

# The Stoic Account of Apprehension

Tamer Nawar

*University of Oxford*

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THIS PAPER EXAMINES THE STOIC ACCOUNT OF APPREHENSION (κατάληψις). Following a seminal article by Michael Frede (1983), it is widely thought that the Stoics maintained a purely externalist causal account of apprehension wherein one may *apprehend* only if one stands in an appropriate causal relation to the object apprehended. An important but unanswered challenge to this view has been offered by David Sedley (2002), who offers reasons to suppose that the Stoics (or at least Zeno, the founder of the Stoa) did *not* make such a causal stipulation. I offer a defence of the traditional, causal reading against the challenges raised by Sedley but also argue, against the traditional view, that the Stoic account incorporated an internalist element. On the hybrid account defended here, in order to apprehend, not only must the agent stand in an appropriate causal relation to the object apprehended, but the agent's appearance of the object must also be *clear* (a feature which is accessible to the epistemic agent). The traditional scholarly view rejects internalist interpretations because it is thought that such interpretations cannot make sense of the Stoics' discussion of the "automatic assent" produced by kataleptic appearances, and a purely externalist view is taken to be charitable insofar as it saves the Stoics from a vicious regress which they would otherwise face (were they internalists). I defend an internalist interpretation against both these charges. The internalist element embraced by the Stoics does not lead to the problems it is often thought to, and the account defended here not only does justice to the textual evidence but also sheds light on the Stoic debates with their sceptical opponents and grants the Stoics an epistemic account fit for purpose.

## 1. A Summary of the Evidence

Apprehension (κατάληψις) lies at the centre of Stoic epistemology.<sup>1</sup> Apprehension occurs when one gives assent to a kataleptic appearance

1. As commentators have noted, apprehension (κατάληψις) is akin to (how we typically view) knowledge (e.g. Annas 1990: 187). For the Stoics there was also a greater cognitive achievement yet, wisdom or expert knowledge (ἐπιστήμη); however, it is not my focus here.

(φαντασία καταληπτική, S.E.M. 7.151; 8.397). For the Stoics, an appearance is kataleptic *iff* it:

- (i) ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος (LS trans. “arises from what is”);
- (ii) κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη (LS trans. “is stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is”);
- (iii) ὅποια οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος (LS trans. “is of such a kind as could not arise from what is not”).<sup>2</sup>

These conditions are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for an appearance to be kataleptic. While interpretation is contentious, on a surface reading: (i) seems to specify that the appearance should be appropriately caused; (ii) seems to specify that the appearance should be true (in virtue of its content being true); and (iii), which may have been a later addition (Cic. *Acad.* 2.77–8; M. 7.253), *seems* to specify that

2. M. 7.248: ἡ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος καὶ κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη, ὅποια οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος. Cf. M. 7.402, 426.  
 M. 11.183: [...] καταληπτικὴ ἐστὶ, τῷ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος γενέσθαι καὶ κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένως καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένως.  
 D.L. 7.46: ἡ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπεσφραγισμένην καὶ ἐναπομεμαγμένην.  
 D.L. 7.50: [ἡ] φαντασία ἡ ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος κατὰ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναποτετυπωμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη, οἷα οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος. This is repeated word for word at *PH.* 2.4.  
 D.L. 7.46 and M. 11.183 offer only the first two clauses; the other reports (M. 7.248, 402, 426; *PH.* 2.4; D.L. 7.50) offer all three. As regards translation, one might wish to take into account the following examples:  
 Frede (1999: 302): “it comes about from what is [...] it is formed in exact accordance with what is [...] and (it is) such as it would not come about from what is not”.  
 Annas and Barnes (2000: 68): “comes from something real, is imprinted and stamped in accordance with the real object itself, and is such as would not come from anything unreal”.  
 Sedley (2002: 135): “from what is [...] moulded and stamped in accordance with *that very thing* [emphasis mine] which is [...] of a kind which could not arise from what is not”.  
 Bett (2005: 50): “from a real thing and is stamped and impressed in accordance with just *that* real thing, and is of such a kind as could not come about from a thing that was not real”.

the appearance should instantiate a certain property (“is of a kind”) which it could not instantiate if (i) were not met.

We also find that some seemingly distinctive quality or qualities are predicated of kataleptic appearances. Thus, Sextus Empiricus tells us that “the Stoics say that the person who has the kataleptic appearance skilfully gets in touch with the hidden difference in the objects, since this kind of appearance has a certain peculiarity (*ιδίωμα*), compared with other appearances, like what horned snakes have compared with other snakes” (M. 7.252; cf. Cic. *Acad.* 2.84). He goes on to say that:

this one [the kataleptic appearance], they say, being clear (*ἐναργής*) and striking (*πληκτική*), all but grabs us by the hair and draws us into assent, needing nothing else to strike us in this way or to suggest its difference from the others [*i.e.* the non-kataleptic appearances] (M. 7.257–8, trans. Bett; cf. M. 7.405).

This passage succinctly captures several of the qualities often attributed to kataleptic appearances in our sources: the manner in which they command assent (M. 257; cf. *Acad.* 2.38); their *clarity/evidentness* (*ἐνάργεια*)<sup>3</sup> or *being clear/evident* (*ἐναργής*, M. 7.227, 257); their *being striking* (*πληκτική*, M. 258, 403); their *being intense* (*ἔντονος*, M. 7.408); their *being vivid* (*τρανής*); and perhaps also their *being distinct* (*ἔκτυπος*, D.L. 7.46; cf. M. 7.171). While various predicates are employed, it is not immediately clear to what degree the terms vary in sense.

## 2. Scholarly Views of Stoic Epistemology

I will first outline and clarify the received views in the literature (section 2.1). I will then (section 2.2) go on to indicate some of the problems certain causal externalist interpretations face and finally

3. I use the somewhat barbaric term ‘evidentness’ rather than ‘evidence’ as these days we most often use ‘evidence’ as a concrete noun for a *piece* of evidence (*e.g.* *OED*, s.v. 4, 5a.–c., 6a.–c.), but this is misleading here.

(section 2.3) briefly discuss some of the problems raised against causal interpretations in general by Sedley (2002).

### 2.1 Frede's (Doubly) Causal, Externalist Account

Much of the literature follows the lead of Michael Frede (1983) and subscribes to a causal, purely externalist interpretation of apprehension. On Frede's view, for *S*'s appearance that *p* to be kataleptic it needs to have "a certain kind of causal history" (1983: 71ff), *i. e.* to be appropriately caused (presumably by the truthmaker of *p*). Call this a *simple causal theory*. However, Frede thinks that not only should a kataleptic appearance have the appropriate sort of causal history, it should also have the right sort of *causal role*: the appropriate causal influence over *S*. On Frede's view, "the suggestion, then, is that the distinctive mark of cognitive impressions [*i. e.* kataleptic appearances] is a causal feature in that it makes the mind react in a distinctive way" (1983: 84).<sup>4</sup> Frede's account may thus be called *doubly causal*.<sup>5</sup> The kataleptic appearance is appropriately caused, but it also has a distinctive causal influence in that it causes assent in the subject.

On Frede's view, both the causal history and the causal influence (or that by which the causal influence is exercised) are *not* features which *S* need be directly aware of or have access to (1983: 83), and, accordingly, Frede understands the Stoic account as being purely externalist. Such an interpretation has, Frede thinks, certain advantages. In particular, it is charitable insofar as it allows the Stoics to avoid a regress problem which they would face if they were internalists (1983: 83).<sup>6</sup> Further, Frede takes the externalist interpretation to be supported by the textual evidence wherein kataleptic appearances are described as forcing our assent. Most of the scholarship has followed Frede in

4. Cf. Striker (1990: 152–5).

5. I introduce the nomenclature because the distinction between the *simple causal* and the *doubly causal* accounts is often not sufficiently marked in the literature.

6. I defer discussion of the precise nature of the putative regress until section 3.2 below.

maintaining a purely externalist interpretation: either a *doubly causal* externalist interpretation (like Frede's) or else a *simple causal theory*.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.2 Criticisms of Purely Externalist Causal Interpretations

While purely externalist interpretations form the dominant view, they suffer from several problems. The first problem concerns the *doubly causal view* advanced by Frede. Frede identifies the distinctive quality of kataleptic appearances as their causing of automatic assent, and it is common among those following Frede to maintain that kataleptic appearances are *always* followed by assent (*e. g.* Striker 1990). However, there are numerous cases discussed in the texts where kataleptic appearances are not assented to. For instance, Menelaus had a kataleptic appearance of Helen but did not assent to it, and the same occurred with Admetus and Alcestis (*M.* 7.253–7). This being so, being followed by assent does not seem to be a necessary feature of kataleptic appearances (*cf.* *M.* 7.405).<sup>8</sup>

The second problem is that if the externalist interpretations are correct, then the Academic attacks miss the mark. Such attacks generally assume some form of internalism in the notion of apprehension they are attacking and ask, for instance, how one will tell apart the kataleptic from the non-kataleptic (*e. g.* *M.* 7.408–11, 415–22; *Acad.* 2.40ff). If the externalist interpretation is correct, then the entire debate seems puzzling.

7. Thus Long & Sedley (1987), Barnes (1990: 131–7), Striker (1990; 1996), Frede (1999); Lefebvre (2007), and Reinhardt (2011) all follow Frede (1983) in attributing to the Stoics a doubly causal theory. Annas (1990) is notable in maintaining that the early Stoics (namely, Zeno) held an indeterminate position between a purely externalist simple causal theory and an internalist simple causal theory (the latter is akin to the view I am here defending).

8. This shows only that kataleptic appearances are not necessarily followed by assent, not that kataleptic appearances fail to cause assent. However, as mentioned above, those holding the doubly causal interpretation often seem to think that kataleptic appearances are always followed by assent, and, even if they were willing to concede that that supposition is mistaken, they would still owe some account of what has occurred in those cases wherein kataleptic appearances do not result in assent.

