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The Truth Evaluability of Stoic *Phantasiai*: *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46

CHRISTOPHER SHIELDS

ORTHODOX STOICS ENDORSE each of the following propositions:

- (1) *Phantasiai* are true or false (i.e., are truth evaluable). (AM VII 242–46 = SVF II 65 = LS 39G, 30F)¹
- (2) Only *axiōmata* are true or false (i.e., are truth evaluable). (AM VIII.74 = SVF II.187 = LS 34B; cf. Stobaeus II.88 = SVF III 171 = LS 33 I, and Sextus, AM VII 151–57 = LS 41C)
- (3) No *phantasia* is an *axiōma*, since *phantasiai* are impressions in the soul,² and hence material, whereas *axiōmata* are *lekta*, and hence immaterial. (AM VIII.74 = SVF II.187 = LS 34B; cf. Stobaeus II.88 = SVF III 171 = LS 33 I, and Sextus, AM VII 151–57 = LS 41C, and Simplicius, *In Ar. Cat.* 217.32–218.1 = SVF II. 389 = LS 28L)

These propositions cannot be true together; hence, if the Stoics hold each in an unqualified form, they have an incoherent doctrine about the semantic character of *phantasiai*. Although there are some challenging ontological questions concerning why and in what sense the Stoics maintain (3),³ the issue at hand is best regarded as a semantic problem, at least insofar as the potential inconsistency, as I will argue, is to be resolved by appeal to purely semantic

¹ Throughout I crosslist passages where possible to H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (SVF) (Leipzig, 1903–5), and A. A. Long and D. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (LS) (Cambridge, 1987).

² A *phantasia* occurs in the soul, and is described in various contexts as a *tupōsis*, *pathos*, *heteroiōsis*, or *alloiōsis* (SVF II 53–59).

³ For a discussion of the Stoic account of truth, see A. A. Long, “The Stoic Distinction between Truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια) and the True (τὸ ἀληθές),” *Les Stoïciens et leur Logique*, ed. J. Brunschwig (Paris: 1978), 297–315.

considerations: the Stoics do not endorse proposition (1) in an unqualified way, and so do not commit themselves to this inconsistent triad. But if the considerations which show this derive exclusively from features of their semantic theory, then the resolution is logically independent of the ontological investigations (3) invites.

This is a point of some significance, since discussions of Stoic ontology tend to overshadow investigations into their semantic theory, with the result that some subtleties in their analysis of the truth evaluability of *phantasiai* have gone largely unremarked. Here I would like to draw attention to one such subtlety in their account, primarily by investigating Sextus, *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46. Although I believe there may be some larger doxographical lessons to be gleaned from this passage, I will not press them here. Rather, I will argue that despite first appearances, *AM* VII 242–46 provides a coherent and plausible Stoic doctrine on the semantic character of *phantasiai*, and that this doctrine helps resolve the semantic problem encoded in (1)–(3). One upshot of this difficult passage is that the Stoics accept only a modified form of (1); but if this is correct, a second upshot is that Sextus himself fails to appreciate at least one central feature of the Stoic theory he recapitulates.

I begin then with Sextus, *AM* VII 242–46, and argue that some features of the passage resist interpretation on the assumption that the Stoics maintain any simple form of a correspondence theory of truth for *phantasiai* (§1). But it is also implausible to regard the Stoics as implicitly adopting any form of coherence theory (§2). If they adopt neither, then their account of the truth evaluability for *phantasiai* is obscure. Even so, Sextus does provide a hint of a plausible Stoic position, according to which *phantasiai* are truth evaluable not in virtue of their intrinsic representational characteristics, but rather insofar as they inherit truth values from the *axiōmata* they can be used to express. If this is correct, then our initial inconsistent triad disappears, since the Stoics will rightly refrain from an unqualified commitment to (1), the claim that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable (§3). Despite the advantages of their adopting the proposed account of the truth evaluability of *phantasiai*, some things the Stoics say seem to preclude their holding any such view. I will argue, however, that all such counterevidence either is neutral or in fact further buttresses the suggestion that the Stoics regard *phantasiai* as only derivatively truth evaluable (§§4 and 5).

1.

According to Sextus, the Stoics exhaustively categorize *phantasiai* as: (i) true, (ii) false, (iii) true and false, or (iv) neither true nor false (*AM* VII 242 = *SVF* II 65 = *LS* 39G, 30F). But Sextus does not represent this as a peculiar or remarkable doctrine. This is surely noteworthy, given his characteristically polemical

stance toward Stoic views, especially since it is difficult to formulate a wholly satisfactory analysis of their position without rejecting the semantic principles Sextus tends to offer them. The most evident problem with Sextus' taxonomy concerns the questionable status of *phantasiai* falling into categories (iii) and (iv); given the Stoics' unwavering commitment to bivalence, one should in any case immediately wonder about those held to be neither true nor false, i.e., category (iv).⁴ Sextus submits sample *phantasiai* as illustrations of categories (iii) and (iv); but the examples selected only exacerbate the situation. In some instances the examples Sextus provides are ill-suited, in others simply obscure. The unfortunate choice of examples, however, only highlights a deeper problem. The root of the problem, I will contend, is to be located in Sextus' evident misunderstanding of the precise semantic character of *phantasiai* within the context of all but the early Stoic system.⁵ The examples he selects throughout betray an underdeveloped appreciation of the probable Stoic doctrine, as does his more fundamental miscasting of their view as an exhaustive taxonomy. Even so, *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46 is valuable insofar as it points toward a coherent and plausible Stoic position.

Sextus' account of the truth evaluability of *phantasiai* is somewhat clumsily fitted into a larger taxonomy given in terms of their being *pithanai* or *apithanai* (persuasive or not persuasive). The passage runs:

(1) Among [*phantasiai*] some are *pithanai*, some *apithanai*, some at the same time [*hama pithanai* and *apithanai*], and some neither *pithanai* nor *apithanai*: (a) those are *pithanai* which effect a smooth movement in the soul, just as now (i) it is day and (ii) I am talking, and all which lay hold to a similar obviousness; (b) those are *apithanai* which are not of this sort, but rather dissuade us from assent, e.g., (i) if it is day, the sun is not above the earth, (ii) if it is dark, it is day; (c) those are *pithanai* and *apithanai* which occur, because of their relative disposition, sometimes one way, sometimes another, e.g., those belonging to aporetic arguments; (d) neither *pithanai* nor *apithanai* are those of these sorts of things, (i) the stars are even [in number], (ii) the stars are odd [in

⁴See Cicero, *De Fato* 21–25 (= LS 20E) and 38 (= LS 34C), and *Academica* 2.92–96 (= LS 37H). See also Long and Sedley, 1: 206. Strictly speaking, in the passages from Cicero, the Stoics do not claim that bivalence is true of *phantasiai* as such, but Sextus' attribution to them of a rejection of bivalence in the case of *phantasiai* nevertheless raises questions about his understanding of their account.

