

Roman and Stoic: the Self as a Mediator

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An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself.

A. Camus

[On 'Ἐμποδίων:] ...ἐχρήσατο δὲ τῇ λέξει Ἰεροκλῆς τε καὶ ἄλλοι ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔμποδιου· φησὶν ἐν β' φιλοσοφουμένῳ περὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων· τίς γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐχὶ καὶ ἔγρημε καὶ παίδας ἀνείλατο καὶ οὐσίας ἐπεμελήθη, μηδενὸς ἔμποδῶν ὄντος; Suidas (Adler II, 262)

Of the vast array of approaches to the self, modern and ancient, this paper focuses on the model that came about through a Roman adaptation of Stoic doctrine: the self as a mediator between philosophical norms and the demands of society, ranging from those of spouse, children and kin to those of the political community.¹ This self is a rational, unified and subjective consciousness that is reflected in a discourse of explicit self-examination and -assessment.² While it is true that the Stoic self is not consciousness in the

1. Based on Panaetius' four-*personae* theory (cf. *infra*), Christopher Gill, "Peace of Mind and Being Yourself: Panaetius to Plutarch," *ANRW* II 36.7 (1994): 4599–640, approaches the Stoic view by making a distinction between *two selves*, one consisting of our "individual capacities and inclinations" and the other, the "deeper" or "more essential self," of our "shared human nature" (4602). I take a different approach: because the Stoics consider our human nature as rational beings to be embedded in a rational universe, the 'true' or 'deeper' normative framework transcends individuals, and therefore our common nature as well, which derives its meaning precisely from this larger perspective. On his deathbed a true Stoic can say to *fortuna*: "here is a better soul than the one you gave me" (... recipe animum meliorem quam dedisti ...), Seneca *De Tr. An.* 11, 3. Hence I posit only one self that is the junction at which different normative frameworks meet; or to put it even more strongly: a self that is constituted by this very encounter. This being said, Christopher Gill's work has been indispensable for my paper.

2. By the development of a concept of the self, I mean a gradual development of a more unitary and a more subjective notion of a human being, in fact the very notion of a 'core' which each of us in this life is supposed to have as his or her own. Stoicism indeed advanced to a highly unitary view, but what we take an individual to be, namely his unique characteristics—what distinguishes him from all other persons—was not crucial to this view, although Stoicism did to a certain extent take individual dispositions into account and Panaetius' four-*personae* theory, as we will see, could explain uniqueness of some sort. But the modern notion of the self as an

strong, and debated, (post-) Cartesian sense, it does represent the most unified model in ancient thought. Stoic psychology attributes a reasoning commanding-faculty to human souls, the *hegemonikon*, which controls the seven subordinate, instrumental faculties—not parts—of the five senses, speech and reproduction. The rational *hegemonikon*, which all humans have and which we can analyse in an abstract manner, becomes a 'self,' I would argue, in concretely experienced situations and choices. The mediating self is paradoxical:³ it entails a 'surrender' to 'higher' values transcending the individual; Stoic philosophy prescribes these values through a specific form of writing and speaking, namely through teachings, precepts and examples of right behaviour. Pierre Hadot has eloquently highlighted the common thread of the care for the self in the Socratic project and in subsequent ancient thought in general.⁴ I want to emphasise the specific features of the Stoic approach, against the backdrop of the general pattern. What could the Stoic model accomplish that other, competing models could not?⁵

individual who holds on to his uniqueness against all odds, who instead of conforming to norms holds himself to be the norm, a 'rebel without a cause,' is truly alien to the Stoic concept, which presupposes a normative framework. And this leads us to the very essence of the Stoic self, namely the 'self' as a mediator in between different sets of norms. It is precisely in the light of the self as a 'mere' mediator, that we can understand why a turn towards the self entails a surrender and abandonment towards a higher ideal. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA, 1989), 27–51, argues at great length against the validity of the modern notion of the self; according to him the 'self' is essentially a relational concept, it can not be seen outside of a "moral space," that is outside of frameworks with qualitative normative distinctions. C. Gill, "Personhood and Personality: The four-*personae* theory in Cicero, *De Officiis*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 6 (1988): 172, refers to Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London, 1981), and brings out the point (172–73 and n. 18, cf. also the article quoted in n. 1) that MacIntyre might have misunderstood the Stoic viewpoint, by describing it as "a deontological, rather than a teleological ethical theory." For this last point, cf. also A.A. Long, "Greek Ethics after MacIntyre and the Stoic Community of Reason," *Ancient Philosophy* 3 (1983): 184–99.

The reader should note that this paper focuses on the self without drawing in the categories of personhood and personality, which create challenges of their own. Panaetius' four-*personae* theory is examined primarily for its emphasis on social values. For an excellent recent study on personality and self, cf. C. Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: the Self in Dialogue* (Oxford, 1996); cf. also his earlier "Is There a Concept of Person in Greek Philosophy?" *Companion to Ancient Thought 2, Psychology*, ed. S. Everson et al. (Cambridge, 1991), 166–93.

3. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self*, ed. Martin et al. (Amherst, 1988), 16–49.

4. Cf. P. Hadot, "Exercices Spirituels," *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1993), 13–58; cf. also P. Rabbow, *Seelenführung. Methodik der Exerzitzen in der Antike* (München, 1954); I. Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie* 13 (Berlin, 1969), esp. 179–90.

5. To examine how the Stoic model differs from others, and how it took time to develop, is not to espouse a naive 'progressivist' view. Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley,

Though moot points and controversies certainly remain, for my purpose the technical aspects of Stoic psychology are fairly clear.⁶ The issue here is not exactly how the four functions of the soul's ruling principle itself (as opposed to the instrumental functions), namely reason, *phantasia*, impulse and assent, work together, but what they tell us about a Stoic's involvement in the world around her. The coming about of the Stoic self proves more than a matter of shifting doctrine,⁷ of new terminology to describe the workings of the inner self. In the Roman period it is primarily that very monitoring as it is lived and reflected in the writing. Marcus Aurelius' writings do not *claim* to be anything but this self-assessment.

To the social historian, my philosophical and conceptual analysis offers one way to make sense of the prevalence of Stoicism in the Roman Empire. To understand notorious Roman encounters between philosophy and politics, such as Cicero's predicament at the end of his life, Seneca's oscillation between distance and participation in politics⁸ (and his political interpretation of non-involvement)⁹ or the famous 'senatorial opposition' of leading Romans to the emperor's rule, it helps to place them in the larger context of the question of involvement. And in order to take a wider perspective than the strictly political, I will include less commonly discussed examples of more intimate relationships.¹⁰ On the basis of this evidence it becomes clear that

1993), 6–7, gets the nuance as follows: "In criticising what I call progressivism, I am not saying that there has been no progress." Though I do not *a priori* share his misgivings about notions like the will and morality, and about ethicised psychology, Williams' analyses about the self in Homer and tragedy are illuminating and useful for my approach.

6. Cf. B. Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford, 1985).

7. For a similar methodology, cf. S. Citroni Marchetti, "Il *sapiens* in pericolo. Psicologia del rapporto con gli altri, da Cicerone a Marco Aurelio," *ANRW* II 36.7 (1994): 4546–598: "Oltre all'analisi propriamente dottrinale, lo studio di un filosofo può ammettere un'angolatura che miri a coglieri il momento in cui la dottrina si confronta con alcune contingenze della vita ..." (4546).

8. Cf. P. Grimal, "Sénèque et le Stoïcisme Romain," *ANRW* II 36.3 (1989): 1962–992, esp. 1976–977.

9. Cf. for instance *De Tr. An.* 5, 2–4, with reference to Socrates' attitude under the Thirty Tyrants; or *Ep.* 14, 14, about Stoics who, shut out from public life, devoted their time to "framing laws for the human race without incurring the displeasure of those in power."

10. For an excellent discussion of the wider issues involved cf. the chapter by Miriam Griffin, "Philosophy, Politics and Politicians at Rome," *Philosophia Togata. Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society* (Oxford 1989), 1–37, and her *Seneca. A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976). On page 6 (1989) she states that she finds the prevalence of Stoicism in the Roman Empire a phenomenon that is difficult to explain. Cf. also ch. 9, "Stoic Tonics: Philosophy and the Self-Government of the Soul" (especially 326–29), and ch. 11, "Seneca on Anger in Public Life," from Martha Nussbaum's book, *The Therapy of Desire, Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 1994). Miriam Griffin quite rightly points out on page 36, that "the doctrines of the dogmatic sects were too complex to provide definite directives on particular occasions, but they

the Stoic self can easily refute the charge often made against it, that of being evasive. Stoicism turns out to be one of the least evasive of the ancient doctrines: the Stoic promises of inner invulnerability and escape, as in suicide, paradoxically encourage and allow one to keep up social responsibilities and personal commitments in difficult and threatening times. The Stoic model can ideally overcome an apparently inevitable kind of conflict, that between the demands of community and philosophical norms.¹¹

To the scholars who analyse the writing methods of the Roman Stoic authors, I offer an explanation for the culmination¹² of self-examination techniques that they display or recommend. The theme that philosophy in words and thought is useless when not matched by an interiorisation and by deeds;¹³ the *topoi* of the so-called *meditatio*, the examination of conscience,¹⁴ in which one's firm adherence to philosophical principles is tested against the reflection on concrete, practical challenges;¹⁵ the emphasis on writing as an exercise in self-assessment—a kind of writing Epictetus is even willing to attribute to Socrates!¹⁶—we find many of these elsewhere as well, notably with the Epicureans,¹⁷ but not to the same extent and on the same scale as

provided the moral *vocabulary* for weighing alternatives and justifying decisions." Martha Nussbaum, page 338, focuses not so much on doctrines but on "certain procedural guidelines" for (self-) monitoring. My paper centres on the problem of involvement specifically, and on the features of Stoic psychology that bear on this issue.