The third problem is that our sources attribute clarity, distinctness, evidentness, and the like to kataleptic appearances (see above) and this sounds obviously, undeniably internalist because it is natural enough to suppose that if *A* is clear/evident to *S*, then this is a feature of *A* which is accessible to *S*. Those who think that the Stoics are externalists must make intelligible the notion that *A* being clear/evident to *S* is compatible with the clarity/evidentness of *A* *not* being something *S* is even potentially aware of.<sup>9</sup>

The fourth problem is that the purely externalist interpretation poses wider difficulties for Stoic epistemology.<sup>10</sup> If one should assent only to kataleptic appearances and *S* is not able to directly tell whether an appearance is kataleptic, there does not seem to be a procedure which *S* can follow so as to attain the aim of assenting only to kataleptic appearances (and the wider aim of believing truths and not believing falsehoods).

### 2.3 Objections to Causal Interpretations

In an important piece, Sedley (2002) offers several as yet unanswered criticisms of causal interpretations in general (he focuses on the *simple* causal aspect), and these motivate him to suggest a non-causal account of the kataleptic appearance.<sup>11</sup> Sedley's non-causal interpretation

9. This has not been done. Either the attributions of clarity, etc. are simply neglected, the internalist character of clarity is neglected, or an unsuccessful attempt is made to parse the talk of clarity into externalist terms (*e.g.* Frede 1983: 74–8, 83–5).

10. Cf. Perin (2005).

11. Drawing attention to the representational sense of 'ἀπό' in Greek, Sedley (2002: 142ff) argues that, as far as Zeno is concerned, the preposition 'ἀπό' should not be understood as 'from' but as 'of'. This prompts a non-causal, representational reading (if *A* is ἀπό *B*, *A* is "of" *B*: *A* represents *B*). On Sedley's interpretation, (i) establishes veridicality (cf. Frede 1983: 79–81). It specifies that the appearance should be true (it does *not* say that the appearance should be appropriately caused). Meanwhile, (ii) "limits itself to describing the graphic qualities with which the cognitive impression's representation of how things are is carried out. It does not just convey in barest outline how things are, but vividly portrays the thing or situation in panoramic detail" (2002: 147–8).

is meant to apply only to Zeno and not to later Stoics (such as Chrysippus);<sup>12</sup> however, since the principal problems Sedley raises for a causal interpretation centre on the definition of the kataleptic appearance (especially on (i) and (ii)) and seem to be entirely general, they would seem to apply not just to Zeno but to all Stoics clinging to the definition of the kataleptic appearance offered above.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, any causal interpretation of any Stoic (be it Zeno, Chrysippus, or some later Stoic) will have to respond to the worries raised by Sedley.

The first problem Sedley raises concerns superfluity. (i) specifies that in order to be kataleptic, an appearance should be "ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος". This has often been taken to specify that the appearance should be appropriately caused by its object (*e.g.* LS: "arises from what is"): if *A* is ἀπό ("from") *B*, then *A* is caused by *B*. Given that the ὑπάρχον ("what is") is usually understood to mean something like a "real entity" (as opposed to some non-existent, see n2 above), then, Sedley (2002: 137) complains, the condition hardly needed specifying. Non-existents do not have causal powers; hence, they cannot cause appearances. One might have an appearance of a centaur, but one cannot have an appearance caused by a centaur, for the simple reason that they do not exist.<sup>14</sup>

The second problem raised by Sedley concerns whether a causal interpretation unacceptably limits the scope of kataleptic appearances and of apprehension. In particular, one might think that a causal

12. Sedley recognises that later Stoics maintained a causal account (2002: 136, 139, 148).

13. Others, notably Perin (*e.g.* 2005: 385), have also objected to causal interpretations. Unlike Sedley, Perin seems to offer his non-causal interpretation as one which applies to later Stoics, but, as far as I am aware, only Sedley offers a detailed discussion of the objections to reading (i) causally, and that is why I discuss his treatment in detail.

14. This point applies, derivatively, to (iii). There are difficulties concerning precisely what ontological status fictional creatures, such as centaurs, have in Stoic ontology, but for our purposes it suffices to note that for the Stoics everything that exists (ὑπάρχειν) is corporeal, all causes are bodies (Stob. 1.138.14–139.14 = LS 55A; M. 9.211), and incorporeals have no causal efficacy (*Acad.* 1.39; M. 8.263).

interpretation limits the scope of apprehension to instances of perception.<sup>15</sup> If apprehension occurs only by means of kataleptic appearances, and one can have a kataleptic appearance only if it is appropriately caused, and only perceptions are appropriately caused, *then* (the thought goes) it is hard to see how (*e.g.*) theological truths or mathematical truths might be apprehended. Accordingly, Sedley proposes that excising the causal element easily allows for non-perceptual kataleptic appearances and hence easily allows for apprehension of (*e.g.*) theological truths, or the truths of logic or mathematics.

### 3. A Causal and Internalist Account of Apprehension

I will argue that the definition of the kataleptic appearance is best read as attributing to the Stoics a (simple) causal account which incorporated an internalist element.<sup>16</sup> A kataleptic appearance must be appropriately *caused* (by the object of the appearance), but the appearance must also be *clear* (a feature which is accessible to the agent). In what follows, I shall defend this account — which marries an internalist element to a stipulation of appropriate causation — from the criticisms levelled against both causal and internalist interpretations, and I will show it to be superior to its rivals.

On my reading, we should render the three conditions thought individually necessary and jointly sufficient for an appearance to be kataleptic as follows:

- (i) ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος, “is caused by what is” (cf. LS: “arises from what is”);
- (ii) κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη, “is stamped and impressed in

15. Sedley (2002: 150); cf. Brennan (1996).

16. What I have in mind here is something akin to what is nowadays most usually called “access-internalism” or “accessibilism”, which holds that the justifier of a belief is something that the agent has access to.

accordance with *that very thing* which is” (cf. LS: “is stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is”);

- (iii) ὁποῖα οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος, “is of such a kind that it could not arise from what is not” (cf. LS: “[is] of such a kind as could not arise from what is not”).

Thus (i) specifies that the appearance should be appropriately caused, and (ii) specifies that the appearance must represent its object (and cause) with suitable accuracy.<sup>17</sup> Finally, by saying “of such a kind”, (iii) invokes the distinctive quality (or qualities) attributed to kataleptic appearances. This *differentia* is the property of *being clear/evident*; it is this, along with the corresponding accounts of kataleptic appearances as being *clear/evident*, that marks the internalist element, and detecting this property allows the agent who is having the appearance to differentiate between kataleptic and non-kataleptic appearances.<sup>18</sup>

17. It is usual to speak of a truth stipulation, but I prefer to talk of *accuracy*. A kataleptic appearance should be formed *in accordance with* (κατὰ, LSJ s.v., B.IV) its object (and cause), and I would suggest that the degree of *accordance* or *accuracy* envisioned in (ii) goes beyond mere truth. I might have a belief that the Eiffel Tower is between 1 and 10,000 metres in height, and this belief might be justified, appropriately caused, etc., and, of course, true. However, in being so imprecise it is not particularly useful and seems to be epistemically deficient. For the Stoics, an appearance with such imprecise content would *not*, I think, be a potential kataleptic appearance, for we find reports that a kataleptic appearance must be sufficiently accurate or precise (ἀκριβής, M. 7.251; cf. ἄκρος, M. 7.248), and talk of kataleptic appearances being produced skillfully (τεχνικῶς, M. 7.248, 250, 252) may also capture this aspect. Further, claims that kataleptic appearances capture the *peculiarities* (ιδιώματα) of their objects (M. 7.250–2; cf. Acad. 1.42) suggest a high level of accuracy and make sense when we appreciate that the Stoics were particularly interested in kataleptic appearances which allowed one to *identify* the object in question (it is frequently assumed that part of the salient content of a kataleptic appearance is something along the lines of identity statement, for instance <this is Socrates>, Acad. 2.85–6; cf. M. 7.410). The content of a photograph must not only be true but must also be detailed and accurate so as to allow one to identify the person photographed. The same holds, I think, with kataleptic appearances.

18. On the reading I propose, the Greek of (iii) is not entirely lacking in awkwardness. However, this reading of (iii) has precedent (see n2 above) and, as is often acknowledged (*e.g.* Sedley 2002: 147), there is *some* awkwardness in the Greek on all hitherto proposed readings of (iii) (cf. n32 below).

In addition to doing justice to the textual evidence, such an interpretation must attempt to respond to some of the objections levelled against both causal and internalist interpretations. This assumes central importance because these objections are the principal motivators for alternative accounts. To recap, the noteworthy objections raised against a (simple) causal interpretation were as follows:

**(OBJ<sub>1</sub>)** the superfluity of (i); if (i) means that the appearance should be caused by something that exists (as opposed to something that does not exist), then it hardly needed specifying;

**(OBJ<sub>2</sub>)** a causal interpretation seems to limit the scope of kataleptic appearances to instances of perception, and this is too narrow (*e.g.* it raises problems for apprehension of theological matters);

Further, the objections against an internalist interpretation were as follows:

**(OBJ<sub>3</sub>)** a worry about how to make sense of the talk of “automatic assent” (such talk was taken by Frede to indicate externalism);

**(OBJ<sub>4</sub>)** a regress problem: if the Stoics are internalists they face a vicious regress problem (for the details of which see section 3.2), but if they are externalists they may avoid it.

In what follows, I first (section 3.1) defend a causal interpretation of kataleptic appearances in general against (OBJ 1 & 2). I then (section 3.2), discuss the distinctive quality that kataleptic appearances have

The benefits of the interpretation proposed here do, I think, outweigh the awkwardness.

of being clear/evident while responding to the objections to an internalist interpretation (OBJ 3 & 4).

