Appeals to Reason: The Consolations of Stoic Dialectic and Theory in Cicero's Tusculan Disputations

Gabriel Sánchez Ainsa

Introduction

On March 45 BCE, only a few months before he wrote his *Tusculan Disputations* (*TD*), Cicero wrote to his confidant: "Atticus, everything is over with me, everything, and has been for long enough, but now I admit it, having lost the one link that held me."[1] These are the self-assessments of a father whose daughter had died weeks earlier. Here we see the legendary former Roman consul confessing that he has lost everything he found valuable and that he stands as far away from happiness as possible.

Cicero's grief, or luctus, reveals a complex structure of beliefs, and to combat his grief, he tells us that he took to writing philosophical works, including his *Tusculans*.[2] In this essay, I shall argue that reading *TD* as belonging to the consolation genre—as Cicero seems to want us to—explains the Stoic content and dialectical form of book V. For Cicero, the analytical strength

of Stoic theory and syllogisms provides a robust theoretical groundwork necessary for comforting a person who has lost a loved one. Therefore, my purpose in this essay is twofold: to demonstrate that Cicero's writing, against some interpretations, does contain rigorous philosophical discourse, and to provide an example of how philosophy and argument can enrich and benefit human life.

To explore these claims, this essay first provides Cicero's intellectual background and philosophical method employed in the *Tusculans*. Secondly, I outline the Stoic-Ciceronian theory of *luctus*, followed by a discussion of consolation and Cicero's failed *Consolatio*. Lastly, I focus on the most powerful arguments in *TD* V (sections 37-44) for the Stoic theses (that "virtue is sufficient for a good life" and that "virtue is the only good") in order to examine their role in consolation. I will defend the claim that the Stoics' theory of emotions relies on Stoic theses of happiness and goods, and show that, since Cicero looks for comfort in the former, he must defend the latter two. I conclude by suggesting that the philosophical therapy presented in the *TD* requires a certain style of writing: rather than the oratorical techniques of the Peripatetics, the dialectical method of analytical and consistent argumentation championed by the Stoics.

Cicero's Intellectual Background in the Tusculans

By the time that Cicero wrote his works on ethics, like *De Finibus*, *Tusculan Disputations*, and others, Greek philosophy had flourished and diversified. The Classical and Hellenistic age saw the rise of a variety of schools of thought, each advocating for a distinct system of logic, physics, ethics, and way of life.[3] As such, the Hellenistic schools are individuated by their views on the happy life and human good and how they argued to those ends—to be a Stoic meant to believe that moral virtue is necessary and sufficient for happiness; to an Epicurean, freedom from anxiety; to a Skeptic, suspension of judgment. Accordingly, somebody like Cicero, writing about the end of human life, had many options to choose from and many arguments for and against each of them.

Furthermore, in Cicero's lifetime, the Academy itself saw a split between the methods and doctrines of the "Old Academy," whose champion in the first-century was Antiochus of Ascalon and his Roman student Marcus Brutus, and the "New Academy," represented at the time by Philo of Larissa. It is beyond the scope of this paper to completely assess the historical background, but I should note how Cicero judges this split to manifest in ethics. What defines the Old Academy is a return to the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, and so, Cicero seems to often collect all Old Academics, Platonists,

and Aristotelians under the label of the "Peripatetics," especially when he contrasts them with the Stoics. According to the Peripatetics, the human good is constituted of psychic goods (e.g., virtue), bodily goods (e.g., health), and external goods (e.g., wealth, love, etc.). Note how the Peripatetics, then, are in direct opposition to the Stoics in their theory of value and happiness, for whom virtue is the sole good. Included in the Peripatetic school are Theophrastus, Crantor, and Antiochus, but, as we shall see, there are subtle differences between these notable members. The New Academy, on the other hand, presented not a set of doctrines as much as an argumentative method of skepticism. New Academics suspend their judgments for the sake of argument, offer critiques of others' dogmatic views, and inquire into the truth dialectically in the manner of Socrates. Cicero studied under both Antiochus and Philo, and eventually followed the latter and came identify with the New Academy.