11. Cf. also Gill (1994), 4602: "This self or nature [the deeper one, our shared human nature, cf. n. 1] is to be seen as constituting the ethical ground or focus of the social roles and projects ..., rather than as being a source of value which competes with the performance of those roles and projects."

12. Cf. Rabbow, 16.

13. Seneca *Ep.* 45, 5; 48, 7; 82, 9; 85; 111; Marcus Aurelius 1, 7; 1, 16 with reference to Socrates; 1, 17; 7, 67; Epictetus, some very stark examples, with reference to Socrates 2, 13, 21ff.; *Ench.* 46, with reference to Socrates; also 51; it is also a recurrent theme in Philo of Alexandria, for example *Mos.* 1, 29; Diogenes Laertius attributes it to Polemo too, 4, 18. For an excellent discussion, cf. K. Döring, "Sokrates bei Epiktet," *Studia Platonica. Festschrift Hermann Gundert* (Amsterdam, 1974), 218ff.

14. According to Cicero, *De Sen.* 38, the Pythagoreans engaged in the practice in order to exercise their memory.

15. Cf. R. Newman, "Cotidie Meditare. Theory and Practice of the *meditatio* in Imperial Stoicism," in *ANRW II* 36.3 (1989): 1473–517. He also discusses, 1477–478, that Cicero attributes to the Cyrenaics a technique of anticipating future evils in thought in order to be better prepared, the *praemediatio mali* (*Tusc. Disp.* 3, 28–54).

16. 2, 1, 32–33; 2, 6, 26–27, on his writing paens in prison, cf. *Phaedo* 60d; cf. 1, 1, 25, on writing as an exercise; on writing for one's own use, cf. Seneca *De Tr. An.* 1, 14. I agree with Döring, 218 n.2, that Epictetus is projecting a common practice of his circle on Socrates.

17. Cf. for instance the end of the *Letter to Menoecus* 135 (LS23J). Seneca does not mind "crossing over to the enemy camp" to borrow a saying from Epicurus when it suits him *Ep.* 2, 5–6. Gill (1994) evaluates the Democritean / Epicurean strand in Panaetius', Seneca's, and Plutarch's approaches to peace of mind.

with the Roman Stoics. While Plato's Socrates would claim that most of us cannot arrive at understanding without someone else waking us up and ridding us of our self-complacency, that is without a dialogue in the full sense, for the Stoics the conversation with oneself, which the exceptional Socrates could manage,¹⁸ becomes the model.¹⁹ The constant balancing act that the Roman Stoics claim as their mode of life, as I will explain below, accounts for this.

ELEMENTS OF STOICISM

According to the Stoics, animals and human children, the latter in their pre-rational phase, are born with a self-awareness and a benevolence towards themselves that make them reach out for what is necessary to their self-preservation. *Oikeiosis*, 'appropriateness,'²⁰ works with the first, natural impulse. Love for and care of one's offspring also act as part of this fundamental dynamic. From this bond between parents and offspring, Cicero in his *De Finibus* makes the Stoic Cato derive that "we are therefore by nature suited to form unions, societies and states" (3, 63). We are by nature part of a community, or as Hierocles describes it (around 100 AD), we are at the centre of a set of concentric circles,²¹ moving from ourselves, to our nuclear family, to our relatives, and so on, to the whole human race. According to Hierocles, the goal is to draw those circles as close to the centre as possible.

18. Cf. the ending of the *Hippias Maior*.

19. Cf. Seneca *Ep.* 27, 1–2: "Sic itaque me audi, tamquam mecum loquar. In secretum te meum admitto et te adhibito mecum exigo." That is, in their exchanges Lucilius becomes a witness to Seneca's conversation with himself. This insight came out of a conversation with Sara Rappe, pun not intended, for which I would like to thank her. Cf. also Cicero *De Off.* 3, 1: (a claim attributed by Cato to Scipio Africanus) ... [numquam se] minus solum [esse] quam cum solus esset.

20. Cf. LS57. For my purpose these are the most useful works on *oikeiosis*: T. Engberg-Pedersen, *The Stoic Theory of Oikeiosis. Moral Development and Social Interaction in Early Stoic Philosophy, Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 2* (Aarhus, 1990); M. Isnardi Parente, "Ierocle stoico. Oikeiosis e doveri sociali," *ANRW II* 36.3 (1989): 2201–226; M. Whitlock Blundell, "Parental Nature and Stoic *oikeiosis*," *Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1990): 221–42.

21. If we combine Pierre Hadot's analysis ("Une clé des *Pensées* de Marc Aurèle: les trois *topoi* philosophiques selon Épictète," *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, 3rd ed. [Paris 1993], 135–72), with the one of E. Asmis ("The Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius," *ANRW II* 36.3 [1989]: 2236) this is what we learn about Marcus Aurelius' views of the different rapports in our life: our primary concern should be for the rational, ruling principle of our soul, the *hegemonikon*, around that centre there are the relationships to the gods and the cosmos, to other human beings, and to everything non-rational, with the body and the non-rational soul falling under the latter category. Cf. also A. Bodson, "La morale sociale des derniers Stoïciens, Sénèque, Épictète et Marc Aurèle," *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège* 176 (Paris, 1967); Cicero *De Off.* 1, 53ff.

In human beings appropriation evolves over time, as Seneca tells us:²² “Each period of life has its own constitution, one for the baby, and another for the boy, [another for the youth], and another for the old man. They are all related appropriately to that constitution in which they exist.” In full-grown adults “reason intervenes as the craftsman of impulse.”²³ Stoicism is notorious for equating the moral and the good with wisdom only, that is, with the correct use of one’s reason, which is related to the divine reason permeating the universe. The previously existing needs are not erased—and this anticipates the doctrine of ‘preferred indifferents’ I will discuss below—but are integrated and subsumed under a new priority, the exercise of one’s reason.

But now, as it turns out, we have *two* approaches²⁴ to human bonding: one in function of the nature and of the kind of impulse we share with animals, starting from the care for off-spring, and another in function of our reason, which distinguishes humans from animals, starting from the divine principle. The two approaches are, of course, related, because all of nature owes its order to the divine principle. This points to a combined issue that goes beyond the limits of this paper—because it deals with the connections between ethics on the one hand, and logic and physics on the other—but which I hope to take up again elsewhere. On the one hand, the Stoic notion of divine order and logos supposedly undoes the pairs of opposition natural / rational, particular / universal, subjective / objective which Sextus Empiricus and Plotinus, following the lead of the ‘New,’ aporetic Academy among others, in their own terms do not fail to use against the Stoics. On the other, by applying a part/whole distinction to human and divine reason, the Stoics try to resolve the contrast between the apparent unreason of external circumstances or adversity and the reason of self and cosmic order without dividing the self internally and destabilising it. The issue I focus on here limits itself to the specific area of applied ethics, as the relation between different sets of demands and normative levels.

The two approaches to human bonding I mentioned above, nature and (divine) reason, do give us different vantage points from which to look at human communities. Cicero’s Cato, in fact, switches from one approach to the other: a) “They [the Stoics] think it is important to understand that nature engenders parents’ love for their children. That is the *starting* point of

22. *Ep.* 121, 6–15; 76, 8–11; Cicero *De Fin.* 4, 16; 5, 24; *Tusc. Disp.* 5, 37–39.

23. *D. L.* 7. 85–86.

24. Cf. M. Schofield, “Two Stoic Approaches to Justice,” *Justice and Generosity ... Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. A. Laks and M. Schofield (Cambridge, 1995), 191–212. I emphasise here that Cicero *readily juxtaposes* the two perspectives in Cato’s exposition.

the universal community of the human race which we seek to attain" (*De Finibus* 3, 62); b) "The Stoics hold that the world is governed by divine will: it is as it were a city and state shared by men and gods, and each one of us is a part of this world. From this it is a natural consequence that we prefer the common advantage to our own" (3, 64). And from this Cicero's Cato draws a grand conclusion about involvement: "Furthermore, since we see that man is created with a view to protecting and preserving his fellows, it is in agreement with this nature that the wise man should want to play a part in governing the state and, in order to live the natural way, take a wife and want children by her" (3, 68).