⁵I adopt the terminology proposed by Theodor Ebert ("The Origin of the Stoic Theory of Signs in Sextus Empiricus," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 5 [1987]: 84, n. 3), who resists grouping Chrysippus together with Zeno and Cleanthes in the "Old Stoa" in matters of logic and epistemology. As Ebert rightly notes, despite strong similarities in ethical doctrine within the Old Stoa, Chrysippus breaks decisively with his predecessors over a range of issues in other areas. Thus, by 'early Stoicism' I intend the logical and semantical views of Zeno and Cleanthes; by 'Stoicism' I intend either Stoic views as primarily developed by Chrysippus, or the Stoics generally, where they hold common views. The argument of this paper lends further credence to Ebert's view insofar as it shows that by failing to take into account some Chrysippean semantic innovations, Sextus misrepresents the full Stoic view.

number]. (2) Among the *pithanai* or *apithanoi phantasiai*, some are true, some false, some true and false, and some neither true nor false: (a) those are true of which it is possible to make a true pronouncement, as (i) it is day, at the present, or (ii) it is light; (b) those are false of which it is possible to make a false pronouncement, as (i) the oar under water is bent, or (ii) the colonnade [gets] narrower; (c) those are true and false which are of the sort (i) that befell Orestes in his madness, of Electra (for insofar as what befell him [was] of some present thing, it was true, for Electra was present, but insofar as it was of a Fury, it was false, for there was no Fury), (ii) and again if someone asleep, absorbed in a dream, [has an impression] of Dion, while he is alive, as of someone present, [he has] a false and vacuous attraction; (d) those are neither true nor false which are generic, for of those whose species are this or that kind, their genera are neither this or that kind, e.g., among men, some are Greek and some barbarian, but the generic man is neither Greek, since then all specific men would be Greek, nor barbarian, because of the same reason. (*AM* VII 242–46 = *SVF* II 65 = LS 39G, 30F)⁶

The obvious, somewhat artificial, parallelism between Sextus' two distinctions presents the first difficulty with this passage.

According to the Stoics' entrenched procedure of division,⁷ we should expect the distinction between true and false *phantasiai* to be subordinate to the superior distinction between their being *pithanai* and *apithanoi*. It would seem most natural to expect it to fall under one half of the division, rather than both; and several editors have accordingly supposed the true/false distinction to be a subdistinction among *pithanai phantasiai*, and have altered the text accordingly.⁸ But this is not the case in the unemended text we have. Sextus represents the distinctions as cutting across one another, so that neither is in fact subordinate to the other.

As the text stands, Sextus offers two separate fourfold distinctions: just as they can fall into four categories of persuasiveness, *phantasiai* are truth evaluable in four ways. Indeed, in each case he exhausts the possible permutations permitted by the respective distinctions. This does not seem implausible when measuring *phantasiai* in terms of their persuasiveness. For it is not difficult to imagine *phantasiai* in each of the four categories of persuasiveness, viz., (i) *pithanai*, (ii) *apithanoi*, (iii) both, and (iv) neither, and Sextus' own candidates seem appropriate illustrations. But this is because persuasiveness, as a stan-

⁶ The translation here is straightforward, with the exception of my rendering *katégorian* "pronouncement," rather than the customary "predication." I provide the motivation for this rendering below in §3.

⁷ See DL VII 61–62 = LS 30C, 32C.

⁸ Thus, von Arnim, Hicks in the Loeb edition, and Mutschmann and Mau in the Teubner edition have excised the words "or *apithanoi*." Long and Sedley, 2: 242, rightly point out that this deletion must be resisted since it leaves no room for *phantasiai* which are true but are not persuasive (including, I would add, e.g., either the proposition that the number of stars is even or the proposition that the number of stars is odd). But the judgment of the editors inclined toward excision already points to the extreme awkwardness of the text as we have it.

dard for measuring *phantasiai*, is wholly epistemic and subjective: certain *phantasiai* will tend to incline us toward assent, others away from assent, others will incline us in both directions, leaving us baffled as to whether we should assent or not, and still others will not affect us one way or the other. Sextus rightly marks this psychological feature of persuasiveness by claiming that *pitthanai phantasiai* “effect a smooth movement in the soul.”

The same cannot, however, be said when measuring the truth value of *phantasiai*, and this is in part because this standard is semantic and objective rather than psychological and subjective; truth value should *prima facie* be determinable without access to the psychological propensities of subjects. Just as initially, on a straightforward correspondence account of truth, we would not say a proposition is true because it tends to be believed, it would not seem that we should count those *phantasiai* as true which tend to incline us to assent. On the contrary, there are *phantasiai* which correctly represent the world, but which do not, in some cases because of considerations of verifiability, incline subjects to assent or dissent at all. Sextus’ own examples (1 d i) and (1 d ii) are instructive: one of the *phantasiai* mentioned is true—the number of stars is odd or even, despite the fact that we are not in a position to say which. But our inability to determine which we should endorse entails nothing at all about their having some truth value or other. Hence, presuming the simple form of correspondence theory Sextus elsewhere articulates (*AM* VII 166–75 = *LS* 69D 2; discussed in §2 below), whereby *phantasiai* are true or false in virtue of their intrinsic representational features, questions of semantic evaluability should proceed independently of questions about a subject’s psychological and epistemological inclinations.

Of course, Sextus does not offer cases (1 d i) and (1 d ii) as examples of *phantasiai* without truth value, but the examples he does provide are of little help. Indeed, it is rather difficult to specify just which *phantasiai* are held to be neither true nor false. He says that generic *phantasiai* are without truth value, and explains this choice by noting that not all men are Greek. If I have a *phantasia* of the generic man, this should not be a representation of a Greek or a non-Greek. But why should it therefore lack truth value altogether? If my generic *phantasia* of man represents him as being rational, it is true; if it represents him as being irrational, it is false. On the other hand, if having encountered only Greeks, I have a *phantasia* which represents the generic man as Greek (if my *phantasia* has the form $(x)(Mx \rightarrow Gx)$), then my *phantasia* is false. If I represent him as non-Greek (if my *phantasia* has the form $(x)(Mx \rightarrow \sim Gx)$), then this *phantasia* is also false. But all of these *phantasiai* have truth value.

So it is unclear just which *phantasia* Sextus envisages, although his remarks seem to commit the Stoics to the view that some *phantasiai* do not have propositional content; being somehow simple or indeterminate they fail to be asser-

toric. For given their commitment to bivalence, any *phantasia* with propositional content should be regarded as either true or false, and not as both or as without truth value altogether. Something has evidently gone awry with Sextus' examples, or his representation of Stoic views, or both.

It is similarly difficult to specify precisely the *phantasiai* which are held to be both true and false. The Stoics evidently think of *lekta* as changing truth value, but curiously, their typical example of a *lekton* which changes truth value is precisely the *phantasia* which Sextus here offers as paradigmatic of true *phantasiai*, viz., "It is day" (*hêmera esti*).⁹ We could naturally interpret the Stoics as holding that the *phantasia* "It is day" is true when asserted during the day, but false otherwise, in virtue of the implicit indexical component, even though this might involve them in a type/token confusion. But Sextus' example precludes this interpretation; the *phantasiai* which are held to be true and false are supposed *simultaneously* to be true and false.

His illustrations (2 c i) and (2 c ii) again do little to help settle the issue. In the first case (2 c i), Orestes experiences *something*, but not the Fury; in the second case (2 c ii), a dreamer experiences Dion, while Dion is alive. The point of the first passage would naturally seem to be that insofar as a *phantasia* is a *phantasia* of something, it is true, at least insofar as it is a *phantasia* of some causally prior *hupokeimenon*. But where its specific representational content is inaccurate, it is false.¹⁰ If this is the point, Sextus could equally have chosen a less colorful example, e.g., Callias could have a *phantasia* of a man in the distance other than Socrates which he nevertheless regards as of Socrates. On the present interpretation of Sextus' example, this *phantasia* would be true in so far as it represents a man, but false insofar as it represents this particular man. On this view, *phantasiai* could be true and false at the same time, but only on different levels of representational specificity. Similarly, a *phantasia* could be true and false at the same time by representing different aspects of the same object, in one instance correctly and in the other incorrectly. For example, a *phantasia* could represent the short, fair-haired Dion as tall and fair-haired, so that it is true in one respect and false in another. Thus, on the assumption that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable in virtue of their intrinsic representational content, some sense can be made of Sextus' suggestion that certain *phantasiai* are both true and false, but only if we are prepared to ignore some representational features of those *phantasiai*. Strictly, a *phantasia* representing the short, fair-haired Dion as tall and fair-haired is not, as Sextus says "in

⁹ See DL VII 69–70 (= SVF II 204 = LS 34K).