### 3.1 Causation

A defence of a causal interpretation requires, in the first instance, a defence of a causal reading of the preposition ‘ἀπό’ employed in (i). The preposition ‘ἀπό’ has both causal (LSJ s.v., III.1–6) and representational (LSJ s.v., III.7) senses, and Sedley (2002) rightly draws attention to the latter sense (which had previously been neglected in the relevant literature).<sup>19</sup> However, it seems best to take the primary intended sense of ‘ἀπό’ in (i) to be causal. The causal sense of ‘ἀπό’ is the more common, but, more significantly, it seems fairly clear that this was the manner in which ‘ἀπό’ was understood in relevant contexts by Chrysippus. Pointedly, when describing a hallucination, Chrysippus uses ‘ἀπό’ to discuss the causal origin of such a mental state: “Imagination is an empty attraction, an affection in the soul which arises *from* (ἀπό) no impressor” (φανταστικὸν δέ ἐστι διάκενος ἔλκυσμός, πάθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἀπ’ οὐδενὸς φανταστοῦ γινόμενον Aetius 4.12.1ff = LS 39B). Further, Chrysippus’ account is explicitly causal for, in describing appearances (in general), he privileges a causal role, and defines an appearance as “an affect occurring in the soul, which reveals in itself its cause” (φαντασία μὲν οὖν ἐστι πάθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γινόμενον, ἐνδεικνύμενον ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ πεποιητὸς Aetius 4.12.1ff = LS 39B).<sup>20</sup> Insofar as kataleptic appearances are appearances, it seems clear that, at least for Chrysippus, appropriate causation is essential to them.

Further, notice that while on my interpretation (i) stipulates causation, (ii) adds further support for this. (ii) stipulates that a kataleptic appearance need be “stamped and impressed in accordance with *that very thing* which is” (κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεσφραγισμένη). Not only does this suggest an accuracy

19. Sedley (2002: 142) points to this representational use of ‘ἀπό’ at *M.* 7.196–7 (a Cyrenaic discussion), 244–5; 8.67; one might also adduce *M.* 7.220.

20. Cf. LS: “an affect occurring in the soul, which reveals itself and its cause”.

stipulation, but the talk of “stamping” and “impressing” also suggests that the appearance has to be *caused* in the right way. This is because something leaving an *impression* or *imprint* seems to be an instance of causation *par excellence*. What causes a footprint? A foot.

These are some *prima facie* reasons in favour of a causal reading (at least from Chrysippus onwards).<sup>21</sup> Those who reject a causal reading are motivated primarily by certain problems it is meant to occasion. The first problem, (OBJ1), focuses upon the supposed superfluity of (i) if it is read causally. If (i) means that the appearance should be caused by something that exists (as opposed to something non-existent), then it hardly needed specifying (Sedley 2002: 137). In response one may agree that (i) does indeed seem superfluous if it is meant to specify that kataleptic appearances are caused by what exists rather than by what does not exist. However, one should not read (i) in isolation but together with the second clause, (ii). The second clause specifies that the kataleptic appearance “is stamped and impressed in accordance with *that very thing* which is” (κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπάρχον ἐναπομεμαγμένη καὶ ἐναπεςφραγισμένη).<sup>22</sup> When (i) and (ii) are read together, we can appreciate, I think, that (i) specifies that a kataleptic appearance must be caused not by something or other, but rather by precisely *that thing* which is the object of the appearance (*i. e.* which the appearance represents). Thus the mention of the ὑπάρχον in (i) is not intended to establish that the appearance must be caused by something that exists, as if this were a novel claim; rather, it is meant to establish a referent that will be picked up in the second clause. Thus, the first clause specifies that a kataleptic appearance has to be caused by something.

21. These considerations are applicable to those (*e. g.* Perin 2005) who see Chrysippus and later Stoics as holding a non-causal account. Sedley takes the first of the considerations I mention into account, and, as mentioned above, his non-causal interpretation is meant to apply only to Zeno. Stoic positions often evolved over time, and a shift in sense between Zeno and Chrysippus (as Sedley proposes) cannot be ruled out. However, this would have been a very dramatic change, and I myself see no compelling case to suppose that such a shift did occur.

22. Cf. LS: “is stamped and impressed exactly in accordance with what is”.

What thing? This is revealed by the second clause: that thing which the appearance is impressed and stamped in accordance with (*i. e.* that thing which the appearance accurately represents).

The second worry, (OBJ2), claims that a causal interpretation leaves the Stoics without apprehension outside of instances of perception and thus without apprehension of non-empirical matters (such as theological or mathematical matters). Were this true, it would be a flaw in the Stoic position; moreover, there is textual evidence claiming that apprehension comes about not only by perception but also by reason (D.L. 7.52; cf. *Acad.* 2.42). This seems to indicate that there is non-perceptual apprehension; hence non-perceptual kataleptic appearances; hence the causal account of the kataleptic appearance cannot be right.

There are three inferences here, and each may, I think, be resisted. First, even if lacking non-perceptual kataleptic appearances is a weakness in the Stoic position, this may simply be an accurate reflection of the Stoa. While non-perceptual appearances are mentioned (D.L. 7.51), there is no explicit discussion of non-perceptual kataleptic appearances. Despite the talk of apprehension occurring by means of reason, the Stoics associated apprehension closely with perception, and certain passages imply that kataleptic appearances were a sub-set of perceptual appearances (*e. g.* *M.* 7.424; *Acad.* 1.40–1).<sup>23</sup> Most plausibly, the Stoics developed their epistemology with an eye towards accounting for knowledge of empirical matters, and these are the cases discussed in greatest detail.<sup>24</sup> (OBJ2) rests upon it being a worry that one cannot account for knowledge of (*e. g.*) mathematics or logic. Nonetheless, a defence of the Stoics is easily possible here: if

23. See Barnes (1982: 10–11); Frede (1983: 73); cf. *PH* 2.95; *M.* 7.25; 8.140–1.

24. On the basis of the evidence about Sphaerus (D.L. 7.177), Brennan (1996) argues that the Stoics are committed to non-perceptual kataleptic appearances because the sage assents to a kataleptic appearance that such-and-such is reasonable (1996: 323–6). However, the textual evidence is vexed and even if reason is involved in such appearances, such appearances need not always be construed as non-perceptual (for instance, one might think the evaluative properties detected are not queer but rather natural properties).

what they sought to explain was our apprehension of empirical truths, then their focus on such matters, to the exclusion of the truths of (*e.g.*) logic, seems like less of a problem.<sup>25</sup>

Secondly, there being non-perceptual instances of apprehension need not entail that there are non-perceptual kataleptic appearances. *Even if* all kataleptic appearances are perceptual appearances, there may still be non-perceptual instances of apprehension; namely, we may apprehend things without perceiving them or having a kataleptic appearance. Although at *M.* 7.151 apprehension is said to be assent to a kataleptic appearance (see above), it is not clear that this is meant to provide a conclusive or comprehensive account of apprehension. Thus, one might raise the case of our apprehension of (*e.g.*) logical truths not so much to challenge a causal interpretation of the definition of kataleptic appearances but instead to challenge the definition of apprehension as assent to a kataleptic appearance.<sup>26</sup> That is to say, assuming that all kataleptic appearances are perceptual appearances *and* that the Stoics were in fact concerned about allowing non-perceptual apprehension, *then* the Stoics may well have developed a supplementary account of apprehension, one that allowed for apprehension by some means other than assenting to a kataleptic appearance. This would explain why, for instance, we find textual evidence of (*e.g.*) *preconceptions* (προλήψεις) being discussed by Chrysippus as a criterion of truth (*e.g.* *Alex. De mixt.* 217.2–4 = LS 48C5; cf. *D.L.* 7.54) for less straightforwardly perceptual matters and why we do find some evidence discussing apprehension of (*e.g.*) preconceptions (*e.g.* *Cic. Top.* 31). A need for allowing apprehension by means other than kataleptic appearances might have been a feature of the Stoic theory early on, or it might have been impressed upon the

Stoics by their opponents appealing to such considerations as those raised here.

Thirdly, suppose that apprehension were limited to assent to kataleptic appearances *and* that there were non-perceptual kataleptic appearances. (OBJ2) sees the second conjunct as weighing decisively against the causal interpretation; a causal account is supposed to leave no room for non-perceptual kataleptic appearances. However, this is too hasty. Appropriate causation requires only that the fact that *p* should (appropriately) cause *S* to think that *p*; while appropriate causation does seem to be an essential feature of perception, not all cases of appropriate causation need be cases of perception. One might have an appearance that *p* that is appropriately caused by the fact that *p*, and yet the appearance is not an instance of perception (at least not perception as we tend to understand it).<sup>27</sup>

Finally, we should notice that *even if* all kataleptic appearances are perceptual, this may not be quite so problematic for the Stoics as proponents of (OBJ2) suppose. (OBJ2) assumes that, on a causal interpretation, the Stoics are left without kataleptic appearances of a number of important matters because all the relevant properties (*e.g.* mathematical properties, theological properties, and probably also moral properties) are *queer* non-natural properties; they are queer insofar as, among other things, they are properties with no causal powers and so cannot be perceived. However, it might simply be the case that the Stoics took (at least some of) the relevant properties to be natural. Such a response seems to be more or less plausible depending upon subject matter (it is, I admit, less plausible with regard to mathematical truths), but it is especially plausible, and thus germane to the Stoics, with regard to apprehension of theological matters (for the Stoics, theology was among the most important topics).

25. This is how causal accounts of knowledge developed in the mid-twentieth century (cf. Goldman 1967: 357).

26. The Stoics may have recognised more than one sense of 'κατάληψις', and we do find talk of how one might be said to apprehend (καταλαμβάνειν) a thesis without believing it (*PH* 2.1–12).