The community of reason and even the well-known tag of "a city and state shared by men and gods," however, are in themselves not sufficient grounds for Cato's conclusion that the "wise man should want to play a part in governing the state." In theory, at least, we could think of other ways to create communities that would do justice to humans as rational and social beings. Why would we want to participate in any 'business as usual' politics, rather than creating a radical alternative? Yet, to give but one striking example, the Stoics may have expressed respect for slaves as human beings, but they nevertheless did not advocate abolishing slavery.²⁵ Two important kinds of tension already emerge from this preliminary analysis of *oikeiosis*: 1) the tension between our specifically human nature as rational beings and our other needs, and 2) the tension between the 'community of reason' and society as given.

In Stoic psychology there is one and only one centre of awareness, the 'ruling' *hegemonikon*, or mind. Unlike Plato, the Stoics explain irrationality as a defect of reason, that is, as something going wrong in the functioning of the *hegemonikon* itself. But the mind does have several faculties. The first, the faculty of 'impression' or 'representation' (*phantasia*) carries *all* kinds of thought-content, sensory and non-sensory (and thus the notion is much more unitary than Aristotle's, in his *De Anima*). The representations based on sense-perception are primary, both chronologically and logically. The most fundamental of all 'representations' is our self-perception and our awareness of ourselves as hearing, seeing or thinking subjects. This is the starting point for 'appropriation,' which I discussed above.

In animals, which do not have reason, representations can create the urge (*horme* or impulse) to do something, to act upon the representation of food, for instance. But rational human adults are not limited to stimulus and response behaviour; in them a third faculty operates upon the connection between representations and impulses, namely the faculty of assent. If an im-

25. Cf. for instance J. Rist, "Seneca and Stoic Orthodoxy," *ANRWII* 36.3 (1989): 2008–009; Griffin (1976), 256–85.

pression, via concepts and language, gives us a proposition such as 'going for a walk now is appropriate,' the assent given or withheld will yield the belief that 'It is appropriate or 'it is not.' Adult humans, in other words, have the opportunity to weigh and evaluate their representations. The conundrum remains, of course, that how one deals with representation 'x' now is the result of one's beliefs and one's preconditioning, but that these beliefs themselves result from previous representations, and thus depend heavily on the factors that Panaetius also took into account, such as the circumstances of one's upbringing or one's disposition (cf. *infra*).

Nevertheless, as Epictetus elaborates and emphasises, we can work on our representations. (All humans can, and not just a few exceptionally gifted ones.) If we learn to give our assent cautiously, to juxtapose contrasting representations, to examine our behaviour in terms of consistency and ultimate happiness as opposed to immediate gratification, if we train ourselves by anticipating what we might consider painful and upsetting and teach ourselves to accept calmly the inevitable; if we do all this, then, according to Epictetus we 'make correct use of our representations.' Within the rational faculty of humans, the *hegemonikon*, representations constitute the core of a given person's consciousness, her moral character, and the faculty of assent allows the balancing act.²⁶

As Anthony Long states, "there is a normative way of living, a rational life 'in accordance with nature,' which we are genetically equipped to understand, as our reason and experience develop, and which specifies what we should seek as moral agents. Stoic self-fashioning is not a case of making up one's own values, but learning to take the norms of nature as one's own."²⁷ This paper adds to the above statement that Stoic self-fashioning also entails constantly questioning the norms of society, the same society in which one nevertheless is involved, and of which one takes on the responsibilities. In this sense the 'self' becomes a mediator.

The sustained mediating operation calls for Epictetus' emphasis on the 'correct use of representations.' Other scholars have noticed that later Stoics like Seneca express a stronger voluntarism than their predecessors.²⁸ Brad Inwood, based on his analysis of *De Ira* ii, claims that Seneca has an "interest in consciously controllable [as opposed to *implicit*] assent and" a "reduced

26. Cf. Anthony A. Long, "Representation of the Self in Stoicism," *Companion to Ancient Thought 2, Psychology*, ed. S. Everson *et al.* (Cambridge, 1991), 102–20.

27. Cf. n. 26, 118.

28. Cf. J. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (1980, reprint), 224–32, contra Pohlenz, claims this is merely a matter of changing terminology; but important nuance in (1989), 1999–2003; for B. Inwood, cf. "Seneca and Psychological Dualism," *Passions and Perceptions ... Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. J. Brunschwig and M. Nussbaum (Cambridge, 1993), 150–83.

interest in overall character.²⁹ Precisely if one is engaged in a very delicate, complicated and sometimes even dangerous balancing act, control matters.

This again becomes apparent if we examine what has value for a Stoic. Only the virtue of living according to our rational nature as reflective of divine reason contributes to happiness; only vice can cause unhappiness. Everything else falls under the category of 'indifferents.' Yet of these indifferents some, like health, turn out to be also 'according to nature' and are to be preferred. They are 'according to nature,' precisely because they correspond to a lower level *oikeiosis*, the kind with which we started out, as new-borns and children. A Stoic will try to maintain her health, but will not become upset if the doctor brings bad news. Of these 'indifferent, yet to be preferred' things some, like health, are primary, because they correspond to our primary needs; others, like riches, are not. But even with the latter, the point is that when a Stoic finds himself at a lavish banquet, he will not sit down with a bowl of rice, but given the right circumstances and the fact that the food is there to be taken, he will join in the meal.³⁰ Similarly, 'proper functions,' *kathekonta*, exist beyond those of the perfect sage, that is other functions one might have to perform as a result of one's walk in life.³¹

As Margareta Isnardi Parente indicates, the above mentioned aspects of Stoicism seem to converge in and coalesce around the remaining texts of Hierocles.³² The writings preserved on a papyrus, called *Elements of Ethics* (*Ἠθικὴ Στοιχειώσις*), give us the theoretical and technical background; the excerpts preserved in Stobaeus deal with more practical applications.³³ They reveal no radical break with earlier 'orthodox' Stoicism, but rather a crucial shift in emphasis. Not only do the later Stoics tend to emphasise ethics over logic and physics—though Seneca, of course, did write his *Natural Questions*—; what the Roman Stoics have in common is that they devote most of their attention to an ethics *in action*.

29. (1993), n. 60, with reference to C. Kahn, "Discovering the Will: from Aristotle to Augustine," *The Question of Eclecticism*, ed. J. Dillon and A.A. Long (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1988), 234–59. Cf. also A. Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley 1982).

30. Cf. LS 58–59. On this cf. Epictetus *Ench.* 15.

31. In some cases, as Martha Nussbaum explores in her chapter on anger (cf. n. 10), there might be a genuine and difficult tension between distance and involvement, especially where one's family and beloved ones in general are concerned, cf. *infra*. There is also the issue of the Stoic view of suicide, which could contradict the detachment.

32. For editions of these texts, cf. H. von Arnim and W. Schubart, *Hierokles. Ethische Elementarlehre, Berliner Klassikertexte 4* (Berlin, 1906), papyrus 9780 and Stobaeus fragments; G. Bastianini and A. Long, *Hierocles. Elementa Moralia, Corpus dei Papiri Filosofici Greci e Latini 1, 1, 2* (Firenze, 1992), papyrus only.

33. Isnardi Parente claims that the Stobaeus fragments point to a work "*Περὶ τῶν καθήκοντων*," which she places in the tradition of *πῶς χρῆστέον* on treatises, or in Seneca's terms "quomodo sit utendum" (*Ep.* 95, 45–67). It is a matter of controversy how much of the Seneca passage goes back to Posidonius, cf. Theiler fr. 452 versus Edelstein and Kidd F176.

MOS MAIORUM AND GREEK PARADIGMS

In a framework such as the *mos maiorum*, as it appears in Roman literature, ideally the self is unnecessary as a driving force behind one's actions: one's duties and tasks are regulated by community-generated and commonly accepted norms, which at all times prevail over the individual; and the evaluation of one's deeds is not a matter of personal opinion, but of other people's judgement, based on a common standard. In such a context personal preferences are not merely considered as irrelevant, but more fundamentally are expected to be at harmony with the outer demands: again, ideally no conflict should exist at all between the individual and the common good, and an inner divergence can be suspect in itself. In this form the *mos maiorum* becomes more a matter of wishful thinking by a Roman elite, and of literary convention, than of an actual historical reality. We are by no means to take this image for granted, and to presume simply that no norm conflicts occurred in the every day life of a Roman senator of the 'old' mould.³⁴

I start my analysis with well-known Greek examples of tensions in which the 'self' as I take it can start to assert itself, because these examples form a cultural background for Roman audiences. Recent scholarship on the self has taken the approach of setting philosophical claims off against literary models.³⁵ I want to draw brief attention to the kind of situations in epic or tragedy that would provide material for a mediating self. Tensions occur when the normative frame of reference that is supposed to guarantee the well-being of the individual,³⁶ although only as a member of the community, for some reason turns itself against him, when the harmonised world of a common standard becomes fractured. Naturally one then starts to question the validity of this framework, and goes into opposition, with the 'self' as one's ally. And the military metaphor here refers to the very basic level on which this process can take place: in moments of extreme crisis³⁷ and danger we find Homeric heroes asking themselves whether to remain faithful to the warrior code, or to run so that they might save themselves, or to try to placate the adversary. On more sophisticated levels we see Medea's strong revolt against the 'fate' of women (to which, ironically, Medea had seemed an exception), when the norms which are supposed to regulate a woman's status have turned against her, in allowing Jason to abandon her; Medea's agonising turn towards herself when she debates which course of action to

34. For this analysis of the *mos maiorum* I am indebted to a lecture given by T.N. Habinek, in the seminar "Roman Identity and the Coming of the Greeks," (UC Berkeley, Spring 1990).