With this historical background in mind, we should address the method which Cicero takes in the *TD*. Cicero splits the *TD* into five books, each depicting a dialogue between Cicero and his student "A." The structure of each book is parallel: A proposes a thesis at the beginning of each book ("death is an evil"; "pain is an evil"; "the good person feels distress"; "the good person feels passions"; and, finally, "virtue is not sufficient for

a good life") and then Cicero seeks to argue against it. He approaches each thesis through the style of the New Academy: examining both sides of the issue and choosing whichever seems more likely to be true.[4] Thus, even though he often takes the side of the Stoics, Cicero adopts the skeptical method that began when Arcesilaus took over the Academy, continued with Cerneades, and reached Cicero through Philo of Larissa.[5] Imitating these thinkers, he commits to the Socratic method of looking for "what seems true" (*simillimum veri*) by examining the different views on a particular thesis.[6] Because of this on-going dialogue of ideas in the *TD*, whether it be with his interlocutor or just the battling of Peripatetic and Stoic theses, Cicero can evaluate each theory based on how effectively they solve the problem at hand and how likely they are to be true.

This *eclectic* method makes his work unique among philosophers of this period.[7] For our purposes, there are two mains reasons to pay attention to his method. First, the New Academy had historically taken the role of umpire in the debate between Stoics and Peripatetics, and so Cicero can engage with their arguments fully and assess their validity without fearing inconsistency.[8] Second, the theses addressed in the *Tusculans* clearly spoke to him personally at the time; thus, Cicero's assessment of these arguments *pro* and *contra* provides

a unique perspective into the value of the Stoic and Peripatetic (and, occasionally, Epicurean) doctrines. For a theory cannot be valid if it yields false conclusions; a good theory of human life must provide an outline of living well and cannot fail to heal our sorrows.[9] If Stoic or Peripatetic theory contradicts Cicero's experience, if their therapies cannot cure his soul, then he is, and we are as well, justified in abandoning whichever doctrine fails. And there can be no doubt that *TD* belongs to the *consolation* genre, as Cicero's last line suggests that he had the intention of comforting himself: "I could have found no other relief for my most bitter and various sorrows and grievances coming from all places."[10] On the other hand, for reasons which we shall explore later, we should not simply regard this text as another *Consolatio*.[11] Nor should we regard this work as another oration sine ratio which soothes the soul solely through rhetorical means. Written after the ethical work of *De Finibus*, *TD* deals with the Hellenistic theories with rigorous analysis; thus, we can subject Cicero and his arguments to the same analysis and expect a certain degree of theoretical consistency. That is, T*usculan Disputations* awakens philosophical interest because it shows how a non-philosopher may engage in philosophical practice to improve the quality of human life. Cicero portrays himself as a human being dealing with human affairs through therapeutic arguments.

Ciceronian Emotion

Having outlined the general themes and background of *TD*, let us begin our inquiry. We should start with a question of definition: what are emotions or the so-called "passions" (*pathē* in Greek, *perturbationes* in Cicero's Latin)? In *TD* III-IV, Cicero lays out a "cognitive thesis of the passions," often associated with the third-century Stoic Chryssipus. According to this theory, human emotions come about from our structures of beliefs and judgments about what matters to us most deeply.[12] In this Stoic-Ciceronian view, a passion is an "upheaval of the soul" brought about by some "belief of good or evil."[13] To *feel* such-and-such emotion about so-and-so is, in part, to *think* that so-and-so is quite good or bad for me, linking each emotion to some cognitive evaluation.

In particular, the family of emotions of anxiety, distress, and mental pain, all of which jointly translate and capture the semantic field of the Ciceronian Latin *aegritudo*, come from the belief that there is some present evil which the patient considers worthy of suffering. A person feeling aegritudo must think "so-and-so is a great evil for me" and "I ought to suffer it." As such, *luctus* is a sub-species of *aegritudo* and has the same type of cognitive structure. In fact, such judgments seem to plague some of Cicero's letters to Atticus of this time. We have already seen how Cicero thinks that the death

of Tullia is a great evil in his letters to Atticus of March 45 BCE, but he is also familiar with the belief that he should *hurt*. He tells us of a shrine that he wanted to build for Tullia, and he speaks of it as a duty and obligation.[14] Elsewhere, he says that even if he could get rid of his pain, he would not.[15] In some twisted way, Cicero thinks it right for him to be in mental pain—he *wills* the suffering. Once we take these into account, we may suspect Cicero's person relation to Stoic theory and why he chose to follow it here. After all, since the Stoic theory accounts for his own experience, it would seem rational for him to favor it as a framework.