¹⁰ This is the sort of interpretation found in E. Arthur, "The Stoic Analysis of the Mind's Reactions to Presentations," *Hermes* 111 (1983): 69–78; see esp. 72.

agreement with its impressor" (*sumphônos . . . tō(i) phantastō(i)*) (AM VII 166–75 = LS 69D 2).

Matters are still further complicated by Sextus' second example, which does not seem susceptible to even this attenuated, partial correspondence. When someone dreams of Dion, and Dion is alive, then one's *phantasia* is supposed by Sextus to be both true and false. But again what is the *phantasia* here? Sextus suggests it is a *phantasia* of Dion being present; but if this is the *phantasia*, why does it matter only that Dion is alive, instead of his being alive and present?¹¹ A dreamer could dream that her husband was sitting in a chair next to the bed reading the newspaper, while her husband was sitting in a chair next to the bed reading the newspaper. One might be inclined to treat this *phantasia* as true, but in a way abnormal, because only accidentally true. But someone might think to treat its abnormality as a form of "falsity." Such a treatment would be mistaken, since (on the assumption that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable in virtue of the intrinsic representational capacities), if the representational content is accurate, the *phantasia* will be true, albeit accidentally true, and not in any sense false. But it is not yet even clear that this is the sort of *phantasia* Sextus envisages; for Dion is not represented as present, but merely as living. Hence, it is difficult to uncover just which *phantasia* is here offered as true and false, and consequently impossible to determine the sense in which it is supposed to be both true and false. Yet it seems clear that whatever the *phantasia* is, it will not be true and false in virtue of different levels of representational accuracy, or in virtue of distinct aspects of representation, as was apparently the case in the Orestes example. Consequently, the examples do not sustain a univocal analysis, and so leave obscure the notion that *phantasiai* can be simultaneously true and false.

Hence, none of the examples alleged to be *phantasiai* of type (2 c) and (2 d), as both true and false or as neither true nor false, illuminates any clear, consistent Stoic doctrine. On the contrary, on the assumption that the Stoics endorse a simple correspondence theory, the examples are jumbled and confused, and at the very best underdetermine the doctrine they are meant to illustrate. It is not yet clear whether this problem stems from Sextus' choice of ill-fitting examples, either of his own making or derived from some tradition,

¹¹ It is conceivable that Sextus here conflates questions about perishing *lekta* (Alexander, *In Ar. An. pr.* 177. 25–178.1 = *SVF* II 202a = LS 38F) with questions about the truth evaluability of *phantasiai*. If, as I will suggest, it is true that a necessary condition of a *phantasia*'s having truth value is that it be capable of expressing some associated *axiōma*, and if, because perished, there is no *axiōma* available, such a *phantasia* would be without truth value. But this suggestion: (i) does not provide an independent account of how a *phantasia* can have two truth values, and (ii) does not explain why Dion must be present (unless Sextus has in mind that the dreamer has a deictic *phantasia*, but he does not indicate anything of this sort).

or whether it results from a Stoic doctrine which is itself underdeveloped. Even so, it should be evident that the truth evaluability of Stoic *phantasiai* is either in some respects confused or somehow misrepresented by Sextus, so long as we follow him in superimposing a simple form of the correspondence theory on their account.

2.

Perhaps, then, the problem has not to do with *phantasiai*, or with Sextus' presentation of them, but rather with the theory of truth invoked on the Stoics' behalf; perhaps *phantasiai* should be regarded as true or false as measured by some subjective criterion within the Stoic system, so that truth for *phantasiai* will be both scaled and indexed to perceivers. This is possible for the Stoics, but only if they conceive of the truth evaluability of *phantasiai* as consisting in something other than simple correspondence. And indeed, Sextus' presentation renders it difficult to make sense of the notion that the Stoics hold a simple correspondence theory. This invites consideration of the possibility that they are coherentists about the truth conditions of *phantasiai*.¹² If they endorse the simple correspondence theory, the Stoics hold that *phantasiai* are true (false) in virtue of standing (failing to stand) in some correspondence, e.g., representational isomorphism, with the *hupokeimena* of which they are *phantasiai*.¹³ By contrast, they are coherentists if they hold that *phantasiai* are true (false) if they are consistent (inconsistent) with a maximal number of other *phantasiai* and beliefs a subject has.

I now want to argue that coherentism about truth is not an alternative available to them, and that consequently, their approach to the truth evaluability of *phantasiai* is more complicated than either of these approaches would indicate.

To begin with, as Annas has plausibly argued,¹⁴ although compatible with some textual evidence, the possibility that the Stoics are coherentists is a dim one. She rightly points out, first, that the antirealist underpinnings of coher-

¹² Coherentist interpretations of Stoic truth can be found in J. Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus* (Leiden, 1970), 48–66; G. Watson, *The Stoic Theory of Knowledge* (Belfast, 1966), 37–53; and less clearly, J. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), 133–51.

¹³ It should be noted that the Stoics can hold a form of the correspondence theory without adopting the *simple* correspondence theory often suggested on their behalf. In §3 below I pursue the suggestion that their view is best understood as a *complex* form of correspondence.

¹⁴ J. Annas, "Truth and Knowledge," *Doubt and Dogmatism*, ed. M. Burnyeat *et al.* (Oxford, 1980), 84–104. She concludes her discussion of coherentism with the observation, "We do, then, seem to be forced back on to some form of the correspondence interpretation: there is something in the nature of the presentation itself which makes it apprehensible. We do not create the perceptible world, as the coherence view is in danger of falling into holding; we face it, and it barrages us with presentations, some of which are veridical and some not" (94).

entist accounts, whereby truth is a function not of agreement with the world but of agreement with a body of representations, do not sit well with the realist presuppositions of Stoic antiskepticism. Further, the Stoics are keen to show that certain *phantasiai* reveal their causes, the *hupokeimena* which imprint them on the soul; and these are clearly considered prior to one's perception of them, so that their being indicated correctly would seem to be independent of the agreement of a subject's corpus of *phantasiai*. Annas's arguments gain even more force when it is remembered that the question of semantic evaluability pertains to the coherence theory of truth and not the coherence theory of justification; one can reject a coherentist account of truth without abandoning the view that *phantasiai* are *pithanai* or *apithanoi* in virtue of their coherence with a subject's corpus of beliefs and *phantasiai*. But, as we have seen, this does not speak to the mechanism by which they have the truth value they have.

In addition to Annas's more general arguments, one can add that Sextus himself marks the distinction between a subjective and an objective account of truth for *phantasiai*, and clearly thinks of the truth of *phantasiai* as objective in the case of the Stoics. When discussing Carneades' account of the criterion, Sextus explicates truth of *phantasiai* first in terms of correspondence, and then juxtaposes this account to a related epistemic or psychological notion of which Carneades means to avail himself: a *phantasia* is "true when it is in agreement with the impressor [*sumphônos ê(i) tô(i) phantastô(i)*], and false when it is not in agreement [*diaphônos*]"; it can also be "apparently true or not apparently true" (*hê men esti phainomenê alêthê hê de ou phainomenê alêthês*).¹⁵ When recounting the Stoic view, he uses the simple terms 'true' and 'false', where presumably the gloss given in the discussion of Carneades is applicable. Thus, when Sextus represents Stoic *phantasiai* as true or false, he interprets the Stoics as holding to some form of a simple correspondence account of truth.

Sextus is surely right not to represent them as coherentists, and his suggestion that they endorse a correspondence theory of truth agrees with most of the textual evidence. But there remains the question of the more specific variety of correspondence he takes them to hold; one cannot infer directly from their rejection of a coherentist account to their holding a simple correspondence view. Sextus does not seem to appreciate this, nor does he seem adequately to appreciate an apparent Chrysippean innovation in the Stoic analysis of truth evaluability for *phantasiai*.