35. Cf. also Gill, n. 2, and Williams, n. 5.

36. I use the term 'individual' here as opposed to 'community,' not with the modern connotation of the word, to which I alluded *supra*.

37. Cf. also A. MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," *The Monist* 60/4 (1977): 453-71.

take, and her final rejection and total transgression of the norms. Medea was a favourite case-study of the Stoics.³⁸

Returning to the *Iliad*, one prime example of tension immediately draws our attention: the wrath of Achilles. The crisis of the warrior code that regulates the distribution of spoils, the power clash between Agamemnon and Achilles, leads the latter to withdraw. Achilles is literally absent from the action; he chooses solitude and distance over company and involvement (1, 348–49). But still, there is more than literal distance: Achilles does turn to ‘himself,’ however that ‘self’ is defined (1, 428–29).

In the embassy scene of Book 9 (308–429), it becomes apparent that the crisis has led Achilles to weigh two different frameworks against each other: the glory of war, with the premature death it entails, and the secure prestige of a long life in peace. Achilles does not merely question strongly the value of the warrior code (316–22); he does so in light of the secure prestige a life at home could offer him. Indeed, the fact that the two alternatives and the final outcome are inscribed in his fate, does not prevent his possessing, at least apparently, a measure of freedom to choose. In this case the opposition against one normative framework does not merely lead to a rebellion of the self, but to an alternative, another socio-political frame of reference: the tension arises between two alternatives on the same level. (We will see to which extent this holds true for Cicero as well.)

Homeric figures might be richly characterised in the narrative, it still holds that the ‘self’ is represented by several psychological entities.³⁹ But maybe we should not look for a clear conceptualisation of the ‘self’ in a narrative; in Homer and the tragedies we see this ‘self,’ whatever it is, at work. And as long as the ‘self’ has a circumscribed role because the normative tensions are supposed to be the exception rather than the rule, and are mainly limited to crises, there may be no need for a conceptualisation of a strong, opposing self. This situation changes drastically in the world according to Socrates and Plato, where the philosopher undertakes a continuous and sustained opposition to the existing social norms. Plato and his Socrates are essential to my argument both because I want to nuance Hadot’s claim that the full notion of the care of the self is already present in Plato’s works, and because the Roman Stoics give so much weight to *their version* of Socrates’ exemplary behaviour.

38. Cf. C. Gill, “Did Chrysippus understand Medea?” *Phronesis* 28 (1983): 136–49. For a path less beaten on the topic of tragic transgression and normative break-down, cf. Martha Nussbaum’s analysis of Hecuba in her *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge, 1986), ch. 13.

39. For the state of the discussion on this issue cf. A. Lesky, *Homeros*, PW Suppl. Bd. 11 687–846. For a critique of the Snell view of a “scattered self,” cf. S. Halliwell, “Traditional Greek Conceptions of Character,” *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, ed. C. Pelling (Oxford, 1990), 32–59.

The Socratic stand against the Athenian *polis* as it is, as opposed to what it could be, is extrapolated by Plato's criticism of the world in which we live, the imperfect and ever-changing realm of the senses, where everything is in a continuous fluctuation of becoming. The criticism leads to withdrawal, into the margin of the *polis*, with as little political involvement as possible,⁴⁰ and into another realm which is perfection itself. The 'core' of ourselves, the reasoning part in our souls, does not belong to the embodied world of the senses; although our souls are here with 'us,' they are of another world, to which they link us. Thus these 'cores' are, if anything, more a general principle, than really yours or mine. Plato does not move beyond a mere typology, and a very rudimentary one, for making distinctions among the souls;⁴¹ and his notion of a soul with different parts leaves many questions unanswered as to the problem of being an agent or having a will.⁴² The soul as Plato describes it acts as a mediator between two realms,⁴³ and in this sense between alternative normative frameworks; yet because this 'soul' is so much 'out of the world,' one could hardly call it a 'self' as I defined it. Still, it remains true that according to Plato we reach the ideal as opposed to the defective reality through a turn inwards, through our souls. "I tried to persuade each of you not to be concerned with any of the things that belong to you before you concern yourself with how your self can be in the best possible and wisest condition," Socrates claims in the *Apology* (36c; cf. also 30a7–b1).⁴⁴

The philosopher's discontent with society leads in Plato's writings to two quite different main approaches to the possibility of human access in human life to the intelligible realm: one utopian and the other pragmatic. The philosopher himself reaches for perfection, but is at the same time fully aware of the fact that not everybody can or will follow him, and for those who continue to operate within the given *polis*-structure and to strive for its rewards, there is a way to incorporate at least somehow the alternative philosophical values. Socrates' return, in Book Ten of the *Republic*, to the external and quite conventional rewards of just behaviour within the *polis*—after his painstaking analysis of the value of just behaviour in itself, regardless of any external rewards—stands as one striking example of the combination of philosophical and conventional wisdom. We should not deem these two view-

40. Cf. *Apology*, 31c ff. and 17d. The *Apology* does mention Socrates' (required) participation in the Council (32b ff.) and the risks he ran then.

41. As for example in the charioteer myth of the *Phaedrus*, where souls are distinguished according to the gods of whose train they are part (250b); or in the *Republic*, where Plato describes the one good type and the four bad ones into which a soul can degenerate (544d ff.).

42. Cf. C. Kahn (1988).

43. Hadot, 77, stresses that Plato's Socrates himself is the mediator between the two.

44. Cf. S. Rappé, "Socrates and Self-knowledge," *Apeiron* 28 (1995): 1–24.

points necessarily incompatible, although they do represent different attitudes.⁴⁵

And these differences emerge clearly when we compare the utopian philosopher-king to the 'real' Alcibiades on display in the *Alcibiades I*. In the *Republic* (520bff.) Socrates distinguishes between the role of the philosophers in the 'other' states and their responsibility in the *kallipolis* he has developed. Instead of focusing on the controversial, and sometimes even seemingly absurd, political themes of the *Republic*, we could approach the political nature of this work by considering under what circumstances and how a philosopher can become involved in governing the state. Philosophers in the other states, Plato's Socrates tells us, are allowed to stay aloof from the political scene, because they acquired their knowledge in spite of a corrupting environment and in opposition to it. This argument does not apply to the *kallipolis*, where the whole structure of education is aimed at the acquisition of the appropriate knowledge. Only under these nurturing circumstances do the philosophers 'owe' the state the proper management of its affairs. Only in the utopian state, which has come as close as possible to the desired perfection, will the philosopher be king, and accept the burden of rule; and through his rule he is supposed to maintain the state, again, in as good a condition as is possible. Yet just as the desired perfection is ultimately absent from our world, so the true wise man would much rather be absent from it, that is aloof from it all, and he considers his involvement a necessary evil (520e). In this sense the philosopher-king possesses a 'tragic' trait; but a Stoic, and especially a Stoic of Seneca's kind, or even more poignantly one like Marcus Aurelius, carries this attitude one important step further: Plato's philosopher-king will accept the burden of involvement in the best of circumstances, the Stoic is willing to take it on in the real world.

Still, let us be fair to Socrates: he operates in the margin of the *polis*, but he does not keep his views to himself; and as he explains in the *Apology*, because his radical criticism asks for nothing less than a reversal of priorities (29d–eff.), not just for himself but for the entire *polis*, he would not have survived very long if he had participated more actively in politics, and thus would not have been of very much use to the state (31d–32a). And as the situation stands, in spite of all his precautions, he has not been careful enough, if dying a natural death would have been his main concern (although he did manage to reach a quite respectable old age).

So Socrates does not operate in the most ideal of states and Alcibiades is not interested in becoming a philosopher-king, but in success within the political framework as it stands, and on the emotional front. In giving ad-

45. I would not go as far as Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford-New York, 1981), 69–70, 348ff. who condemns Book Ten partly because of this shift in focus.

vice to Alcibiades, Socrates faces the challenge of a more pragmatic incorporation of his values into the political game as it is being played; his task is to turn Alcibiades into a better man, so that he may become a better politician, in the moral sense, and a better lover. In this practical context, as Foucault remarks,⁴⁶ we find an important occurrence of the expression ‘τ. αὐτοῦ πειλεῖσθαι’—taking care of oneself’ (123d, cf. also *Apology* 36c, quoted above—as opposed to other expressions, such as ‘περὶ χυλῶν ψεραπεῖαν’⁴⁷).

All the essential components are in the *Alcibiades*: the level of practical involvement, namely the political ambition and the relationship with the lover, and the motives of knowledge and care of oneself, which aim at the incorporation of philosophical values. And when Socrates has fully trapped the despairing Alcibiades in his own contradictions (127d), the philosopher finally finds the would-be politician open to his advice and knowledge. But Socrates’ first approach involves a trick to which the young Alcibiades is highly susceptible: an imaginary judgement of him by someone who is extremely influential, the Persian queen-mother (123d). What ‘others’ think is crucial in the socio-political setting.