Let us return to the *Tusculans*. Having provided a general definition of passions and *aegritudo*, Cicero suggests a refined definition for *luctus*: it is "the *aegritudo* caused by the bitter death of loved one."[16] The implication here is that the griever has the belief that the death of the loved one is a present evil worth suffering for. It is worth noting, though, that Cicero provides at least two ways of interpreting how the death of a loved one may be an evil: it could be an evil for the dead loved one herself and/or an evil for the living lover. The former possibility has already appeared in the Tusculans, when Cicero assessed the argument that death is an evil because it deprives our loved ones of the comfort of life.[17] However, he challenges this belief throughout book one, arguing that death is *not* an evil for the dead.

To assess these arguments is beyond the scope of this paper; all I shall note is that, by arguing that death is not an evil for the dead, Cicero has already taken care of the first type of luctus. If death is to be an evil, it is not because it harms the dead but those who must live on.

The luctus we are left with, then, is the personal one which Cicero speaks of both in his letters and whenever he mentions his being deprived of "the consolations of family life" in *TD*.[18] In addition, the griever experiencing this second kind of luctus believes that she loves her deceased loved one more than she loves herself.[19] If this griever believes that the life of her loved one is more lovable than her own, then she must also believe that the presence, company, and well-being of her loved one are of so much value to her compared to her own well-being that, once the loss takes place, she should devote her life to mourning and even constructing shrines across her country. The griever would not desire a good life for themselves if it meant not being able to suffer for the loss of her loved one. Hence, luctus requires a certain pain and aversion to happiness.

However, in the Stoic-Ciceronian framework, all these beliefs constituting the passion are false. Michael Frede has noted that the Hellenistic philosophers have a notion of natural or "right reason" (recta ratio): rationality is not only the faculty of information-processing and

inference-drawing, as it is for the moderns, but it also contains certain logical truths within itself.[20] This is to say, there exist some propositions about the universe which our minds acquire from and by nature. There are natural tautologies. In fact, we see these notions in *TD*: Cicero's definition of a passion as "contrary to right reason" (*aversa recta ratione)* and "against nature" (*contra naturam*) implies that the causal belief of each passion goes against Frede's natural reason.[21] The passions, Cicero concludes (following the Stoics), are normatively problematic, that is, they are "wrong" because they involve false propositions about what is naturally good or evil for us. To treat *luctus*, then, a comforter must prove false this belief the loved one's death is an evil for which we should suffer and which should take away our happiness.

Consolation

Before we examine how the structure of *luctus* influences Cicero's arguments in *TD* V, we should analyze Cicero's first therapeutic attempts. In 3.76, he lists the treatments suggested by different philosophers, from Stoics to Epicureans. Cicero tells us that he attempted all of them in another (lost) work of his, the Consolatio. He wrote this treatise to himself merely weeks after Tullia's death, even though he was aware that Chryssipus warned that philosophical treatments should not be applied during convalescence from recent wounds.[22]

In his letters, Cicero admits that the *Consolatio* is not bringing him enough comfort or benefit.[23] He seems to allude to this in *TD* 3.76 when he clarifies that these methods must be used at the right time. Even the reliable Chryssipean method of persuading an emotional person that feeling passions is wrong is not useful in this time of distress—for how could we convince a mourner attached to their luctus that they should not feel it?[24] *Consolatio* was Cicero's attempt to comfort himself, but it partly failed because he had not waited long enough before writing it: his wound was too fresh. *TD* may be a second attempt, for the methods which he had used before can only be applied once the person has had some time to recover.

There is another relevant difference between *TD* and *Consolatio*, though. Margaret Graver notes that, based on what we know of this lost work, Consolatio follows the Crantorian tradition: a more Academic-Peripatetic approach in form and content.[25] Crantor emphasized that emotions are natural, implying that they should be felt and that treatment consists in regulating aegritudo.[26] In the TD, Cicero, though still owing a debt to Crantor's influence on the larger consolatory tradition, moves away from the Crantorian position on emotions.[27] He stands closer to the Stoics by arguing, with them, that emotions are not natural and should be extirpated. In fact, his preferred treatments appeal to the Stoic cogni-

tive thesis of passions: they remove luctus by changing its causal beliefs.[28] For Cicero, even the natural method of letting time heal our wounds is essentially about the restructuring of cognitions of the mourner. Time gives experience and chance for reflection, and these allow mourners to reassess their value-commitments once they get a better grasp of the larger picture and recognize that such events are "by no means bad enough to overturn a good life."[29] Nevertheless, what if there are things which are worth suffering for and which may destroy happiness, as Crantor and Theophrastus claim in 3.71 and 5.24, respectively? If Consolatio stands closer to Crantor, it would struggle to provide comfort, for these Academics think it natural to feel luctus. On the other hand, if the more Stoic *TD* proves that there is no such evil worth unhappiness, then this work may solidify through intellectual discourse the healing which time has granted to Cicero.[30]