The evidence regarding the precise nature of Chrysippus' innovation is unfortunately obscure, although it seems fair to conclude that the simple account introduced by Cleanthes in the early Stoa, the account in terms of simple correspondence reiterated by Sextus at *AM* VII.168–75, was indeed

¹⁵ *AM* VII 166–75 = *LS* 69D 2.

refined by Chrysippus (DL VII 49–50 = *SVF* II 52, 55 = LS 39A). The interesting question concerns, of course, just what these refinements were. Cleanthes' view is that an impressor (*phantaston*) impressed a *phantasia* upon the soul in the way that a seal impressed its sign upon wax. On this account, the relationship will be a straightforward correspondence, in terms of the internal characteristics of *phantasiai*; indeed, the correspondence is given in terms of pictorial isomorphism. The motivation provided by Diogenes Laertius for Chrysippus' rejection of this simple account is somewhat perplexing: "a *phantasia* is an imprinting on the soul that is an alteration, as Chrysippus suggests in the second book of his *On the Soul*; for one must not take the imprinting as like the print of a stamp, since it is impossible for many prints to come about at the same time for the same subject" (DL VII 50). But this is not likely to be the full story.¹⁶

It is first of all clear that this rather lame objection would not motivate a rejection of the general account provided by Cleanthes. In order to accommodate this complaint, a defender of Cleanthes would naturally need only to point out that a sufficiently large piece of wax could receive any number of impressions, and that consequently the metaphor in all important respects—that is, insofar as it is a metaphor intended to illustrate what *phantasiai* are and how they come about in the soul—is completely apt. But it is likely that Chrysippus had a more interesting objection to Cleanthes' metaphor, as can be gleaned from his own positive account of *phantasiai*. His objection may well have been that Cleanthes' account was simply too pictorial, in three respects. First, as was already known in late antiquity,¹⁷ the pictorial model of *phantasiai*, endorsed often enough by the early Stoics and their predecessors,¹⁸ hardly accommodates any but visual *phantasiai*. But, according to a report of Aetius, Chrysippus acknowledges the existence of aural and olfactory as well as visual *phantasiai* (Aetius IV 12 = *SVF* II 54). Second, Aetius' attribution to Chrysippus of an analogy with light also tells against the pictorial view, since on the picture theory, one would expect *phantasiai* to be analogous to objects in light, rather than to light itself. Finally, as Long and Sedley rightly note,¹⁹ Chrysippus' positive account of *phantasiai* carefully avoids any commitment to the

¹⁶ See M. Pohlenz, "Zenon und Chrysipp," *NGG*, phil.-hist. Kl. 12.9 (1938): 173–210, esp. 176–77, reprinted in M. Pohlenz, *Kleine Schriften* (Hildesheim, 1965), 1: 1–38. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy*, 176, criticizes Pohlenz, claiming that "the reasons why Chrysippus changed the explanation of τύπωσις are given in the passage of Sextus. No deeper significance is to be attached to them than Sextus himself attaches." Although my analysis of the deeper significance is not the same as Pohlenz's, in my view he is right to regard Chrysippus' complaint as motivated by broader concerns than those recounted locally in our sources.

¹⁷ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In De Anima*, 72, 5 (= *SVF* II 58).

¹⁸ See, e.g., Aristotle, *De Memoria* 450b20–451a1.

¹⁹ Long and Sedley, 1: 239.

picture theory, and this itself already suggests a dissatisfaction with features of Cleanthes' metaphor other than the rather feeble one reported.²⁰

This point is of some interest, since if it is correct that Chrysippus objects to an account of *phantasiai* as simple internal pictures directly mirroring their causally responsible *hupokeimena*, then he also implicitly rejects the straightforward account of correspondence this approach provides, viz., pictorial isomorphism. But he does not thereby altogether reject a correspondence theory of truth for *phantasiai*. He can continue to maintain such an account by either: (i) adopting a more sophisticated pictorial account, whereby *phantasiai* are functional pictures rather than actual pictures;²¹ or (ii) advancing a view according to which they do not represent *hupokeimena per se* at all, but rather stand in an appropriate relationship to entities which do, from which they are derivatively considered true or false.²² In any case, without the relatively straightforward picture theory, the Stoics, that is those Stoics siding with Chrysippus against Cleanthes and the early Stoa generally, require some more sophisticated account. Without such an account, their doctrine that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable becomes unintelligible.

3.

Several commentators have implicitly suggested an account of Stoic *phantasiai* in accordance with which the Stoics have available to them a type of correspondence theory which both escapes Chrysippus' objection to Cleanthes' picture theory and enables them to regard *phantasiai* as truth evaluable.²³ Although

²⁰ One might attempt to conclude from this same evidence that although true, *phantasiai* are not true in the same sense in which propositions are true. The thought here would be that *phantasiai* are after all true in virtue of their internal representational features, but true in some nonsemantic sense, perhaps only in the sense in which we call a portrait a "true likeness" in virtue of its representational features. (The predicate 'true' presumably applies in these cases in a nonsemantic sense—the opposite of "true" here seems to be "poor" rather than "false." This would have the force of rendering our initial inconsistent triad consistent by treating 'true' as ambiguous.) Perhaps Cleanthes approached the issue in this way; but it is unlikely to have been Chrysippus' position. First, this account altogether severs the connection between *phantasiai* and *axiōmata* clearly present in mature Stoic accounts; and second, as suggested in the text, we should be at a loss to describe the olfactory and tactile *phantasiai* Aetius mentions in these terms.

²¹ See Michael Tye, "The Picture Theory of Mental Images," *Philosophical Review* 97 (1988): 497–520 for a clear discussion and defense of this approach to the picture theory.

²² Note that on this account, *phantasiai* could still be representational; but, importantly, (i) their truth value will not be a simple function of their representational features, as it would in the naive picture theory; and (ii) they could be representational without being *inherently* representational—that is, they need not represent by some form of pictographic isomorphism.

²³ See M. Frede, "Stoics and Skeptics on Clear and Distinct Impressions," in *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. M. Burnyeat (Berkeley, 1983), 65–93; Long and Sedley, 1: 240, and Annas, "Truth and Knowledge," 88, who is especially clear: "For them 'true' and 'false' have their primary application to propositions, so even though presentations are true or false, this is so by virtue of some proposition's being true or false in each case." Cf. also G. Striker, "Epicurus on the Truth of

not always developed as a correspondence account,²⁴ this analysis of Stoic *phantasiai* implicitly offers them what I will call *inherited semantic value*, where this represents the second possibility offered the Stoics above. *Phantasiai* on this account are only derivatively true or false because they inherit their truth evaluability from associated *axiōmata*, which are primarily true or false. More precisely, we can say:

Inherited Semantic Value (ISV): A *phantasia* ϕ is true/false if and only if: (i) ϕ has propositional content;²⁵ and (ii) if ϕ were asserted, it would express an *axiōma* which was itself true/false.

On this account, no *phantasia* is primarily true or false; rather it is true or false only insofar as it is associated with a determinate *axiōma*, which is itself primarily true or false.²⁶ Thus, a *phantasia* has its truth conditions by having a hypothetical property, namely, that if asserted, it expresses a certain *lekton*, or rather a certain *axiōma*, with a determinate truth value.²⁷

Sense-Impressions," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 59 (1977): 134, who attributes this view to the Stoics by way of illustrating a related Epicurean account of sensation. I am in agreement with this view, although I do not think it has been developed with enough precision by those who have offered it, and consequently that its ramifications for our account of Stoic *phantasiai* have not yet been made clear. Importantly, each of the commentators cited evidently continues to think of *phantasiai* as true or false in virtue of their intrinsic representational features. But this is precisely the view which needs to be rejected in light of their insights. Similarly, Arthur, "Stoic Analysis," 70–71 is rightly cautious about regarding *phantasiai* as representations, but does not question Sextus' reliance on a simple correspondence theory of truth.