27. For instance, in discussing divination, Posidonius seems to envision the truthmaker of *p* causing the mind to think that *p* non-perceptually and seems to see this as a rational appearance (*Cic. Div.* 1.129). Matters are difficult, but I put forward this third option to suggest that there *could* be apprehension in such cases insofar as there seems to be conceptual room for it in the Stoic account. For detailed discussion of divination, see Brittain (2011).



For the Stoics, God does not lie beyond the realm we inhabit; He is immanent rather than transcendent, and He is often discussed primarily in terms of His causal powers and as being the supreme cause.<sup>28</sup> This being so, and bearing in mind the claim that every appearance reveals its cause (Aetius 4.12.1ff = LS 39B [quoted above]), I see nothing to rule out the possibility that *S* could (on a causal interpretation) have a kataleptic appearance of God's existence or His attributes through God's causal influence (cf. S.E.M. 9.75–6). While the exact details of such a proposal would have to be explored elsewhere, a kataleptic appearance that the gods are providential (benevolent, etc.) would be caused by the fact that the gods are providential (benevolent, etc.).

We may thus observe that various replies are possible to (OBJ2). On the first, the Stoics simply did not devise their theory of apprehension and the kataleptic appearance with an eye towards non-empirical matters; on the second, if we suppose that kataleptic appearances are perceptual, then we might suppose that there are instances of apprehension that are attained by some means other than by assenting to kataleptic appearances; on the third, supposing that there are non-perceptual kataleptic appearances need not count against a causal interpretation, because not all appropriately caused appearances need be perceptual; on the fourth, for the Stoics the empirical may be broader in scope than typically supposed. Accordingly, the Stoics may have held simply that we *can* have perceptually based kataleptic appearances of a wide range of matters (especially theological matters) because the relevant properties are natural properties.

For my purposes here (namely, defending a causal interpretation), one need not decide between these responses. However, it is striking that there is no evidence that the Stoics appealed to the

28. For the Stoics, God is the active principle and cause (τὸ ποιῶν, D.L. 7.134); immanent rather than transcendent insofar as He is mixed in with matter (e.g. Alex. Aphr. *Mixt.* 225.1–2 = LS 45H; Stob. 1.138.14–139.14 = LS 55A; M. 8.263, 9.211; Acad. 1.39); causally responsible for bringing about the order of the universe (e.g. Aetius 1.7.33 = LS 46A); and, in fact, the cause of all things (Plut. *Stoic. repugn.* 1056B = SVF 2.997 [LS 55R part.]; Seneca *Ep.* 65.12; Stob. 1.31.11 = SVF 2.1062; Augustine *Civ. Dei* 5.8).

truths of mathematics or logic in order to defeat global scepticism (e.g. the thesis that “nothing can be apprehended”, Acad. 1.45, 2.83) as Augustine later does (*Contra Academicos* 3.21ff). That they did not do so, coupled with a seeming reticence to talk of our having kataleptic appearances of mathematical or logical truths (i.e. those cases which a causal account seems to most struggle with),<sup>29</sup> does — I think — suggest that it did not occur to them that their theory of apprehension might appeal to such truths.

In sum, there is strong textual evidence favouring a causal interpretation (at least from Chrysippus onwards), and the objections raised against a causal interpretation may be overcome.<sup>30</sup> Further, one should notice that a causal interpretation also seems to attribute to the (relevant) Stoics a stronger position than existing non-causal interpretations do. For instance, on Sedley's non-causal interpretation of Zeno, (i) and (ii) amount to stipulating that *S* has a kataleptic appearance that *p* iff *p* is true and *S*'s appearance that *p* is vivid; however, this allows that a person who assents to a vivid hallucination which happens to be true will count as having apprehended. Even if one were to attempt to ward off such a result by appealing to (iii) (for instance, by reading (iii) as claiming that kataleptic appearances are of a kind the content of which could not but be true), this would leave unexplained why truth and vivacity (or evidentness/clarity)<sup>31</sup> should

29. Sextus complains that on the Stoic account one cannot have an appearance or apprehension of a proof (ἀπόδειξις), because it is incorporeal and has no causal efficacy (M. 8.400–410). The Stoics are forced, he says, to make obscure claims to the effect that appearances are formed “in relation to them [incorporeals like proofs] but are not caused by them” (ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς [...] καὶ οὐχ ὑπ’ αὐτῶν, M. 8.409). While this provides some evidence for Stoic interest in the epistemology of logical truths, the crucial point to notice is that the Stoics seem to have employed a curious locution so as to avoid the use of ‘ἀπό’ in a non-causal context, and this seems to provide further support for a causal interpretation of ‘ἀπό’ in (i).

30. As remarked above, I see no strong evidence that a dramatic change did occur, and I take Chrysippus to have been clarifying and refining (rather than revolutionising or significantly revising) Zeno's account.

31. Sedley does not say too much about how vivacity is to be read from the definition or, indeed, much about the nature of vivacity (but I take him to have

occur alongside each other and brings its own set of problems.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, a causal interpretation not only respects the textual evidence and overcomes the objections typically raised against it, but also allows the Stoics a plausible and attractive thought. In order to apprehend something, it is not enough to be right or have the right sort of *feeling* (which might occur by blind luck); one also needs something more: one must also have the appropriate causal relationship with that which one is right about.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2 The Internalist Element: The Distinctive Quality of Kataleptic Appearances

On the interpretation I offer, (iii), “is of such a kind that it could not arise from what is not” (ὅποια οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο ἀπὸ μὴ ὑπάρχοντος),<sup>34</sup> makes two claims: first, that kataleptic appearances are of a kind and share a distinctive quality (which, relying on the other textual evidence, I argue is that of being clear/evident);<sup>35</sup> and second, that only appearances which are appropriately caused (by the object of the appearance) are of this kind and *could* have this distinctive quality (on this last, see section 4). On the account I defend here, what kataleptic appearances share in common, beyond their being appropriately caused (as per (i)), and being accurate (as per (ii)), is their being *clear/evident*. It was common in Hellenistic philosophy to appeal to *clarity/evidentness* (ἐνάργεια) when discussing the criterion of truth (e.g. M.

in mind something akin to what I discuss below as the phenomenological sense of ‘evident’).

32. Anyone proposing that (i) amounts to a truth-stipulation will, it seems, face a greater difficulty in making sense of both the scope of the modal operator in (iii) and what it adds to (i) and (ii) than the interpretation defended here does.

33. As we shall see below (section 4), this emphasis on appropriate causation also provides an answer of sorts (though not, I shall argue, an entirely satisfactory one) as to why the relevant features (accuracy, clarity/evidentness, and being appropriately caused) are meant to coincide in kataleptic appearances.

34. Cf. LS: “[is] of such a kind as could not arise from what is not”.

35. Thus kataleptic appearances capture the *peculiarities* (ιδιώματα) of their object(s) (see above), but they also have their own *peculiarity* (ιδίωμα): being clear/evident (M. 7.252).

7.141–260),<sup>36</sup> and the textual evidence for attributing the quality of being clear/evident to Stoic kataleptic appearances is strong. We find that kataleptic appearances are said to be *clear/evident* (ἐναργής, M. 7.227, 257) or possess *clarity/evidentness* (ἐνάργεια, cf. περιφάνεια, M. 7.242), and Cicero also talks of *perspicuity* (*perspicuitas*) and *evidentness* (*evidentia*) and of appearances being *perspicuous* (*perspicuus*) or *evident* (*evidens*, e.g. *Acad.* 2.17, 45–6). As mentioned above, we also find additional terms: kataleptic appearances are described as being *striking* (πληκτική, M. 258, 403), *intense* (ἐντονος, M. 7.408), and *clear* (τρανής, M. 7.258, 404; cf. D.L. 7.46).

We do not find any attempt at a clear distinction between the relevant terms in our sources, and they seem to have been used nigh on interchangeably.<sup>37</sup> However, we would do well to notice a crucial ambiguity here. A term like ‘ἐναργής’ might be rendered as ‘plain’ (e.g. Bett 2005: 52), ‘evident’, or indeed, ‘self-evident’ (e.g. LS 1: 246), but there are various ways of construing what such talk amounts to. In particular, such terms might be used to express a *phenomenological* property or an *evidential* or *justificatory* property. As far as the phenomenological aspect is concerned, consider the case of a person with a visual impairment who requires glasses. Such a person needs glasses for their visual appearances to be *clear*; lacking glasses, their visual appearances are often blurred or otherwise unclear. As far as the evidential aspect is concerned, we are concerned with that which justifies belief. When *p* is evident to *S*, then *S* has (good) grounds for believing that *p* — i. e. *S* is justified in believing that *p*. The two features, the phenomenological and the evidential, should not be conflated, but they are *not* easy to separate with regard to the issue at hand (consider the way we talk of *seeing the truth*, an expression which often seems to capture both features), and the Stoics may not have clearly distinguished them.

36. We find this in Theophrastus (M. 7.217–18), the Cyrenaics (Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1120e–f), and Epicurus (e.g. D.L. 10.34, 52, 82; M. 7.211–213).

37. This applies also, I think, to ‘δῆλον’ and ‘πρόδηλον’ (terms used by Epictetus, but generally less common in our earlier Stoic sources).

