

On the present account, Stoics require that it be discernible that *beliefs bear certain marks*, which are in fact marks of truth; not that it be discernible that *certain marks are marks of truth*. On another reading, called “externalist”, Stoics merely required that impressions had the right kind of causal history (Annas, 1990, 197 and Barnes, 1990, 131–6). That makes it puzzling why Stoics did not point out that fakes and duplicates fail to show that no impression has the right kind of causal history. That also makes it hard to see why they thought that it was possible to assent only to impressions that are cognitive (Reed, 2002b, 155–7). On the present account, the causal history of cognitive impressions matters only because it confers them *intrinsic* features that are discernible (Frede, 1987, 162).^{34,35}

ment is ambiguous between two accounts. On the first, the Stoic view is that one can introspect *whether the feature in question entails truth*. That is the “internalist” account Frede and I reject. On the second, the Stoics held that there is a truth-entailing feature such that one can introspect *whether impressions have it*; but there is no claim that one can introspect whether the feature is truth-entailing. That is compatible with Classical Infallibilism and not “internalist” in the sense above. Now Frede also rejects the second account because he thinks that on the Stoic view, being attuned to cognitive impressions is not a matter of introspection but of exercising one’s sensitivity to their intrinsic features (Frede, 1999, 315). However the non-introspective account is still within the bounds of Classical Infallibilism, because it is still held that a sufficiently attentive (*i.e.*, exercised) subject will be such that necessarily, they believe that a certain impression is cognitive just if it is.

³⁴A similar story can be told about another apparently externalist trend in Stoic epistemology, namely the addition of a “no-impediment” clause to the Stoic definition of basic knowledge. Under pressure from Sceptics, later Stoics added held that a cognitive impression should be “unimpeded” or “undiverted” (LS 40K). Some texts suggest that the “impediments” in question consist in the dysfunction of sense organs or an unfavourable position of the subject (LS 40L). Long and Sedley (1987, 251–252) conclude that later Stoics endorsed what amounts to a contemporary externalist position: one knows provided that when everything is functioning normally, sense impressions are truthful. This would amount to a rejection of the discernibility requirement. I doubt the reading is defensible: if Stoics had rejected it, Sceptics would have forcefully pointed it out and Cicero would have reported it. Rather, I suggest that the Stoic view was that dysfunctions of one’s sense organs would be reflected in discernible aspects of one’s experience. Indeed, several other texts suggest that the “impediments” of an impression are other impressions of the subject which indicate that the former impression is false, that is, *defeating impressions* (LS 40K, LS69E). (LS69E is about Carneades’s notion of impediment, but later Stoics adopted it.)

³⁵Reed (2002b, 167–80) defends an alternative account on which (a) early Stoics were indirect realists, (b) Academics raised problems for the view, which (c) later Stoics tried to meet by adopting a disjunctivist view. While I cannot discuss the account properly here, let me briefly indicate why I do not endorse it. First, the evidence for (a) only comes LS 40B, in which it is said that Zeno took sensations to be a compound of impressions with an act of assent. Reed (2002b, 168) comments that “in order to assent to the [impression], the subject must be aware of it”. But LS 40B does not talk of assenting *to* an impression. Moreover, it describes impressions as “a sort of blow provided from outside”, which suggests an alteration of mind rather than an image we introspect (Frede, 1999, 315). Second, Reed does not detail how Academic arguments threaten the indirect realist view. Suppose that, as Reed suggests, early Stoics took “cognitive impressions” to be images resembling what is, caused by what is. Academics point out that the same images *could* be caused by other things. From that one should infer that our impressions *could* fail to be cognitive—and further down the line, that even the wise cannot in principle avoid error entirely. But the conclusion drawn was that none of our impressions *were* cognitive (LS 40D). Why? Third, the evidence for (c) comes from Chrysippus’ distinction between *impressions*, which are caused by an “impressor”, and *figments*, which are not (LS 53G): as in contemporary disjunctivist views, there is no common factor between impressions and delusions (Reed, 2002b, 171). But nothing indicates that the distinction was thought to be relevant to the debate with Academics: on the contrary, the discussion exclusively focus on the distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive impressions. Fourth, neither of the two views ascribed to Stoics supports their claim that it is in principle possible to avoid assent to non-cognitive impressions entirely (LS 41G). The only view