²⁴ Kerferd does, however, offer an alternative to the simple correspondence theory which is itself supposed to be a form of correspondence. See "The Problem of Synkatathesis and Katalepsis in Stoic Doctrine," *Les Stoiciens et leur Logique*, ed. J. Brunschwig (Paris: 1978), 251–72, esp. §3. The simple correspondence theory holds that *phantasiai* are true just in case they correspond by means of some intrinsic characteristics with the *hupokeimena* of which they are *phantasiai*. By contrast, Kerferd holds that "while it is correspondence between the Phantasia and $\pi\rho\tilde{\alpha}\gamma\mu\alpha$ which makes the Phantasia true, the $\pi\rho\tilde{\alpha}\gamma\mu\alpha$ in question is not the external object, but the *Lekton*" (260). He infers this interpretation in part from Sextus, *AM* VIII, 11–12 (= *SVF* II 166 = *LS* 33B) which does not contain or entail it. More importantly, such an account adds complications which do nothing to remedy the problems we have seen associated with the simple view. On Kerferd's account, *phantasiai* remain truth evaluable in virtue of their internal representational characteristics, and so his approach suffers the same problems as that view. Long and Sedley by contrast capture the purport of Sextus' remark: "The truth and falsehood of impressions are defined in terms of the kind of assertions that can be made of them" (1: 240).

²⁵ Note that *ISV* leaves open the question of whether all *phantasiai* have propositional content; *ISV* (i) states only a necessary condition for the truth evaluability of *phantasiai*, and does not by itself commit the Stoics to the view that all *phantasiai* are truth evaluable. *ISV* does preclude, however, that a *phantasia* without propositional content could express an *axiōma* rather than an incomplete *lekton*.

²⁶ See Stobaeus II.88 = *SVF* III 171; Sextus, *AM* VII 152ff.

²⁷ The question of whether the *phantasiai* themselves or their related *axiōmata* are properly regarded as the objects of assent need not be addressed here. A similar counterfactual account could be given, *mutatis mutandis*, by someone who thought of the *axiōma* itself as the proper object of assent.

On this account, *phantasiai* have roughly the semantic status token sentences of a public language have in a Fregean account: a sentence is not in itself true or false, but true or false because it expresses a certain proposition. So, just as for a Fregean a sentence ‘ σ ’ in a natural language L is true only because $R(\sigma, \psi)$, where ψ is a true proposition and R is the relation whereby σ expresses ψ , so for the Stoics *phantasia* ϕ is true because $R(\sigma, \psi)$, where ψ is an *axiōma* and R the relation connecting them. It is, of course, wholly conventional for a Fregean that any given sentence will have truth value, i.e., will be a substitution instance for σ in $R(\sigma, \psi)$; this need not be the case for the Stoics, nor need it be the case that the relationship R be explicated in precisely the same way.⁸⁸

The principal reason for reading the Stoics in this way derives from *AM* 242–46; despite its obscurities, this passage provides the strongest support for *ISV* in the doxography. Although some of his examples seem initially unfortunate, Sextus quite significantly takes care to characterize the truth evaluability of *phantasiai* in hypothetical terms; the implications of this point have gone unappreciated, perhaps even by Sextus himself. When explaining why true *phantasiai* are to be counted as true at all, Sextus is careful to say not that they are true because they are faithful representations of *hupokeimena*, or even that they are true because of any intrinsic features at all. He says rather that those *phantasiai* are true “of which it is possible to make a true pronouncement” (*hōn estin alēthē katēgorian poiēsasthai*); he similarly claims that “those are false of which it is possible to make a false pronouncement.” Here he explicitly offers the modal analysis of the truth evaluability captured in *ISV* above: their truth evaluability depends not directly upon any actual intrinsic features, representational or not, but rather upon a hypothetical property; for a true *phantasia* this will be the property of being able to be used to make a true pronouncement, and for a false *phantasia* the property of being able to be used to make a false pronouncement.⁸⁹

Now, Sextus’ example of a true *phantasia*, “It is day,” can indeed be used to make a true pronouncement. But it can equally be used to make a false pronouncement, and it will be so used when uttered at night. If so, it is

⁸⁸ This does not, however, undermine the parallel suggested: p can have its semantic properties *contingently* without its being a matter of arbitrary *convention*.

⁸⁹ It might be thought that this bit of evidence does not comport with other descriptions available to us, including even other passages of Sextus, e.g., *AM* VIII 70 (= *LS* 33C = *SVF* 2.187). There we learn the canonical description of a *lekton* as “what subsists in accordance with a *logikē phantasia*, while a *logikē phantasia* is one whose content can be exhibited in language.” This might be thought to undermine my interpretation of *hōn estin alēthē katēgorian poiēsasthai*, since the content of the *phantasia* cannot be asserted. But *AM* VIII 70 is not at odds with my interpretation of that phrase: the content of the *phantasia* seems to me to be precisely the content of the sentence used to express it, viz., the *axiōma*; the *contexts* of the assertions will determine the truth values.

mistaken to classify any such *phantasia* as exclusively one or the other.³⁰ To see this, the parallel with sentences in a public language for a Fregean is again perhaps useful. Is the sentence “My team won the championship” true or false? Well, it can be true or false depending on the circumstances of its utterance, and not only in virtue of its indexical component. It would be odd for someone, realizing that sentences can be derivatively true or false, to proceed to offer a taxonomy of different types of sentences in terms of their truth values. Someone so inclined would have two choices: she could taxonomize either sentence types or sentence tokens. But neither choice makes much sense. It would first of all be impossible to taxonomize sentence types; for the truth values of all but analytic sentences will be a function of their circumstances of utterance: we cannot say, for example, that the sentence type “It is day” is true or false, since it will be true in some circumstances of utterance and false in others. By contrast, one could in principle compile a list of all true sentence tokens uttered thus far, and then a separate list of all the false tokens, and call this a taxonomy. It seems clear, however, that there would be little to be gained in our offering such an exhaustive taxonomy of sentence tokens. More to the point, this is surely not Sextus’ enterprise in *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46. He seeks to explicate some nontrivial Stoic doctrine about the truth evaluability of *phantasiai*, and not merely to compile a fruitless list. And such a list would be fruitless: *phantasiai*, like sentences in natural languages, are not truth evaluable in terms of their intrinsic representational features. On the contrary, they inherit their truth values from the propositions they can be used to express.

This parallel suggests, then, that the Stoics can have neither the simple correspondence theory nor the coherence theory in mind when offering the judgment that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable. It suggests, rather, that they adopt *ISV*, the account according to which they derive their truth evaluability from associated *axiōmata*, the entities they deem primarily truth evaluable and as truth evaluable in terms of their intrinsic characteristics.

Three further considerations favor this relatively sophisticated account of the semantic evaluability of Stoic *phantasiai*. First, this approach, and among the possible alternatives this approach alone, resolves the inconsistent triad with which we began. The Stoics clearly accept both (2) and (3) (the claims that only *axiōmata* are truth evaluable and that no *phantasia* is an *axiōma*). Stoic *lekta*, and in particular *axiōmata*, are represented by all sources as being the primary

³⁰This is so, at any rate, if *katēgorian* is rendered as “pronouncement” instead of the customary “predication” (LS have “assertion”). It should be so rendered, evidently, because it is unclear what the customary rendering could mean. *Phantasiai* are not predicated of anything; nor are they used in making predications. By contrast, *phantasiai* might be used to make true pronouncements insofar as they are used to express *axiōmata* which are true.

bearers of truth and falsity within the Stoic system.⁵¹ As abstract objects which have essentially the truth conditions they have, *axiômata* are regarded by the Stoics as truth evaluable in a nonderivative way:

Given the considerable difference among *lekta*, the Stoics say that for something to be true or false, it must first of all be a *lekton*, and second one which is complete; and not just any such *lekton*, but an *axiôma*; for it is only when we say an *axiôma* that we speak truly or falsely. (Sextus, *AM* VIII.74 = *SVF* II.187 = LS 34B; cf. Stobaeus II.88 = *SVF* III 171 and Sextus, *AM* VII 152ff.)