Passions, Goods, and Logical Fallacies

In fact, Cicero attempts this therapy via the analytical defense of the Stoic thesis of happiness (virtue is sufficient for a happy life) of *TD* V. Yet, in the proem addressed to Brutus, Cicero, reflecting on his grief due to external circumstances, appears to slightly doubt this thesis:

> Or on the other hand, if virtue is subject to many uncertainties of chance and the handmaid of fortune, if it is not strong enough to protect itself, I fear that it would seem that we should be putting our prayers rather than placing our faith in virtue. For my part, reflecting by myself on those events of chance in which fortune has fiercely tried me, I begin to doubt this thesis [that virtue is sufficient for a good life] and dread the fragility and weakness of human beings.[31]

This comment inserts a therapeutic mission to *TD* V, giving it a persuasive power which a rawer argument would lack. If he can prove that virtue brings happiness, and if Philosophy is the "explorer of virtue and expeller of vice," then Philosophy can comfort a Cicero who has "taken refuge in [philosophy] amidst these terrible misfortunes."[32] Following observations along these lines, Douglas argues for this distinction between *TD* V and *De Finibus* IV-V: in the latter, Cicero can more freely argue against the Stoics and grant more ground to the Peripatetics, but the writer of the awe-inspiring "hymn to Philosophy" in *TD* V is completely committed to her promise and needs to believe that virtue is enough for happiness.[33] This commitment to Philosophy is one to therapeutic arguments. While we explore the arguments in this book, we should remember the commitments under which they operate.

Cicero's first argument (from the freedom from pas-

sion) relies on his results in *TD* IV and appears there.[34] We can see here the logical link between his treatment of the passions and the Stoic thesis of happiness. The syllogism is:[35]

(**A1**) If a person has virtue, then she must have freedom from passions
(**A2**) If a person has freedom from passions, the she must have happiness
Therefore, (**A3**) if a person has virtue, then she must have happiness.

This would seem a satisfactory proof of the thesis that "virtue is sufficient for a good life," as Cicero's interlocutor thinks. But immediately after, Cicero points out that there exists a *bi-conditional* relationship between the Stoic theses of goods and happiness: if virtue is the sole good and vice the sole evil, then virtue is sufficient for happiness; conversely, if virtue is sufficient for happiness, then virtue is the sole good and vice is the sole evil.[36] Cicero compares his argument to that of a mathematician: "if there is anything pertaining to their [i.e., the mathematician's] thesis which they have previously showed, this they take for conceded and proved; in this way, they only demonstrate those arguments about which nothing has been previously written."[37] In contrast, philosophers wish to put everything before the audience and do not assume any lemmas. This comparison is not a mere stylistic lesson from Cicero to his interlocutor—it suggests a deeper logical problem for Cicero and the method of the Stoics. He points out that the Stoics, as meticulous dialecticians, prove both their theses of good and of happiness independently from each other: "for each subject must be dealt with their own demarcations and arguments."[38] If they were not careful to treat them separately, though, they would risk either being inconsistent or committing a logical fallacy. As we shall see, for Cicero, this observation reveals the larger logical structure of his arguments and those of his Peripatetic and Antiochean adversaries.

At this point of book V, this bi-conditional is merely a logical relationship which Cicero uses as a metric for consistency for the different positions. Of course, the Stoics consistently consider both theses true. Cicero contrasts them with Theophrastus, who consistently argues for the factual falsehood of the claim that there are no external goods and, therefore, argues that "not all good people are happy."[39] On the other hand, the Antiocheans deny the logical bi-conditional and claim that even if virtue is sufficient for a happy life, virtue and vice are not the only good and evil things.[40] They explain this inconsistency by introducing degrees for happiness and claiming that "virtue by itself can make a life happy but not happiest (*beatissimam*)."[41] We shall see later how Cicero considers these last philosophers

to be inconsistent.

