The Politics of Asceticism

An Analysis of the Political Spirituality of the Imperial Stoics

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"The friend of humanity cannot recognize a distinction between what is political and what is not. There is nothing that is not political. Everything is politics."

Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*

"Progress is the realisation of Utopias."

Oscar Wilde, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*

"Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave."

Frederick Douglas

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To have the opportunity to apportion a substantial amount of one's time to the purpose of pursuing knowledge has undeniably been a privilege. In Friedrich Nietzsche's mind, society is comprised of slaves and those who are free. Time was the suggested criterium for this division: whoever does not have two-thirds of the day for themselves are slaves. While writing this dissertation, I did at times feel like a slave in this Nietzschean sense, but such times have been few. This dissertation is not born out of direct, external necessity; it is entirely born from passion. For most parts, my passions and disquisitive fascination led me into nooks and crannies of both expedient and inexpedient matters. I therefore rarely felt anything but having the entire day for myself. For this reason, for three-and-something years of my life, I can gladly say I was thoroughly free. For that, I am eternally grateful.

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too small or too sizeable to dissuade conversations, even when the deadlines approached fast.

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1 Introduction

In recent decades, the Hellenistic philosophies have received increased attention and appreciation within scholarship and this attention has led to significant advances in our understanding of ancient philosophy as historical phenomenon. Although the philosophies' systems of ideas usually are in the forefront, it is increasingly being acknowledged that these ideas, in many of the ancient philosophies, were intricately connected to an existential demand of self-transformation, and a stronger emphasis is, therefore, now being put on ancient philosophy's focus on the concomitant practical dimension ensuing from this. When considering this shift in interpretation, in which the practical dimension is accentuated, Karl Marx's well-known 11th Feuerbach thesis might come to mind. In this thesis, Marx famously censured philosophers for having, "only interpreted (*interpretiert*) the world in various ways", since, as he put it, "the point is to change it (*verändern*)" (Marx & Engels 2011, 794). In Marx's polemical view, philosophers should put less emphasis on the interpretation of the world and instead direct their philosophical concerns towards changing the world. Marx was arguably versed in ancient philosophy, and he would surely have found all of them wanting regarding his world-transformational demands and hopes.

However, in light of what has happened in the interpretation of Hellenistic philosophies since the time of Marx, with accrued attention to their practical nature, it is as relevant as ever to enquire into ancient Hellenistic philosophies' relation to societal change. In such an endeavour, Stoicism is a fascinating object of study for many reasons. For instance, from a historical perspective, ancient Stoicism seems to have been tied to the Roman political ruling class in Antiquity to an extent that other Hellenistic philosophies were not. Furthermore, Stoicism serves as a compelling

case, because the most repeated scholarly interpretation suggests that Stoicism was either apolitical or underwent a significant development from Early to later Stoicism regarding political attitude. Stoicism therefore provides an excellent basis for examining the connection between ancient philosophy and then world transformation. At the most general level, the purpose of this dissertation can, therefore, be identified as providing a reinterpretation of the political thought and expression of ancient Imperial Stoicism.

1.1 Which Stoicism?

The examinations will focus primarily on Imperial Stoicism. Ancient Stoicism is usually divided into three parts: Early Stoicism (Hellenistic Stoicism), Middle Stoicism, and Late Stoicism (Roman or Imperial Stoicism).[1] The end of Hellenistic Stoicism and the beginning of Middle Stoicism is marked by the institutional decomposition of Stoicism and the displacement of Stoicism from Athens to Rhodes where Panaetius (185-110 BCE) and Posidonius (135-51 BCE) flourished. Eventually, Stoicism would come to flourish in a thoroughly Roman-dominated world. During Middle Stoicism, some Stoics tried to merge Stoic thought with Aristotelianism and Platonism and attempted to articulate a Stoicism better in tune with the Roman world. Stoicism gradually seeped into Rome and the period between ca. 30 BCE-200 CE is usually referred to as Roman Stoicism. However, this term should be avoided because it is not entirely clear that 'Roman' correctly identifies everything that happened within Stoicism. Instead, for this dissertation, I prefer the term Imperial Stoicism, which refers to the type of political constitution during which the Stoics politically lived and thought. In the examinations, I primarily engage with Imperial Stoics, such as Seneca, Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and to a lesser degree

[1] The term Middle Stoicism owes its conception to Schmekel (1892). In his historical survey, David Sedley has suggested five key phases of Stoicism, but this distinction is usually not applied in the scholarship (2003, 7ff).

Cornutus, and Hierocles – the latter seems to have adopted Middle Stoicism to a larger degree than the rest of the Imperial Stoics. Other Stoics could also have been included in the focus, but I have chosen these Stoics because they provide the largest amount of source material in this period from the hands of actual Stoics. A Cynic-Stoic like Dio Chrysostom could perhaps have been included more than I do, and he would certainly have substantiated the examinations and argument, but due to his generally accepted adherence to the Cynic philosophy, I have chosen not to do so.[2]

Imperial Stoicism was indubitably different in various ways from their Hellenistic predecessors and the intermediate Middle Stoics. The main reason for these differences was basically that the Imperial Stoics flourished in a wholly different context. The importance of stressing philosophy's proper context as relevant for its specific composition was forcefully advocated by the Cambridge School and Quentin Skinner, who emphasised that political thought must be interpreted through its historicity and context (Skinner 1969, 49; 2001, 176). The forceful point of the Cambridge School, according to Ellen Meiksins Wood, is that philosophical thinkers are confronted by questions, "posed to them in specific historical forms" (Wood 2008, 12). Despite the Cambridge School's best efforts to emphasise context, Wood criticises the school's proponents for disregarding the non-discursive elements and adds that it is important to realise that those questions, which philosophers seek to answer, are not reducible to political controversies and philosophical debates. The context is also, "social pressures and tensions […] outside the political arena and beyond the world of texts" (ibid.). Naturally, this extended context is equally important to underline and Stoicism should, accordingly, be contextualised as much as it is possible with attention to its wider social and cultural context.

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[2] Inwood has recently and very interestingly argued against the majority of scholars and contended that Musonius Rufus was not a Stoic but perhaps a Cynic or merely a spokesperson for philosophy in general (cf. Inwood 2017; also Appendix in this dissertation). I follow the majority of scholars on this question and accept Musonius Rufus as a genuine Stoic.

The Cambridge School's emphasis on context also led them to argue that political thought should be interpreted at the level of the intention of the author (cf. Boucher & Kelly 2017, 5). The supposed intention of a Stoic author (insofar we can reconstruct this intention beyond mere conjecture and psychologising) can undoubtedly illuminate certain aspects of the content, but an author is never monolithic and the specific intentions of the Stoics were simultaneously conceptually limited.[3] The individual Stoic author might intentionally have been answering questions specific for their historical time, but insofar they employed Stoic philosophy to answer such questions, they utilised a set of philosophical ideas initially developed in a different cultural and political context. I am interested in how this overarching intellectual framework shaped, guided, and was represented in the thought of the individual Imperial Stoics.

I do not necessarily attempt to arrive at a unified system of thought called 'Stoicism.' The researcher of ancient philosophy meticulously identifies passages in the fragmentary sources and attempts to present these passages as a coherent system of thought (cf. Skinner 1969, 17). However, any such attempt faces great problems that complicate the effort. The mind of the Stoics was not neatly compartmentalised and other spheres of life could influence, challenge, or circumvent Stoic ideas and notions to which the Stoic subject otherwise adhered. Since Stoic philosophy was designed for being implemented in personal lives, it is reasonable to expect that every Stoic utilised Stoicism in her own unique and deeply personal way, and it is therefore understandable that conceptual convergence sometimes is lacking between individual Stoics. Despite all the variety among the ancient Stoics, they shared a com-

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[3] The unproblematic position of the author in relation to a text has significantly been put into question; see for instance Foucault (1984a). Goffman has also destabilised the monolithic author by arguing that the author function can be subdivided into three constituent elements: the 'animator' (who writes), the 'author' (who is responsible for the sentiments and words expressed in the writing), and the 'principal' (the one whose position is being represented in the text). One person might or might not hold all three positions (1981, 144-146). This points to a complexity and difficulty in examining the work of an author that challenge the Cambridge School's prioritisation of intentionality.

mon reference to the Stoic philosophical system of which there could, of course, be different variations; for instance, the Stoicism of Ariston contra Chrysippus's Stoicism or Cynicised Stoicism contra Ciceronian Stoicism.[4] The Stoics did not have – as Sedley argues – a, "virtually religious commitment to the authority of a founder figure" (Sedley 1989, 97).[5] The Stoics could also subscribe to the philosophical system in different degrees. They could be well versed in Stoicism or only rudimentary knowledgeable about doctrines and arguments; they could be professional teachers, amateur teachers, passionate propagators, or merely interested adherents. The difference in dedication seems to have entailed that one should adjust the expectations for personal consistency relative to the degree of dedication (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 71,30-37). The widespread dissemination therefore also led to discussions in Antiquity over the authenticity of affiliation (Rawson 1989, 247).[6] It is not uncommon for scholars today to argue that the Imperial Stoics were eclectic, yet it is not clear what the necessary or sufficient criteria are for determining this eclecticism. This question was also debated in Antiquity, but Stoicism was never a 'pure' system of thought, and when studying Stoicism as a historical phenomenon, I find these modern-day charges of eclecticism potentially misguided.

In this dissertation, I am interested in Stoicism as a historical and cultural phenomenon during the Roman Principate. The examinations therefore require en-

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[4] Cicero is often referenced when reconstructing Stoic thought. In many areas he is indispensable, but he was not a Stoic himself and his position colours some of his presentations of Stoicism; this is especially evident in relation to the Cynic elements in Stoicism, which he actively tried to combat.

[5] Sedley's examinations are primarily limited to the Epicureans, on which basis he makes his conclusion (1989, 117). Sedley rejects Seneca, who otherwise challenges the conclusion, but Reydams-Schils finds the same line of reasoning in Epictetus, who indubitably cannot be discounted as non-representative for professional Stoic philosophers in Roman times (Reydams-Schils 2011, 306). According to her, Epictetus did in fact strategically undermine any cultic following around individual Stoics (ibid., 310). This disdain for 'cult of personality' is also prevalent in Musonius Rufus's thought, she underlines (ibid., 316), and the fact that Musonius frequently refers to Socrates rather than Zeno also speak against Sedley's claim that the founding figure should have had any 'religious authority.' Her argument is, therefore, that the authority of the founding figures of Stoicism was "strikingly modest" compared to other philosophical schools (ibid., 308). See also Sellars (2009, 62n39).

[6] See Rist on Marcus Aurelius (1982, 23, 42f). Opposed by Brunt (1974, 3n15) and Gill (2007, 187).

gagement with Stoicism not just as an abstract and 'coherent' system of thought but also as a lived philosophy. Due to its wide dissemination in Roman times, Stoicism was a multifaceted patchwork. In order to interpret this polyvalence, I cross-read the sources and interpret them through a specific theoretical framework, and in the analyses I will locate a variety of themes that, as I will argue, seem to be expressed and shared by most of the Imperial Stoics. Although each textual source had a specific purpose of its own, a rigid focus on these purposes might be at risk of losing sight of the philosophy that coloured it and shaped its direction. In other words, behind every argument and point, which might not necessarily have been philosophical, a specific concept, notion, or worldview derived from Stoic philosophy can often be identified. Through theoretically informed readings, I will attempt to elucidate and examine how the Stoic texts can be seen to express specific common ideas and notions derived from Stoicism and the Stoic worldview.

1.1.1 What was Ancient Philosophy?

In the academic disciplines, philosophy is usually understood as referring to abstract systems of thought. Often, scholars who study philosophy engage in either the construction of such abstract systems of thought or, if they write history of philosophy, they comment on and reconstruct abstract systems of thought. In doing this, they have been continuing a tradition that goes all the way back to Antiquity. However, the keen focus on systems of thought has for some scholars resulted in a narrow interpretation of philosophy which to some extent misrepresents how philosophy was conceptualised and practised in Antiquity. In Greco-Roman Antiquity, as Pierre Hadot forcefully underlined, philosophy was understood both as a way of thinking and a way of life (cf. Hadot 1995; 2001; 2004). Although it should be cautioned to dichotomise ancient and modern philosophy too much (cf. Sellars 2009, 2ff), today – thanks to the profound insights produced by Hadot and other notable scholars – this

appreciation seems to have gained widespread currency again.[7] A perhaps one-dimensional focus has tended to relegate this practical dimension of ancient philosophy to a secondary position, where thinkers in the tradition of Hegel has attempted to separate biographical information of the ancient philosophers from expositions of their abstract system of thought.[8]

Hegel's conception of philosophy represents perhaps the common position in the academic study of philosophy, but it has occasionally been challenged. Although he eventually would come to scorn Stoic philosophy, a philosopher like Nietzsche was heavily indebted to the Stoics in his conception of what philosophy was and should be. Quoting Seneca, Nietzsche regretted in his inaugural lecture at Basel that philosophy had been reduced to mere wordplay (Ure 2016, 292; cf. Seneca *Ep*. 108,23), and for Nietzsche, the most important philosophical work from Antiquity was, therefore, Diogenes Laërtius's *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Giving expression to the idea that philosophy should return to its source, Nietzsche would write in *Schopenhauer as Educator* that:

> I attach importance to a philosopher only to the extent that he is capable of setting an example […] The Philosopher must supply this example in his visible life, and not merely in his books; that is, it must be presented in the way the philosophers of Greece taught, through facial expression, demeanor, clothing, food, and custom more than through what they said, let alone what they wrote (Nietzsche 1995, §3: 183f).

For Nietzsche, the litmus test of a philosophical system was how well it could be implemented in a lived praxis (ibid., §8: 246) and he therefore showed great appreci-

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[7] In honour of Hadot's work, an anthology has been published, focussing on how philosophy historically has continued to be practised as a way of life (cf. Chase et al. 2013). The evaluation of philosophy as a way of life also verge upon the apparent differences between philosophy within the continental and analytic schools. Sellars has recently attempted to determine how philosophy as a way of life relates to these two schools and finds it to, "cut across that divide" (Sellars 2017, 50).