On its surface, this passage seems completely incompatible with the well-documented claim that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable. After all, it is asserted here that a necessary condition of something's having truth value is that it be a *lekton*, which *phantasiai*, as physical alterations in the soul, are surely not. But there will be no contradiction if we presume that Sextus here means *primarily* or *nonderivatively* true or false; *phantasiai* are not *per se* truth evaluable, but rather insofar as they are related to *axiômata*.

If so, if the Stoics regard *phantasiai* as truth evaluable not in terms of their intrinsic representational features, then they do not adopt (1) in such a way that it conflicts with (2) and (3). By accepting *ISV*, the Stoics reject (1) in its unrestricted form, and endorse only the following three propositions:

- (1') *Phantasiai* are derivatively true or false (i.e., are truth evaluable insofar as they can be associated with truth evaluable *axiômata*).
- (2') Only *axiômata* are nonderivatively true or false (i.e., are truth evaluable in terms of their intrinsic characteristics).
- (3) No *phantasia* is an *axiôma*, since *phantasiai* are impressions in the soul, and hence material, whereas *axiômata* are *lekta*, and hence immaterial.

(1'), (2'), (3) are perfectly consistent, and so present no problem for the Stoics. Hence, *ISV* provides a way of understanding their doctrine of the truth evaluability of *phantasiai* in such a way that it is both consistent and plausible.

Much the same can be said about another apparent peculiarity within the Stoic system, and this suggests a second form of support for *ISV*. *Phantasiai* are not judgments, even though in rational creatures *noêseis* count as *phantasiai* (*DL* VII 51 = *SVF* II 61). So we know immediately, it would seem, that the sense in which they are true or false is derivative or in some way metaphorical. Insofar as they assert nothing, they can hardly be thought of as true or false in any direct or nonmetaphorical way. Hence, again, it should seem odd for them to proceed to treat *phantasiai* as true or false at all. Given their self-conscious distinction between assertoric and nonassertoric mental states, developed perhaps in par-

⁵¹ See M. Frede, *Die Stoische Logik* (Göttingen, 1974), 40–44.

tial response to Epicurean doctrines,³² we should expect them not to proceed to blur this distinction by counting some nonassertoric states as truth evaluable. But if on the contrary they think that *phantasiai* inherit their truth values from more fundamental semantic units, the oddness disappears. *Phantasiai* are not truth evaluable as such, but only insofar as they can be taken to have a relationship with determinate *axiōmata*.

Finally, despite his sometimes attributing a simple correspondence theory to the Stoics, Sextus offers other evidence which points rather to *ISV*. At *AM* VIII 10, in a general survey of views on truth, Sextus characterizes the Stoic view as follows: "The Stoics say that some sense impressions [*aisthēta*] and objects of thought [*noēta*] are true—the sense impressions not directly, but by reference to objects of thought associated with them." Sextus explicitly identifies the *noēta* with *axiōmata* later in the same passage, while the *aisthēta* mentioned are presumably perceptual *phantasiai*.³³ If so, Sextus means to point out that it would be mistaken to regard *phantasiai* as intrinsically truth evaluable. This does not yet constitute a commitment to *ISV*, since it does not yet provide the hypothetical analysis captured in that account; but it does provide a key component of *ISV* insofar as it makes *phantasiai* dependent upon *axiōmata* for their truth evaluability, and equally denies the Stoics the simple correspondence theory he elsewhere articulates.

Each of these considerations provides evidence for *ISV* as an account of the truth evaluability of Stoic *phantasiai*. There is room within the Stoic system for regarding *phantasiai* as truth evaluable, but not without their standing in appropriate relations to associated *axiōmata*, and so not in virtue of their intrinsic representational features alone. Consequently, neither a coherentist account nor any simple correspondence account in terms of representational isomorphism will suffice. Their view—at least from the time of Chrysippus—seems both subtler and more philosophically astute than either of these interpretations would indicate.

4.

On the assumption that *ISV* best captures the Stoic attitude toward the truth evaluability of *phantasiai*, Sextus' account at *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46 begins to look in some ways more understandable, but in others still more obscure. It looks more understandable because each of the *phantasiai* introduced, where determinable, can stand in a relationship to the primary bearer of truth and falsity, the *axiōma*, and so accordingly to *ISV* can have truth value. For example, if one has the *phantasia* of its being day at *t*, during the day, then

³² See Striker, "Epicurus on the Truth of Sense-Impressions."

³³ See *ibid.*, 134.

this *phantasia* would be true precisely because it *could* express a true *axiōma* at t_1 . Similarly, Orestes' *phantasia* can stand in relation to more than one *axiōma*, and so will be both true and false, but in different respects; insofar as it can be used to express an *axiōma* which is true, it is true, insofar as it can be used to express a *axiōma* which is false, it is false.

But Sextus' account also appears deeply peculiar. It should be clear that if *phantasiai* are not true or false in virtue of internal representational character independent of any connection to *axiōmata*, it is somewhat odd to offer specific examples as *per se* true or false, and, as I have suggested, somewhat odd to offer a taxonomy of them at all. Presumably a taxonomy should minimally be given in terms of the intrinsic characteristics of the entities being classified. If *ISV* best represents the Stoic account of the truth evaluability of *phantasiai*, then *phantasiai* will not have the requisite internal features. Indeed, there will not be truth invariable *phantasiai* at all, except insofar as they express truth invariable *axiōmata*.³⁴ The examples of false *phantasiai*, for instance, seem perplexing, since a *phantasia* of an oar bent under water (2 b i), or of a colonnade growing narrower (2 b ii), could in principle be true, exactly when they express true *axiōmata*, that is, when it is true that there is a bent oar under water or that a colonnade gets narrower. (A playful Academic might construct and confront a Stoic with such artificial situations.) Oddly, one of the examples of *apithanoi phantasiai* might fare better here (viz., if it is dark, it is day), since although it can be dark during the day, its being dark is not sufficient for its being day, so that (1 b ii) should always express a false *axiōma*. But again, *phantasiai, qua phantasiai*, should not be regarded as *per se* true or false, even though given *phantasiai* can have truth value.

The same holds true of even Sextus' least complicated example. The *phantasia* of its being day can be used to assert something true, when it is day. But as noted, "It is day" is for the Stoics the very paradigm of the sorts of *lekta*

³⁴ Here it should be noted that there are two grades to the modal claim that a true *phantasia* is one that can be used to make a true pronouncement, whereby: (1) any *phantasia* could in principle stand in any relation to any *axiōma* (just as the English sentence 'Two and two are four' could have expressed what the English sentence 'The lilies are blooming early this year' expresses, and so could have been contingently true), or (2) given some conventional or nonconventional features, the range of potential *relata* is fixed, even though the circumstances of utterance may vary in such a way that truth value may also vary (just as, given the conventions of English, different tokens of 'It is day' take different truth values, even though the meaning is invariable). (Here see John Perry, "Frege on Demonstratives," *Philosophical Review* 86 [1977]: 474–97.) The Stoics seem to adopt something like (2) for *phantasiai*, although the distinction is never drawn explicitly in the sources. Further, as I've indicated above, one needs to separate questions of contingency from questions of conventionality. It might be contingent that *phantasia f* expresses *axiōma a*, even though it is not altogether random that human beings with similar faculties tend to correlate them as they do: it is altogether contingent, but hardly accidental that the onomatopoeic word 'sizzle' has the meaning it has in English.

which change truth value (Sextus, *AM* VIII 103 = LS 34F). When asserted during the day, it is true; when asserted at night, it is false. In virtue of *ISV* and the variability of the truth value of the *lekton* associated with the *phantasia* of its being day, we should expect this *phantasia* to be an example not of a true *phantasia*, but rather of a *phantasia* which can be true or false. Indeed, if *ISV* is correct, this single *phantasia* should serve as an example of types (2a), (2b), and (2c), viz., as an example of a *phantasia* which can be true or false, and so as true at t_1 and false at t_2 , as long as it is held in mind that the variable truth value attaches to different tokens precisely as it attaches to different tokens of *lekta*. If so, Sextus' more complicated examples seem unnecessary, unless there is reason to suppose that token *phantasiai* can be *simultaneously* true and false. As suggested, there is a way to provide such examples given *ISV*, but the suspicion lingers that the Stoics may have not explicitly committed themselves to this possibility.