However, the logical bi-conditional creates a fallacy for Cicero's earlier argument from the freedom from passion. For to prove premise (**A1**) of the argument, he relies on his work in book IV in which he assumes the thesis of book V. In 4.34, he describes virtue as a disposition which may be reduced to "right reason" (*recta ratio*). Cicero, then, identifies virtue with wisdom. In his definition of wisdom, the sage has right knowledge (justified belief not contradicting Frede's natural reason) and does not value externals (i.e. wealth, love, success, or all "human things" (*humana omnia*) in comparison with virtue.[42] For these definitions to stand, Cicero must also assume that externals are neither good nor evil by nature, that only virtue is good and only vice is evil. Consequently, when completely laid out, the argument from the freedom of the passions is as follows:

(**B1**) If a person has virtue, then she has wisdom [by definition]
(**B2**) If a person has wisdom, then she has correct beliefs of the normative value of things [by definition]
(**B3**) Externals are neither good nor bad (compared to what is morally good or evil) [by assumption]
Therefore, (**B4**) if a person has virtue, then she must have the belief that "externals are neither good nor bad"

(**B5**) If a person has such-and-such passion, then she must have the belief that "so-and-so external is either quite good or bad for me" [by Cicero's cognitive thesis of the passions]
Therefore, (**B6**/**A1**) if a person has virtue, then she has freedom from passions
(**B7**/**A2**) If a person has freedom from passions, then she has happiness [by definition]
Therefore, (**B8**/**A3**) if a person has virtue, then she has happiness

Note that Cicero needs to assume (**B3**), that externals are not that important, to prove that the good person is free from passions and therefore happy. Yet, the Peripatetics (whether Theophrasteans or Antiocheans) do not grant this assumption, resulting in a divergence from the Stoics in their treatment of passions.[43] Both Stoics and Peripatetics will agree that if externals had some value by nature, then the sage would judge as such. However, unlike the Stoics, the Peripatetics claim that the death of a loved one is an evil according to right reason; thus, the Peripatetic sage correctly believes that the death of a loved is an evil. Consequently, the Peripatetic sage does experience some moderate *luctus*.[44] On the other hand, the Stoic sage experiences absolutely no *aegritudo*, nor *luctus*, for there are rational affects equivalent to each passion except for forms *aegritudo*.[45] This apathy results from the Stoic sage

not evaluating the death of a loved one as a true evil. This difference explains the link between each school's theories of goods and of passions and, hence, how Cicero's commitment to the consolation of philosophy may motivate his proofs for the Stoic thesis of goods.

Furthermore, because of the bi-conditional relationship between the Stoic theses of happiness and of value that we have already discussed, the only way to show that virtue is the sole good and no external is worth our suffering is through the thesis of book V that virtue is sufficient for happiness. In other words, Cicero needs conclusion (**B8**) to prove premise (**B3**), which he needs to prove (**B8**) itself; thus, the argument is circular and has no analytical strength. Nevertheless, the therapeutic value of the arguments in *TD* V shines through here: for if Cicero can argue that "virtue is sufficient for happiness" and that "if virtue is sufficient, then virtue is the sole good and vice the sole evil," then he can prove that "no external has any relevant worth." And if he proves that "no external has any relevant worth," then he has some theoretical basis to combat *aegritudo* and *luctus*, for these come about from the belief that the death of a loved one is worth suffering for and enough to kill a good life. Only when these theses have been demonstrated can the cognitive therapies delineated in *TD* III-IV better treat luctus. Furthermore, if this therapy must be somewhat cognitive, then it requires a

consistent argumentative basis. To reiterate, the Antiocheans against whom Cicero argues here do not have the logical consistency required for cognitive consolation. Hence, we may read a consolatory motivation in the following arguments in *TD* V which provides greater consistency to the text as a whole.

Stoic Dialectics

Let us turn to the arguments in 5.37-54, the more "Stoic" (analytical) part of the book. Cicero begins this section with a naturalistic argument, for, as he signals, "from which point could I better begin than from our common parent, nature?"[46] This passage (5.37-39) presents itself with a fresher, more powerful, and more philosophically-grounded argument than those which have come before, not only because he has colored it with his own rhetorical gift but because he grounds an ethical claim on a robust theory of physics much more difficult to challenge. The authority which physics provide fill this passage with a greater argumentative strength than it otherwise would lack.