In order to maintain externalism, scholarly interpretations typically minimise attention to the textual evidence describing kataleptic appearances as *clear/evident*, or else attempt to parse such terms in an externalist-friendly way.<sup>38</sup> To do that successfully would require an explanation of how *S*'s appearance *A* might be clear/evident without *A*'s clarity/evidentness being *accessible* to *S*. This has not been provided in the literature; neither is it clear that it could be provided (probably not for the evidential aspect, and certainly not, I think, for the phenomenological aspect).<sup>39</sup> Construing talk of clarity, evidentness, and the like in an internalist manner is natural (cf. Burnyeat 1982: 194).<sup>40</sup> For instance, if *A* is clear/evident (evidential notion), then it seems that *A* is evident to some agent *S* in such a way that it seems to *S* that *A* obtains or is true. If *A* is clear/evident (phenomenological notion), then it seems that *A* is clear to someone; there is some agent *S* such that *S* is aware (at least potentially) of *A*'s clarity. It is in these ways that our ancient sources discuss clarity/evidentness. Thus, we are told of appearances "*being found clear/evident and striking*" (ἐναργεῖς καὶ πληκτικὰς εὐρίσκεσθαι, *M.* 7.403). Similarly, we are told that just

38. Thus Frede (1983); Lefebvre (2007); Reinhardt (2011).

39. There *are* ways of rendering talk of *evidence* in an externalist-friendly manner. For instance, one can make a distinction between objective and subjective notions of evidence. On an objective view of evidence, *A* is evidence of *B* iff the truth or obtainment of *A* sufficiently probabilifies the truth or obtainment of *B* (no one need be aware of the relation). On a subjective view of evidence, *A* is evidence of *B* (to *S*) iff the truth or obtainment of *A* seems (or can seem, e.g. upon reflection) to *S* to sufficiently probabilify the truth or obtainment of *B*. However, the scholarly literature on Stoic epistemology has *not* appealed to anything like this distinction in order to support an externalist interpretation of the Stoic account. Further, while this would seem like the most promising way for them to proceed, there is a significant difficulty. The sources talk not so much of *evidence* (which is easier to understand in an externalist-friendly manner) but of something being *evident*, and therein lies the problem. Presumably, if *A* is evident, then it is evident to someone.

40. Burnyeat, in one of the most important (and widely followed) studies of ancient views of evidence, assumes internalism: "For *X* to be a sign or evidence of *Y* requires (i) that *X* should be *evident* or manifest to us in some appropriate way, (ii) that it should be evidence of something else in that *Y* can be inferred from it" (1982: 194).

as one might distinguish one species of snake from another on the basis of one possessing a certain kind of horn, so too one is meant to distinguish kataleptic appearances from non-kataleptic appearances on the basis of their being clear/evident (*M.* 7.252). It is in this way that Cicero discusses the *notae* (marks) or *signa* (signs) by which kataleptic appearances might be distinguished from non-kataleptic appearances (e.g. *Acad.* 2.33, 36, 51–4): the *nota* is clarity/evidentness (e.g. *Acad.* 2.46).

What motivates externalist interpretations to attempt to explain away this internalist talk are two putative problems for internalist interpretations. The first problem raised against internalist accounts is (OBJ<sub>3</sub>). This proposes that the talk in our sources of kataleptic appearances causing automatic assent suggests externalism.<sup>41</sup> As we saw above, on Frede's *doubly causal* view, the distinctive feature of kataleptic appearances was their causal effect upon *S*; a kataleptic appearance *causes* *S* to assent to it. Thus, for instance, we might think of Sextus's report: "this one [the kataleptic appearance], they say, being evident and striking, all but grabs us by the hair, and draws us into assent" (αὕτη γὰρ ἐναργεῖς οὔσα καὶ πληκτικὴ μόνον οὐχὶ τῶν τριχῶν, φασί, λαμβάνεται, κατασπῶσα ἡμᾶς εἰς συγκατάθεσιν, *M.* 7.257; cf. *Acad.* 2.38).<sup>42</sup>

However, it is not clear why this talk of kataleptic appearances (generally) commanding assent should motivate externalism or else constitute an objection to an internalist interpretation. Frede does not offer an explanation, but it seems that Frede and those following him understand the talk of commanding assent to indicate that kataleptic appearances exert causal influence that operates outside of (to use Sellars's phrase) "the logical space of reasons", *i.e.* to indicate that kataleptic appearances cause one to assent in the same way that (e.g.) aspirin might cause one to feel less pain.

Such a view is unsatisfactory. To see why, consider the following claims:

41. Cf. Frede (1983); Barnes (1990: 131–7).

42. Frede (1983) also invokes *M.* 7.405, 407; *Plut. Adv. Col.* 1121e, 1122c.

- (A) Two plus two makes four.
- (B) A bachelor is an unmarried male.
- (C) Paris is the capital of France.
- (D) The Earth has existed for more than five minutes.

The propositions expressed by these sentences are all true. Moreover, they are all, I trust, *obviously* true. Read them, and think about them as you see fit; try, if you will, to refrain from believing them. It seems natural to regard these propositions as *commanding assent*. This is a common enough *façon de parler* and it is in this way that mathematicians might (famously) claim that the axioms of set theory “force themselves upon us as being true”.<sup>43</sup> This is not limited to necessary truths or a priori truths but applies simply to any obvious truth.

Such claims command assent because we cannot directly and spontaneously decide to disbelieve them. Why not? Well, precisely because when we directly deliberate over what to believe we aim at truth and our deliberations yield to truth-conducive reasons which are accessible to us and inform our deliberation. *That* is presumably why these claims are difficult to doubt. The ancients also seem to have conceived of clarity/evidentness and assent in this (internalist-friendly) way (cf. *PH* 2.97, *M.* 8.144).<sup>44</sup> Just as we might talk of belief aiming at truth, the Stoics frequently emphasise the truth-directedness of our cognitive capacities and their responsiveness to truth-conducive reasons (cf. *Acad.* 2.31, 38, 119, 128; *M.* 7.242), though it is perhaps the later report of Epictetus that puts it best:

43. The remark is Gödel’s; it is cited by Shapiro (2009: 179).

44. In discussing signs, Sextus talks of evident things (πρόδηλα). These, we are told, “come of themselves, they say, to our cognisance” (καὶ πρόδηλα μὲν εἶναί φασι τὰ ἐξ ἑαυτῶν εἰς γνώσιν ἡμῖν ἐρχόμενα, *PH* 2.97; cf. *PH* 2.99). As examples Sextus gives that it is day (*PH* 2.97, *M.* 8.144) or that I am currently having a discussion (*M.* 8.144), or that this is a human being (*M.* 8.316). In the right circumstances (e.g. when it is in fact a sunny day and we are outside), these examples are much like the examples given above.

It is the nature of the mind to assent to truths, to dissent from falsehoods, to suspend judgement with regard to things *unclear* (τὰ ἄδηλα). What’s the proof of this? Try to feel, if you can, that it is now night. “Impossible”. Try not to feel that it is day now. “Impossible” (*Diss.* 1.28.2–3).<sup>45</sup>

Wishful thinking, self-deception, and other similar phenomena are familiar human foibles. However, as Epictetus points out, our assent concerning what we take to be the case is typically governed by truth-conducive reasons insofar as we cannot spontaneously and deliberately decide to believe seeming absurdities or disbelieve what strikes us as being extremely clear/evident. For *clarity/evidentness* or *strikingness* to act as reasons for belief in the way described, they should, it seems, be accessible to the agent and be taken as a good indication that the appearance is true, and this is indeed suggested by Sextus’s own words (“being evident and striking, [...] [it] draws us into assent”, *M.* 7.257 [see above]; cf. *M.* 7.403 [see above]), which imply that kataleptic appearances command assent precisely *because* they are evident and striking (a feature which is accessible to the agent). Thus, contra Frede, talk of automatic assent is *not* evidence for a purely externalist theory, and in the fact that our sources suggest that it is in virtue of their *clarity* — a feature accessible to the epistemic agent — that kataleptic appearances command assent, we seem to find further evidence here for internalism. So much then for (OBJ3).

The other problem raised against internalist interpretations arises from considerations of charity. In particular, (OBJ4) claims that internalist interpretations make the Stoics vulnerable to a vicious regress problem and hence that the externalist interpretation is

45. τῷ οὖν φαινομένῳ ὅτι οὐχ ὑπάρχει συγκατατίθεσθαι οὐχ οἷόν τε. διὰ τί; ὅτι ἡ φύσις αὕτη ἐστὶ τῆς διανοίας τοῖς μὲν ἀληθέσιν ἐπινεύειν, τοῖς δὲ ψευδέσιν δυσαρρεστεῖν, πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἄδηλα ἐπέχειν. τίς τούτου πίστις; πάθε, εἰ δύνασαι, νῦν ὅτι νύξ ἐστίν. ‘οὐχ οἷόν τε.’ ἀπόπαθε ὅτι ἡμέρα ἐστίν. ‘οὐχ οἷόν τε.’ I have re-positioned the quotation marks. Here (and also, later, in section 4) I draw on Epictetus where this seems to support or at least be compatible with what we find in the work of earlier Stoics.

preferable. In response it must first be emphasised that *even if* the regress objection were effective against the Stoics, this is a poor reason to favour an externalist interpretation, given our other evidence. A similar principle would seek to save each and every internalist from their error, and such charity will leave us with no internalists (and is clearly a poor interpretative principle).

In what follows, I will argue that the particular regress objection adduced in the literature may be resisted and that the weakness in the Stoic position comes from a different angle (see section 4). The regress objection originates in Frede (1983), who also offers its most detailed discussion:

If they [*i. e.* the Stoics] had taken this [internalist] view, they would have opened themselves to the charge of an infinite regress. For we would have to ask what is supposed to guarantee the truth of the impression that a given impression has this distinctive feature. Quite generally, the criterion will only fulfil its role if it does not require the judgment that an impression is of a certain kind. For this will always raise the question how this judgment is to be certified. The Stoic theory, I want to suggest, escapes this [regress] difficulty because it assumes that the distinctive feature of cognitive impressions is a causal feature of impressions such that cognitive impressions play their criterial role not through our awareness of their distinctive feature, but through the causal effects they have on our minds in virtue of this feature (Frede 1983: 83).

As argued by Frede, the putative internalist is presented with a *reductio ad infinitum*. The putative regress ensuing from internalism is often granted special weight as an objection to internalist interpretations in the scholarship (*e.g.* Reinhardt 2011: 299–300), and it is seemingly as a result of this problem that Frede goes on to offer his own

purely externalist interpretation whereby kataleptic appearances are distinguished in virtue of their causal effects on the subject and the Stoics are saved from a vicious regress. However, despite its putative importance, precisely how the regress is meant to go is not perspicuously presented by Frede or others.<sup>46</sup> I will focus here on Frede's account, and in what follows I will both try to formulate the objection more precisely and provide a way of disarming it.