Socrates, of course, has a solution to Alcibiades’ despair:

But don’t despair. If you had noticed this problem only when you’d turned fifty, then it would have been difficult for you to take care of yourself. But now you have exactly the right age at which one should perceive it. (127e)

This passage is ambiguous enough to allow for the view shared by Callicles (*Gorgias* 484cff.), on the topic of philosophy, that ‘taking care of oneself’ is merely a phase of education one must pass through at a young age, in order to acquire the necessary knowledge once and for all. In the *Republic* (498a–c) Socrates lashes out against those who study philosophy at a young age only as a prelude to “running a household and making money.” Young people, he is made to claim there, should take very good care of their bodies, and as they grow older and their souls begin to reach maturity, progressively devote more attention to philosophy. Once again the tension between the perspectives of the *Alcibiades I* and the *Republic* become apparent, a tension, I would argue, the Stoic position tries to overcome. In the Stoic context the preoccupation with oneself is both a lifelong and ongoing activity, and one for which an older man is in fact better equipped.

It is not, however, that experience will have no value at all for the young Alcibiades. Lack of experience, and of the kind of dignity which an advanced

46. Cf. n. 3, 23–26.

47. *Laches*, 185e. In the *Gorgias*, 464c we find: τετάρων δὴ τούτων οὐσῶν (four arts he has described), καὶ αἰεὶ πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον θεραπευουσῶν τῶν μὲν τὸ σῶμα, τῶν δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν,

age effects, is exactly what the queen-mother insinuates in Socrates' imaginary set-up, and traditionally it does carry a lot of weight in public life. But for Socrates the crucial knowledge has little to do with actual experience in the ordinary sense, and that knowledge always has absolute priority (even if ultimately it is virtually impossible to attain).

Taking good care of oneself amounts to making oneself better, to improving oneself (128b). But in order to do that one needs to know what this 'self' is, as opposed to what merely belongs to it (128d, 129a; cf. also *Apology* 36c, quoted above). The crucial distinction to the discovery of the self in this dialogue lies between the user and the thing he uses (129c). Now, because a man uses his body, his identity cannot be reduced to it (129e). And that which uses the body, rules over it, is the soul (130b–c). So if 'Socrates' and 'Alcibiades' are talking, what actually occurs is a conversation between souls (130d).⁴⁸ We are left with an uneasy feeling, and the intuition that surely besides their souls there must be more to Socrates and Alcibiades that can account for their being who they are.

The turn towards the true self will have its repercussions both for Alcibiades' love life and his political ambition. He should favour the lover who is in love with his true self, his soul, and not with his body, because this is the kind of lover who will remain with him even when the bloom of his beauty has withered (131c–132a). Secondly the knowledge of his 'self' will entail the knowledge he will need in the political arena (132b).⁴⁹

What is striking about Socrates' remark here is a certain naive optimism, which might be intended to suggest that everything will be all right, once one knows what one needs to know. One is inclined to think that a politician as envisioned by Socrates might run into all kinds of trouble, encounter a great deal of resistance and become in fact quite vulnerable: with the challenges of Athenian politics, being just and wise could cost one one's life. (The Stoic on the other hand both becomes fully involved and acknowledges fully the risks. His art does not so much consist in avoiding trouble, as in knowing how to deal with it so that it does not affect him.) The same optimism noted in the *Alcibiades I* works in the description of the external rewards for the just man, in Book Ten of the *Republic*, to which I alluded already, and in the *Apology* (30aff.), where Socrates claims that Athens would do very well, if only the city followed his advice. At the end of the *Alcibiades I*, however, Socrates does hint at the difficulties that might arise for one who attempts to be morally upright (and elsewhere, of course, he claims that

48. Echoed by Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1, 52: neque nos corpora sumus, nec ego tibi haec dicens corpori tuo dico.

49. Ἰὺννασαι πρότον, ὦ μακάριε, καὶ μάθε ἃ δεῖ μαθόντα ἶνα ἐπὶ τὰ τῆς πόλεως, πρότερον δὲ μή, ἢν' ἀλεξιφάρμακα ἔξωι ἰῆς καὶ μηδὲν πάθης δεινόν. (Socrates).

nothing can harm the wise man—as in *Apology* 30c8–d5; 41c8–d2).

It is not so much in the utopian approach, as in the more pragmatic one of incorporating philosophical values into the given socio-political context, that we can find resemblances between what Socrates advocates and later Stoic attitudes. But crucial differences still remain: for the Stoic at whom we are looking, the turn towards the self is a lifelong balancing act between two parallel sets of norms, philosophical and socio-political; and while her acquired knowledge might not guarantee her success, it will guarantee her happiness, because it should help her weather adverse circumstances. As I stated above, the Stoic unified and subjective self is eminently suited for this continuous balancing act between involvement and distance. Such a developed notion of a ‘core’ was not needed in philosophies that thrived on the outskirts of society, as for example Cynicism and Epicureanism,⁵⁰ nor is it surprising that Aristotle did not devise the concept,⁵¹ because for him essentially no strong conflict existed between philosophy and society (even though there might be an unresolved tension in his writings between the political active life and philosophical contemplation, to which the enormous amount of secondary literature on the topic testifies!).

This review of some Greek models of the ‘self,’ gives us a number of essential and necessary, but not sufficient, components of the Stoic version: tension, involvement and distance, the linking of an awareness of oneself with the need for self-improvement (‘taking care of oneself’). But even within Stoicism the notion of the ‘self’ took time to develop. Following Gill’s analysis of the four-*personae* theory in Cicero’s *De Officiis*,⁵² and expanding on it, one could roughly describe the evolution passing from an emphasis on the innovative philosophical values in the early stage of Stoicism, a shift in focus to socio-political factors considered⁵³ by Roman authors, with Cicero as main

50. Miriam Griffin (1989) points out that many Roman Epicureans did participate in public life, while many Stoics did not. Yet there is a difference in emphasis, as she herself notes on page 33: “Thus on the fundamental question, whether or not to participate in politics, the Stoics had to decide if any of the recognized obstacles obtained at any one time; the Epicureans, if an emergency existed great enough to justify participation.” This distinction is in fact preserved in ancient texts: for Cicero, *De Off.* 1, 70ff., non-involvement would be the exception; Epicurus, in Plutarch *De Ti. An.* 465F–466A, makes the opposite claim.

51. Though we find an adumbration of the notion in *NEX*, 1178a2–4, with the claims that reason (or the best thing in us) “would seem to be each man himself” and that its life is the “the life of oneself.” This is not unlike Plato’s appeal to a turn inwards. As hinted above, in the discussion of *phantasia*, in some respects the Stoics do seem to have worked along similar lines as Aristotle in the development of their psychology. I am grateful to David O’Connor for having shown me, before publication, his paper on “Where Aristotle’s Action is: Common Ground for Philosophy and Politics?”

52. 70–199.

53. Pierre Grimal, 1971–72, cautions that Panaetius did not initiate this development, but that Antipater of Tarsos played a crucial role, and that the development started not in Rome,

catalyst (though he is not a Stoic himself),⁵⁴ to the establishment of a hierarchy in values, which still takes the socio-political dimension into account as being important and valuable, but which gives absolute priority to values of the sage. It is this last stage which Epictetus elaborates, together with the full-fledged 'self,' and which Seneca's works reflect.

Christopher Gill, as I already pointed out, focuses in his analysis of the *De Officiis*, on the four-*personae* theory, which Cicero has inherited from Panaetius. The four *personae*, which Gill defines as "normative reference-points in rational moral choice" (176), appear in the first book, in the context of the discussion of the notion of 'decorum' (1, 93ff.), that which is proper. The first pair of normative reference points (1, 107) are on the one hand our common human nature, endowed with reason, and on the other, our individual dispositions. Another pair combines with the first (1, 115): the circumstances in which one so happens to live (*casus aliqui aut tempus*) and the kind of career one chooses, which is both to a certain extent determined by the other three *personae* and apparently a *persona* in its own right.

Christopher Gill sees the essence of the Panaetian innovation of Stoic ethics in an "increased interest in actual, differentiated human beings" (the second *persona*) "and a reduced interest in the normative 'sage'" (170), but the new interest is embedded in "a highly social perspective; the individual is viewed in a social setting and judged by social norms" (171). Hence, the Panaetian version differs crucially from Early Stoicism, which supposedly did take circumstances and the appropriate lifestyle or career choice into account,⁵⁵ by the importance it attributes to conventional social values, whether explicit or not. Thus, for instance, the examples Cicero gives us of different individual dispositions (1, 108–09), can only be understood in the social framework: the people he quotes are 'distinguished' in the sense of "accomplished and notable in society" (thus Gill 181). The emphasis on social success even leads to its contradiction with certain higher moral values, as illustrated in the cases of Sulla and Crassus. So with the Panaetian scheme we have (i) the theoretical means to differentiate among individuals, or even to determine what might prove a nearly unique combination for

but in Hellenistic Greece and the East, even though Roman culture accelerated it. M. Isnarde Parente, n. 20, also emphasises Antipater's importance. For the importance of Diogenes of Babylon in this development, cf. also P. Vander Waerdt, "Politics and philosophy in Stoicism," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 9 (1991): 185–211; D. Obbink and P. Vander Waerdt, "Diogenes of Babylon: the Stoic sage in the city of fools," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 32 (1991): 355–96.