[8] In his lectures on the history of philosophy, Hegel noted that Socrates' principles was bound to the events of his life, and his philosophy did, therefore, not develop into a system (Hegel 1995a, 389, 396). Likewise, he notes, the Cynics did not propose a proper philosophy, but it was left to the Stoics to systematise the tenets "into a philosophic discipline" (ibid., 479).

ation for the ancient conception of philosophy. It is this conception that was reemphasised with Hadot's work and the strength of these examinations is their emphasis on ancient philosophy as a response to an existential concern (cf. Kapstein 2013, 100). In Antiquity, Hadot relates, the theoretical activity that was connected to philosophy, "originates in a choice of life and an existential option – not vice versa." However, after this existential life choice was made, theorising was employed to provide a logical and persuasive justification for the choice (Hadot 2004, 3).[9] Although Hadot might have overstated his case regarding the universality of this precise function and mechanism of philosophy (cf. Cooper 2012, 18, 29), even with such a hesitant qualification in mind, all the major philosophical schools are explainable in terms of Hadot's interpretation. These ancient philosophies were designed to provide an intellectual substantiation of the need for an existentially based self-transformation and a set of corresponding praxes designed to secure this transformation. In Hadot's terminology, these praxes were called 'spiritual exercises' (Hadot 2001, 6; 1995, 82).[10]

Inspired by the work of Hadot, John Sellars has shown a great appreciation of the practical element in ancient philosophies. Although he concludes that the term

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[9] There has been voiced some concern that Hadot neglects the role of rationality (λόγος) in ancient philosophy (cf. Sellars 2009, 116; Nussbaum 2009, 5), but Hadot did, in fact, point out numerous times that the practical nature of ancient philosophy was unthinkable without a basis in the accompanying λόγος (cf. Hadot 1995, 85f; 2001, 98; 2004, 128, 174). He might have de-emphasised this aspect of ancient philosophy in order to emphasise what others have neglected, but his aim was never, as Aubry points out, 'anti-philosophical' (cf. Aubry 2013).

[10] Vernant also used the term 'spiritual exercise' in describing the Pythagorean practice of purification of the soul (2006a, 127), but Hadot is inspired by Paul Rabbow's reading of Ignatius's *Exercitia Spiritualia* (Hadot 1995, 126; cf. Rabbow 1954). Cooper has criticised Hadot for having anachronistically employed a later term like 'spiritual exercise' to the Hellenistic philosophies (2012, 20). Instead, Cooper focusses on ancient philosophies simply as different 'ways of life.' Despite the apparent affinity, Cooper's view differs markedly from Hadot's, insofar he understands the so-called 'spiritual exercises' to have had, at best, only a "secondary and very derivative function in the philosophical life during the heyday of ancient philosophy" (ibid., 22). For this reason, Cooper does not care to discuss any of the "nonrational practices," since he aims only to examine, "those philosophies as philosophies, that is, as systems of philosophical thought" (ibid.). As can be seen, Cooper echoes the view of philosophy enforced by Hegel. Cooper's interpretation has been heavily criticised and refuted by Matthew Sharpe (2014).

'spiritual exercises' is a valid generic characterisation of the practical dimension of ancient philosophy, he proposes a somewhat different interpretation, for which he argues in great detail (cf. Sellars 2009, 112ff). Instead of understanding ancient philosophy as comprising a set of spiritual exercises, Sellars suggests, based on Plato's *Gorgias*, that craftsmanship or art (τέχνη) might suit the description better (ibid., 39-47).[11] In Sellars's interpretation, philosophy was a performative art (τέχνη), similar to dancing, that worked on its raw material (ὕλη), the soul (ψυχή), through various types of exercises (ἄσκησις), resulting in a changed disposition of the soul (διάθεσις τῆς ψυχῆς), which constituted its final product (ἔργον). The activity of this performative art would bring about 'human flourishing' or 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία), which can be identified as the main goal of the activity, and the activity of philosophy was, therefore, its own purpose (ibid., 168).[12] Sellars' interpretation of ancient philosophy is persuasive since it encapsulates large parts of ancient philosophy well. However, it does not capture all ancient conceptions. Sellars' argument is thoroughly substantiated by references to the ancient sources, but I surmise the ancient philosophers employed different ways of conceptualising philosophy as part of their attempt to grasp what exactly the nature of their endeavours was. In their attempt to define and describe their relatively newly founded discipline, they could use the helpful analogy of τέχνη.[13]

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[11] The term spiritual exercise is not explicitly coupled to any religious categories in the writings of Hadot, but Sellars has voiced the concern that it might be misunderstood as a sort of esoteric religious practice, when it should be understood merely as a mental training (ἄσκησις) (ibid., 111n19). Sellars's distaste for coupling the spiritual exercises to religious categories is never elaborated, but elsewhere he states that he prefers Hahm's 'cosmobiological' interpretation when describing the Stoic worldview in order to avoid a 'religious' reading of Stoicism (cf. Sellars 2006, 91-95; Hahm 1977, 136-184). This question is where I differ the most from Sellars. For Stoicism and religion, see chapter 1.1.1.1 in this dissertation.

[12] The term εὐδαιμονία is often translated as 'happiness' (cf. Sellars 2009, 57; Long 2010, 193), but Nussbaum makes a reasonable point that this does not convey the actual meaning of the term and therefore suggests 'human flourishing' as an alternative (Nussbaum 2009, 15).

[13] As Reydams-Schils argues, the Stoics emphasised the differences between philosophy and other arts but were not shy of underlining some of the apparent similarities (Reydams-Schils 2017a, 183-187).

Similarly, they would at times describe themselves analogue to physicians and the discipline of philosophy as equivalent to medicine. According to Martha Nussbaum, the Hellenistic philosophies should, for this reason, be understood as therapeutic philosophies analogously to medicine, and she therefore labels them medical philosophies (cf. 2009, 35). Dealing with the Peripatetics, Epicureans, Sceptics, and the Stoics, she relates that the ancient philosophers understood most humans to be afflicted by an illness stemming from irrational desire. The philosopher, as a "compassionate physician," would help her patients by diagnosing the cause of their illness, dose the correct set of prescriptions, and cure the student of her illness (ibid., 3). Nussbaum accentuates the Stoics' concern for extirpating what they saw as certain damaging passions and emotions, such as desire and anger. The end goal of such a philosophical treatment was, by way of rationally demonstrating that the illness originated in one's own erroneous beliefs and judgments, to attain a state of 'human flourishing' (εὐδαιμονία) (ibid., 15, 34), and Nussbaum, to a larger degree than Sellars, therefore accentuates the existential concern that animated the Stoic philosophers. Certainly, the Stoics did express their philosophy in these terms,[14] and they did like many other philosophers engage in a dialogical relationship with the medical sciences of their time (cf. Hankinson 2003). However, Musonius Rufus would also point out that philosophy required a more radical submission of the individual than medicine required because of its more important subject matter, the soul (Musonius Rufus VI.56,26-28). Arguing against Dobbin's position that echoes Nussbaum's (cf. Dobbin 1998, 156), Sellars has emphasised that while medicine is unable to guarantee good health due to external factors, philosophy, according to ancient philosophers, could guarantee absolute success if its prescriptions were followed. For this reason, Sellars does not think that medicine is the best interpretative device for ancient philosophy (Sellars 2009, 45, 74). A passage in Cicero substan-

[14] See for instance Epictetus I.25,32, III.23,27-30; Marcus Aurelius V.9; Seneca *Ep.* 15,1, 52,9, 104,17, *Marc.* 1,6; Musonius Rufus I.32,8-10, XXXVI.134,8-17.

tiates that the affinity should never be understood as anything more than an analogy. Medicine had an end goal external to itself (good health), while philosophy was its own end goal in the same way dance or play was, and Cicero's objection does, therefore, seem to dovetail better with Sellars's interpretation (Cicero *Fin*. III.24). The ancient sources do, however, not give a unified interpretation on the matter and arguments can be made for either case, but I suggest that medicine, like the artform (τέχνη), simply provided a conceptual analogy.

We should, therefore, not necessarily attempt to understand the ancient philosophers in their own terms. A univocal concern seems to have been the 'self' as something that needed to be corrected and transformed. Heavily inspired by Hadot's work, Michel Foucault examined the ancient philosophers with attention to this 'self' that needed transformation, but due to the affinity it is important to note that he did so with a different purpose than Hadot. He aimed to:

> sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology. The main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific "truth games" related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves (Foucault 1988, 17f).

In other words, Foucault examined ancient philosophy in an attempt to chart some of the techniques that had historically been employed by humans for self-understanding and which genealogically had shaped particular formations of the subject and conceptions of the self. Foucault thought there existed four major (ideal) types of such techniques: 1) technologies of production, 2) technologies of sign systems, 3) technologies of power, and 4) technologies of the self. These technologies of the self – which formed the object of his concern in his study of Antiquity – permitted people to apply "operations on their own body and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immorality" (ibid., 18).

Foucault's aim was therefore not to present the ancient philosophers in their terms, but to present how philosophy historically had expressed a particular conception of and method of dealing with the self. Despite this different aim, Hadot criticised Foucault for being terminologically indelicate. Firstly, Hadot objected to Foucault's use of the word 'pleasure' in the context of Stoicism (Hadot 1995, 207; cf. Foucault 1986a, 65f). Secondly, Hadot objected to Foucault's interpretation that the Stoics had pleasure in their self because, as he argued, the Stoics aimed at transcending their own limited self. For Hadot, it was therefore impossible to talk of technologies of the self in Stoicism since the purpose was to transcend oneself (Hadot 1995, 206f; 210ff). I think Hadot's criticisms reveal that he misread at what analytical order Foucault did his examinations as well as the aim, as Foucault did not attempt to present Stoicism as a philosophical system but examined Stoicism primarily to flesh out how it was a specific historical example of a technology of the self.

Despite his different aim, Foucault made some vital points about the purpose of ancient philosophy. In his readings, Foucault outlined how the ancient philosopher was understood as an 'agent of truth' and the philosophical lifestyle was a testimony and manifestation of this truth in action and one's being (Foucault 2011a, 320f). This lead Foucault to characterise ancient philosophy as 'spiritual philosophy.' In this interpretation, spirituality should not designate a religious term but was to be understood as:

> the search, practice, and experiences through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth […] the set of these researches, practices, and experiences, which may be purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence, etc., which are not for knowledge but for the subject, for the subject's very being, the price to be paid for access to the truth. […] It postulates that for the subject to have right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself (Foucault 2005a, 15).

In other words, ancient philosophies were spiritual philosophies because, in order to have access to the truth, they required and demanded the transformation of the subject (ibid., 14). In this operation, philosophy made a coupling between the traditional Spartan dictum to 'care for oneself' (ἑαυτού ἐπιμελείσθαι) and the inscription at the Delphic oracle of 'know thyself' (γνώθι σαυτόν). Echoing Hadot's existential emphasis, the relationship between the two principles has, according to Foucault, been misrepresented due to an inversion of the hierarchy of the two. When interpreting Antiquity, the modern Western thought has prioritised one pillar on which ancient philosophy was founded (self-knowledge) at the expense of the other pillar (self-care).[15] What Foucault sought to point out is the fact that the practical dimension of ancient philosophy has been deemphasised by a modern preoccupation with the abstract system of thought. In line with Hadot's existential reading, Foucault would argue that, "in Greco-Roman culture knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of taking care of oneself. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle" (Foucault 1988, 22; also 1986a, 44; 2005a, 67).

Nussbaum has raised a relevant point regarding Foucault's work and problematises Foucault's representation of ancient philosophy as a part of the broader category of technologies of the self. She acknowledges that Foucault is correct in pointing out that the Hellenistic philosophers engaged in practices of self-shaping; however, the issue, for Nussbaum, relates to the fact that they had this self-shaping in common with "religious and magical/superstitious movements of various types in their culture" (Nussbaum 2009, 5, 489). The difference between philosophy and such other movements, according to Nussbaum, is philosophy's, "fundamental commitment to reason," in obtaining access to the truth (ibid., 5). Foucault – and Hadot – in her mind, thereby obscure the "dignity of reason" by putting too much emphasis on

[15] It is not surprising to find that Hegel took the Delphic maxim to indicate the form the 'spirit' took in Greece. For Hegel, the Delphic inscription indicates that Greek philosophy aimed at a general knowledge of humanity, not an admonition of the individual to know strength and weaknesses (Hegel 2011, 201).

the practical aspect of philosophy (ibid., 353). Nussbaum's concern reveals that she, like Sellars (cf. 2009, 111n19), rejects that philosophy was framed as part of a religious worldview. Both Nussbaum and Sellars have been made nervous by Foucault and Hadot's examinations, insofar they both see in their research the possibility for a conflation of religion and philosophy. Neither Hadot nor Foucault seems to have intended this but there is, in fact, good reason to soften the barrier between philosophy and religion in Antiquity.

1.1.1.1 Stoic Religion or Religious Stoicism?

Plato has often been interpreted as representing the initial philosophical break with a religious tradition, a break the subsequent philosophers could then more or less successfully uphold and improve.[16] As Boys-Stones notes, such a unilinear interpretation has naturally been challenged, which has produced chafing with those who insist religion and philosophy is conflicting traditions (cf. Boys-Stones 2012). This perceived essential difference has, for instance, led Tim Whitmarsh, in *Battling the Gods*, to argue that the Greeks pondered the world through the medium of philosophy and not through "organized religion" (Whitmarsh 2015, 30). From this point of departure, he examines how this new medium gave rise to atheistic notions in the antique world. Yet, despite the presence of atheistic notions and implications, the fact that this contemplation took place outside so-called 'organised religion' – which is not exhaustive of religion as phenomena – does not exclude that the endeavour could be inherently religious in purpose and outlook. When reading the sources, it can be argued, as done by Petersen, that many ancient philosophers were, "religious apologists involved in an effort to reform their contemporaneous religion" (Petersen 2017, 15). In this interpretation, Plato was not the harbinger of atheism but a philosopher with a religiously reformist motivation, who began a tradition of using the medium

[16] However, some recent works have been dedicated to explicating his positive relation to religion, see a summary in Petersen (2017, 12n6). For recent examinations of the relationship between religion and philosophy in Antiquity in general, see Kooten & Petersen (2017).

of philosophy to arrive at a more sophisticated representation of religious truth than what could be expressed in mythology and cults.[17] From an etic perspective, Petersen argues, it is entirely possible to classify the historical instances of philosophy in Antiquity as, "representative of the wider category of religion" (ibid., 18), because they display significant family resemblances with other cultural phenomena falling into the scholarly category of religion.

Despite apparent differences from traditional manifestations of religion in Antiquity, it is essential to maintain that ancient philosophy as historical phenomenon mainly belongs in a scholarly category of religion. However, some scholars, like Brent Nongbri, cautions this comparative approach, since there is not necessarily an equivalent concept in ancient and foreign cultures to our concept of religion (cf. Nongbri 2013, 25-45).[18] This should caution the praxis of unreflectively translating terms like the Latin *religio* and Greek θρησκεία into our term religion since both could take meanings related to our notion of religion but also other meanings (ibid., 26-38). However, one cannot assume that even if a comparable term existed it would unproblematically guarantee conceptual convergence with the modern Western concept. The issue concerns any term separated temporally and geographically. Nongbri's concern is therefore not an issue of cultural and historical comparison but

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[17] The attempt to aid religion with philosophy can also be found in modern philosophers like Kant and Hegel. The former sought the amelioration of religion by proposing a 'true religion' based not on traditional religious conduct but in a moral community governed by reason (cf. Kant 1960). The latter saw traditional religion as the anticipation of philosophy and philosophy as the completion of religion through self-consciousness. Both religion and philosophy had, for Hegel, the divine as their object (Hegel 2011, 360).