In order for a regress objection, like that adduced by Frede, to have any force, at least two things must be shown. One is that the acceptance of certain assumptions generates an infinite sequence. The other is that the infinite sequence is objectionable because accepting the sequence/regress entails accepting a recognised falsehood, impossibility, absurdity, explanatory failure, or some other philosophical sin.<sup>47</sup> The regress adduced by Frede fails, I will contend, on both counts. It is not clear that the internalism espoused by the Stoics entails the infinite regress that Frede (and others) think it does. Further, *even if* a regress does obtain, it is not clear that it is a vicious one.

Supposing Frede's objection to be targeting precisely the sort of interpretation that I am here defending (*i. e.* construing Frede's objection as strongly as possible *against* my position), namely an interpretation which makes being clear/evident (as understood here) the distinctive feature of kataleptic appearances, what seems to generate the regress is the following permissibility principle:

**(PERMPRINC)** For me to permissibly assent to *A*, then  
( $\alpha$ ) it must be clear to me that *A*; and ( $\beta$ ) I must permissibly

46. Only Reed (2002: 158–9) offers a (brief) discussion of Frede's regress objection. My own interpretation of the problem and solution are substantially different.

47. There are, of course, infinite sequences/regresses which are not objectionable. For instance, take the following seemingly innocuous principle: for any proposition *p*, if *p*, then it is true that *p*. Acceptance of this principle generates an infinite series of truths for each proposition that is the case and many of us see this as being no more objectionable than there being an infinite set of natural numbers.

assent that it is clear to me that  $A$ . We might express this principle thus:  $KA \supset (CA \wedge K(CA))$ .<sup>48</sup>

The two conjuncts of the consequent offer us two (jointly) necessary conditions of permissible assent. Permissibly assenting to an appearance generates an infinite series, and it would be natural for a proponent of (OBJ<sub>4</sub>) to lay out the beginning of the *reductio* as follows:

- I.  $KA \supset (CA \wedge K(CA))$  [assumption]
- II.  $KA$  [assumption]
- III.  $CA \wedge K(CA)$  [from I, II]
- IV.  $K(CA)$  [from III]
- V.  $C(CA) \wedge K(K(CA))$  [from I, IV]
- VI.  $K(K(CA))$  [from V]
- VII.  $C(K(CA)) \wedge K\{C(K(CA))\}$  [from I, VI]
- .
- .
- .

Thus, for me to permissibly assent to  $A$ , it must be clear to me that  $A$  and I must permissibly assent to  $\langle$ it is clear to me that  $A\rangle$ . However, for me to permissibly assent to  $\langle$ it is clear to me that  $A\rangle$ , it must be clear to me that  $\langle$ it is clear to me that  $A\rangle$  and I must permissibly assent to  $\langle$ it is clear to me that it is clear to me that  $A\rangle$ , etc. In this way an infinite series is generated.

48. 'K', a familiar epistemic operator, signifies here 'it is permissible (for me) to assent to...'; 'C' signifies 'it is clear/evident (to me) that'. Notice that for this section, I will use 'clear' where I previously used 'clear/evident'; this is for stylistic reasons.

There are two broad sorts of responses here. First, it is easy to resist the generation of a regress. For an infinite series to be generated, the Stoics must hold the (PERMPRINC) as articulated above or some comparable principle. However, it seems plausible that in order for me to permissibly assent to  $A$ , the Stoics do *not* require both ( $\alpha$ ) that it must be clear to me that  $A$ ; and ( $\beta$ ) that I must permissibly assent that it is clear to me that  $A$ . Rather they might merely require ( $\alpha$ ), *i. e.* that it must be clear to me that  $A$ .<sup>49</sup> If that is right, then there is no infinite series generated, and no difficulty, and (OBJ<sub>4</sub>) would be disposed of.

Second, supposing that (PERMPRINC) is maintained and an infinite sequence is generated, it is not clear (as should be apparent from I–VII above) that the regress is objectionable. If the generation of an infinite series is meant to function as a *reductio* (as supposed by the proponents of (OBJ<sub>4</sub>)), then one would have to say what is so objectionable about the infinite series in question. After all, we can see above that no contradiction is produced (nor will one be). What absurdity or otherwise undesirable result follows from these assumptions then? Here those, like Frede, who think the regress poses a problem must, I think, stumble. It is not clear (forgive the expression) that there is anything particularly objectionable about infinitely higher-order clarity. We might, for instance, take the "it is clear that" operator to function like the "it is true that" operator (discussed above)

49. This point will apply to numerous other interpretations of Frede's objection; thus one might, for instance take Frede's objection to be that an infinite number of *appearances* is generated. It seems that the crucial principle would be not (PERMPRINC) but:

(PERMPRINC\*): For me to permissibly assent to an appearance  $A$ , then ( $\alpha^*$ ) it must be clear that  $A$ ; and ( $\beta^*$ ) it must appear to me that it is clear that  $A$ . For this to generate a regress it seems one would also have to assume ( $\gamma^*$ ): for it to appear to me that it is clear that  $A$ , I must have an (other) appearance ( $B$ ), that it is clear that  $A$ . This objection is stronger insofar as an epistemic agent having an infinite number of appearances is more troublesome, but weaker insofar as one could resist ( $\beta^*$ ) and ( $\gamma^*$ ) more easily. One could resist ( $\beta^*$ ) in the same way as ( $\beta$ ). One could resist ( $\gamma^*$ ) by appealing to features of appearances that we can be *directly aware of*. Similar points apply for other interpretations of Frede's objection (invoking, *e. g.*, an infinite number of acts of assent).

or else like the necessity operator in S<sub>4</sub> modal logic. The S<sub>4</sub> system (among the weaker modal logics) is characterised by acceptance of the S<sub>4</sub> axiom, which makes ( $\Box p \supset \Box \Box p$ ) a tautology.<sup>50</sup> In such a system,  $\Box p$  is equivalent to  $\Box \Box p$  (and  $\Box \Box \Box p$  is equivalent to  $\Box \Box p$  and thus to  $\Box p$ , and so too with  $\Box \Box \Box \Box p$ , etc.). That there should be such equivalence between CA and C(CA) makes sense given the semantic notions at stake insofar as there is at least one sense of clarity which follows this pattern: self-revealing or self-presenting clarity.<sup>51</sup> On such a conception, if A is clear, then it is clear that A is clear, and it is clear that it is clear that A is clear, etc. That higher-order clarity should have this nature would, I think, have proved germane to the Stoics (and possibly even their Academic opponents); they were happy to talk of various things such as appearances or light as being *self-revealing* (e.g. Aetius 4.12.1–5 = LS 39B; M. 7.163).<sup>52</sup> Thus, the putative regress adduced by (OBJ<sub>4</sub>) would pose no problem.

In sum: there are various responses to (OBJ<sub>4</sub>). The first is that, supposing that there were some vicious regress, this would be a problem not for internalist interpretations of the Stoics but rather — given our textual evidence — for the Stoics. The second is that it is not clear that an infinite regress, regardless of what we take the regress to be, is in fact generated. The third is that, supposing that Frede's regress objection targets clarity/evidentness (the feature to

which the internalism I am here defending appeals), it is not clear (*even if* an infinite series were generated) that this would be objectionable (or that it should have seemed so to the Stoics).

A final point, which we may better appreciate after having discussed (OBJ<sub>4</sub>), may now be made in defence of the internalist interpretation. It was noted above that one objection to the externalist interpretation is that if S is not able to directly tell whether an appearance is kataleptic, then S seems to have no credible strategy for the fulfilment of their epistemic aims. This point can now be put more clearly: if S is to attempt to attain truths by means of some rule or method (and not merely fulfil what is required by the rule unintentionally), then S requires a rule or method that S can follow directly. For instance, suppose that S is commanded simply to believe an appearance that p *iff* the appearance that p is appropriately caused (true, etc.). In order to pursue this goal, either S must be able to tell *directly* whether an appearance is appropriately caused (true, etc.) *or* S must be able to follow some other rule so as to be able tell indirectly whether an appearance is appropriately caused (true, etc.). If neither of these options is taken, then S is left with no obvious means by which to decide which appearances to assent to.<sup>53</sup>

Consider an analogy: S is a faithful clerk at a till and is commanded to accept notes if and only if they are genuine. Whether a banknote is genuine is determined, at least in part, by its causal history (whether it was printed in the royal mint, etc.). Now, if S is to pursue this aim or to follow the rule (which permits S to accept notes *iff* they are genuine), S requires a rule which S can follow *directly*. A bank note's causal history is not something which is directly accessible to S, and so the rule "Accept only notes which have the appropriate causal history (*i.e.* which are genuine)" is not one that can be followed directly by S. If S is to follow this rule at all, then S requires a rule which S can follow directly: (e.g.) "Accept a note as genuine only if it closely resembles this one" or "Accept a note as genuine only if it has the right sort of watermark", etc.

53. For a detailed discussion of rule-following and internalism, see Wedgwood (2002).

50. On weaker logics,  $\Diamond \alpha$  in some world  $\omega$  is true *iff* there is at least one world  $\nu$ , such that  $\omega$  has access to  $\nu$  and  $\alpha$  is true at  $\nu$ .  $\Box \alpha$  in some world  $\omega$  is true *iff* every world  $\nu$ , such that  $\omega$  has access to  $\nu$  and  $\alpha$  is true at  $\nu$ . In S<sub>4</sub>,  $\Box \alpha$  in some world  $\omega$  is true *iff* every world  $\nu$ , such that  $\omega$  has access to  $\nu$  and  $\Box \alpha$  is true at  $\nu$ .