54. Cf. the still valuable work by P.M. Valente, *L'étique stoïcienne chez Cicéron* (Paris 1956).

55. Gill (1988), 175, n. 27, refers to work of Brunt and De Lacey on this issue, but also adds the caveat, n. 29, that most of our evidence is post-Panaetian.

each of us; and (ii) a value system in which the philosophical norm of a human rational nature has become fused with the *mos maiorum*.

Cicero makes it very clear that his emphasis lies in a conflict not between social and philosophical values, but between past and present, within the socio-political framework in other words. From his perspective the ideal of the *mos maiorum* and of the good of the community, the *res publica*, which really is omnipresent in the *De Officiis*,⁵⁶ has given way to fragmentation, the civil war, and to individualisation, in the power struggle and especially in Caesar's power monopoly. The philosophical values are embraced only insofar as they justify the old order, for which no justification was needed as long as it could maintain itself, and insofar as they condemn what Cicero wants to condemn.

When Cicero discusses the notion of *societas* he does mention the common bond of our universal nature, which is *ratio* and *oratio* (50) (reason / concepts and language), but he also strongly emphasises the *res publica* and the fatherland (1, 57), with a particularly Roman twist to the Stoic notion of the universe-city (cosmopolitan) community.⁵⁷ Cicero's political concerns, the frustration and horror he feels vis-à-vis the socio-political changes of his times, could not have been expressed more explicitly. Regulus lies behind the entire *De Officiis* as the appropriate paradigm for the old value system: the Roman who returned to Carthage, as he had promised, and to his death, because the hostages would be of more use to the common good than he. When Cicero claims that one is allowed to follow one's own nature, as long as it does not go against the encompassing common human nature (1, 110), we, the readers, must keep his political perspective in mind.

The following passage illustrates how he uses philosophical values to convey his political views:

But those whom nature has endowed with the capacity for administering public affairs should put aside all hesitation, enter the race for public office, and take a hand in directing the government; for in no other way can a government be administered or greatness of spirit be manifest. Statesmen too, no less than philosophers—perhaps even more so—should carry with them that greatness of spirit and indifference to outward circumstances to which I so often refer, together with calm of soul and freedom of care, if they are to be free from worries and lead a dignified and self-consistent life... Not without reason, therefore are stronger emotions aroused in those who engage in public life than in those who live in retirement, and greater is their ambition for success; the more, therefore, do they need to enjoy greatness of spirit and freedom from annoying cares. (1, 72–73, cf. also the entire context of this passage)

56. To give but one striking example: "magnum est enim eadem habere monumenta maiorum, eisdem uti sacris, sepulchra habere communia ..." (1, 55).

57. Gill (1988) does remark, on pages 196–97, that the *De Officiis* has a strong tendency to equate conventional values with the common human nature, but does not elaborate on the consequences this has for its incorporation of the Panaetian theory.

The inner calm, which Cicero advocates here, the aloofness from the blows and difficulties of fortune, has a double function, generally speaking: it gives the politician the courage to continue performing his duties in a political context that has become very dangerous and unpredictable (cf. also 1, 71). Similarly Tacitus said of the Stoic senator Helvidius Priscus that "he devoted himself to philosophy ... to take up public life, protected against the blows of fortune" (*Hist.* 4, 5; transl. Griffin). It is not that hard to see that senators and emperors alike needed this kind of courage (at different times, and under different circumstances).

But even more fundamentally, according to Cicero this attitude would have prevented the degeneration of the *res publica* in the first place, because only the politician who is indifferent to personal advantages, or to the advantages of only one group of people, can truly serve the common good (cf. for instance 1, 85). Cicero condemns the parties of the civil war, and especially Caesar, because their personal ambition prevailed (1, 26; 43; 57; 62ff., etc.).

Another striking point in the passage I quoted, is the definition of what I called 'the balancing act': according to Cicero a politician needs even more composure than a philosopher, because he is constantly under fire, or, we might say, under the temptation to give in to the wrong values. The Ciceronian politician should be involved, and yet detached at the same time, because only then can he make the best of his job.

Cicero's treatment of Plato and Socrates follows the same lines: on the one hand he seems to agree with Plato's viewpoint, especially where the latter defines justice as responsibility for the common good (1, 85); on the other hand he criticises Plato and others for their lack of involvement (1, 19; 28; 69, 70, 72–73; 92 etc.). Cicero in turn advocates political courage even under difficult circumstances (given the right 'natural' disposition; he is willing to make an exception for philosophically inclined natures, and for those who have a weak health, or a serious motive for withdrawal, 1, 71). And not only does he criticise non-involvement, he also resists philosophical values that oppose the social norms to which he adheres.⁵⁸

Whatever role was attributed to social values in the Panaetian theory, we cannot divorce this theory anymore from the Ciceronian context in which it appears. But we can witness how crucial and predominant the socio-political values are for Cicero, and in what sense; they become so crucial in fact that the philosophical values are completely drawn into a non-philosophical framework. In the *De Officiis* Cicero turns to philosophy from a very Roman viewpoint and from a clearly marked historical perspective.⁵⁹

58. As Gill (1988) remarks, 193–94, cf. 128, 148.

59. The *De Officiis* was written after Caesar's death. For a recent treatment of this, cf. A.

The combination of involvement and distance, which will become so essential in later Stoicism, manifests itself in the specific concerns of politicians like Cicero. Because conflicting values of individualism and the common good are at work in public life, 'the right thing to do' appears no longer to be evident, but must be justified and rejustified, and hence becomes a matter of continuous evaluation. The conflict with which Cicero deals, however, does not yet address public involvement and philosophical distance, but remains within the parameters of public life. A strong notion of the 'self' would run counter to the ideal of the *mos maiorum* and the common good, to which this 'traditional' Roman, as he presents himself, adheres. In fact, if anything, a notion like that approaches the attitudes of the politicians whom Cicero severely condemns.⁶⁰ It is very telling that Cicero (1, 53ff. and 3, 69), although he too uses the image of concentric circles for social relationships, does not put the individual at the centre, unlike Hierokles who does.

Seneca and Epictetus readjust Stoicism, re-emphasising the priority of the philosophically defined human nature over all other roles, including the socially defined ones. But the legacy we find in Cicero cannot be ignored in later developments of Stoic ethics, and we need to keep it in mind in order to understand a Seneca or a Marcus Aurelius, and especially their involvement in public life, even on the highest level of power and prestige. Via the *personae* theory the (Roman) social values have become firmly entrenched.⁶¹

We have been coming closer and closer to the full-fledged 'Stoic' self, and with Epictetus and Seneca we finally see how the concept of the 'self' as a mediator can operate: it helps us to respect the right hierarchy of values. If we imagine a day in the life of an ideal Roman Stoic, who, as Seneca presents him to us, is not the perfect sage, we would notice that every day he has a loaded agenda of activities; the power concentration in the person of the emperor is by now an accomplished fact. Nevertheless a political forum still remains, with the responsibilities it entails, and the care of one's own household, in the largest sense, with its possessions, still forms a primary con-

Long, "Cicero's politics in *De Officiis*," *Justice and Generosity ... Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. A. Laks and M. Schofield (Cambridge, 1995), 213–40. I also found W. Heilmann's analysis useful, *Ethische Reflexion und römische Lebenswirklichkeit in Cicero's Schrift 'De Officiis'*, *Palingenesia* 17 (Wiesbaden, 1982): esp. 129–33. Gill (1994, n. 39) rightly points out that the Early Stoics already recommended participation in public life (cf. *SVF* 3, 611–24; 686; 694–700; 702; Diogenes Laertius 7, 117–31; Long and Sedley 434–37). Yet the context in which Cicero addresses the issue is strikingly Roman.

60. Griffin (1989), 9–11, explains the attraction of the Peripatetic and Academic sects exerted for Romans of the Late Republic as the result of the training these schools could provide in oratorical skills, which were at that time still essential to political activity.

61. Cf. for instance Epictetus *Disc.* 2, 10, 1–12 (Long and Sedley 59Q); 4, 12, 15–19 (LS66F). Cf. also P. A. Brunt, "Stoicism and the Principate," *Proceedings of the British School at Rome* 43 (1975): 7–35.

cern.⁶² Unless extreme circumstances create obstacles, even rendering suicide the only valid option, the Stoic would assume his role in the community—and would not withdraw to its margin. Nor would he devote his time to considering how to *change* the socio-political structures fundamentally (even if some of his beliefs could be considered quite radical): he moves within the given parameters of public life.⁶³ But he does not internalise its values and its judgements of his success or failures: however involved he is, and however seriously he takes his responsibilities, he maintains his reserve, the so-called ‘exceptio’ or ‘*ὑπεξάρσεις*,’⁶⁴ a distance, a withdrawal within the inner self, not for its own sake, but in the light of higher philosophical values. Thus at the end of the day, when he evaluates what he has done, in a moment of self-contemplation, in a letter to a friend or in a diary entry, he will ideally set aside the praise he has earned, or the profit he has made. In determining whether or not he has done well, he will consider only his degree of rationality and self-composure and his indifference to the irrelevant external goods. This distance of the inner realm is itself highly determined by a framework of philosophical values, which find their justification in our human nature as rational beings; a framework that possesses its own authoritative tradition of teachings, precepts and examples.