In this passage (5.37-39), Cicero provides a picture of an ordered cosmos, one in which nature has gifted all living beings with some ability inherently linked to their way of living. In addition, each being tends to become perfect with respect to their own nature, namely, their mode of living and thus particular ability, that "nature

willed that each living creature be perfected according to their own kind" (*in suo quidque genere perfectum esse* [*natura*] *voluit*). In this way, as plants hold their inner seed from which they grow their "flowers, fruits, or berries," as animals hold the powers of sensation and movement, so it is with human beings. In our case, the human soul, derived "from the divine intelligence" (*ex mente divina*), can be made perfect if "cultivated and refined" (*excultus*) and free from "falsehood and error" (*erroribus*) such that it acquires "perfect reason" (*absolutam rationem*), which is human virtue (*virtus*). Note that this notion of virtue as perfected intellectual capacity, that is, as wisdom, matches that given in *TD* 4.57, where Cicero argues that virtuous people are free from errors and therefore from passions.

His next step in 5.37 is to introduce a refined notion of happiness (*beatum*). Earlier in the dialogue, he defines it as the "fullness of combined good and complete separation of evil."[47] Now, he limits it to the nature of the being in question, "happy is that being who lacks in nothing and who has accumulated and fulfilled all things *within the extent of its nature*."[48] With this refined definition of happiness, Cicero completes his proof: since human happiness must refer to the human goods, and since these must exist within a human life, and since our human soul and powers characterizes a human life, then, we must concede, human happiness "is the prop-

er mark of virtue." How can we deny, then, that all virtuous people must be happy?

This formidable argument concludes that happiness lies in virtue; however, the Antiocheans also lay claim to this argument.[49] The naturalistic argument only demonstrates that virtue is necessary for and constitutive of a good life, to which both Stoics and Antiocheans will agree. Still, the naturalistic argument is not enough to establish the Stoic thesis that "virtue is sufficient for a good life." And so, to prove his Stoic thesis, Cicero needs to dismantle the idea that there is a *happiest* life in which virtue needs externals.

Cicero executes this with his next argument (from *securitas*) in 5.40-42. If we follow the Antiocheans, the happiest life relies on the acquisition of all goods of soul, body, and fortune. Yet, nobody can perfectly secure nor guarantee the presence of external goods and absence of external evils. Loved ones can always be lost, and tragedies can always happen; these things are not up to us. Antiochus' happiest person may lose her status at any point in the future. Furthermore, because she is also wise, she must recognize and be aware of her own fragility. As such, it follows that she will always live in fear and be subject to distress. Can we even call such a person happy if she does not have *securitas*, or "the absence of distress upon which a good life lies"?[50]

Cicero seems to think that the Antiocheans cannot insist that the happiest life lies in virtue while claiming that there are external goods, for the existence of externals which are necessary for the best life entails that human life is fragile and, thus, that the sage should live in fear and be vulnerable to distress. Clearly, a person who concedes that the death of his daughter is a terrible evil cannot be satisfied, safe, or virtuous. If happiness lies in virtue, and if we want happiness to be possible, Antiochus must be inconsistent. This can only mean that if virtue is indeed necessary for happiness, then there can be no external goods. It immediately follows that virtue is in fact sufficient for a good life.

As predicted, once Cicero has shown that (i) virtue is necessary for a happy life (through his naturalistic argument) and that (ii) if virtue is necessary for a good life, then there can be no external goods or evils (through his argument from *securitas*), he returns to the tranquility of the sage in 5.43-44. Here, Cicero outlines the same argument as in 4.38 and 5.17; now, however, he has greater theoretical grounding for this claim that 'sages are free from passions.' He associates tranquility with happiness, which has been argued to lie in virtue. Since the sage has virtue, she then has everything she needs: she has secured all human goods and does not experience any human evils. It follows, then, that she must be in a state of perfect tranquility, and as Cicero

extensively discusses throughout the *Tusculans*, this tranquility of mind is associated with, if not identical to, happiness, and "therefore, the sage is always happy."[51]

Concluding Remarks

This conclusion that the sage is always happy corroborates my hypothesis that the arguments in *TD* V have a therapeutic motivation, at least to extent that the thesis that the sage is free from passions (and therefore from luctus) follows from his naturalistic argument and argument from securitas. And if the best human beings do not have to suffer this terrible passion, then it is neither natural nor rational for any human being. Indeed, the object of luctus, the bitter death of the loved one, may not be such an evil so as to destroy any hope of happiness. Once this belief begins to grow in our minds, once we dispel the misguided notion that our lives have been ruined, the consolations of the philosophers may have some sway. Thus, through these Stoic arguments and theories, Cicero consolidates the possibility for the cognitive therapies which, if we believe him, did provide him solace in difficult times.