51. 'Self-presenting' is Chisholm's term (e.g. 1966: 27–9); 'self-revealing' is Bobzien's (2011). Bobzien's characterisation is helpful; the clarity 'shines through all higher-order levels — if you want. If something is self-revealingly clear, it cannot be unclear whether it is clear' (2011: 194).

52. Notice that I claim only that the particular regress adduced by Frede (and others) does not have the force it is meant to. This is not to say that the Stoics might not have been troubled by other sorts of infinite series or that there were not infinite-regress arguments which might have force against them (Sextus, for instance, adduces several such regresses against dogmatic philosophers, including the Stoics; each of these arguments would have to be evaluated on its own merits).

These are features which are directly accessible to *S* and which enable *S* to pursue his or her epistemic goals. On the account I have offered, the Stoics propose something similar. To accept an appearance *iff* it has the appropriate causal history and is accurate is not a rule which can be followed directly; hence the invocation of clarity/evidentness. This feature is directly accessible to the epistemic agent, and hence a rule such as “Accept only those appearances which are clear/evident” can be followed directly. It is telling that this is precisely the Stoic advice; for instance, when confronted with sorites cases, Chrysippus advises us to stop our assent at those cases which are clear (*inlustribus igitur rebus insistis*, *Acad.* 2.94).<sup>54</sup> If clarity/evidentness were not accessible to the epistemic agent, how could one follow this advice (cf. *Acad.* 2.36)?

#### 4. All and Only Kataleptic Appearances are Clear

The principal difficulty for the Stoic account lies not in accounting for the possibility of how one can tell whether an appearance is clear/evident (see the defence provided above) but rather in attempting to account for why an appearance should be clear/evident *iff* it is kataleptic (*i. e.* why all and only kataleptic appearances are clear/evident) and why an appearance which is not kataleptic (or appropriately caused) *could not* be clear/evident (*e. g.* *Acad.* 2.34, 84).<sup>55</sup>

We might begin by wondering whether all kataleptic appearances are indeed clear/evident. The admission of cases, such as that of Menelaus and Helen (*M.* 7.253–7), where agents do not assent to kataleptic appearances proved (as was observed above) problematic for Frede’s doubly causal interpretation. The account I offer proposes that we are strongly inclined to assent to kataleptic appearances (due to their clarity/evidentness) but recognises that kataleptic appearances need not be followed by assent and offers two complementary answers

54. On the text, I follow Brittain (2006: 54, 114).

55. (iii) might be read so as to commit the Stoics only to the view that an appearance is clear/evident *iff* it is appropriately caused. However, I shall discuss the stronger claim that an appearance is clear/evident *iff* it is kataleptic (which entails but is not entailed by the previous view) because it is often assumed in the sceptical attacks and the Stoics were also interested in defending it.

as to why sometimes agents fail to assent to kataleptic appearances despite their being clear.<sup>56</sup>

The first is to explain lack of assent through incoherence. While *A* might be (phenomenologically) clear/evident to *S*, *S* might not assent to *A* because *A* does not cohere with *S*’s convictions. The cases discussed in Sextus wherein clear (kataleptic) appearances are not assented to are, I think, most often best analysed in such a manner. In the case of Admetus, we are told that he “caught an apprehensive appearance from Alcestis, yet did not trust it” (ὁ Ἄδμητος ἔσπασε μὲν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλκήστιδος, ἠπίσται δ’ αὐτῇ. *M.* 7.254). Similarly, Menelaus was grasping (ἐλάμβανε) an apprehensive appearance from Helen but did not have trust in it (*M.* 7.255).<sup>57</sup> Most plausibly, Admetus failed to assent to the kataleptic appearance of Alcestis being before him because it was inconsistent with his other beliefs (*e. g.* that Alcestis was dead, that dead people do not walk around, etc.), and the same goes for Menelaus (*e. g.* believing that Helen was on the ship, that people cannot be in two places at once,

56. In a recent piece, brought to my attention by an anonymous reviewer for *Philosophers’ Imprint*, Brittain (2014) also argues that kataleptic appearances are not always followed by assent. In contrast to my own treatment (which aims to provide a broader account of apprehension and the kataleptic appearance), he focuses entirely on this aspect and offers a close reading of *M.* 7.253–4, adducing evidence from elsewhere (such as the Stoic response to the sorites paradox, *Acad.* 2.94) to persuasively argue that not only later Stoics but also earlier Stoics — such as Chrysippus — recognised that kataleptic appearances need not always be assented to (Brittain 2014: 338–346), and, puts forward two principal reasons why kataleptic appearances might fail to secure assent. The first suggestion, like my own, turns on a kataleptic appearance being inconsistent with one’s beliefs (see below). The second proposal put forward by Brittain (one which I do not discuss) is that one might fail to assent to kataleptic appearances owing to a temporary strategy of withholding assent due to taking oneself to be under the influence of mind-altering illness or drug. Although we are, I think, largely in agreement, Brittain’s treatment focuses on why kataleptic appearances might fail to secure assent while leaving open how apprehension and the kataleptic appearance should be interpreted. In contrast, my own discussion in this section focuses on why one would not assent to an appearance which is clear/evident (understood in an internalist manner).

57. I follow Bett (2005: 52n101) in reading εἶχε δὲ αὐτῇ πίστιν for the manuscript εἶχε δὲ αὐτῆν.



etc.). Self-presentingly clear/evident as an appearance might be, if its content is obviously inconsistent with deeply held beliefs, it is easy to see why these appearances are not accompanied by assent. One might see, and see (phenomenologically) clearly/evidently, and yet not believe.

A second explanation of why one might fail to assent to kataleptic appearances is somewhat more tentative and turns on attention (or lack thereof). While the role of attention (*προσοχή*) in Stoic epistemology is not much discussed by the scholarship, it does play an important role in the thought of later Stoics such as Epictetus (e.g. *Diss* 1.20.10; 2.18.8; 3.22.15; and especially 4.12) and is hinted at in earlier reports. Thus, that an appearance might be (e.g. phenomenologically) clear/evident without one being entirely or sufficiently aware of its (e.g. phenomenological) clarity/evidentness is a possibility raised by Lucullus in the *Academica*: “It is first charged that people focus and concentrate their minds too little on those things which are perspicuous for them to realize in how much light those things are surrounded” (*Adversatur enim primum quod parum defigunt animos et intendunt in ea quae perspicua sunt ut quanta luce ea circumfusa sint possint agnoscere*, *Acad.* 2.46). We may understand what occurs when one fails to assent to a kataleptic appearance along such lines. Thus, *S*'s failure to assent to a clear (kataleptic) appearance might occur because of *S*'s lack of attention. Despite *A* being (phenomenologically) clear (and this clarity being accessible), *S* does not pay sufficient attention to *A*'s clarity and so fails to assent.

These two responses — lack of coherence and lack of attention — are compatible and indeed complementary insofar as one can see why one might not pay too much attention to an appearance's clarity if that appearance does not fit one's evidence or convictions.<sup>58</sup> One final point should be made here: explaining lack of assent to

58. There may have been other responses, For instance, Posidonius departs from Chrysippus in appealing to the intervention of an irrational faculty to explain excessive impulses (Galen *PHP* 4.2.10–18 = LS 65J) and might have offered a similar account for one's failure to assent to kataleptic appearances.

kataleptic appearances in virtue of lack of attention may well have held a strong appeal for the Stoics. Supposing attention to be within our control (a plausible assumption), the Stoics would have a neat explanation for why assent is up to us (cf. *Acad.* 1.40) and why we may be held accountable for our assent — or lack thereof — to kataleptic appearances (*M.* 8.397). We *could* have assented to them had we been paying attention, but due to lack of attention (a fault which can develop into a habit and blameworthy vice, Epict. *Diss.* 4.12.2–3), we did not. It is easy to see, then, why not assenting to kataleptic appearances might seem epistemically blameworthy.

What, then, about the notion that *only* kataleptic appearances are clear/evident and that it is not possible for non-kataleptic appearances to be clear/evident? Here we find that opponents of the Stoics appealed to non-kataleptic appearances which were inappropriately caused or inaccurate but which were subjectively indistinguishable from kataleptic appearances (e.g. *Acad.* 2.33–4, 41–2). As is traditional in such cases, appeals to dreams played an important role (*Acad.* 2.47–8). The sort of dreaming arguments we are familiar with from Descartes typically assume that dreams may have the same intrinsic features as instances of perception. Proponents of dream arguments may suppose (A) that every instance of perception is such that it is possible to have a non-perceptual (e.g. dreaming) experience subjectively indistinguishable from it. However, all that is required to endanger the Stoic account (and their desire for an *infallible* criterion) is the weaker and more plausible claim: (B) that some instances of perception are such that it is possible to have non-perceptual (e.g. dreaming) experiences subjectively indistinguishable from them.

The more modest claim, (B), *seems* to be that which the Academics make (certainly, they *need* to make only this more modest claim). They propose that some dreams have the same sort of content and *feel the same* (this includes being phenomenologically *clear*) as perception and are subjectively indistinguishable from instances of perception (*i.e.* from perceptual kataleptic appearances). This has seemed plausible to many, and the Academics invite us to share this view by asking

us to consider our own behaviour and experience (*Acad.* 2.48). Non-kataleptic appearances, such as dreams, hallucinations, etc. seem — the Academic proposes — to provoke our assent. Surely (the thought goes) they do so because they too are clear/evident, etc., and thus subjectively indistinguishable from our waking and veridical kataleptic appearances (*Acad.* 2.48; *M.* 7.403–5). This is enough to endanger the Stoic account, for what was being sought by the Stoics was a mark of being kataleptic, namely some means by which kataleptic appearances could infallibly be distinguished from non-kataleptic appearances.