Viewed from this perspective, Stoicism would help a Roman to stay involved in public life under uncertain and dangerous circumstances, while at the same time it would protect him, because it detaches his happiness from the outcome of his involvement. Seneca’s Stoicism then effects for him what Cicero’s turn to philosophy did as well; one could call it psychological evasiveness, but it is in the end the least evasive of the ancient models, because it motivates political courage. Things might be much more pleasant and less dangerous on the outskirts of public life, especially under the rule of some of the emperors, but then again, precisely this kind of safety a Roman from a certain mould would have been unwilling to countenance.⁶⁵ Yet no matter how attractive a solution the Stoic balance may be, it remained very hard to realise in practice, an ideal equilibrium which in reality turned out to be very

62. On the background for this, cf. C. Natali, “*Oikonomia* in Hellenistic Political Thought,” *Justice and Generosity ... Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium Hellenisticum*, ed. A. Laks and M. Schofield (Cambridge, 1995), 95–127.

63. For an excellent analysis of this, cf. Brunt, 13ff., 23, 26 (slavery not challenged), 32. The title of my paper is inspired by his claim, 23, that an antithesis of Roman and Stoic would be false.

64. Cf. Rabbow, 175–79.

65. J.M. André, *ANRWII* 36.3 (1989): 1776–778, gets the nuance exactly right in connection with Seneca when he speaks of a “paradoxical reversal of the *mos maiorum*,” and claims that Seneca’s *De Orio* “demonstrates the intellectual scruples of a Roman social conscience that refuses to die.”

vulnerable. But if equilibrium mattered, if holding on to the sage's values implied a tension with other norms, it is not that hard to understand why a Stoic like Seneca could break down in exile. Hierocles (7, 5–10) points out that children are afraid of the dark, because the lack of external, sensory stimuli generates the impression that their extinction is at hand. They need outside stimuli to keep their sense of self.

At this point one could argue that, after all, this equilibrium was also displayed by Socrates. Socrates took his distance from and minimised his participation in the political life of Athens, a city which nevertheless he only left under exceptional circumstances and which he knew inside out, together with its inhabitants and their 'who is who.' Ultimately nothing can harm the good man, as he claimed, and he himself emptied the cup calmly. He could participate in military expeditions and remain his unperturbed self, drink without getting drunk, sleep next to the attractive young Alcibiades without getting sexually aroused, and have a wife and children and yet be by himself—with that relentless fellow, his inner voice—when he went home. Yet the later Stoics claimed precisely this Socrates as a model.⁶⁶ "Ask yourself: 'What would Zeno or Socrates have *done* under these circumstances?'" is the key question preserved in Epictetus' *Encheiridion* (33, 12).

SPOUSES AND CHILDREN

After the previous section that dealt primarily with the challenges of politics and public life, I now turn to the second component of involvement. A good way to enter the realm of personal relationships is to turn from Plato's intimations of Alcibiades' love life to Cicero's correspondence.

If Cicero started to write his *Tusculan Disputations* in the summer of 45 BC, several months would have passed since the death of his daughter Tullia, around mid-February of the same year. The *Consolatio* Cicero himself wrote after Tullia's death has been lost. But the epistolary consolation that Sulpicius Rufus wrote to Cicero (*Ad Familiares* iv.5) and Cicero's response explicitly acknowledge his sorrow: "... the grief I incur in the public life, my home can no longer offer a consolation for; nor can the public forum make up for the domestic kind" (*Ad Familiares* iv.6). In the *Tusculan Disputations*, however, and in the work's expositions on death, pain and suffering, Tullia is remarkably absent, in every respect.

66. Cf. Döring, n. 13, and the earlier study by A. Jagu, *Épictète et Platon* (Paris 1946). Dio Cass. 62, 15, 4 puts the famous dictum "Anytus and Meletus can kill me, but they cannot hurt me" (based on *Apol.* 30cd) into the mouth of the Roman senator Thrasca Paetus, substituting Nero for Socrates' accusers. In *Disc.* 3, 1, 42, the connection is made with the *Alcibiades I* (131d).

Tullia in all likelihood died of the complications of childbirth—we think she gave birth to a boy around mid-January. In a letter, again (*Ad Familiaves* vi.18), Cicero expressed concern about Tullia's pregnancy; in the second book of the *Disputations* that deals primarily with physical pain, on the other hand, men are the ones who suffer pain and toil, in war, athletics or the public arena in general. Women are "womanish in weeping," virtue is derived from the Latin word for 'man' (*vir*; 43), and the only examples of women's endurance are old women being able to go without food (40) and Spartan women being subjected to the same kind of drill as the men (36).⁶⁷ Noting this as a modern reader is not a matter of anachronistic sentimentality; the gaps in the discourse, the silences, are philosophically relevant.

On the issue of psychological distress, turmoil over present as opposed to future evil, Cicero follows a Stoic line of reasoning, in the fourth book (11–14) to arrive at the conclusion that, while the other passions of delight, lust and fear do have positive counterparts in joy, wish and precaution, the wise man has no use for distress whatsoever.⁶⁸ Tullia has vanished: not only does Cicero no longer acknowledge his grief, but he becomes unable to recognise her pain as such. The hard line on grief, and similarly Cicero's pleading for a restrained vocal expression of pain (55, which, interestingly, also includes a reference to legal restrictions of women's mourning practices) are, of course, not unique to the Stoics. To return to the text I have used as a backdrop here before, when Plato in the *Republic* discusses the poets' negative influences on how we should deal with pain or enjoyment, we hear that:

A decent man who gets as his share some such chance as losing a son or something else ... will bear it more easily than other men; ... But when left alone he'll dare to utter many things of which he would be ashamed if someone were to hear, and he will do many things he would not choose to have anyone see him do; ... But when personal sorrow comes to one of us ... we pride ourselves if we are able to keep quiet and bear up, taking this to be the part of a man [as opposed to 'that of a woman'] (603cff.)

But if we can express reservations about the feasibility of a godlike aloofness in one's management of public affairs, or even question whether aloofness is the most desirable course of action under all circumstances, surely we must be even more critical of that same attitude in more intimate rapports, and we can question whether it is even a good thing or an appropriate response. Maybe we *ought* to feel and express grief at the loss of a child.

67. As Susan Treggiari pointed out to me, an exception to the generally negative evaluation of women is Cicero's inclusion of women among the heroes who supposedly have gone to heaven (1, 27–28). If we take into account that Cicero considered erecting a shrine for Tullia (cf. n. 69), he may have been thinking of her in this passage.

68. For a recent analysis, cf. S. White, "Cicero and the therapists," *Cicero the Philosopher. Twelve Papers*, ed. J. Powell (Oxford, 1995), 219–46.

In a letter to Atticus of March 8 (xii. 14. 3; cf. also 15) Cicero is still wavering on this issue: "And I try all I know to bring my face if not my heart back to composure, if I can. While I do this sometimes I feel I am committing a sin, at others that I should be sinning if I failed to do it" (trans. Shackleton Bailey). In the *Disputations* Cicero categorically denies the claim we ought to grieve (3, 61ff.); and though he himself in his letters discusses the possibility of erecting a shrine for Tullia,⁶⁹ in his *Disputations* a woman once again comes to stand for excessive grief: Artemisia who built the burial monument for her husband Mausolus (3, 75).

Here too, however, the actual Stoic response, of the later Stoics primarily, comes as a surprise, when taken beyond its *prima facie* evasiveness. An official complains to Epictetus (1, 11) about how wretched he felt when his little daughter was sick, and tells Epictetus he had to leave her bedside, because he could not face the risk. The striking corollary to Epictetus' upbraiding him that the only evils are in "our opinions and the decisions of our will" and not in events, is that the official too, and not only the girl's mother, should have stayed with the child to attend her (as Cicero *in fact* appears to have attended to Tullia's pregnancy, at least to some extent). Family affection, after all, as the analysis of *oikeiosis* teaches us as well (cf. above), is in accordance with nature, *and the good*, Epictetus stipulates (16ff.).⁷⁰

Comparing the death of a wife or a child to a broken jug and claiming that we should train ourselves to accept losses "beginning with the very least things," (*Encheiridion* 3) may strike us as particularly insensitive. But, again, if we place this claim in its context, the nuance is different (3, 24, 84–88). Epictetus' recommendation is tough, that every time one kisses one's child one should whisper "Tomorrow you will die." We cannot let our affection run its full course, we must "exert a counter-pull" (*αντίσπασσον/κόλυσσον*), we must maintain a reserve by "calling to mind the opposite impressions." Yet Epictetus describes a *fundamentally* dialectical rapport: Epictetus does acknowledge human love for off-spring, and the expression of that love as commitment. Socrates did love his children, Epictetus claims, but in a free spirit (3, 24, 60–61). Both affection for spouse and children, and reserve are integrated into *one and the same* philosophical discourse, and not, as in Cicero's own case, segregated in different modes of writing, each with its own literary conventions.

