According to the Stoics, only physical stuff exists. To describe it in their terms, the world consists of different types of an airy substance, *pneuma*. Some of these pneumatic stuffs instantiate psychological properties or states. Thus, psychological attributes, which they deny are completely different in kind from bodily properties, can be studied as part of the natural world. Within the context of their naturalism, the Stoics also carefully attend to the character of psychological properties. Despite their differences, such states as sense-perceptions, emotions, and beliefs convey information to an agent. The complex physical organization of the underlying pneumatic states determines why such psychological states have content. Thus, the Stoics aim to provide a unified theory of varied mental phenomena.

1. There are ontological complications since they also hold that there are things that do not exist, such as sayables (*lekta*). See, e.g., Sextus M 10. 218.

2. Though the Stoics reject ordinary versions of substance dualism, their own views are complicated in ways I shall not explore. In particular, they do not appear to accept either a version of reductive type-physicalism in which psychological states are simply identified with physical ones, or eliminativist theories. The Stoics are committed to nothing more than that psychological properties have a physical basis sufficient for their real existence and their explanation. Accordingly, all that can be said here is that the Stoics endorse some weak version of non-reductive physicalism. One apparent dissent from this view is Deborah Modrak, “Stoics, Epicureans and Mental Content,” *Apeiron* 26 (1993), p. 98, which is a review-discussion of Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Modrak suggests without argument that Stoic monism about the world provides a motive for a reductive physicalism. David Sedley, “Chrysippus on psychophysical causality,” *Passions and Perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), edd. Jacques Brunschwig and Martha C. Nussbaum, pp. 313-331, argues that it is a mistake to understand Chrysippus to distinguish distinctly physical from mental descriptions of psychological attributes. The basic Stoic texts and their fundamental arguments on behalf of their view are clearly presented in Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 3-6, 20-33, 37-70.

3. These general remarks help to reveal the attraction of Stoic philosophy of mind for many contemporary scholars. The Stoics are thoroughgoing naturalists who conduct a serious inquiry into the ascription of propositional attitudes. Their analysis of fundamental issues in philosophy of mind is often subtle and serves to remind...
It quickly becomes evident that the Stoic view about the nature and extent of the propositional content of mental states is puzzling. They deny that human young or animals can entertain beliefs or have thoughts. The existence of propositional attitudes ordinarily is held to involve the attribution of some thought or belief. So, it would follow that the Stoics deny small children or animals have mental states with propositional contents. Yet, there is also evidence to the contrary. For instance, in his well-known example, Chrysippus attributes what appears to be reasoning by disjunctive syllogism to a dog. One might argue that this kind of example commits the Stoics to the ascription of propositional contents even in the case of animals. Furthermore, if the mental states of non-rational animals are so impoverished as to lack any propositional content, the Stoics must explain how it is possible for such animals to function adequately at all. Doesn’t, say, a mouse see that a cat is nearby? Recently, commentators have debated the extent of propositional contents in the Stoic account of psychological states. The discussion has focused, in particular, on perceptual states because for the Stoics perception and impulse are what distinguish animal life from other living things and perception has a special prominence in their inquiry into mental states. Two basic, competing interpretations have emerged. On what has become the orthodox reading, the Stoics sharply separate the psychological states of non-rational animals from those of rational animals. According to advocates of the orthodox position, the mental states of, say, small children are too simple to have the cognitive structure necessary for the attribution of propositional attitudes to them. Non-rational animals can perceive only qualities such