This consideration suggests the possibility that Sextus partially misreports the actual Stoic doctrine, or perhaps misses the significance of the Chrysippean innovation he reports. Not only does a taxonomy of *phantasiai* seem unmotivated if *ISV* captures the Stoic attitude toward their truth evaluability, it positively obscures their relationship with associated *axiōmata*. This sort of taxonomy inevitably represents *phantasiai* as if they were *per se* rather than derivatively truth evaluable.

That Sextus' taxonomical approach is unwarranted gains further support from some crossed signals within *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46. First, as we have seen, the clearest statement of the Stoic doctrine, apart from putative examples of it, is already couched in modal terms. This alone suggests a derivative account of truth evaluability, and consequently renders the taxonomy unmotivated. Second, it is clear that Sextus fails in his attempt to offer a coordinated taxonomy relating a true/false distinction to a superior one given in terms of persuasiveness.³⁵ This suggests that either the taxonomies are simply not related, or that one or the other is specious. Long and Sedley have tentatively suggested that the first distinction, between *phantasiai* which are *pithanai* and those which are *apithanoi*, is the suspect one, in part because it is not reflected in other sources.³⁶ My own countersuggestion would be that the first distinction is both philosophically well motivated and well illustrated, and is therefore probably genuine. The examples rightly bring out that on the subjective scale of persuasiveness, there will be *phantasiai* which in themselves will tend to invite assent, others which will ward off assent, and still others which will do both or neither. It is the second taxonomy which is neither well

³⁵ See Long and Sedley, 2: 242 and n. 8 above.

³⁶ Long and Sedley, 2: 242.

motivated nor well illustrated, and which betrays some confusion on Sextus' part, minimally involving him in an ill-conceived and poorly executed attempt to forge a parallelism where none exists.

5.

ISV offers a clear way of understanding a Stoic doctrine similar to that offered by Sextus, but it is not precisely as Sextus packages it. It is to be conjectured, then, that based upon a Stoic report that *phantasiai* could be true, false, both, or neither, Sextus³⁷ wrongly constructed a taxonomy of the types of *phantasiai* fitting these categories, relying only on the simple account of pictorial correspondence endorsed by the early Stoa. But this conjecture leaves some things unexplained, and so leaves *ISV* open to question.

In particular, the interpretation offered regards Sextus as correct in holding not only that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable, but that certain *phantasiai* fail to turn up either true or false, and must be regarded as without truth value. But if there are *phantasiai* without truth value, and if *phantasiai* are all related to *axiōmata*, then presumably there are *axiōmata* without truth value. This seems unlikely, given the way *axiōmata* are marked off from *lekta* generally,³⁸ and so poses a question for the appropriateness of *ISV*.

Several potential responses to this objection are not hard to see, but some of them fairly clearly outstrip the available textual evidence. Thus, a Stoic could hold with Frege as against Russell that certain *axiōmata*—those with nonreferring subject terms—are neither true nor false and that consequently their correlative *phantasiai* are similarly without truth value. Somewhat more likely, given the available textual evidence, is that demonstrative *phantasiai* normally associated with perished *lekta*, e.g., This is Dion,³⁹ are neither true nor false, since although the *phantasia* itself may appear to have propositional structure, it is hollow in the sense that its content has disappeared.⁴⁰ A final possibility would be that only rational *phantasiai* (DL VII 51 = SVF II 61 = LS

³⁷ It is of course possible that Sextus invented neither the taxonomy nor the examples, which may derive from a tradition already in place. I think this is probably not the case, given (i) the construction of *AM* VII 242–46 and (ii) Sextus' failure elsewhere to appreciate the account he provides, e.g., at *AM* VII 166–75 = LS 69D 2. But even if this were the case, Sextus would nonetheless be culpable for passing along the Stoic doctrine in this unhappy wrapping.

³⁸ Sextus, *AM* VIII 74 = SVF 2.187 = LS 34B; *AM* 152 ff. = LS 41C, DL VII 65–66 = SVF 2.193 = LS 34A, and Stobaeus II.88 = SVF III 171; but cf. DL VII 190, which attributes to Chrysippus two books, one on indefinite *axiōmata* (*peri tōn aoristōn axiōmatōn*) and one evidently on the types of indefinite *axiōmata* (*peri tēs diaphoras tōn aoristōn*).

³⁹ Alexander, *In Ar. An. pr.* 177, 25–178.1 = SVF II 202a = LS 38F.

⁴⁰ This suggestion raises some large questions about the degree to which the Stoics meant to endorse a direct reference theory for deictic sentences. I think their view is best understood in these terms, but these considerations move us beyond the scope of the present inquiry.

39A) have truth value, so that those belonging to animals, and perhaps small children, will be too primitive to count as true or false.

If developed, any one of these proposals would suffice to show that *ISV* is not endangered as an account of the truth evaluability of Stoic *phantasiai*. But none of them is necessary, and in a sense none gets to the root of the objection. First of all, as noted, *ISV* does not entail that all *phantasiai*, even all rational *phantasiai*, are related to truth-evaluable *axiōmata*; it holds only that *if* a *phantasia* is to have a truth value, it must inherit it from some *axiōma*. So, nothing about that doctrine itself commits the Stoics to the view that all *phantasiai* are truth evaluable. Only together with some other thesis, e.g., that every *phantasia* is propositional in structure (in the sense of expressing some determinate *axiōma*), will there be a problem for *ISV*.

Several commentators have held the Stoics to this further thesis, implicitly or explicitly maintaining that all *phantasiai*, or minimally all rational *phantasiai*, are propositional in structure.⁴¹ So Annas has argued, on the basis of the passage under consideration, first that *phantasiai* inherit their truth values from associated *axiōmata*, but second that “a presentation must be the kind of thing which has a content which can be expressed in propositional form.”⁴² But Sextus surely does not suggest that every *phantasia* has propositional form; on the contrary, since there are *phantasiai* without truth value, the suggestion would seem to be that at least some of them are subpropositional. This passage alone leaves the issue underdetermined.⁴³

A similar position is advanced by Frede, but for different reasons. Frede suggests that because all *phantasiai* of rational beings are rational *phantasiai*, they are thoughts, and therefore propositional in structure.⁴⁴ Although he is

⁴¹ Frede, “Stoics and Skeptics on Clear and Distinct Impressions,” 69–71, Annas, “Truth and Knowledge,” 88, and esp. Long and Sedley, 1: 240: “Yet in the mature human being all impressions are ‘rational’ or ‘thought processes’ (A 6 [reference to LS 39A 6]) and all conceptions are themselves ‘a kind of impression’ ([39]F). This suggests that all impressions of mature human beings are envisaged to have a propositional content, and that we assent to impressions (40B 1) by assenting to their corresponding *lekta* which are the proper objects of assent. . . . [W]e should take it that rational impressions themselves represent their objects in ways that presuppose language and concepts: minimally ‘This is white’ etc.”