[18] Nongbri argues that scholars should dispense with using the category of religion when studying Antiquity (Nongbri 2013, see also Barton & Boyarin 2016 for a similar argument). According to Nongbri, religion and faith are not timeless stables in human culture since religion is a specifically Western and modern phenomenon (Nongbri 2013, 15, 24). One issue with Nongbri's argument is that he, as far as I see it, sketch out a quite specific definition of religion (encapsulated by Protestant Christianity, cf. Nongbri 2013, 18; see Gueye who discounts the religious nature of Stoicism on a similar basis 2006, 175) that makes it easier for him to reject it as a common historical and cultural phenomenon. He does not pay sufficient heed to the scholarly effort to define religion in a way that avoids both anachronistically and Eurocentric definitions, and on the basis of this strawman argument he can dismiss the utility of religion as a theoretical concept.

rather one of translation and concerns the fluidity of language in general. The fact that there is no directly comparable term to our concept of religion in Antiquity does not preclude the existence of the phenomenon. The theoretical concept of religion allows comparison of phenomena in different cultural and historical contexts that share a set of family resemblances which researchers for analytically purposes rubric religion. Religion as a scholarly category at the third order level therefore makes the researcher's second order analyses of first-order reality possible. Nothing unreasonable pertains to this. Third order concepts are necessary when describing and interpreting phenomena because, as pointed out by Jensen, "without concepts and universals, there would be no paradigms and no science at all" (Jensen 2001, 256). Although we reject the concept of 'ontological universals,' Jensen argues that some phenomena share a set of 'theoretical universals' because, "given certain conventions […] and for the sake of reasonable communication, we accept the idea that calling [X for Y] serves us better" (ibid., 242). This pragmatic position is necessary if communication between people shall be possible at all since the ability to construct such theoretical categories is indispensable for navigating our world. It is a fundamental operation in the construction of social reality, insofar theoretical concepts follow the form of Searle's constitutive rules: 'X counts as Y in context C' (cf. Searle 1995, 28). In other words, the construction of religion as a scholarly category follows the same basic operation that allows the existence of any other social reality.

It is, of course, necessary to point out that it makes sense to distinguish between philosophies as a historical phenomenon that potentially belongs to the broader category of religion (i.e. containing particular historical actors who articulated a particular religious worldview in answer to concrete historical questions) and philosophy as a third order category in itself. As a third order category, philosophy might be identified as a specific type of thought that commits itself to a rational and logically coherent way of thinking, introducing thoughts about its thinking. If philosophy as a third order category is defined in terms similar to this, it would seem

that it initially developed in relation to various spheres. For instance, while rejecting mono-causal explanations as sufficient, Robert Hahn has argued that philosophy's origin should be located within developments in architecture (cf. Hahn 2001; 2010). Richard Seaford, in his attempt to argue that it was the metaphysical quality of economics that gave rise to philosophy, has concluded that: "the rapid monetisation of the Greek city-states of the sixth century BC was an important factor in the genesis and form of the earliest 'philosophy'" (Seaford 2004, 315). Such new interpretations have therefore added to the various explanations that locate the crux in general technological advancements (Farrington 1944), the development of literacy (Goody & Watt 1968), and the unique political situation in Greece (Lloyd 1979; Vernant 1962). None of these are likely to be sufficient explanations in themselves, but they point to the fact that the philosophical way of thinking also seems to have developed in spheres, or at the very least quickly was utilised in spheres, that were (albeit possibly enmeshed in religion) mostly concerned with non-religious matters. Constituting a specific way of thinking, and in extension, a particular type of discourse communicating these thoughts, philosophy is compatible with a wide range of social and cultural domains that have various purposes. For instance, philosophy as a way of thinking might be employed for a political purpose or a religious purpose: defining justice, providing arguments for the existence of God, answering problems of theodicy, etc. In other words, philosophical systems might be religious; philosophy is not. The predicament when addressing ancient religio-philosophical interrelation is that each might be said to constitute an independent third order category of its own, yet in historical examinations, our analytical distinction can only be maintained by discounting the historical specificity of actual philosophical movements.

How the possible religious nature of ancient philosophy is determined is debatable. The semantic reference to a divine sphere is not necessarily the best indication in these matters, insofar such references might merely be a matter of having recourse to tradition, and they might instead imply the conceptual limitations of a

thinker flourishing in a specific historical and cultural setting. Similarly, the reference to nature or biology is not an indication that gods or the divine are not implied or part of the framework. A strategy could be to examine the differences at the level of discourse, understood analogue to the relationship between semantics and grammar. In other words, the semantic content of a philosophical text might point to the existence of superhuman agents, but the underlying 'grammar' of the text, the way the argument is structured, might follow thoroughly philosophical rules. The aim is then to determine, for instance, at the 'grammatical' level of the discourse, to what extent a transcendent agent serves as the source of legitimation; this solution has been proposed by Lars Albinus (cf. Albinus 2017, 76). This strategy for making an analytical distinction between religious and philosophical discourse is an excellent way to determine the specific mode of thought employed by an ancient thinker, and it can establish whether a thinker predominantly thought 'religiously' or 'philosophically.' In this dissertation, I will hinge my interpretation of Stoicism as inherently religious on account of three points: the Stoics decidedly made (1) semantic references to superhuman agents and these semantic references furthermore had import at the (2) grammatical level. However, more importantly, the entire purpose of Stoic philosophy was to provide a (3) soteriological answer to existential questions and this gave it an inherently religious attitude.

However, the scholarly interpretation of the religious nature of Stoic philosophy is unsurprisingly not without its disputes. It is very common that scholars argue for a solid distinction between Stoicism and religion. Cooper, for instance, has argued that a philosophical way of life, due to its prioritisation of rationality, is different from the religious way of life (cf. Cooper 2012, 17f) and Nussbaum has similarly located the rational argument as that which sets it apart: at the moment a philosopher has recourse to 'brainwashing' and 'non-argumentative' means in order to arrive at some form of 'conversion' of the proselyte, "they risk ceasing to be philosophical" (Nussbaum 2009, 489). Textual instances in the sources that share a resem-

blance with religious traditions can thereby be discounted as religious regress and failure to remain faithful to the philosophical ideals (cf. Lagrange 1912, 18). However, notwithstanding our third order category of philosophy, as a historical phenomenon philosophy did not emerge with such a clear-cut definition as these scholars suggest. The religious thought visible in ancient Stoicism is not a sign of impurity or regress, it merely is Stoicism. Nevertheless, some scholars have explicitly argued that Stoic philosophy was entirely secular (cf. Shaw 1985), some scholars have presented Stoicism oddly devoid of any religious semantics (cf. Sambursky 1959), and some have argued that the supposedly religious framework had no 'grammatical' import on their philosophy (cf. Engberg-Pedersen 1990, 60f). Concerning Engberg-Pedersen's point, the Stoics interestingly seem to have charged Epicurus for having introduced gods with no necessary purpose in his philosophical system, indicating that the Stoics thought they had avoided this problem when they referenced the gods (Cicero *Nat. Deo.* 1.123; cf. Bremmer 2007, 19). The tendency to interpret Stoicism as non-religious seems to be a rather modern phenomenon. Christopher Brooke has, for instance, surveyed how this interpretation owes its inception to comparably modern commentators like Johann Franz Buddeus (1667-1729) who, in a critical tone, characterised Stoicism as atheism and 'Spinozism before Spinoza.' Buddeus's interpretation of Stoicism as atheism continued in the works of his student J. J. Brucker and, consequently, since Brucker's presentation of Stoicism was the source for Denis Diderot's article on Stoicism in the *Encyclopédie*, the conception of Stoicism as an atheistic philosophy was reproduced during the Enlightenment, at which point, of course, the tagline 'atheism' was a seal of approval (Brooke 2012, 139-148).

The question is therefore not unproblematic and the issue is still unsettled in the scholarly community, and even amongst those scholars that accept a religious outlook, the question remains whether the Early Stoics, unlike their successors, should be acquitted of a religious worldview. But such narratives of religious regress within Stoicism might indicate a normative reading that attempts to 'rehabilitate' the

Hellenistic Stoics from their 'less than capable' heirs, since this narrative does not find substantiation in the sources, which will be clear from the ensuing examinations. Many researchers accept that ancient Stoicism had a religious dimension although few systematically has attempted to disentangle the complexity with attention to a broader scholarly debate of the interrelationship between religion and philosophy in Antiquity.[19] Taken at the general level, Stoicism contains elements that would satisfy a substantive definition of religion, i.e. the belief in a superhuman agent serving as the ultimate foundation of their philosophy, as well as a functional definition of religion, insofar Stoicism served a soteriological function by providing an answer to existential concerns,[20] although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a definitive argument. The underlying assumption that

[19] For the origin of the Stoic conception of God, see Sedley (2002). The anthology *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, edited by Ricardo Salles, is a recent attempt to examine the interrelationship between Stoic theology and cosmology (Salles 2009). See especially Boeri's contribution in this anthology for a survey that pays heed to the theological importance for Stoic cosmology (Boeri 2009). Various other examples of the relationship between Stoicism and religion can be mentioned. See Sedley (2007), White (2003), Gerson (1994), or Thorsteinsson (2012, 535-539) for treatments of Stoic cosmology that, unlike Hahm's cosmobiological interpretation, does not merely pay lip service to their religious worldview. See also Algra (2003, 2007, 2009) for recent treatments of Stoic theology. Elisabeth Asmis has examined how Cleanthes's *Hymn to Zeus* employed a religious framework to substantiate a philosophical reconceptualisation of Zeus (Asmis 2007). See also Thom's examination of Cleanthes' hymn and prayer praxis in Stoicism (Thom 2005). George Boys-Stones has argued Zeus was seen as an *a priori* given in human cognition, which in the Stoic framework proved the existence of God (Boys-Stones 2001, 39ff). Petersen also takes Stoic religiosity as point of departure and has argued that the psychological development of the Stoic practitioner should be interpreted as a form of *imitatio dei* (Petersen 2013). Frede has examined the relationship between cosmic world-order and providence in Stoicism and points to a pedagogical strategy in Stoicism that affirms certain conventional beliefs but is meant to surpass them (Frede 2002). See especially Comella (2015) for a thorough examination of the Stoics' relationship to religion. Comella aims to examine the philosophical theology of the Stoics and its interaction with traditional religious praxes. Through his readings of various Imperial Stoics, he argues that the Stoics engaged positively with religious tradition and employed traditional religious praxes and imagery as a strategic pedagogical instrument when addressing the Stoic student. Throughout Stoicism there is, however, a permanent tension between justification and criticism of traditional religious praxes. The Stoic philosophers, Comella argues, considered their theology to be a rational sophistication of the natural apprehension of the divine which was a *a priori* in human cognition, and he concludes therefore that they were religious reformers (Comella 2015, 495).

[20] For Tillich, Stoicism displays a basic religious attitude, since its soteriological dimension was an answer to the problem of existence and the anxiety of fate (Tillich 2014, 11).

guides the examinations are, nonetheless, that Stoicism, generally speaking, throughout all of Antiquity, should be understood as a religious philosophy, both as a philosophical system and historical phenomenon. I anticipate that the examinations will show the appropriateness of this assumption.

1.2 Depoliticised Stoicism?

Although Karl Marx's dismissal was aimed broadly at all previous philosophers, when it comes to the Hellenistic philosophers his charge strikes a responsive chord with many other scholars. The dismissive evaluation of the Hellenistic philosophies' political nature was given voice already by Hegel, who understood this as being convergent with the shift from the classical Greek city-state to Rome as the power hub in the Mediterranean region. According to Hegel, the Greek city-state had through its specific political constitution introduced the principle of freedom into the world, but the Roman world was an unsuitable environment for rational self-consciousness. Philosophy was, therefore, "driven back into itself from external actuality," and a new kind of philosophy developed that was, "conformable to the spirit of the Roman world" (Hegel 1995b, 234f). Despite being a necessary moment in the development of the spirit, Hegel saw in Stoicism a self-assertion of freedom problematically decoupled from political exteriority (ibid., 274). For Hegel, Stoicism sought rationality and freedom only in itself and did not attempt to give expression to this in the Roman state. Peter Sloterdijk has recently reiterated this Hegelian interpretation of the historical development of ancient philosophy. Placing the shift already at Plato and Aristotle, the philosophers embarked on what Sloterdijk has called 'loser romanticism,' as the philosophers made their defeat at the political arena a "virtue of detachment," and thereby claimed victory in defeat (Sloterdijk 2012, 45ff).

Such interpretations have gained reasonable traction in dedicated interpretations of ancient Stoicism. With this supposedly disinterested relation to exteriority, it

is not surprising that some scholars have concluded that Stoicism provided no set of political doctrines (Dudley 1941, 97; Starr 1949, 26; Hadot 2001, 296, 304, 306). Similarly, one scholar has stated that among what is often called the Stoic Opposition there was no Stoic political programme at all but only a Republican programme (cf. Wilkinson 2012, 70f). Paul Veyne found that the Stoics were incapable of thinking political (Veyne 2003, 145), thereby echoing Thomas Sinclair, according to whom, the Stoics expressed a “refusal or inability to relate political thinking to the material conditions” (Sinclair 1967, 261; also Finley 1980, 121). Rather, the Stoics focussed on ethics and more or less completely neglected the political (cf. I. Hadot 1969, 80f; Brunt 1975, 29). Many scholars have therefore found Stoicism to be, like Sellars expresses it, “broadly apolitical when it comes to conventional politics” (Sellars 2006, 133). According to Schofield, the most political work of the Stoics, Zeno’s *Republic* contained its own ‘seed of destruction’ by focusing, “on the potentialities of man considered as man, not as citizen” (Schofield 1999a, 102f). This started an apolitical trajectory for Stoicism, leading to a lack of political analysis and a depoliticised expression (ibid., 97). Julia Annas even rejects that Zeno’s *Republic* should be regarded as political philosophy because it did not take the city-state as the primary unit of concern (Annas 2007, 77f). As Annas sees it, Stoicism did not care for the city-state as the prioritised unit and in her view, Stoicism is, therefore, “radically unpolitical, even depoliticized” (Annas 1995a, 311). These many interpretations seem to reverberate with Marx’s and Hegel’s position, at least in the instance of Stoicism, that there was no aim to translate philosophical doctrine into exterior reality. Three main reasons for deeming Stoicism apolitical can be located in these points: 1) Stoicism provided no discernible political programme; 2) it engaged with neither the city-state nor its institutional framework; 3) or the Stoics’ primary concern was morality and their dealings with political matters were framed in moral categories rather than political categories.

Scholars have challenged the first position with their specific period or Stoic adherent under scrutiny, most notably Erskine's examinations of primarily the Hellenistic Stoics (cf. 2011). In this approach, it is usually assumed that if it is possible to establish a reasonable relationship between Stoic philosophy and the political programmes of specific historical actors who adhered to Stoicism, Stoicism might be interpreted as political. This position proposes relevant avenues of research but is also somewhat limited since the absence of this coupling is not a sufficient criterion for discounting a political reading of Stoicism, as it is possible to be political without having a political programme. Furthermore, any historical agent might also be variously motivated by, for instance, geographical or family concerns or by Roman tradition and values, which in some instances is very difficult to separate from Stoic doctrines. It is also nearly impossible to draw conclusions on causality when confronted with the relationship between a particular set of philosophical beliefs and specific political action in Antiquity.[21] To make up for this, Griffin has suggested analysing what kind of language was used to justify specific actions since, "to write or speak in philosophical terms, even insincerely, is to think in those terms" (Griffin 1989, 36, 33; cf. Trapp 2007, 229). However, this method is not without issues. Our knowledge of these political acts are often provided by secondary accounts that had an agenda of their own; for instance, the wish to show the applicability of philosophy in political matters or to show the corrosive nature of philosophy. We are therefore not necessarily able to ascertain with certainty that the vocabulary provided by the secondary account – or even for that matter by the historical agents themselves, who might be retrofitting their philosophy to their deeds – reflects that of the historical actor in the situation. Despite its issues, this approach can, nevertheless, yield positive and attractive interpretations.