On the other hand, Cicero concludes book V by playing down the contrast between Stoic and Peripatetic theories of goods. He even concedes that the Peripatetics practically make the sage happy by making virtue supremely good compared with everything else; how-

ever, they seem to do so "as eloquent men tend to do at length" with the strength of their claim subsisting in their rhetoric.[52] But to persuade through the art of rhetoric is the same as through the art of reason. Cicero leaves this latter analytical style to the Stoics.[53] Even if he mocks their "little syllogisms" (*conclusiunculas*) Cicero sees more of a theoretical foundation and consistency in the Stoics than in the Peripatetics, who have more of an empty speech than a rigorous theory. Understanding the cognitive basis of luctus, Cicero needs to appeal more to reason to fundamentally challenge the passion's causal beliefs. In this essay, I have argued for Cicero's motivation to sustain the complete Stoic system to provide their cognitive consolation. I have focused on the more analytical sections, and perhaps he defends the Stoics more wherever he needs their form. But arguably, these sections provide the foundational framework for the consolation of the whole *Tusculans*. As such, without the Stoic logic and dialectic of these passages, the project of the work would fail, and as he confesses in his closing line, he "could have found no better relief for his so bitter sorrows and various struggles coming from all sides."[54] At the same time, having been an orator, Cicero understands the value of rhetoric, hence his interest in establishing a "rhetorical philosophy."[55] The complexity of the *Tusculans*, then, makes this work stand out, and its unique style in form and content provide us with a more human philosophy

of virtue and happiness which should interest philosophers for its own sake.

Cicero was a non-philosopher who saw great value in philosophical activities in a time of crisis. He lost his family, his reputation, his republic. Even if his arguments and the dry syllogisms of the Stoics do not move us today, our generation, raised through financial, social, political crises and a global pandemic, can learn something from the Ciceronian project. We should not think, unlike some of our predecessors, that philosophy has nothing to say about our joys or sorrows nor that it has nothing to do with our everyday life. On the contrary: the promise of philosophy is to enrich human life and make it worth living.

Notes

1. *Letters to Atticus* XII. 23.1, trans. Bailey. Unless otherwise specified, I provide my own translation of Cicero's Latin. I abbreviate *Letters to Atticus* as *Att.* and T*usculan Disputations* as *TD* and cite them by book and section.
2. (*Att*. XII.38.1)
3. Hadot (1995) argues that each school developed their own way of life around their views on the highest good and happiness as well as their unique spiritual exercises.
4. See *TD* 1.8, 2.9, 5.11 for some insights into how Cicero views his method as New Academic following Socrates, Cerneades, Philo, and Aristotelian dialectic.

5. See Powell (1985, 19) for Cicero's New Academic background.
6. *TD* 1.8
7. As commented by Powell (1985, 3).
8. Cicero comments on the role of the New Academy in the debates between Stoics and Peripatetics in *TD* 5. 120.
9. As Nussbaum (1994) points out in her classical work on Hellenistic ethics, the use of "therapeutic arguments" is especially prevalent in Hellenistic philosophies such as Stoicism and Epicureanism.
10. *TD* 5.121
11. Months before he wrote *TD* and weeks following the death of his daughter Tullia, Cicero attempted to console himself by writing a "consolation like no other," which ultimately did not bring him the comfort which he sought; see *Att*. XII. 14. 3.
12. In her classic analysis of Hellenistic theories of emotions, Nussbaum (1994, 371-377) notes that the Stoics considered propositional beliefs to be a necessary cause, constitutive of and, in the case of Chryssipus, even identical to the passion in the question. Thus, to remove the emotion, all one must do is remove the belief. In selecting Zeno's definition in *TD* 4.11, Cicero puts himself in this same tradition. Note that it is not essential whether Cicero considers beliefs to be identical to the passions; all he needs is to argue for some intrinsic relation, even if merely causal.
13. *TD* 3.24
14. See *Att*. XII. 18.1: "*sed iam quasi voto quodam et promisso me teneri puto*" and note the cognitive connotation of "*puto*."
15. See *Att*. XII. 28.2: "*maerorem minui [littera consolatione], dolorem nec potu nec, si possem, vellem*" and note Cicero's emphasis on his grief as voluntary.