⁴² Annas, “Truth and Knowledge,” 88.

⁴³ Cf. Striker, “Epicurus on the Truth of Sense-Impressions,” who suggests that according to the Stoics “sense-impressions are transformed into propositions by a kind of automatic translation” (134). Although she explicitly denies that for the Stoics impressions are propositions, Striker cites DL VII 49 as evidence for their holding some similar view; but Diogenes says only that thought brings forth into a proposition what one receives from a *phantasia* (*hē dianoia . . . ho paschei hupo tēs phantasias, touto ekpherei logō(i)*). Note that Diogenes uses *logos* and not *axiōma*. *Phantasiai* may have propositional structure, or may express propositions, but there is no reason to suppose that they themselves are translated into propositions.

⁴⁴ This argument is not explicit in Frede, but he seems to presuppose that rational *phantasiai* are propositional in structure insofar as they are rational. He suggests, for example, that “rational

right to argue that rational agents have only rational *phantasiai*,⁴⁵ it does not follow directly that all such *phantasiai* will be propositional in structure. There could, for example, be perceptual *phantasiai* which are not yet of the structure “This is white,” but which would simply be *phantasiai* of white.⁴⁶ If we hold with Diogenes in making it analytic that a *phantasia* is rational simply in being the *phantasia* of a rational agent, then we will need a further step to show that all such *phantasiai* have propositional content. But such a step seems improbable given that rational agents have perceptual *phantasiai*.

As Frede himself goes on to note, “the Stoics seem to be willing to call such parts of impressions ‘impressions’ (SE M VII 246; Plut. Com. not. 1084F, cf. Cic. Acad. II 21). But this seems to be misleading, since parts of impressions are not true or false in the way that impressions properly speaking are.”⁴⁷ He is right to suggest that such discrete parts of complex *phantasiai* cannot be true or false in the way that their wholes are, viz., in terms of *ISV*. But this is just because they are subpropositional, and so indeed are not properly true or false at all. The parts of *phantasiai* which are themselves *phantasiai* but are without truth value may be rational without *ipso facto* being propositional, if at any rate rational *phantasiai* are simply defined as all and only those *phantasiai* rational agents have.

Sextus himself points out that according to the Stoics men do not differ from irrational beasts in terms of simple *phantasia*, since beasts have that as well. Rather, he claims that the difference turns on the fact that humans have a form of *phantasia* that is inferential (or discursive) and synthetic (*metabatikê(i) kai*

impressions have a propositional content. They are impressions to the effect that something is the case very much in the sense in which we might say ordinarily ‘the impression one gets, if one looks at the evidence, is that . . .’” (67). He does not think, however, that a rational impression is simply a *phantasia* with propositional content; rather, “to have a rational impression is to think a proposition in a certain way” (69).

⁴⁵ DL 5.1; cf. Striker, “Epicurus on the Truth of Sense-Impressions,” 134.

⁴⁶ There may seem to be a problem here about the possibility of assenting to such *phantasiai*. In particular, there may seem to be a problem about how subpropositional *phantasiai* could be asserted as true, if we suppose assent to involve minimally this sort of commitment. But (a) there is no conclusive evidence that all *phantasiai*, or even all rational *phantasiai*, are potential objects of assent (indeed, if as Sextus reports some *phantasiai* are neither true nor false, and assent involves commitment to the truth of the *axiōma* expressed by a *phantasia*, then it would seem to follow directly that some *phantasiai* are not potential objects of assent); alternatively (b) if we think of all *phantasiai* as potential objects of assent, we will need to entertain the peculiar possibility that in some cases assent involves affirmation without commitment to truth (where, e.g., in assenting to whiteness one does not supply the dummy subject found in “This is white”; rather, one affirms nondiscursively that whiteness is present to one); a third, unrelated possibility (c) would be that nonrational aesthetic *phantasiai* are after all the only ones the Stoics hold to be neither true nor false. One could begin to make sense of a Stoic postulation of the existence of *phantasiai* without truth value in spite of their commitment to bivalence along any one of these lines, but (a) seems to me the most promising.

⁴⁷ Frede, “Stoics and Skeptics on Clear and Distinct Impressions,” 70.

sunthetikê(i)) (II 275 = SVF II 223 = LS 53 T). What is the simple *phantasia* that man shares with the lower animals? It may be, of course, just a form of subpropositional, perhaps perceptual *phantasia*. But it is to be further noted that Sextus suggests that rational *phantasiai* are *metabatikê*, where this may be explicated in terms of a *phantasia*'s being capable of being correlated to an *axiōma*, given that *metabasis* is said to be the mode of conception for *lekta* (DL VII 53 = SVF 2.87 = LS 39 D 7). The suggestion would then be that the *phantasiai* of irrational creatures are not as such too primitive to express *axiōmata*, but that they occur in intentional systems too primitive to correlate them with *axiōmata*, and are for this reason not truth evaluable. In this way, we might have *phantasiai* qualitatively identical with those of animals, even though ours and not theirs are truth evaluable. The types of *phantasiai* we share need not, then, be restricted to those which are subinferential.⁴⁸ In any case, there is no evidence to guarantee that all rational *phantasiai* express *axiōmata*, and some evidence which suggests that at least some do not, viz., those which are the subpropositional constituents of *phantasiai* expressing simple propositions.⁴⁹

Indeed, far from posing a threat to the account I have advanced, a doctrine of *phantasiai* without truth value finds clear space within the Stoic system in terms of *ISV*. As we have seen, Sextus' own example under (2 d) of a *phantasia* without a truth value, the so-called generic *phantasia*, is difficult to accommodate within the simple correspondence theory he seems to presuppose. But given *ISV*, Sextus' report of *phantasiai* without truth value can be rendered intelligible, even if his examples are not always as useful as we would wish. According to *ISV*, any *phantasia* which fails to be associated with a determinate *axiōmata* will *ipso facto* fail to have truth value. Hence, the existence of such *phantasiai* within the context of the Stoic system does not undermine the truth of *ISV*; on the contrary, it provides further support for this analysis of the truth evaluability of Stoic *phantasiai*.

6.

As our principal source for the character of the Stoic claim that *phantasiai* are truth evaluable, *Adversus Mathematicos* VII 242–46 is both a rich and a problematical passage. The report of the Stoic doctrine within the passage, together with the balance of evidence concerning the role of *phantasiai* within all but the early Stoic system, suggests that *phantasiai* are not inherently true or false, in

⁴⁸ Bury suggests this interpretation in a note to the Loeb translation, 383, n. a.

⁴⁹ Indeed, according to the canonical definition at Sextus, *AM* VIII 70 (SVF II 187 = LS 33C), a *lekton* is that which "subsists in accordance with a rational impression." But since there are certainly *lekta* which are not yet propositional (DL 7.63 = LS 33F; DL 7.64 = SVF II 183 = LS 33G; Stobaeus II 88, 2–6 = SVF III 171 = LS 331), there would seem to be corresponding rational *phantasiai* which are not yet propositional.

terms of some pictorial isomorphism with their causally responsible *hypo-keimena*, but rather that they inherit their truth evaluability from associated *axiōmata*. But this same evidence, then, also suggests that Sextus' illustrations of the doctrine he reports are unfortunate, and indeed that his casting the doctrine in terms of a taxonomy is mistaken. The taxonomical rendering of the Stoic doctrine, which is in any case at best clumsily executed, is here the culprit: once the taxonomy is in place, Sextus needs examples to fill its voids. The very fact that such examples are not forthcoming already points toward the inappropriateness of this taxonomy, and consequently toward the indefensibility of the unduly simple conception of Stoic *phantasiai* which motivates it.⁵⁰

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