However, if that [kataleptic] appearance shares something in common with a false one, there will not be a criterion, because a peculiarity (*proprium*) cannot be indicated by a common sign. But if there is nothing in common, then I have what I want, since I am looking for that which seems to be true to me in such a way that it couldn't also seem false (*Acad.* 2.34).<sup>59</sup>

While the “something in common” and “nothing in common” claims are incautiously strong, the overall point is clear. If there are or — given the modal status of (iii) — *could be* non-kataleptic appearances which have a certain feature taken to be unique to kataleptic appearances (on my interpretation, being clear/evident), then this presents a problem, since this feature (namely, being clear/evident) is meant to be the mark of the kataleptic. This being so, it is open to the proponent of the dream argument to propose that for some experiences (or all experiences, if he or she holds (A)), there is no way for the subject to rule out that an appearance they are experiencing is not kataleptic, and assenting to a clear appearance is no guarantee that one has gotten things right (*i. e.* formed an accurate belief).

The Stoic response to the appeal to dreams seems to have been similar to that of Austin (1962: 42ff). They reject the assumption that

59. *In eo autem, si erit communitas cum falso, nullum erit iudicium, quia proprium in communi signo notari non potest. Sin autem commune nihil erit, habeo quod uolo; id enim quaero, quod ita mihi uideatur uerum, ut non possit item falsum uideri.*

dreams, illusions, and the like are intrinsically indistinguishable from perception.

There is one defence against all empty appearances (*inania visa*),<sup>60</sup> whether they are fashioned by imagination, which we admit often occurs, or whether in sleep, or through wine or insanity. For we will say that perspicuity (*perspicuitas*), which we must cling to with our teeth, is absent from all appearances of that sort. After all, who, when imagining something to himself or depicting something through his imagination, is not aware of the difference between perspicuous and empty [appearances] once he has roused and come to himself? The same response applies to dreams (*Acad.* 2.51).<sup>61</sup>

While the Stoics might have argued that dreams (and hallucinations) typically do not have the same content as waking experience (*e.g.* we often dream of dragons and the like), they focus instead on the (putative) fact that such experiences are not *phenomenologically* the same as waking experiences; dreams and waking experience are not *intrinsically indistinguishable*. In particular, dreams (and other non-veridical experiences of a similar sort) are not clear/evident. The sceptic might here interpose: If dreams and waking experience are intrinsically distinguishable, then why can't we tell them apart (*Acad.* 2.52)?<sup>62</sup> The Stoic response lies in pointing out that such

60. *I. e.* φαντάσματα (Aetius 4.12.1–5 = LS 39B).

61. *Omnium deinde inanium visorum una depulsio est, sive illa cogitatione informantur, quod fieri solere concedimus, siue in quiete siue per uinum siue per insaniam. Nam ab omnibus eius modi uisis perspicuitatem, quam mordicus tenere debemus, abesse dicemus. Quis enim, cum sibi fingit aliquid et cogitatione depingit, non simul ac se ipse commouit atque ad se revocauit, sentit quid intersit inter perspicua et inania? Eadem ratio est somniorum* (*Acad.* 2.51).

62. “But while we are having them, their ‘look’ (*species*, cf. *Acad.* 2.58) during sleep is the same as that of the things we see when we are awake!” (*At enim dum uidentur eadem est in somnis species eorumque quae quae uigilantes uidemus!* *Acad.* 2.52, trans. Brittain).

a question is prompted by a hasty assumption. While we cannot distinguish between dreams and waking experience when we are asleep, this does not indicate that dreaming and being awake are intrinsically indistinguishable (*i.e.* qualitatively identical with respect to intrinsic qualities); we should resist such a hasty conflation (*Acad.* 2.50). Rather, on the Stoic view, dreams and waking experience *are* intrinsically distinguishable — it is just that in sleep we are cognitively impaired; even though the appearances are not clear/evident, we are taken in and assent to them (cf. *M.* 7.247). That the experiences are intrinsically distinguishable is (they think) easily shown: we *can* distinguish between these experiences once (*simul*) we are awake (*Acad.* 2.51). Thus, if we were to examine our dreaming experiences while awake (as we might do just as we are waking up), then we would see that dreams are not clear/evident. We may thus observe that on the assumptions of the Stoics (which may well have been shared by other ancients),<sup>63</sup> dream arguments are perhaps less effective than one might first think. On any given occasion, we might test whether we are awake or not by testing to see if we can distinguish between the clear and the unclear. If we can, this confirms that we are awake; if we cannot, then we may well be asleep.<sup>64</sup> While the exact nature of the cognitive impairment that we suffer in sleep is not explicitly discussed, it does seem plausible to suppose that — given what we have been told before (*e.g.* *Acad.* 2.46) — it may have to do with lack of attention.

This response to the dream argument offers a plausible explanation of why one might think that dream appearances are clear/evident when in fact they are not. However, it fails to show that dreams are not clear/evident or that they *could not be*. What the Stoics said in

63. It is hard to tell where the burden of proof lies in such arguments. Like Austin (1962), the Stoics could appeal to the fact that we talk of a dream-like quality and that this seems to assume an ability to distinguish dreaming and waking.

64. This nicely complements what seems to have been Stoic policy. Upon experiencing an appearance which is not clear/evident, one should withhold judgement and seek a clear/evident appearance, *e.g.* by coming closer to the object and getting a good look, and giving assent only when one gets a kataleptic appearance (*e.g.* *Acad.* 2.19, 57; cf. *M.* 7.258).

defence of these claims or in defence of the notion that only kataleptic appearances could be clear is uncertain. The prospects for a defence of the modal claim are poor.<sup>65</sup> Beyond a brute appeal to providence (cf. *Acad.* 2.87), I can only think to draw on the Stoic talk of “stamping” and “impressing” so as to offer an analogy on the Stoics’ behalf. On this suggestion, the Stoic definition of the kataleptic appearance not only claims that kataleptic appearances are appropriately caused, accurate, and clear but also hints at *why* these features coincide. Why does the stamp left by a signet ring accurately reflect the emblem on the ring? Because of the mechanism at work. By invoking the mechanism of *being impressed* in (ii), we have an indication that the appearance is accurate and clear precisely *because* it is appropriately caused.

The analogy one might draw is then as follows: think back on photographs in the days before digital tomfoolery. Given the way that film reacts to light and how cameras operate (*i.e.* certain causal constraints), if the photograph’s image is clear, then it is natural to suppose that its content is accurate and appropriately caused. It would be inconceivable — the thought goes — that a photograph might clearly show a lady at a ball if in fact there was no lady at a ball to cause the film to react in the right sort of way. Similarly, if the photograph is not clear but blurred, then it is natural to suppose that the content is inaccurate. A blurred photograph does not lead us to suppose that its object was thus *or* that the process went as it should; instead, we suppose that something has gone wrong in the photographic (*i.e.* the causal) process.

The analogy provides *some* reason to suppose that, if they occur at all, the relevant features (appropriate causal history, accuracy, and clarity) regularly coincide in kataleptic appearances. However, *even if* one were to accept the analogy (and that is a big *if*), this falls far short of establishing what the Stoics need to show: that only kataleptic appearances *could* be clear. Sticking to the analogy: while lack of clarity may be a good guide to falsehood, being clear falls far short of being

65. The prospects are not, I think, much better if we try to circumscribe the sort of possibility at issue (cf. Reed 2002: 154n17).

an infallible indication of accuracy or appropriate causation (let alone both together). There are, after all, inappropriate apertures and shutter speeds, doctored photographs, and the like. Photographs of flying saucers are neither caused by flying saucers nor do they accurately reflect the world. Further, even if we were to suppose for a second that there were no such deficient photographs, there remains the simple fact that there *easily could be*. Worse, there are systematic failures (which, nonetheless, instantiate clarity). Looking at photographs, one might believe that the eyes of people are red at night or that the world used to be less colourful in the days before colour photography.

In sum, the Stoic account possesses significant internal coherence but cannot be deemed an unqualified success. While the Stoics' disarming of the Academic dreaming argument offers a plausible explanation of why one might think dreams (and also hallucinations) are clear/evident when in fact they are not, and some story can be told wherein causal history, accuracy, and clarity regularly occur together, this falls short of what is needed to defeat the sceptics' attacks. Despite their internal coherence, neither the Stoic response to dreams nor an account explaining the regular concurrence of the relevant features (*i. e.* appropriate causal history, accuracy, and clarity) succeed in showing that dreams or other non-kataleptic appearances are not clear/evident;<sup>66</sup> still less do they show that they *could not be* clear/evident. It is here, then, in supposing that all and only kataleptic appearances could be clear, that we find the crucial weakness in the Stoic account.

## 5. Conclusion

I have here defended an original interpretation of the Stoic account of apprehension and the kataleptic appearance. On my reading, the Stoic

66. It should also be pointed out that the Stoic response to dreams does little to address the phenomenon of illusions (*cf. Acad.* 2.79–80). Illusions pose a significant problem of their own, because epistemic agents are not typically cognitively impaired in the same way while experiencing illusions as they are during dreams or hallucinations (and so the Stoics cannot avail themselves of the same response as in the dreaming case).

account marries a causal stipulation, favoured by purely externalist interpretations, with an internalist element: *clarity/evidentness*. A kataleptic appearance must be caused by the object of the appearance, but kataleptic appearances are also *clear/evident*. It is in virtue of this last feature, which is accessible to the epistemic agent, that there exists a procedure which agents can follow so as to attain truths and avoid falsehoods. I have shown how such an interpretation does justice to the textual evidence while defending it from the principal objections levelled against both causal interpretations and internalist interpretations. Such an account has significant internal coherence and grants us insight into how the Stoics responded to sceptical attacks and also why, if one does not sufficiently attend to its clarity or if the content of the appearance conflicts with one's deeply held convictions, one might experience a kataleptic appearance and yet not assent to it. However, the crucial weakness in the Stoic account lies in the unwarranted supposition that all and only kataleptic appearances could be clear.<sup>67</sup>

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