[21] See also Griffin 1989 (22-37) for a brief overview of some of the issues pertaining to this method.

The second position identified here locates the political as related to the city-state and its institutional framework and is immediately more problematic. Scholars who understand politics as only that which take place within a designated institutional structure operate with a definition of politics that might be termed 'politics in the strong sense' (Cartledge 2010, 11). This type of definition expresses, as Christopher Rowe points out, a modern interpretation of the 'political' as the institutional and economic management of society (Rowe 2010, 5). Scholars taking this approach typically examines whether the Stoics partook in the political institutions of their time by, for instance, proposing legislation formulated on the basis of Stoic principles or they examine whether the Stoics theorised on the city-state and its various political institutions. However, this method problematically attempts to locate the political exclusively within the institutional framework and such a conception of politics is deeply problematic. It is normative rather than descriptive and it reflects a conservative bias towards the existing order of things because it excludes any action from being perceived as political, and hence legitimate, if it is not based within the institutional framework. Political acts such as revolutions can in this view never be anything but illegitimate and non-political actions. Furthermore, what is political in this perspective is also relative to the specific institution in question, through which acts are sanctioned as political. Thus, in democratic Athens, for instance, foreigners and slaves, who could not legally participate in the political institutions, would by this conception forever be barred from the political and acting politically.

Defining the political in this strong sense provides a very exclusive criterion that does not adequately fit how the 'political' was conceived in Antiquity. As Rowe correctly points out, the political was conceptualised as encompassing more than participating in, for instance, the Athenian Assembly. Rather, the Athenians understood it as *anything* that pertained to the "fundamental unit into which society is organized" (ibid., 4f). This is a much broader perspective that allows for the political to take place in different configurations and also points to the ethical dimension,

which I will return to below. However, in his argument, Rowe problematically reproduces 'city-state' as this privileged unit. Rowe's extended definition of the political does therefore still disqualify large parts of Stoicism from being political because he reiterates the point emphasised by Annas that the 'political' exclusively pertains to the city-state. Any definition of the 'political' in Antiquity that relates the political specifically to the city-state betrays a position informed primarily by Aristotle, inasmuch that Aristotle defined humanity as political animals (ζῷον πολιτικός) *qua* living in the city-state (πόλις) (Aristotle *Pol.* I.1253a). However, the Stoics made it an explicit point to extend their concern beyond that of the city-state, and this should be appreciated as a genuine development to political philosophy, both practically and theoretically.

The third reason for discounting the political nature of Stoicism is based on the argument that Stoicism's primary concern was morality. Accordingly, the argument goes, the Stoics did not theorise about politics and Stoicism did therefore not engage with proper political philosophy. However, this position adopts a quite specific but widespread view of what constitutes philosophical thinking about politics. It is necessary, as Rowe also has pointed out, to realise the distinction between 'political theory' and 'political thought'. He identifies political theory as, "direct, systematic reflection on things political," and it therefore includes, "second-order reflection about what it is to think politically, and about the nature and possibility of political knowledge" (Rowe 2010, 1, 1n2). Those who emphasise theory typically try to establish the political nature of Stoicism by examining how the Stoics theorised about such typical political concepts as freedom, justice, the state, equity, kingship, etc. However, two critical points accrue.

Firstly, given the fact that the political in Greco-Roman Antiquity should be understood in the broadest sense possible – as anything that pertains to the wellbeing of the community – this approach is too limited in its conception of what consti-

tutes a political concept or proper political analysis.[22] It rejects the entire ethical dimension, which was of immense importance to those ancient philosophers who theorised about the political. For instance, Seneca's lack of concern with theorising about the state is presented as reflecting a general apolitical character of Stoic literature; Seneca does not theorise on the division of power, about legitimacy of power, different kinds of constitution, or institutional reforms and is as such disinterested in political matters (cf. Cooper & Procopé 1995, xxv).[23] Although Seneca displays a distinct concern for the moral character of the political ruler and embeds his political hope and concern into a moral transformation of the ruler in his mirror for princes-literature, Cooper and Procopé does for some reason conclude that Seneca's moral essays, contrary to the mirror for princes-literature of the Renaissance, was apolitical (ibid., xxvi). However, the ancients considered ethics and politics to be deeply interconnected and this is evident in Aristotle's tripartite distinction of knowledge in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the type of knowledge called practical wisdom (φρόνησις) encompassed both politics and ethics (cf. Aristotle *NE* VI). For this reason, it is welcoming that Miriam Griffin recently has challenged this supposed dichotomy, by underlining that these scholars misrepresent both Classical and Hellenistic political philosophy, by reducing the significance of morals and ethics as part of political philosophy to a degree foreign to ancient philosophy. The coupling between the two, she argues, is clear in Plato's *Republic,* which was concerned with both the ethical disposition of the ideal city's inhabitant's as well as the structural arrangements. Likewise, she argues, Aristotle understood political science as concerning human beings in their entirety (Griffin 2013, 8; cf. Aristotle *NE* I.1094a-c; X.1179a-1181b). Secondly, this false dichotomy between ethics and politics is also problematic because it is in danger of misconstruing ancient philosophy as a historical phenome-

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[22] Cf. Winton & Garnsey who claim that no Stoic concept had political content and all concepts remained purely ethical concepts, although they might have had political implications (1984, 58).

[23] This lack of interest in theorising about politics led Finley to conclude that the Imperial Stoics were mere moralisers and not legitimate philosophers (Finley 1980, 120f).

non by overemphasising the theoretical discourse. Theoretical philosophical discourse is, as already noted, indeed present, prevalent, and essential in ancient philosophy, but since ancient philosophy was not reducible to theorising, as some scholars would have it, but constituted an entire way of being and living, this conception inadequately distorts the examinations.

Political philosophy must inevitably be conceived to encompass more than merely the theoretical dimension of ancient philosophy. Notions like 'the personal are political' might seem counter-cultural to moderns, but this was not the case in ancient Greece, as Cartledge points out (Cartledge 2010, 12). The coupling between ethics and politics within philosophy seems to date back at least to Socrates, to whom this was a primary concern. In Plato's *Alcibiades* Socrates addresses the young Alcibiades who is hoping to enter Athenian politics.[24] In his traditional method, Socrates questions Alcibiades' ability to participate in the government of Athens because he does not think Alcibiades has yet received the proper training. For him to become ready, Socrates urges Alcibiades to show the utmost concern (ἐράω), heed the words of the Delphic inscription 'know thyself' (γνῶθι σαυτόν), and transform (γίγνομαι) himself into an excellent person (Plato *Alcibiades* 124a-c). In this passage, the coupling between the maxims 'to know oneself' and 'to take care of oneself' becomes visible and provides the impetus for a politically motivated personal transformation. The best guide to this is Alcibiades' personal guardian (δαίμων), given to him by the gods (124c). Socrates then goes on to examine what exactly constitutes oneself and in order to do so he makes the distinction between 'something' (e.g. a foot) and that which belongs to something (e.g. a sandal), the point is that there is a

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[24] The authenticity was never questioned in Antiquity but Friedrich Schleiermacher identified *Alcibiades* as a pseudo-Platonic text, and in large parts of the scholarship it has, therefore, been regarded a later text retroactively attributed to Plato. Schleiermacher's conclusion was, however, derived from a problematic unitary conception of Plato's philosophy and his view has been challenged by stylometrics (cf. Young 1998). Despite Gregory Vlastos's depreciation of the work for being simultaneously too Platonic and too unlike Plato (Denyer 2001, 16n13), scholars are increasingly accepting the *Alcibiades* as a Platonic text (ibid., 14-26).

difference between something that uses, like a foot, and that which is used, for instance, a sandal. He then proceeds to deduce that since a person uses his body, a person must necessarily be different from the body and immediately concludes that the user, or that which 'commands' (ἄρχω) the body, is the soul (ψυχή) (129e-130a). For this reason, to know and take care of oneself – the prerequisites of political participation – is, according to Socrates, to be concerned with one's soul (130e). Only if Alcibiades pays heed to his soul will he be provided with an antidote for those vices he will encounter in politics, and it is therefore pivotal that he concentrates on the care for his soul (ἐπιμελητέος) and trains (γυμνάζω) himself before entering the political institution (132b-c). Only the person who has done this will, according to Socrates, be able to govern well and avoid the pitfalls of tyranny, and it is, therefore, necessary that Alcibiades and the citizen body of Athens are made aware of this (133d-134c). As the *Alcibiades* clearly illustrates, Socrates, or at the very least Plato, was preoccupied with the political domain in a very particular way; that is, from the vantage point of the subject's ethical disposition. This particular outlook – the intersection between ethics and politics – was continued by the Hellenistic Stoics and also determined the Imperial Stoics' political activity.

A few researchers have correctly insisted on the necessary interconnectedness between ethics and politics in ancient Stoicism without dichotomising them (cf. Eliopoulos 2011, 29, 31; Vogt 2008, 25n9, 70; Trapp 2007, 233-243; Gueye 2013, 81). Likewise, Inwood sees in the Stoics' concern with 'man as man' an accentuation of the interconnectedness between ethics and politics in Antiquity. The demarcation line is a modern construction and he proposes to assess the sources according to the criterion of whether the writer expresses a concern for society, "in a genuinely political sense," or whether the writer primarily is concerned with ethics (Inwood 2005, 72; 2007, 246, 265). However, with this somewhat 'fluffy' criterion, one might simply claim that 'in a genuinely political sense' refers solely to political institutions, the

city-state, or a specific established political vocabulary, and the ethical can once more be depreciated as part of the political.

The Stoics' supposed deemphasis of political theorising might be explained by a change in historical conditions. This has been suggested by Whitmarsh, who writes that the emphasis on ethics in Stoic thought expressed the contextual necessity of, "reinventing the political vocabulary inherited from democratic Athens" (Whitmarsh 2001a, 144). For instance, the Stoic conception of cosmopolitanism is just such an attempt at reinventing political thought and it is therefore not surprising that Martha Nussbaum has argued that Stoic cosmopolitanism is inherently political in content (Nussbaum 1997). As Christensen argued, the tendency to discount the ethics of Stoicism, as having, "only internal, psychological consequences, is surely to underestimate the reformist spirit of the Stoics" – social and political reform is obligatory, he stated (Christensen 1984, 49f; cf. Shaw 1985, 28). Taking the political attitude of the Imperial Stoics seriously, Reydams-Schils argues that, "Stoicism is the least evasive of the ancient models because it motivates political courage and systematic engagement" (Reydams-Schils 2005, 99). It is, therefore, about time to take leave of the idea that Imperial Stoicism was apolitical; the aim now is to establish *how* the Imperial Stoics were political.

1.2.1 The Political Leanings of the Stoics

If by political one would suspect a homogenous political position, one is then confronted with issues of determining this Stoic position. As pointed out by Wood, a political reading of Stoicism will be confronted with apparently incommensurate positions, as it would seem, "their doctrines are compatible with a fairly wide range of political attitudes" (Wood 2008, 107f). To illustrate this polyvalence, she points out that Stoic principles were invoked on both sides of the debate with regard to Tiberius Gracchus's progressive agrarian reform (Wood 2008, 129). Furthermore, the Cosmic City of Stoicism can, "underwrite deeply egalitarian principles; but […] it can

also be used to justify empire. The idea of a transcendent natural equality […] can also serve as a pretext for accepting inequality" (Wood 2008, 109). This polyvalence is reflected in the fact that the Stoics did not arrive at a consensus on the best regime, as pointed out by Griffin, for which reason their philosophy was available for a broad set of political actors.[25] Instead, Stoicism provided a vocabulary that could be employed by individual senators to express their political position (Griffin 2000, 42f).

Indeed, when examining various Stoics, one is presented with an assorted group of philosophers containing both reformers and upholders of the status quo (cf. Brunt, 1975, 7; George 1991, 241).[26] According to Annas, the Stoics had certain ideals but they were primarily pragmatists and neither revolutionaries nor reactionaries (Annas 1989, 167n17). It is therefore entirely feasible that Stoicism could have been invoked by opposite positions on a given political matter, thereby providing a polyvalent and challenging determination. This indeterminacy of Stoic political

[25] Like many other philosophical schools, the Stoics discussed what constituted the best regime. Typically under discussion were monarchy, a mixed constitution, or democracy. There is no clear consensus among the Stoics on this but there has been made some attempts in the scholarship to provide generalising conclusions. According to Arnold (2015, §310), Devine (1970, 331f), and Trapp (2007, 172) the Stoics argued that a monarchy was the best type of regime. Likewise, but with a slightly different emphasis, Dudley (1937, 140), Toynbee (1944, 53, 56), Wirszubski (1960, 145f), Sinclair (1967, 259), and most recently Braund (2009, 68f) have also argued that the Stoics favoured monarchy as institution but readily would criticise unjust monarchs. One scholar has thoroughly argued that the Stoics considered democracy to be the best regime (Erskine 2011) and Christensen (1984, 51) briefly voices the possibility. Some textual sources suggest that the mixed constitution was preferred by the Stoics (cf. DL VII.131; Cicero *De Rep*. I.34), but the most promising position in my mind is that no single regime necessarily was preferred by the Stoics. The Stoics followed Aristotle in this matter by claiming that any type of regime could be either just or unjust. Scholars who take this position argue that the Stoics cared more for that a regime instilled society with virtue than what kind of system that did the instilling (cf. Brunt 1975, 17, 31; Christensen 1984, 51; Vander Waerdt 1991, 187). Both Wistrand (1979, 94) and Christopher Gill (2003, 53; 2010, 606-607) has added that the Stoics considered the best regime to be cosmic nature and the best worldly regime is, therefore, the regime that reflects cosmic nature best. This dovetails with the general argument of this dissertation. The Stoic position is made further difficult to determine, I think, because the Stoics would distinguish between actuality (what is the best regime in a community comprised of rational and non-rational actors alike) and virtuality (what is the best regime in a community comprised solely of rational actors).

[26] The most thorough overview of the political theory of the Stoics and various Stoics' political position can be found in two older articles, see especially Brunt (1975) but also Toynbee (1944). To my knowledge, there has been no recent attempt to make a unifying overview of the entire school.

thought is further supported by Long, who has argued that even though we find a strain that seems compatible with radical communism, the Stoics were, in fact, closer to being Lockean liberalists (Long 2006, 349, 357, 359; 2007a, 242; 2007b, 235ff). Surveying Stoicism's influence on political thought in Europe from Lipsius to Rousseau, Christopher Brooke is sympathetic towards Long's interpretation, although he adds the crucial qualifier of calling it 'Ciceronian Stoicism' (Brooke 2012, 46-48).