Musonius Rufus, Epictetus' teacher, perhaps takes the importance of personal involvement the furthest. His answer to the question "whether mar-

69. Cf. D. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero's Letters to Atticus*, vol. 5, *Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries* 7 (Cambridge, 1966), 404–13.

70. In his *De Officiis* Cicero tells us (1, 32) that one is allowed to walk away from one's public duty in order to stay close to a son who has become ill; against this and Plato's example, Epictetus' choice of a daughter may also be significant.

riage and living with a wife is a handicap to the pursuit of philosophy" (XIV, Lutz) is a radical one in its context, though it may seem conventional to modern ears: marriage stands not only "manifestly in accord with nature," but it serves more than the function of procreation, though that is an important function. Musonius Rufus also claims that "one could find no other association more necessary nor more pleasant than that of men and women," and that "... no reasonable mother or father would expect to entertain a deeper love for his own child than for the one joined to him in marriage." "... the love of a wife for her husband surpasses the love of parents of their children" (illustrated with the example of Admetus and Alcestis).

That Musonius Rufus mentions Socrates' marriage, together with Pythagoras' and Crates', in a context in which he puts such a strong emphasis on affection, and that he *presents* this claim as seemingly self-evident, are, I think, indications that he is rewriting the script. This is a vast departure from Plato's one-paragraph dismissal of Xanthippe in the *Phaedo*, or even Epictetus' praise for Socrates' patience with his difficult wife (4, 5, 3; 33; cf. also 3, 26, 23; 4, 1, 159ff.; in 3, 22, 67–82, he even explores the Cynics' stance on marriage). Musonius Rufus' claims could be read, and I think they should be, as a point for point refutation of Plato's views on the tension between kinship ties and the good of the community as a whole (*Republic* 462–66). In the much debated fifth book of the *Republic*,⁷¹ Plato has the guardians hold women and children in common (a point echoed by Zeno in his *Republic*, SVF3, 728=DL 7, 131);⁷² Musonius Rufus stipulates that "[the creator of mankind] wished the two [female and male] to be united and live together ... and to produce and rear children together," and he asks the question "To whom is everything judged to be common, body, *soul* [my emphasis], and possessions, except man and wife?" Rather than seeing kinship ties as a source of faction and detrimental rivalry, as Plato does, Musonius Rufus considers human marriage the cornerstone of community. "Thus whoever destroys human marriage destroys the home, the city, and the whole human race."⁷³ "For these reasons all men consider the love of man and wife

71. In the *Laws* (as in 721a; 772e ff.; 778 b; 783d ff.; 835d ff.) Plato's approach is different; (controlled) marriages do become the cornerstone of society. But the *Republic* is more to the point for my purpose here because of what it has to say about philosophical natures specifically.

72. For the tension between this passage and SVF 1, 270=Diogenes Laertius 7, 121 cf. M. Schofield, *The Stoic idea of the city* (Cambridge, 1991), 111–27 and E. Asmis, "The Stoics on Women," *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy*, ed. J. Ward (New York-London, 1996), 68–92.

73. Mary Whitlock Blundell, on pages 225–26, sees a parallel between Plato's claim, *Republic* 461d, that "all members of the previous generation are to be addressed as 'mother' or 'father,' of the same generation as 'brother' or 'sister,' and of the next generation as 'son' or 'daughter,'" and Hierocles' injunction to draw the concentric circles, cf. above, as close to the centre as possible by calling cousins 'brothers, and uncles and aunts 'fathers and mothers'

to be the highest form of love;..." "Where, indeed, does Eros more properly belong than in the lawful union of man and wife?" This is a highly-charged philosophical repartee contra Plato.⁷⁴ Community starts with spousal and parental *affection*, with personal involvement.⁷⁵

Hierocles "most necessary *logos* on marriage" is very similar in tone to Musonius Rufus' exposition (Stobaeus 3, 21 ff.). Community lies at the heart of what we as human beings are, and without homes there would be no cities. A marriage's purpose is not limited to procreation, but retains its value in the shared life between the spouses. No one holds a closer affinity to a man than his spouse, no one comes closer to his skin than his child (οὔτε δὲ συμπαθέστερόν τι γυναικὸς εὔροίμεν ἄν οὔτε τέκνων συγγενέστερον). The pair (ζεύγος) of man and wife intertwines the fate of both; harmony exists between them; they do everything together, in body, and even *more so* in soul. Why, then, do men scorn marriage? Because they married for the

(LS57G). But the crucial difference remains that for Hierocles and Musonius Rufus the nuclear family is essential to the larger community, as its 'starting point,' while Plato proposes the abolishment of the ties between partners, and between parents and children.

74. In an excellent and concise analysis Daniel Babut ("Les Stoïciens et l'amour," *Revue des Études Grecques* 76 [1963]: 55–63, contra Flacelière, Pohlenz and Praechter) rightly cautions that we should not project an evolution onto the Stoics that would go from the Early Stoics' preference for Platonic same-gender relations to the later Stoics' emphasis on marriage as the norm. Persaeus of Citium, a disciple of Zeno, wrote already a *Ἐπὶ γάμου* (DL 7, 36=SVF 1, 435) and Cleanthes is said to have written a work *Ἐπὶ ἕμεναίου*. Furthermore, there is the general Stoic injunction that the wise man should marry and have children (DL 7, 121=SVF 1, 270, for this cf. n. 72; Stobaeus=SVF 3, 611; 686; cf. also SVF 1, 244; 3, 727 and 729). This injunction could also be seen as rejecting the exact opposite claim of Epicurus (DL 10, 119). I disagree with Babut, however, on two points: a) against his claim that the arguments pro marriage do not entail any value judgement against same gender *eros*. Musonius Rufus does ask "Where, indeed, does *Eros* more properly belong than in the lawful union of man and wife?" (*Is Marriage a Handicap for the Pursuit of Philosophy?* XIV, Lutz, Antipater, cf. n. 76 is more gender neutral); b) against his claim that love does not fit into the Stoic image of marriage, because the Stoics supposedly see marriage in function of procreation and social duties (62): Musonius Rufus denies this explicitly: "The birth of a human being which results from such a union is to be sure something marvelous, but it is not yet enough for the relation of husband and wife, inasmuch as quite apart from marriage it could result from any other sexual union, just as in the case of animals. But in marriage there must be above all perfect companionship and mutual love of husband and wife,..." (*On the Chief End of Marriage* XIIIa, Lutz); and the other texts too emphasise the bond between the spouses. Cicero's Cato too in this context speaks of *sancti amores* (*De Fin.* 3, 68); cf. also Plutarch *Amatorius* 769B–770B; *Conj. Praec.* 138A–146A (union of spouses seen in terms of body, property, friends and relations, soul not included; 140F; 143A). On this topic, cf. also K. Gaiser, *Für und wider die Ehe* (München 1974). Aristotle in his *Nic. Eth.* 1162a 16–31 is an interesting text for comparison as well.

75. I wish to make it very clear that I am interested here only in the contrast between Plato and Musonius Rufus, specifically on the issue of the erotic (in its ancient sense) and emotional potential of the spousal relationship, not in implications for current debates on the role of the nuclear family in society.

wrong reasons. It does not make any sense to try to make friends as allies against the hardships of life, and to ignore at the same time the prime alliance given to us by nature, the laws and the gods, that with spouse and children.⁷⁶

In this paper I have unfolded the implications of the Stoic Cato's call to public involvement and personal commitment, as Cicero presents it. Stoic doctrine in action and displayed in the self-assessment of the Roman Stoics' writings has yielded a self that finds its meaning in, or that is constituted by, being poised between diverging demands. Poised as that self is, it is not frozen or paralysed. It may have difficulty avoiding contamination by values it ultimately must reject, and it may lack empathy in personal rapports, but its philosophical reserve does keep it involved in the life that we face everyday, in our ordinary concerns. We continue to "do the same things, but not in the same manner" (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, 18, 4).⁷⁷

76. Cf. Isnarde Parente, 2208. We can turn to Antipater for an anticipation of this view, *SVF* 3, 62–63: importance of the household for the larger community; union of the spouses compared to complete 'whole through whole' mixture of wine in water; union not merely of sustenance and children, but of body *and soul*; explicit tackling of the problem of misogyny and of rejection of marriage; union compared to acquiring an extra pair of eyes or hands, which make our tasks so much easier if we 'take the other as ourselves' (gender neutral). Antipater, if it is the same author, *SVF* 3, 65, unlike Musonius Rufus, refers to the difficult rapport between Socrates and Xanthippe.

77. Hoc multo fortius est, ebrio ac vomitante populo siccum ac sobrium esse, illud temperatius, non excerpere se nec insigniri nec misceri omnibus et eadem, sed non eodem modo, facere. Licet enim sine luxuria agere festum diem.

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