view is Rubarth. However, it is possible that some scholars who seem to endorse the indifferents-only view in fact intend to endorse the comprehensive view.

¹⁵ The Stoics recognized that in addition to the general εὐπάθειαι, there were sub-species of each. Accordingly, a complementary rejoinder on behalf of the comprehensive view is that the sage might feel one sub-species of εὐπάθεια about what is genuinely good and another sub-species of εὐπάθεια about what is indifferent. For instance, perhaps the Stoics would say that the sage feels affection (*agapêsin*) about what is genuinely good and warmth (*aspasmon*) about preferred indifferents. As we shall see, even if such a

response saves the comprehensive view from the current concern, there is a decisive reason to reject the view, which I discuss below.

¹⁶ Indeed, as an anonymous referee pointed out, the characterization of a *εὐπάθεια* as a ‘well-reasoned shrinking or swelling’ (LS 65F) suggests that *εὐπάθειαι* come in degrees. Since shrinking and swelling can come in degrees, so too, presumably, can *εὐπάθειαι*. Cf. Rubarth.

¹⁷ To be clear, the virtue-only view is also consistent with the view that *εὐπάθειαι* come in degrees. *Εὐπάθειαι* can come in degrees even if their objects are exclusively virtue and vice; a sage can experience more or less of a good feeling (though never too much, as *εὐπάθειαι* are not excessive) for any number of reasons (e.g., the wise action she performs is more or less significant). So, the fact that *εὐπάθειαι* come in degrees does not lend particular support to the comprehensive view.

¹⁸ ‘General’ because, as noted above (note 15), the Stoics also recognized sub-species of these emotions and *εὐπάθειαι*. Here, it is clearer and more fruitful to restrict our discussion to the general states.

¹⁹ Of course, as an anonymous referee pointed out, in one sense vice will be present to the sage; she will be surrounded by vicious people and unjust institutions. But being surrounded by vice is not the same as having vice present in oneself, just as being surrounded by money is not the same as having money in the way required for a non-sage to feel pleasure. One must possess the money in order to experience pleasure from it (see LS 65L). Thus, in order for vice to give rise to an affective response in the sage, it would have to be her vice. I raise the question of why only the sage’s own virtue matters to her in the conclusion of this paper. By way of preview, I think that this is a major problem for the Stoics. As far as I can tell, the only other commentators to consider this question are Sorabji (2003, 50) and Graver (2008, 55). Neither seems bothered by it, however.

²⁰ This criticism also provides further reason to reject the indifferents-only view.

²¹ LS 63L: ‘Yet no one can be happy without a good which is secure, stable, and lasting... We want the happy man to be safe, impregnable, fenced, and fortified, so that he is not just largely unafraid, but completely.’

²² LS 63M: ‘‘So, the wise man’s life is always happy.’’

²³ It is obvious that this reply assumes that that if there were a *εὐπαθητικός* version of pain, it would take away from the sage’s happiness. Yet, given that the sage experiences caution, it mustn’t be the case that all

negative evaluative judgments (i.e., negative εὐπάθειαι) detract from a sage's happiness. More on this below.

²⁴ Cf. Brennan (1998, 34-35).

²⁵ In addition to the two concerns considered here, one might object that non-sages can have feelings about their own present vice or about the prospect of having virtue in the future (cf. Sandbach (1975, 67) and Inwood (1985, 174-175)). So, it might seem that non-sages can experience εὐπάθειαι. Accordingly, one might be tempted to think that the virtue-only view incorrectly makes εὐπάθειαι available to non-sages. Indeed, as we know from Cicero (*Tusc.* 3.77-78), the Stoics did think it was possible for a non-sage to have an affective response to true evil. In the case that Cicero discusses Alcibiades is pained at his current vice. But even in this case the non-sage does not experience a εὐπάθεια about true evil, but instead experiences an emotion (pain). The explanation for this is that these sorts of beliefs in non-sages, although true, fall short of rationality because non-sages have inconsistent beliefs sets (see Brennan (2005, 96) and Sorabji (2003, 49)). At any rate, in reply to this concern it suffices to point out that although all εὐπάθειαι are true evaluative beliefs, not all true evaluative beliefs are εὐπάθειαι.

²⁶ Cf. Brennan (1998, 35-37).

²⁷ See, for instance LS 58B as well as D.L. 7.104. For further discussion, though, see Brennan (2005, 97-110).

²⁸ Both sages and non-sages alike can take things to be indifferent, and so, have these sorts of impulses.

²⁹ Brennan (1998, 60-61) considers this problem in a note. While I agree with him that there is a suitable response, I spell out in detail exactly how the sage could feel caution. Sorabji (2009, 156) also raises a related issue but his discussion focuses on whether there is a feeling associated with the εὐπάθεια, rather than analyzing how the evaluative belief in question is possible.

³⁰ Indeed, most commentators assume that the sage will always maintain her virtue. See, for instance, Striker (1983, 67). Lesses (1983, 59-60) explicitly discusses the issue and sides with the majority.

³¹ The case of depression would similarly be up to the sage. Since the Stoics believe that the soul is wholly rational, depression could only come about through false beliefs about what is valuable.

³² Cf. Brennan (1998, note 29).

³³ Our discussion is not unique in making this assumption, as it is one accepted by all commentators of Stoic ethics and is supported by Stoic texts (cf. note 19 above).

³⁴ LS 57G. The problem is exacerbated if the Stoics believed that we should pull everyone (or even just some people) into the center, so that we care about them just as much as we do ourselves, which is a going interpretation of οἰκείωσις in the secondary literature. See, for instance, Becker (2004, 272).

³⁵ This is the usual explanation offered by commentators regarding the sage's apparent disinterest in the suffering of others, as exemplified by Stephens (1996), cf. Sorabji (2009, 156). Most of these discussions, however, focus on the suffering from dispreferred indifferents. I believe that if the problem is presented on the Stoics's own terms—and vice is seen as the only real evil—then it is more pressing than commentators have appreciated.

³⁶ Even if we allow this—that is, the fact that the sage is always happy—to explain why the sage would not have an affective response to vice in others, there is still a problem. After all, we know that the sage can experience a εὐπάθεια about something negative in the future (hence, caution) without thereby disrupting her happiness. Thus, it cannot be that negative εὐπάθειαι in principle disrupt happiness. Furthermore, given that εὐπάθειαι are not excessive, it seems that even a εὐπάθεια correlating to pain would not be excessive. Thus, this also cannot be the reason that the Stoics thought that such an affective state would disrupt the happiness of the sage.

³⁷ This new puzzle may seem to undermine my claim that the virtue-only view is superior to the comprehensive view because the former is consistent with and can explain the absence of the εὐπαθητικός version of pain. But this is not so. Whereas on the comprehensive view the Stoics have an internally inconsistent theory of the emotions and εὐπάθειαι, the virtue-only view renders theory internally consistent. So, I have offered a resolution of a puzzle in Stoic moral psychology but in doing so uncovered a puzzle in their larger ethical theory.