The picture is further muddied by the fact that it would seem that there is a development within Stoicism, from Hellenistic Stoicism to later Stoicism, typically presented as the development of an early progressive Stoicism that turned into reactionary Stoicism. Any attempt at localising just one political position of the Stoics is therefore continually challenged by the various and seemingly incommensurable positions of this motley crew.

1.2.1.1 Political Reactionaries

Various attempts have nevertheless been made to interpret the most likely political position inherent in Stoicism. Some examinations pinpoint the progressiveness and subversive political nature of Imperial Stoicism but the largest group of scholars argue that the Imperial Stoics tend towards a reactionary and conservative position. In his study of ancient Cynicism, Dudley concluded that the Cynics shaped early Stoicism into a 'left-wing' Stoicism (cf. Dudley 1937, 99). Attempting to nuance the intellectual interconnection between Stoicism and Cynicism, Moles claims that what he labels 'hard Cynicism,' who preached radical and absolute detachment from society, "differs radically from orthodox Stoicism" (Moles 2007, 155). However, most scholars agree that a Cynic influence on Stoicism formed a 'left-wing' Stoicism, especially in its Hellenistic phase. Although it is acknowledged that this 'left-wing' Stoicism still existed within the Stoic tradition in Epictetus and Musonius Rufus (Starr 1949, 28; Millar 1965, 148; Dawson 1992, 244ff), in the scholarship it is usually understood to have been surpassed by an 'anti-Cynic' Stoicism that developed during Middle

Stoicism and was encouraged especially by Cicero (Cicero *Fin*. III.20,68; *Off.* I.35,128, I.41,148; cf. Griffin 1989, 25). This suggested 'surpassing' should, however, be challenged. It is possible that these two streams, a Cynicised Stoicism and Ciceronian Stoicism, were present in Imperial Stoicism, but the Cynicised Stoicism seems to have been the dominant, at least in the sources. Of the Imperial Stoics, Hierocles seems to have been the one who continued the Middle Stoic tradition the most and attempted to discourage innovations over tradition, but herein he appears to have differed from the rest of the Imperial Stoics (cf. Hierocles *Acts* 70,13-26).

The standard interpretation of ancient Stoicism therefore presents the picture that Stoicism underwent a development from its early Hellenistic and 'Cynicised' founders to its later Roman successors, both in terms of which parts of the philosophical system is prioritised (developing from a general interest in physics, logic, and ethics, to focusing primarily on ethics)[27] and in terms of their political outlook (proposing a radical political position to justifying the status quo and stressing Roman decorum). A century ago, one commentator described the Imperial Stoics in the following way: "The daring moral theories and bold paradoxes of the founders of Stoicism tend to disappear from sight, and are replaced by shrewd good sense and worldly wisdom" (Arnold 2015 [1911], §332). Presenting the same picture, Dawson has concluded that the radical communistic ideas of early Stoicism, due to the development commenced by Panaetius, eventually was reduced to the Imperial Stoics' household (οἶκος) philosophy (Dawson 1992, 234f; for a similar picture, see also Schofield 1999a, 102f; Obbink & Vander Waerdt 1991, 395f; Erskine 2011, 207f). Eventually, Dawson relates, like the other philosophical schools, the Stoics were

[27] Within Stoicism, Cornutus's lost treatise on logic, Seneca's *Natural Questions*, and Cleomedes' *Caelestia* all substantiate the claim that the branches of physics and logic retained its importance in Stoic philosophy. While not commenting on physics, Hijmans concluded that only a superficial reading of the sources gives the impression that logic was irrelevant (Hijmans 1959, 39). The same goes, I surmise, for physics.

patronised by the Roman upper classes and this patronising reflected itself in the development of conservative moral and political teachings (Dawson 1992, 250).

Despite acknowledging the presence of a Cynic strain, most scholars therefore emphasise that Imperial Stoicism had a conservative outlook and provided a philosophical justification of the status quo one way or the other, although the specific status quo the Stoics is supposed to have upheld differs. MacMullen's survey of the Stoic Opposition might be read as a testament to Stoicism's subversive potential – and it should indeed be read in this way – but it is at the same time a historical survey of how a group of aristocrats found philosophical backing and courage in Stoicism to fight the Roman Principate with the purpose of returning to the more aristocratically inclined Roman Republic (MacMullen 1967, chapter 1 & 2). While MacMullen provided an interpretation of how a group of aristocrats employed the subversive content in Stoicism, Jocelyn explicitly characterised the Imperial Stoics in general as staunch aristocrats and defenders of the aristocratic political tradition (Jocelyn 1977, 363). Wirszubski found among Stoics to be defenders of monarchy who nevertheless tried to secure the continued traditional aristocratic privilege of *libertas* (freedom of speech) within an imperial political system (Wirszubski 1960, 145f). Hadot echoes this by stating the Stoics had an aristocratic outlook, not by diverting privilege and wealth to the aristocratic class, "but in the sense that it made the considerations of value and moral responsibility enter into every decision of political and private life" (Hadot 2001, 219). Their value-system seems indeed to have been aristocratic, but as I will argue, this aristocratic outlook was ambitiously democratised by the Stoics into a privilege and demand that pertained to all of humanity.

While these scholars have accentuated Stoicism's potential for countering political power, another group of scholars have examined Stoicism in term of its relation to a much broader category of what constitutes the status quo. This group of scholars have argued that it is possible to find content in Stoicism that at face value

are subversive and progressive but in the final analysis turns out to be ideologically servicing the status quo. This argument has been most elaborated by Shaw who argued that Stoicism, despite apparently being subversive (Shaw 1985, 45), first and foremost was an expression of the dominant ideological system and therefore should be analysed as part of the upper-class ideology (ibid., 18, 51; cf. Finley 1975a, 188). In Shaw's Marxian reading, Stoicism gave credence to a servile social system by stressing and attaching labour to nature, thereby making one's social position in society a given, for which reason the whole philosophical system was both fatalistic and authoritarian (Shaw 1985, 35f, 43f). A reading of Stoicism as ideologically flawedin servicing one economic and political class can indeed be made, as Shaw does, but I do find it pertinent to emphasise that Shaw's rather one-sided view should be nuanced. Drawing much the same conclusion that Shaw does, James Francis has attempted to examine the subversive content in Stoic asceticism. Being originally subversive, during Middle Stoicism the Stoics' philosophical asceticism shifted attention from politics to psychology and in the process moved towards social respectability (Francis 1995, 3-5).[28] As argued by Francis, the Stoic philosophers' asceticism underwent a process of sanitation in which suspicious elements of a subversive nature was removed and reinterpreted in a way that gave support to the status quo. At the time of Marcus Aurelius, the transformation was complete, as his Stoic attitudes were inherently conservative (ibid., 23, 50f). Ridden of its subversive nature and providing only a justification of the status quo, Marcus Aurelius's Stoicism potentially had, "severe consequences for those who would not conform" (ibid., 42f, 51). Consequently, for

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[28] Brunt has likewise emphasised how social respectability and conservatism informed the views of the Stoics (Brunt 2013, chapter 3). However, his interpretation is primarily based on the positions of the Middle Stoic Panaetius and Cicero's Stoicism. These are, the way I see it, not representative for neither Hellenistic nor Imperial Stoicism.

Francis, Marcus Aurelius's persecution of the Christians was intellectually justified by the conservative outlook provided by Stoicism (ibid., 43).[29]

However, there is a good reason to remain cautious with this standard narrative since it might be an instance of comparing apples and oranges. Our knowledge of Hellenistic Stoic political thought often concerns political possibility, while our sources on later Stoic thought (Middle and Imperial Stoicism) was written to address political actuality.[30] This often reiterated interpretation will, therefore, be challenged in this dissertation, by seeking to render it probable that a more substantial degree of continuity between the political thought of Hellenistic and Imperial Stoicism existed and by pinpointing the politically subversive nature of Imperial Stoicism to a more considerable degree than has hitherto been done in the scholarship.

1.3 Political Spirituality of the Stoics

The strategy employed here is to examine the political philosophy of Stoicism according to a broader recognition of both what constitutes the philosophical (as proposed by scholars like Hadot, Sellars, Nussbaum, and Foucault) as well as what constitutes the political. The purpose is not to deny that some domains and institutions obviously can be set aside as the privileged centre of politics or being specifically political in a particular society. However, the privileged domain of the political in Antiquity was understood in a broader sense than some scholars acknowledge. Normatively, we might assign specific areas a unique political status but descriptive-

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[29] This is, however, a conjecture that cannot be substantiated by the *Meditations*. The passages which Francis points to (IV.29 and II.16) explain that anti-social behaviour entails a penalty quite different from any kind of political persecution; the penalty is simply being anti-social and it is, therefore, self-inflicted. This way of thinking penalty, that the act itself was the penalty, was closely coupled to the Stoics' understanding of personal development. According to Epictetus, the penalty for not subjecting oneself to cosmic rationality was personal stasis (Epictetus I.12,21-2; cf. Plato *Tht*. 176c-177a).

[30] Reydams-Schils has examined how the Imperial Stoics were divided between a utopian impetus inherited from the Hellenistic Stoics and living in conventional society, and this dichotomy provided them with both an evasive and conformist attitude. In her examinations, she argues that they successfully balanced this by emphasising the self as mediator between individuality and sociality (cf. Reydams-Schils 2005, 1ff, 83, 91f).

ly speaking, politics is not limited to narrowly defined areas of life and particular institutions but intersects all fabrics of human life knowingly and unknowingly of the political subjects. As Clifford Geertz pointed out, "some of the most critical decisions concerning the direction of public life are not made in parliaments and presidiums; they are made in the unformalized realms of what Durkheim called 'the collective conscience'" (Geertz 1973c, 316). In other words, politics is not reducible to a specific domain or particular kind of actions relative to this domain. Instead, politics is concerned with human communities at large and any action or thought can be considered as political, insofar as it has implications for or is concerned with the community. This is a broad-ranged interpretation of the political and politics and the concern might be raised that such a broad conception lacks analytical clarity or precision. There are well-founded reasons to object to notions like 'everything is political,' because it might dilute a critical analytical concept. However, any narrow conception of what constitutes the political is missing essential elements in relation to both descriptive and normative concerns. There is a good reason to maintain, at least for analytically purposes, that while not everything is necessarily political, the most unlikely things and events can, on the other hand, take a political meaning.

The Stoics provided an interesting conceptualisation of the political and political praxis and it is this I will attempt to make clear. Concerning the Cynics' specific way of doing politics, Moles suggests that the political praxis of the Cynics simply was the Cynic way of life (Moles 2007, 129); the same goes, I propose, for Stoicism. To be able to examine the political nature of Imperial Stoicism – with acute attention to the philosophy as a specific way of life – a framework comprised of a wide range of theoretical concepts and insights will be employed for contextual and analytical purposes, and it might be necessary to make an important remark anterior to the examinations. The aim is not to ground these examinations firmly within one scholar's theoretical framework, it is not the purpose to expand and improve on any individual thinker's theories, and my concern is not necessarily the same concern as that

of the thinkers I employ. The purpose is to examine the political nature of the Imperial Stoics and not to commit to a particular 'type' of study. The reason that this is not, for instance, a Foucauldian study, is best explained by Foucault:

> I am tired of people studying him [Nietzsche] only to produce the same kind of commentaries that are written on Hegel or Mallarmé. For myself, I prefer to utilize the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators say that I am being unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is of absolutely no interest (Foucault 1980, 53f).

In other words, an extensive set of theoreticians will be utilised but the goal of employing these is first and foremost the interpretative potential.[31] This conceptual and theoretical diversity allows the extraction of valuable insights from the sources that might otherwise have been neglected or overlooked. The theoretical framework employed in this dissertation should preferably be evaluated with respect to its interpretative utility and this interpretative utility should be judged according to its applicability on the observed phenomenon in bringing about an increased sense of hermeneutic understanding of the object under scrutiny.

Stoicism as philosophical phenomenon forms part of the larger historical development that Karl Jaspers termed 'the Axial Age.'[32] Although this is not supposed

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[31] I do not expect my interpretations will be able to demonstrate, as Leopold von Ranke infamously phrased it in his positivistic spirit, "*wie es eigentlich gewesen.*" The correspondence theory of truth, the idea that there is a structural isomorphism between a propositional statement and the object it refers to, is deeply problematic and is also under heavy criticism in the 'hard sciences.' See Gardiner & Engler (2010, 4).

[32] Jaspers's Axial Age theory has received dedicated attention at various instances, of which only a few shall be pointed out. It was introduced to a broader public in his book *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* in 1949 (English translation 1953, reprinted 2010). The theory was treated in issue 104 of *Daedelus* in 1975 and also in the anthology *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* edited by Shmuel Eisenstadt in 1986. More recently the theory has received renewed attention in relation to Robert Bellah's coupling of the Axial Age theory to a wider bio-cultural evolutionary framework which is presented in his *Religion in Human Evolution* from 2011, and a number of scholars have within this framework given it new impetus. A recent anthology, *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* from 2012, edited by Bellah and Hans Joas seeks to readdress the theory from various points. The Axial Age theory is still being discussed in the scholarship and continues to generate both detailed studies as well as controversy. Besides more particular criticism levelled by various

to be a detailed study of Jaspers' Axial Age theory, the points he made concerning this historical period does provide some valuable insights and couples the examinations of Stoicism to a larger interpretative framework.[33] The novelty of this period (ca. 800-200 BCE), in which Stoicism developed only in the period's end-phase,[34] was that certain geographical regions (generally accepted is China, India, Greece, and Israel)[35] in this period became increasingly concerned about existential matters and through reflective consciousness came to question customs and conditions that had so far unreflectingly been accepted (Jaspers 2010, 2). A set of thinkers and movements articulated thoughts and ideas that challenged the dominant worldviews and the consequence of this was the possibility both of a questioning of the existing order

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historical specialists, the overall project of Jaspers's has been criticised for being too Hegelian in its Euroasiancentric perspective and its 'flimsy' idealism cf. (Boy & Torpey 2013, 248; Tsonis 2013, 189, 257; 2014, 130f).

33 Jaspers explicitly sought to broaden Hegel's Christocentric notion of world history by providing a more inclusive 'axis' of world history, i.e. the time in history where those things that constituted the largest part in the shaping of humanity came into being (Jaspers 2010, 1; cf. Joas 2012, 10). Jaspers's theory might therefore also be subject to a teleological criticism in which, "the action has to await the future to await its meaning" (Skinner 1969, 23f). Jaspers anticipated this criticism and provided his Hegelian conception of the matter: "In matter of the spirit, a fact can only be apprehended through the understanding of meaning […] though it rests empirically upon an accumulation of separate data, a historical construction never comes into being through these alone" (Jaspers 2010, 9f). The entire theory was therefore also articulated as an article of hope that humanity shared a common origin and a common goal, though Jaspers was less self-assured that it was possible to determine these in more than glimmers (ibid., xv). Assmann is therefore correct in emphasising that the theory is, "the creation of philosophers and sociologists, not of historians and philologists" (Assmann 2012, 366). However, this does not by default reduce its applicability as a heuristic tool for interpretation and analysis. As a regulative idea, it serves to create order in the otherwise incomprehensible magnitude of historical diversity with which scholars are presented.