16. *TD* 4.18
17. *TD* 1.30
18. See above, *Att* XII. 23.1 and also *TD* 1.84
19. *TD* 3.73
20. Frede (1986, 104-105)
21. *TD* 4.11
22. *TD* 4.63
23. *Att*. XII.14.3:"T*otos dies scribe, non quo proficiam quid sed tantisper impedior–non equidem satis (vis enim urget), sed relaxor tamen*."
24. *TD* 3.79
25. Graver (2002, 187)
26. As Graver (2002, 188) proposes.
27. See note 14 and *TD* 3.71-72
28. The Chyrssipian, Cleanthean, and Cyrenaic methods, as well as reflecting on the endured grief of others, are the methods he favors; they all have in common that to heal our mental pain, we have to change our beliefs.
29. *TD* 3.53
30. It is worth noting that some months have passed in between Tullia's death and the *Tusculan Disputations*, while the *Consolatio* was written immediately after. In the time in between Tullia's death and *TD*, Cicero wrote other philosophical works, including *De Finibus*. If we take his comments in *TD* III on the importance of letting time do its healing seriously, then we might suppose that these months do somewhat help him in his recovery. Finally, I should note that Cicero stops mentioning Tullia's death later in his letters

to Atticus, suggesting that he eventually does recover from his soul-wrecking grief, at least so as to live a more active life.
31. *TD* 5.3. I provide the Latin here: "*Sin autem virtus subiecta sub varios incertosque casus famula fortunae est nec tantarum virium est, ut se ipsa tueatur, vereor ne non tam virtutis fiducia nitendum nobis ad spem beate vivendi quam vota facienda videantur. Equidem eos casus, in quibus me fortuna vehementer exercuit, mecum ipse considerans huic incipio sententiae diffidere interdum et humani generis imbecillitatem fragilitatemque extimescere*."
32. *TD* 5.5
33. Douglas (1985, 210-211)
34. *TD* 4.38
35. *TD* 5.17
36. ibid.
37. *TD* 5.18
38. *TD* 5.19
39. *TD* 5.25
40. *TD* 5.21
41. *TD* 5.22
42. *TD* 4.57. I provide the Latin here: "*sapientam esse rerum divinarum et humanarum scientiam cognitionemque, quae cuiusque rei causa sit; ex quo efficitur, ut divina imitetus, humana omnio inferiora virtute ducat*."
43. For Nussbaum (1994, p. 390-391), this is a crucial discrepancy between the Stoics and Peripatetics which results in their divergent views of emotions.
44. *TD* 4.38-39
45. *TD* 4.14

46. *TD* 5.37
47. *TD* 5.28
48. *TD* 5.39, emphasis added
49. "*Et hoc quidem mihi cum Bruto convenit, id est, cum Aristotele, Xenocrate, Speusippo, Polemone*" (5.37). This argument is similar to Aristotle's "function argument" in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7
50. *TD* 5.42
51. *TD* 5.44
52. *TD* 5.85
53. In his *Tusculans*, Cicero has a tendency of drawing a distinction between the dialectical style of the Stoics and the rhetorical style of the Peripatetics: "Because Chryssipus and the Stoics, when they discuss the upheavals of the soul [emotions], spend most of their time making distinctions and definitions, that part of their discourse in which they claim to heal souls and hinder them from being agitated is quite small. However, the Peripatetics bring much to the healing of souls, but they put aside the thorns of making divisions and definitions. I wonder, therefore, whether I should spread out the sails of rhetoric or whether, before that, I should drive forth the oars of dialectic" (4.9).
54. *TD* 5.121
55. See Douglas (1985, 200).

Bibliography

Bailey, Shackleton D.R., translator. 1966. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, A.E. 1985. "Form and Content in the *Tusculan Disputations*." In *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers*, edited

by J.F.C. Powell, 197-218. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Frede, Michael. 1986. "Stoic Doctrine of the Affections of the Soul." In *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics*, edited by Malcolm Schofield and Gisela Striker, 93-110. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Graver, Margaret. 2002. "Appendix A: Crantor and the Consolatory Tradition." In *Cicero on the Emotions: Tusculan Disputations 3 and 4*, 187-194. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hadot, Pierre. 1995. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* Éditions Gallimard.

Nussbaum, Martha. 1994. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Powell, J.F.C. 1985. "Introduction." In *Cicero the Philosopher: Twelve Papers*. Edited by J.F.C. Powell. Clarendon Press, Oxford.