Outline

1. Introduction

1.1. Influence of Epi. & Sto.
   1.1.1. During Hellenistic period
   1.1.2. Revival of interest in 20th century (psychology)
   1.1.3. Both saw interest in practical philosophy

1.2. Definitions
   1.2.1. Eudaemonia
   1.2.2. Apatheia / pathos/ eupatheia
   1.2.3. Pleasure

2. Trouble in the soul

2.1. Epicurean view
   2.1.1. Fear of death
   2.1.2. Fear of fate/gods
   2.1.3. Unnecessary desires

2.2. Stoic view
   2.2.1. oikeiosis vs. adiaphora; agathon/kakon vs. lepton/alepton
   2.2.2. ends and objectives

2.3. Comparison
   2.3.1. Both see happiness as absence of disturbing ideas/opinions
   2.3.2. Epi. concentrates on specific false opinions; Sto. generalises — more sophisticated but runs risk of paradox.

3. Pain in the body

3.1. Epicurean view
   3.1.1. Pain to be avoided but not worried about (if intense, then short; if long, then mild). How realistic is this?
   3.1.2. Pleasures to be avoided if they bring pain; pain to be tolerated if brings pleasure. Sensible!

3.2. Stoic view
   3.2.1. Pain/discomfort is alepton, so adiaphora. But is natural=good, isn’t pain a natural message?
   3.2.2. Reactions to pain – pop. view unflinching acceptance, but a momentary physical response OK. cf symptom stress.
4. Conclusion

4.1. Similarities
4.1.1. Both view happiness in negative terms
4.1.2. Both emphasise importance of opinion
4.1.3. Both are based on a view of natural=good

4.2. Differences
4.2.1. Epi. more specific about types of false opinion.
4.2.2. Sto. classes physical pleasure/pain as indifferent, so cannot define happiness.

4.3. Both have practical measures for achieving happiness/avoiding misery, but neither provides a fully adequate explanation

Notes

**Epicurus — Letter to Menoeceus**

“So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it.”

“Accustom yourself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply awareness, and death is the privation of all awareness; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an unlimited time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality. For life has no terror; for those who thoroughly apprehend that there are no terrors for them in ceasing to live.”

“We must also reflect that of desires some are natural, others are groundless; and that of the natural some are necessary as well as natural, and some natural only. And of the necessary desires some are necessary if we are to be happy, some if the body is to be rid of uneasiness, some if we are even to live. He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a happy life.”

“we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a happy life.”

“When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or willful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.”

**Epicurus — Principal Doctrines**

“A happy and eternal being has no trouble himself and brings no trouble upon any other being; hence he is exempt from movements of anger and partiality, for every
such movement implies weakness.”

“Of all the means which are procured by wisdom to ensure happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friends.”

“The magnitude of pleasure reaches its limit in the removal of all pain. When pleasure is present, so long as it is uninterrupted, there is no pain either of body or of mind or of both together.”

“If we had never been molested by alarms at celestial and atmospheric phenomena, nor by the misgiving that death somehow affects us, nor by neglect of the proper limits of pains and desires, we should have had no need to study natural science.”

Amelie Oksenberg Rorty — *The Two Faces of Stoicism: Rousseau and Freud*

“But despite his *apatheia*, the sage is said to have general benign affections (*eu-patheiai*): joy, friendliness, cheerfulness, piety” (1998:243)

“obdurate passions . . . are mistaken judgements that can be corrected by revising the erroneous beliefs that engender or constitute them” (1998:244)

“since passions are also physical states, correcting them seems to involve more than changing one’s mind” (1998:244)

“The cosmos is a self-sufficient and self-sustaining living organism, forming a coherent logically ordered system, one that is reflected in the rational unity of the human mind” (1998:245) {P} c.f. Gaia

whole = *ousia*; parts = *mere*

T.H. Irwin — *Stoic Inhumanity*

Objective vs. end (1998:229) — archery example (objective = hitting the target; end = skill in archery)

“The objective is achieving the natural advantages (preferred indifferents); the end is happiness” (1998:228).

“What matters to Stoic sages . . . is not what they achieve, but the skill they display in trying to achieve it” (1998:227).