34 The Hellenistic Stoa had its origin in the end period of the Axial Age and the Imperial Stoa were part of what, in lack of a better word, can be called the post-Axial period. While the Axial Age has received much attention, the post-Axial period has unfortunately not received much attention. The post-Axial period is characterised by a compromise between the creative 'Axial' developments and the existing order. On a societal level, Rome expresses the incorporation of Axial Age thinking in a way that would support and stabilise society, but the anarchic and creative model remained as a sub-current that could manifest in specific ways (Jaspers 2010, 5ff; Bellah 2011, 396). Such an inherent tension is also discernible within Stoicism in which critical, subversive, and world-renunciative elements are expressed side by side with world-affirmative and social edifying elements.

35 Jaspers originally included Iran as well, but this has since been rejected (cf. Bellah 2011, 271). While retaining scepticism towards the theory, Jan Assmann has attempted to include Egypt, which would also shift the beginning of the period to an even earlier date (cf. Assmann 2012, 387-398). Among those scholars who by and large accept the theory, Assmann's proposal is generally not accepted.

as well as an alternative to this order (Bellah 1964, 359). In the religious sphere and on the existential level humanity found itself confronted with its ontological limitations and sought for ways to bridge the chasm to a transcendent order, thereby giving rise to, as Eisenstadt points out, soteriological speculations and resolutions (Eisenstadt 1986, 3). In other words, humanity was faced with its limitations and sought "liberation and redemption" by setting the highest goals (Jaspers 2010, 2) and many of the Axial Age movements were, therefore, attempts at addressing and solving the anxieties of existence and non-existence. Many of these movements were ascetic in outlook and would develop, in Tillich's words, a 'courage to be,' i.e. a set of 'courageous' acts that counter-intuitively affirmed one's being despite containing self-affirmative negations like self-deprivations and world-renunciative sentiments (Tillich 2014, 5).[36] The period produced the first spiritualisation of religion and placed religion firmly in the ethical. Part of this ethical turn was the birth of what Jaspers termed 'philosophers,' who in their introspection realised the potential for transcending the world and themselves, either through becoming one with the Godhead or by becoming a tool for the will of their god. This resulted in the renouncement of worldly goods; some withdrew into the desert, the forests, or mountains and then later returned as prophets, sages, or philosophers (Jaspers 2010, 3ff).

The most primary feature of the Axial Age, therefore, seems to have been transcendence. In the Axial Age humanity generated a scheme of orientation that distinguishes between immanence, i.e. the world we live in, and transcendence, i.e. the world we cannot access but only allude to, which makes possible both the interpretation and the relativising of the mundane world. In other words, the Axial Age emphasised the distinction between the actual and the potential (cf. Dalferth 2012, 142). This distinction created a horizon of meaning, insofar the transcendent point allowed for retrospective reinterpretation and revaluation of the existing order of

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[36] Tillich dedicates a few pages to explicating the Stoic and Neo-Stoic 'courage to be' (ibid., 10-24).

things (ibid., 145). The result of this was inevitably extensive criticism and for this reason, the period was described in the following terms by Arnaldo Momigliano:

> In all these civilizations there is a profound tension between political powers and intellectual movements. Everywhere one notices attempts to introduce greater purity, greater justice, greater perfection and a more universal explanation of things. New models of reality, either mystically or prophetically or rationally apprehended, are propounded as a criticism of, and alternative to, the prevailing models. We are in the age of criticism (Momigliano 1975, 9).

The existing order of things was evaluated according to a new set of transcendent values of various sorts. Historically, the stable conditions that society had previously experienced were replaced with tension and tumult which gave rise to an awareness of history itself, giving birth to ideas and wishes to return to a previous 'golden' age or to turn the future into an unfulfilled utopia (Jaspers 1948, 432).

These contextual remarks serve to illustrate what kind of cultural phenomenon ancient Stoicism was and they point to a particular way it is possible to conceptualise the political nature of ancient Stoicism. From a transcendent vantage point, the Stoics would level criticism against the general order of things and articulate utopian thoughts of potentiality for both humanity and society. In this interpretative framework it is advantageous to employ the concept of 'political spirituality.' Foucault only briefly introduced the concept and it is marginal in his writings, but it is, as Jeremy Carrette has noted, nevertheless relevant to Foucault's later work (Carrette 2002, 138). Foucault used the term to describe the events of the Iranian revolution where the Iranians, according to Foucault, attempted, "to open a spiritual dimension in politics" (Foucault 2005b, 208f). That same year, he had explained 'political spirituality' as, "the will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false" (Foucault 1978, 82). Although Foucault left the concept behind, the ideas it was meant to designate preoccupied much of

Foucault's later work.[37] The concept was however further elaborated in an interview, only recently published online in February 2018 by *L'Obs* (cf. Foucault 2018). This interview gives further valuable clues on the concept. Foucault explains that political spirituality was introduced as a concept that could help to describe how it was possible for unarmed civilians to raise a strength that could counter the tremendously powerful and terrible regime of the Shah. The strength needed for this insurrection was not derived from the typical source of political organisation, like Marxism, but from Islam, which took the form of political spirituality. Spirituality, he explains in the interview, should not be confused with religion – although most religions have a spiritual dimension, they are encodings of spirituality – but designates the practice in which a person is, "displaced, transformed, moved (*bouleversé*), to the point of the renouncement of his own individuality, his own position as subject" (ibid.). Political spirituality, therefore, rejects the general order of things and seeks to combat it through rejecting one's subjectivity and one's identity, demanding the transformation of these (ibid.). Political spirituality, therefore, connects the political to the ethical.

One of the main points of Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France in the early eighties was that this coupling between the political and a person's ethical disposition came to pose a significant concern for antique philosophers. A primary problem of politics was, according to Foucault, the soul; how to mould a ruler's soul and how to shape the souls of the participatory body in politics, and this was, "the question of pedagogy" (Foucault 2011a, 196). Addressing this issue was, as noted by Foucault, one of the most important efforts of the ancient philosophers and constituted a large part of the political praxis of philosophy. Philosophy was never meant to dictate political action through a political programme (cf. ibid., 286) but had, "to

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[37] Carrette interprets the concept as being inseparable from Foucault's concept of 'governmentality,' i.e. the governance of self and others (Carrette 2002, 138). I will not be able to venture further into governmentality, which has become an immense field in Foucauldian studies, though much of my examinations inevitably verge on this subject.

define for the governor, the politician, what he has to be" (ibid., 295). Through this notion of political spirituality, I want to emphasise the self-transformational move as that which for the Stoics allowed a transformation of society. Political spirituality should accordingly be understood in conjunction with Foucault's notion of ancient philosophy as 'spiritual philosophy.' What is entailed by this spirituality is a necessary relation between a transformation of the subject and a specific truth for which reason this personal transformation is embarked upon. The transformation and the truth it could obtain was inherently political.

1.3.1.1 The Spiritual Will to Power

A feature of the Axial Age developments was the frantic concern with a new truth – the absolute truth of reality – that often came to challenge and criticise the more or less unconscious and dominant worldview. For the Stoics, this truth should be understood as a profoundly existential truth concerned with ones being and the content of this truth was expressed in the Stoics' worldview, i.e. the true order of things (cf. Geertz 1973a, 89). The religio-philosophical worldview professed by the Stoics would, like any other religion, put a, "gloss upon the mundane world of social relationships and psychological events," and render, "them graspable" (ibid., 124). The Stoic worldview, therefore, contained information concerning a profound and underlying reality – a cosmic order – that was perceived to be more real and true than the unreflective traditional worldview that was commonly accepted. The Stoic worldview opposed the common-sense perception of the world because it moved beyond the experiences and conceptions of everyday life and posed questions that challenged these traditional perceptions (cf. ibid., 112). In this way, it served as the specific interpretative framework through which the Stoics perceived the world.

In addition to being a gloss, the Stoic worldview was also a template that did more than interpreting everyday reality in terms of this cosmic order, it simultaneously shaped everyday life by recommending a specific "attitude towards life, a re-

curring mood, and a persisting set of motivations" (ibid.; cf. 1973b, 216). The Stoic worldview could, therefore, structure the Stoic subject's whole being, give her life depth and direction, and animate all other aspects of everyday life (eating, dressing, the role as a parent, or political subject). In other words, intimately connected to their worldview was a particular Stoic 'ethos.' The relationship between worldview and ethos was described in the following way by Geertz:

> In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world view describes, while the world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well-arranged to accommodate such a way of life […] and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other (Geertz 1973a, 89f).

This coupling between worldview and ethos elaborates on how Stoicism as philosophy should be understood as an existential life-choice (cf. Hadot 2004, 3). It also dovetails with the relationship between how the Stoics imagined the actual state of the cosmos and the consequences this had for how one (ideally) had to live. The particular ethos of the Stoics was rendered intellectually cogent and urgent by their conception of reality, i.e. a reality being different from what was conventionally taken as being reality. Furthermore, this worldview, which gave urgency to a particular way of life, was at the same time emotionally charged as uniquely real and convincing by being presented as an ideal composition of reality accommodating to the ethos. The strength of Geertz's framework is its focus on groups and a broader social dimension, but it can advantageously be underpinned by reference to Paul Tillich's rather more individualistic perspective and his concept of 'ultimate concerns.' An ultimate concern, for Tillich, is a spiritual concern that claims a total surrender of the subject, who in turn is promised an ultimate fulfilment (Tillich 2009, 1). Ultimate concerns are something that someone is invested in, has given absolute primacy to, something that serves as a dominating centre that structures an entire way of being and regu-

lates daily life. As such it gives, "depth, direction and unity to all other concerns and, with them, to the whole personality," and it is a source of a passion that expresses itself in a particular artistic creation, scientific knowledge, ethical formation, or political organisation (ibid., 122, 125).

Thus, Stoic philosophy expressed an ultimate concern that conveyed a universal truth; it was comprised of a particular worldview and supporting and emanating from this worldview was an appurtenant ethos. No system of thought is devoid of a corresponding praxis and no praxis is devoid of a corresponding system of thought. It is, in fact, a realisation of this that prompted Nietzsche to criticise Stoicism in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he framed Stoicism as a "spiritual will to power" that attempted to create the world in its own image (Nietzsche 2003a, §9: 39).[38] Like Platonism – insofar both contained a dogmatising force in their denying of the 'perspectivism' that Nietzsche advocated (cf. ibid., 32) – Stoicism, for Nietzsche, was first and foremost a moral intention and the philosophical system itself grew from this moral intent (ibid., §6: 37). Censuring the Stoics, Nietzsche would therefore write:

> Your pride wants to prescribe your morality, your ideal, to nature, yes to nature itself, and incorporate them in it; you demand that nature should be nature 'according to the Stoa' and would like to make all existence exist only after your own image – as a tremendous eternal glorification and universalization of Stoicism (ibid., §9: 39).

For Nietzsche, Stoic philosophy did not remain at the level of description but expressed a moral fanaticism in suppressing and submitting human nature to their own faux human nature (cf. ibid., §189: 112). Likewise, Foucault found in Stoicism the precursor to Christianity. The Stoics were harbingers of change relative to Classical philosophy, as they introduced a different method of subjection (*mode*

[38] Nietzsche had initially praised Stoicism for its individualism, which he thought was an antidote to modern-day thoughts of communality (Nietzsche 2005, §131: 131, §546: 547; Ure 2016, 294f). Contrary to Nietzsche's reading, I will be making the argument that the Stoics, first and foremost, were communitarians. Their individualistic ethics was given its meaning only through the community.

d'assujettissement), by eliminating the life-choice in a system of universal nature and an existential obligation following from this nature (Foucault 1984b, 356).[39] Similarly to Nietzsche, Foucault would hint at this particular 'spiritual will to power' by emphasising that the Stoics had transposed their philosophy onto nature, which came to serve as the transcendent reference and rule for the individual. In pinpointing the Stoic demand for self-transformation, both thereby addressed the exact point where the Stoics were the most political. This self-transformative demand in Stoicism came to expression as a political spirituality that could guarantee the transformation of society through the transformation of the subjects.

Essential for their political spirituality was the Stoics' worldview, which opposed the existing worldviews. As Clifford Geertz explained it, an important political domain in any society is the collective conscience that reflects a common worldview (cf. Geertz 1973c, 316). Such a collective conscience of social norms, ideas, beliefs, etc. will often translate into what John Searle called institutional fact, whereby they are given a certain institutional power. An institutional fact can be many different things such as language, money, or private property but it can also be something like the Roman Empire or the Roman Emperor that by virtue of being the Emperor had certain 'status-functions.' By this, Searle points to the fact that through mutual recognition, certain deontic powers (rights, duties, permissions, authority, etc.) are granted to a status-function like the Emperor that allowed him to perform these functions. It is important here, as Searle repeatedly makes it clear, that any institutional fact only is capable of remaining an institutional fact as long as it is accepted as such: "the continued existence of institutional facts is simply that […] a sufficient number of members of the relevant community must continue to recognize and accept the existence of such facts" (Searle 1995, 117). The moment this stops,

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[39] This should, of course, be understood from the most general perspective since Foucault had emphasised the development was initiated with the beginning of the Socratic philosophical tradition (cf. Foucault 2011b, 162f).

Searle continues, such things as money or private property will cease to exist as an institutional fact. The same also goes for Roman Emperors or for the Roman Empire itself. Numerous different methods exist to secure the continued acceptance and reproduction of institutional facts, and one method is, of course, through brute force. However, even in Roman Antiquity, in which brute force was a typical instrument in the arsenal of the Emperor, it is important to remember that even these instruments, employed to maintain his institutional position, required the acceptance of the Emperor's status-function. In other words, the Emperor was unable to subjugate the entire Roman Empire by himself (regardless of his physical strength), and he therefore required the help from different instruments of force, for instance, his armies or bodyguards. His ability to use these instruments rested on their acceptance of his legitimate authority, and once his enforcers rejected this legitimacy, an essential instrument for maintaining his position of Emperor was gone. This fact placed the Emperors in a difficult position in which their legitimacy continually required maintenance and strengthening; in this continual reproduction of legitimacy, ideas and worldviews played an important part.

Echoing the point made by Searle, Wistrand noted that most Emperors, "more or less openly usurped power, and his rule was then given some legal form by the assent of the Senate, regarded as the true keeper of legal power" (Wistrand 1979, 99). This need for having his legitimacy established was a continual process, and it was, as Miles argues, just as important for the Emperor to maintain the representation of his power, as it was to maintain his armies and passing of laws (Miles 2002, 37). The ongoing maintenance of legitimacy entailed that the Emperor at all times needed to pay attention not only to military threats but also to those who posed a threat by undermining and subverting this legitimacy. Philosophy played an interesting role in this regard because it historically had a close connection to the circles of power. Philosophers could be household philosophers or members of the political elite could self-identify as philosophers. The ancient philosophers could,

therefore, “indirectly play a great part in the formation of opinion” (Wistrand 1979, 100). In other words, philosophers were uniquely coupled to the articulation of ideas that had the potential for mobilising social action or for influencing the collective consciousness in a way that shifted public opinion in such a way the Emperor’s legitimacy was questioned (cf. Geertz 1973b, 232; 1973c, 316). Power is intricately connected to truth, and when any belief or idea is established as truth, it is a manifestation of power. What guides the following examinations in this dissertation, is how the Stoics’ philosophy challenged this bricolage of ideas, beliefs, and praxes that underpinned the current order of things, by providing a wholly different worldview and way of life.

2 Prelude: The Utopian Vision

For an esteemed classicist like Finley, there were very few examples of utopian thought in Antiquity, the reason being that utopian thought in his mind excluded any metaphysical notions of transcendence (Finley 1975, 181). Scholars inspired by Jaspers have taken a very different stance and has reinforced the coupling to transcendence in utopian thought. As Seligman has pointed out, the utopian thinker provides an alternate vision for society when it is clear that the existing order insufficiently addresses the human condition and this alternate vision differ from other forms of social protest in that it is rooted in a strong notion of transcendence (Seligman 1988, 9; cf. Eisenstadt 1988). The commonality of utopian visions is, according to Eisenstadt, that the mundane order should be reconfigured relative to a transcendent order, and thus the vision serves as, "an alternative cultural and social order beyond any given place or time" (Eisenstadt 1986, 11). Stoicism's founder, Zeno, articulated one such vision in his *Republic*, which seems to have been further elaborated and substantiated in his student Chrysippus's treatise *On the Republic*. Zeno's treatise serves as an important backdrop for the examination of the political spirituality of the Imperial Stoa because it is an essential and vital piece of evidence on the political spirituality of Stoicism.[40]

[40] In a recent reconstruction of the political philosophy of Early Stoicism, Katja Maria Vogt takes a different stance and claims that the *Republic* only seems of importance to the political thought of the Stoics because the Sceptics criticised it heavily as part of their attacks on Stoicism. We are therefore presented with a distorted view of its centrality in Early Stoic philosophy, she argues (Vogt 2008, 51).

2.1 The Cosmic Premise

The Hellenistic Stoic utopian vision was grounded in what the Stoics understood to be cosmic reality and the vision must therefore be interpreted through the lens of its precondition.

Since the conception of their philosophy, the Stoics had understood the universe pantheistically (cf. Baltzly 2003). Cicero reported that already Zeno had reasoned by way of syllogisms that the universe must be wise (*sapiens*) and sentient (*sensus*) (*Nat. De.* II.8,21-22).[41] To the Stoics, this meant both that Zeus's divine reason and providence had ordered the universe and also that the universe was equivalent with Zeus (*Nat. De.* I.14,36; DL VII.137-138).[42] The divine reason of Zeus was, therefore, an inseparable quality of matter, and the Stoics understood his reason to move through matter, like semen does through the genital organs or like the soul in man (Calcidius *Comm. Tim.* 294; DL VII.138; cf. also Origen *De Princ.* III.1,2-3).[43] The soul itself had been animated by Zeus's fiery breath (πνεῦμα) and was identifiable with a small part of Zeus's reason and everyone therefore had part in the divine (Aetius I.7,33 = *LS* 46A; Tertullian *De Anim.* 5,3; Galen *Hipp. Plat.* V.3,8 = *LS* 47H; Nemesius *Nat. Hom.* 2,67; Calcidius *Comm. Tim.* c. 220 = *LS* 53G; DL VII.157).

Consequently, all humans had the divine within themselves and Stoic philosophy aimed to cultivate this divinity. This cultivation would guarantee the virtuous life, i.e. the life of a sage who lived, "a life in accordance with nature" (ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν) (DL VII.87). This phrase in many ways serve as a summation of the Stoic religio-philosophical creed and can be understood as border-

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[41] Diogenes Laërtius reports that this doctrine was presented by Chrysippus (DL VII.142), but elsewhere it is presented in a way the suggests the conception goes back to Zeno (cf. DL VII.147-148).

[42] The Stoics did sometimes present their teachings as if there existed a personal providence. This is, according to Frede, incompatible with the rational ordering of the universe and must therefore have been part of a pedagogical strategy (Frede 2002, 98f).

[43] In the Stoics' monistic cosmology the unity of the whole resulted in many different equivalent terms for their god, such as fire (πῦρ), breath (πνεῦμα), rationality and reason (λόγος, νοῦς), the governing faculty (ἡγεμονικόν), the generative reason (λόγος σπερματικός), etc. (cf. also White 2003, 136).

ing on Roy Rappaport's notion of 'ultimate sacred postulates' (USP).[44] According to Rappaport, a USP sanctifies any system of understanding and action (Rappaport 1999, 265) and is intricately connected to one's being where performativity and meaning intersect (Rappaport 1979b, 157). Consequently, the so-called Stoic creed – 'life according to nature' – both recapitulates and reveals their worldview as well as points to the Stoic ethos. The phrase inevitably begs the question what such a life looks like, and within the word ὁμολογουμένως we find the clarification of this question. Ὁμολογουμένως, which is usually translated as "in accordance with" or "conformably with," has as its root the word λόγος (reason) combined with the prefix ὁμο- (identical).[45] The word, therefore, points to the fact that to live according to nature was to have made one's reason identical to Zeus's divine reason which was imbued and discernible in nature.[46] Zeus's ordering of the cosmos meant that reason guided humans as a natural impulse (ὁρμή). Therefore, as Diogenes reports, to live according to reason (κατὰ λόγον ζῆν) was in the end, according to the Stoics, the same as life according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν) (DL VII.86).

This divine rational mind, which humans shared with Zeus, was coupled to the idea that Zeus had given each person an inner divinity and to convey this doctrine, the Stoics would employ the concept of a personal 'daemon' (δαίμων). The term δαίμων could in a Greek context refer to many different things and can therefore be translated in various ways. The traditional interpretation of daemon is found in Hesiod who associated daemons with men from the Golden Age, who post-mortem came to serve as Zeus's guardians or intermediaries on earth and whose job

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[44] Rappaport's textbook example of a USP is the Jewish *Shema*: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Rappaport 1979a, 117).

[45] The term λόγος had many different meanings in Antiquity, and depending on context there are many different ways to translate the word. However, in the context of Stoic philosophy λόγος is usually employed to designate reason or rationality.

[46] According to Reydams-Schils, the point was not that people should become like god, but "the fact that humans *are* like god," and this should come to fruition in people's spiritual disposition (Reydams-Schils 2017b, 158).

it was to safeguard humanity (Hesiod *Op.* 121-123). The term was, however, buoyant and could refer to more than one thing, which might be a decisive factor in the philosophical reinterpretation found in Socrates and the ensuing tradition (Albinus 2003, 427). Socrates reconceptualised the daemonic into an inner voice or sign that primarily discouraged certain actions that would render his service to society futile (Plato *Ap.* 31d; *Alc.* 103a-b; cf. Foucault 2011b, 80), but when Plato employed this concept of an inner and personalised daemon, the vague and abstract articulated "something daemonic" as Socrates phrased it, was given a more precise meaning (Albinus 2003, 434). In Plato's *Timaeus* it is explained how the god has planted the soul (ψυχή) as a guardian (δαίμων) in the head of men and that this soul elevates its bearer towards the divine (Plato *Tim.* 90a). Thus, in the context of the philosophical reconceptualisation, the daemon was no longer an external agent but had become an internalised and personal mediator, the attempt to bridge transcendence, yet in continuation of Hesiod's protective daemons, the philosophical term still referred to a guarding agent (cf. Plato *Leg.* 876e-877a).

These same elements are explicitly found in the thought of the Imperial Stoics but nothing indicates their position differed significantly from the Hellenistic Stoics. Explaining this personal daemon, Epictetus would tell his students:

> He [Zeus] has assigned (παρίστημι) to each person their own divinity (δαίμων) as protector and has entrusted it to stand guard – never to sleep and never to be deceived. For which other guard more powerful or attentive could he have given each of us? (Epictetus I.14,12-13).

This passage resonates with Hesiod's daemonic guardians and is a clear parallel to Plato's *Timaeus* 90a. It has been suggested that it was the Middle Stoic Posidonius who, through his readings of the *Timaeus*, had introduced and incorporated this Platonic conception of the daemon (Dobbin 1998, 154); however, the concept of daemon seems to have been explicitly coupled with the rational faculty already in the works

of Chrysippus (cf. DL VII.87-88).[47] Thus, the daemon is, according to the Stoics, given by Zeus as an internalised and individual guardian. Epictetus also made it clear that the daemon should be understood as a minor chip of Zeus. Therefore, in addition to having been received from Zeus, this daemon is equal to Zeus, insofar as it is an ability (δύναμις) equal to Zeus's, Epictetus reports (Epictetus I.14,11). Without making the connections explicit in this passage, the daemon was, therefore, another way to express man's privileged part in the divine reason.

Seneca also expressed the same idea: "God is near you, he is with you, he is within you […] a holy spirit (*sacer spiritus*) sits within us; an observer and guard of our evils and honours" (Seneca *Ep.* 41,1-2). Like Epictetus, Seneca thought a divine element was present within and safeguarded its bearer, and like Epictetus, this divine element was also equated with Zeus by Seneca. Marcus Aurelius continued the conceptual point:

> Live with the gods! And he lives with the gods who invariably demonstrates his soul to them, satisfied with what has been assigned and doing what the inner divinity (δαίμων) wills – that leader and ruler (ἡγεμών) given by Zeus as a shred of himself. And this is each person's intelligence (νοῦς) and rationality (λόγος) (Marcus Aurelius V.27).

Thus, the inner divinity was a small part of Zeus' divine reason and constituted the mediating link between the individual and the entire cosmos. The Stoic daemon therefore formed one word among a wide range of terms throughout the corpus that could be employed interchangeably with each other: daemon, soul, holy spirit, mind, generative reason (λόγος σπερματικός), ability, reason, ruler, and rational or gov-

[47] Chrysippus's conceptualisation differed slightly from Posidonius's Platonic interpretation (Long 2010, 166). Furthermore, a passage in Diogenes Laërtius does also seem to suggest that Chrysippus, like Hesiod, employed a traditional concept of external daemons (δαίμονες), i.e. as creatures guarding humanity (DL VII.151). If this is the case, then Chrysippus seemingly used multiple interpretations of the term.

erning faculty (ἡγεμονικόν) (cf. Hijmans 1959, 13f).[48] Despite a broad terminology, it is clear that this divine element, whatever its specific designation in a given context, was the relation humanity had with Zeus as part of Zeus (cf. Epictetus II.8,11). This divine element, serving as the seat of reason, therefore made the Stoics distinguish between perfect reason (ὀρθός λόγος) and reason (λόγος) (cf. DL VII.88), which should be understood within an often invoked conceptual framework of whole and parts.[49] The former corresponded to divine reason and the latter to human reason, but it is important to realise that the difference is in degree and not in kind, wherefore human reason merely was a less complete version of divine reason.

It was on the backdrop of these doctrines, on the relationship between humanity and the divine cosmos, the Early Stoics would provide their vision of the ideal society, and it is therefore now possible to present an interpretation of its content and purpose.

2.2 The Stoic Utopia

The utopia envisaged by the Stoics generated much debate in Antiquity and even caused concern for some Stoics. The case that Diogenes Laërtius used Chrysippus as testament to the fact that Zeno was the author of the *Republic* (cf. DL VII.34) accentuates the treatise's problematic character for some Stoics, who would instead reinterpret or reject the orthodox status of the treatise – an attempt the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus would not accept (Phil. *De Stoic*. c.2, cols. IX-XII, ed. Dorandi). The head of the library at Pergamon, the Stoic Athenodorus Cordylion (fl. mid 1st century BCE), even attempted to remove passages from the treatise but these were reinserted (DL VII.34). Today, the treatise is unfortunately lost. When trying to reconstruct the

48 Epictetus might idiosyncratically have used ἡγεμονικόν interchangeably with another term, προαίρεσις, which could be translated as volition (for a discussion of the translation, see Long 2010, 218-220). However, Long has argued that Epictetus made a distinction between ἡγεμονικόν, which humans had in common with non-rational animals and προαίρεσις, which was limited to human psychology only (Long 2010, 211ff).

49 The relation between parts and whole could also be envisaged in social terms.

content of Zeno's *Republic*, scholars are therefore faced with severe challenges. We do not have any explicitly attested excerpts from Zeno's *Republic* but we can reconstruct some of the basic ideas presented in the treatise via doxographic reports and critical rejoinders dispersed throughout the ancient literature.[50] In recent years much valuable work has been done in the reconstruction of the content of Zeno's *Republic*.[51] Through these scattered passages and modern scholars' helpful interpretations, it is possible to present a likely intimation of the Stoic utopian vision. Ideally, this presentation would require a substantial amount of interpretative comments, but for the sake of brevity this will not be feasible, and I shall retain comments to only those most necessary.

Zeno's *Republic* was part of a textual genre that was instigated and shaped by Plato's *Republic* and *Laws* and it is plausible to believe that Zeno positioned his treatise against these seminal works.[52] Many of the subjects covered in Zeno's *Republic* was therefore also covered by Plato in his political treatises but Zeno's take on these subjects are unique and differ immensely from Plato's, insofar they represent the

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[50] A systematic presentation of relevant passages can be found in Nicola Festa who brings a total of 31 in Italian translation (1971, 9-25). Dawson presents 22 passages in English translation (1992, 167-172). John Sellars brings 21 translations arranged according to their use-value in the reconstruction of the content (2007, 25-29). Baldry provides only the 12 passages in their original language that explicitly mentions the *Republic* (1959, 3-5).

[51] For recent elaborate attempts to reconstruct Zeno's *Republic* and its relation to Hellenistic Stoic political thought, see: Erskine (2011, esp. 9-42), Schofield (1999a), Dawson (1992, 160-222), Vander Waerdt (1994a) and Vogt (2008). For a critique of Erskine and Dawson, see Vander Waerdt (1991) and Schofield (1999b), respectively.

[52] Plutarch regarded the purpose of Zeno's *Republic* an explicit attack on Plato's *Republic* (Plut. *Stoic. Repn.* 1034e-f). The coupling has gained general acceptance among modern day scholars and informs the appreciation of Zeno's work in different ways. Finley regarded the treatise to be explainable as merely an anti-*Republic* (Finley 1975, 188; cf. Shaw 1985, 49). Schofield has also suggested that Zeno's ideal city should be seen as a direct counter-proposal to Plato's treatise (Schofield 1999a, 25; 2010, 444). The most convincing argument that Zeno's *Republic* should be seen as a direct response to Plato's *Republic* has been made by Vander Waerdt, who interprets the treatise as an attempt to advance Plato's philosophy in answering the conventionalist challenge brought forward by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic* book II (1994, 277). That Zeno engaged with Plato's seminal works on politics in his own political treatise is very likely, but I find it vital to stress the importance and originality of the work in its own right. I therefore agree with Vogt, who warns against treating Zeno's *Republic* as a simple anti-*Republic* (Vogt 2008, 68).

Stoic response to the questions of the ideal community. The response resulted, during Antiquity, in ridicule and contempt, and Zeno's *Republic* was mocked for having been written on the tail of a dog (DL VII.4), an insult implying that its content was profoundly shaped by Cynic ideas.[53] Considering the apparent content of the treatise, it is not difficult to see why such an insult is neighbouring. For instance, Sextus Empiricus reported that Zeno had argued for the acceptability of incestuous relationships (cf. SE *Ph*. III.205; III.245-246)[54] and it would also seem that Zeno had argued for the acceptability of cannibalism (DL VII.121).[55] The arguments for incest and cannibalism formed part of a direct assault on conventions that, according to Zeno, were guilty of the mindless reproduction of uninformed views.[56] Zeno's *Republic* therefore contained doctrines that would have shocked his contemporaneous society since the treatise, in continuation of the Cynic tradition in which Zeno was trained, challenged traditional conventions and customs.[57] This Cynic strain was unacceptable to many ancient commentators, and detractors of the Stoics would emphasise this exact influence, while friendly commentators would downplay the in-

[53] Dudley found no notable difference between Early Stoicism and Cynicism (Dudley 1937, 137; also Harris 1977), but according to Brunt, the two philosophical schools should not be confused with each other (1975, 29). The influence on at least Early Stoicism is seldom doubted today, and the indebtedness can hardly be overestimated as Cynicism seems to have shaped many Stoic core doctrines. Goulet-Cazé has written an elaborate attempt to affirm the indebtedness to Cynicism among all Early Stoics and not just the young Zeno as it is sometimes presented (Goulet-Cazé 2003).

[54] This led Philodemus to characterise Zeno's treatment of sexual relations in the *Republic* as being particularly ridden with many evils (Phil. *De Stoic.* C.3, col. XV, ed. Dorandi). Chrysippus furthermore continued the doctrine of acceptable incest in his treatise *On the Republic* (cf. DL VII.188; SE *Ph*. I.160, III.205; Plut. *St. Repn.* 1044f-1045a = *LS* 67F) and the doctrine continued to be discussed by commentators at least until the church father Origen (cf. Origen *Cels*. IV.45). For the similar Cynic position, see Dio Chrysostom *Disc.* 10,29-30.

[55] This suggests a prosaic evaluation of the body that was also forcefully defended by the Cynics and might be the source of inspiration for Zeno's position (cf. DL. VI.73, 79; Dio Chrysostom *Disc.* 8,13-14; Theo. Ant. *Ap. Aut.* III.5). For the Stoic position, see also DL VII.188; SE *Ph*. III.247-248; Seneca *Ep*. 92,34.

[56] Whereas a similar point led Protagoras to defend traditional values (Plato *Prot.* cf. Nicholson 2017, 35-39), the Stoics, by insisting on a transcendent and divine point of reference that differed significantly from conventional societies, posed rather a challenge to traditional values and existing social constellations.

[57] For a detailed exposition of general Stoic attacks on conventions, see Sextus Empiricus (*Ph*. III.197-232) who couples it directly to the Stoic concept of 'indifferents' (ἀδιαφὸϱαν).

fluence (Mansfeld 1986, 346). Regardless of ancient attempts to defuse Stoicism's similarity with Cynicism, the rest of the treatise was similarly infused with a mindset indebted to Cynicism.

2.2.1 Proto-Communism and the Stoic Utopia

Not merely moral conventions but also the institutional structure of society was under assault in Zeno's *Republic*. I am unable to provide a detailed picture but will retain the reconstruction for those points most relevant to the proceeding examinations. According to a passage in Diogenes Laërtius (DL VII.32-34), Zeno explicitly proposed the abolishment of the institutional framework of the city-state, which in modern scholarship has been interpreted as a philosophical charge against Plato's *Laws* (Dyroff 1897, 210; Baldry 1959, 11; Dawson 1992, 179). However, it is unlikely that Zeno undermined the institutional framework of society merely to comment on Plato, since the abolishment seems to have been proposed as logical consequences of Stoic philosophy. As part of his attack on the institutions of society, Zeno, for instance, proposed to abolish the popular gymnasiums, most likely because they, in the Stoic analysis, were irrelevant to human flourishing.[58] Additionally, he would also level an attack on places of cultic worship and holiness, as temples also were excluded from the ideal community (DL VII.32-34). The fourth century CE bishop Epiphanius of Salamis would relate that Zeno in his *Republic* proposed this ban on temples because: "we must not build temples for gods but keep the Godhead in our minds alone – or rather, regard the mind as God, for it is immortal" (Epiph. *De Fide* 9,40; transl. Williams 2013, 666). It therefore seems that the Stoic philosophical system undermined the necessity of traditional cultic praxis and it is reasonable to

[58] That Zeno proposed to abolish gymnasiums seems to be undermined by Philodemus who reports that women and men would exercise naked together in Zeno's *Republic* (Phil. *De Stoic.* c.7, cols. XVIII-XX, ed. Dorandi). According to Dorandi, Philodemus unwittingly conflates the thought of Diogenes the Cynic with Zeno's (Dorandi 1982, 125).

suggest that, in the ideal Stoic society, the traditional religious conduct and institutions would be converted into a different kind of religion, a philosophical religion.

However, Zeno also rejected other vital parts of the political-institutional framework. The Greek educational system undertaken before professional studies (ἐγκύκλια παιδεία) were supposed to be abolished in the ideal state (DL VII.32-34). We know that Zeno wrote other works concerning education (cf. DL VII.4) but why Zeno argued for its abolition here is unclear. Dawson has suggested it merely was part of a counterargument to Plato's suggested educational reforms in his *Republic* (Dawson 1992, 176f) but other reasons might be suggested that does not reduce the proposition to an anti-Platonic attack. Zeno's proposal to abolish the educational system is possibly reflected in the later Stoic approach to education as merely pro-paideutic to philosophy (cf. Reydams-Schils 2010a, 564). However, their insistence on the pro-paideutic function of the general education is not dismissive like Zeno's position in his *Republic*. Zeno would indubitably have criticised the quest for erudition for the sake of erudition, as the Imperial Stoics did, but another reason might help to elucidate the proposition. The general education played a fundamental part in the functioning of ancient Greek societies, as it helped in shaping the citizens according to the city-state's disposition (cf. Plato *Prot.* 324d-326e, 342e-343b).[59] The elite classes in Athens found the general education of extreme importance for the wellbeing of the city-state since it was here that they were able to educate the citizens into the 'aristocratic gentlemen' type. As the anonymous 'Old Oligarch' in Xenophon's writings phrased it, the general education served to establish a qualitative difference between the elite (βέλτιστος) and the masses (δῆμος) (Xen. *Const. Ath.* I,5). The general education was therefore coupled to the maintaining and shaping of the elite culture and identity that through education could be further differentiated from the

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[59] Two examples will serve as case in point. Athens' system shaped individual agents meant to participate in the democratic city-state, while Sparta's system strategically attempted to undermine the traditional household in order to subordinate its citizens to one single purpose: military excellence and obedience (cf. Austin & Vidal-Naquet 1973, 85f, 91).

masses. In opposition to this, Zeno would have believed philosophy was better suited to shape the citizens of his ideal state. The abolishment of the general education does not necessarily preclude the transmission of knowledge but any such transmission would be entirely subservient to philosophy. Philosophy, for the Stoics, was radically democratic in its claim on humanity insofar all had equal access to this kind of intellectual cultivation and – as an antithesis to an educational system serving the reproduction of a stratified society – it would therefore help neutralise the artificial hierarchy strengthened by the general education.[60]

In their ideal society, there was no room for traditional societal hierarchy, which also seems to have included hierarchies firmly justified in antique conceptions of biological differences. Greco-Roman societies were manifestly structured along patriarchal lines and women were identified as inferior to their male counterparts due to their biology. For Aristotle, women were, "weaker and colder in nature, and we must look upon the female character as being a sort of natural deficiency" (Aristotle *Anim.* IV.775a; translation Ogle). Spatial gender segregation was normal and the Greek household would often have an '*andron*' and a '*gynaeceum*.' That is, different parts of the house reserved either for male or female household members and visitors, whereas the *gynaecium*, however, was situated farther away from the public areas of the house. Participation in physical activities and expression was also severely limited for women but the Stoics proposed the abrogation of these culturally defined boundaries. Zeno supposedly argued that, "both men and women should wear the same dress and that no part of the body should be hidden away" (DL VII.33). This passage resonates with Philodemus's report that men and women were allowed to exercise naked together in Zeno's ideal society (Phil. *De Stoic.* C.7, cols.

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[60] This is a significant innovation that sets Stoicism apart from particularly Aristotle's philosophy. For Aristotle, a necessary prerequisite for the attainment of the full rational potential was freedom from labour (σχολάζω) (*Metaph.* I.981b). This made philosophy an elite activity possible only for the well-to-do. However, the Stoics radically democratised the activity of philosophy by stressing philosophy as suitable and possible for all (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 33,11).

XVIII-XX, ed. Dorandi). Furthermore, it was reported that there would be sexual communality in this society (cf. DL VII.32),[61] a proposition also supported by Chrysippus, which seems to have given rise to the idea that childrearing should be transferred from the individual household to communal nurture (DL VII.131).[62] A hierarchy of gender was impossible to sustain by reference to human nature since women were equally endowed with a rational and divine nature. The logical consequence of this would be that in a society populated by men and women who had all attained divine perfection, no conventional separation and hierarchy among genders would be maintained.[63]

The radically democratic impetus in these doctrines points to a fundamental argument in Zeno's *Republic*: the ideal society was not hierarchical but in fact profoundly egalitarian.[64] The treatise seems to have been both a corrective to Plato's

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[61] Diogenes Laërtius reports that the sage will marry and beget children but also that the sage will not marry (cf. DL VII.121). Reydams-Schils argues that this points to a contradiction in Stoic philosophy (2005, 145), but Schofield has argued that it displays the difference between what the sage will do in the perfect community and what the sage will do in conventional communities (Schofield 1999a, 45). See Grahn-Wilder for a similar argument (2018, 246ff). I surmise Schofield and Grahn-Wilder are correct.

[62] Schofield concludes that Zeno's *Republic* theoretically was gender inclusive but in praxis a male club (Schofield 1999a, 43-46). His reason for doing so is his interpretation of Zeno's *Republic* as a philosophical model on Spartan society, which I, however, find untenable (see below). Schofield has been criticised for relying on Plato in his presentation of the Stoic utopia and gender equality, which is problematic due to the different agenda of Plato (cf. Grahn-Wilder 2018, 242ff).

[63] Hill have argued that Stoicism, along with Epicureanism and Cynicism, constitute the first wave of feminism, although she concludes that the later Stoics failed to realise the gender egalitarian ideal of Zeno's *Republic* (Hill 2001, 40). For the Stoics' view on women, see also Asmis (1996) and Nussbaum (2000; 2002). A recent book by Malin Grahn-Wilder scrutinises the Stoics' view on gender and sexuality and constitute the first thorough study of this important subject. Her contribution to an examination of gender and sexuality from the perspective of Stoic metaphysics and physics is an important contribution to the scholarship. She argues that the Stoics operated with a very egalitarian view that differed markedly from that of Plato and Aristotle, partly by emphasising a, "transformative potential, treating gendered characteristics as mere cultural artifacts" (Grahn-Wilder 2018, 160). Grahn-Wilder argues that two sides is visible in Stoic thought: an idealistic and utopian side expressed in Zeno's *Republic*, stressing polygamy and sexual communism, and a realistic and practical side, stressing adherence to conventions of monogamy (ibid., 235-252).

[64] Zeno's criticism of artisans (cf. Clement *Strom.* V.12,76; Plut. *St. Repn.* 1034b) should not be misinterpreted as the traditional devaluation of artisans common among the Greek elite (cf. Herodotus II.166-167; Xen. *Oecon*. 4,1-4, 6,4-8; Aristotle *Pol*. III.1277b, VII.1328b) but expresses a subversion of

political philosophy as well as a corrective to the societal arrangements that Plato ideologically defended and justified. In Plato's *Republic,* we are presented with a stratified society comprised of the Guardians (the philosophers), the Auxiliaries (the warriors), and the Producers (farmers, artisans). The citizens of Plato's ideal city were divided into these classes and would serve in Plato's city according to a corresponding function (Plato *Rep.* IV.435e-436a). These societal classes correlate with the tripartite nature of the soul – the logical, the spirited, and the appetitive parts – and the inhabitants were delegated to their particular class in accordance with how well their nature was adapted to a specific class (Plato *Rep.* IV.433a). The hierarchical structure in Plato's ideal city was, therefore, an ideal consequence of the tripartition of the soul, but his philosophical system could therefore also serve as an ideological justification of the existing order. Zeno and the Stoics understood the soul (ψυχή) as monistic and the soul did therefore not contain different parts as in Plato's philosophy.[65] The soul was, in the Stoic view, rational through and through and society did therefore not represent a natural and biological hierarchy but only a humanmade, artificially instituted hierarchy.

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the tendency to ascribe holiness to human constructions and material objects (see Stob. *Anth.* IV.27,12-14).

[65] Long & Sedley writes that the unitary view of the soul cannot be attributed to Zeno with certainty and that the specific exposition we know stems from Chrysippus (1998, 321). However, Chrysippus usually elaborated and defended Zeno's position and nothing in the sources indicates that the unitary soul was not already present in Zeno's thought. The fact that Posidonius is noted for having had platonised his conception of the soul (cf. Sorabji 2003, 154) and that Panaetius was influenced by Aristotle in his bipartition of the soul (cf. Cicero *Off.* I.132) would suggest that if Zeno had nothing to say on the matter or were incompatible with the orthodox Stoic view, it would have been noted by ancient commentators. Among the Imperial Stoics there does appear to be times when the soul was conceptualised as non-monistic (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 65,18; Epictetus I.3,3; Marcus Aurelius II.2, V.26). This led Frede to argue that all Imperial Stoics operated with a platonic soul (Frede 1989, 2097), but this supposed Platonism has been challenged in recent scholarship (cf. Inwood 2007b; Reydams-Schils 2010b; Boys-Stones 2013; Long 2010, 2017). Following Long, Christopher Gill points out that these passages are only found in instances of more idiosyncratic nature where the expositor are not interested in technical expositions of orthodox Stoicism but concerned with pragmatic utilisations of dualist terminology in order to convey a moral point (Gill 2009, 97f). I find no reason to call into question Imperial Stoicism's general continuation of orthodoxy on this matter, though lay philosophers, like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, might have been less consistent than the professional philosophers.

The nature of the egalitarianism in Zeno's utopia can be further appreciated through the testimony that he also advocated the abolition of law-courts (DL VII.32-34). This abolition does, however, not herald unstable anarchy but rather a perfect harmony. This underpins that the egalitarianism of the ideal Stoic society was very different from a narrow form of egalitarianism defined by legal equality. The same passage provides a vital piece of information in interpreting how this society was supposed to function without law-courts:

> he says that all who are not wise (σπουδαίος) are hateful (ἐχθρός) and hostile (πολέμιος), slaves, and estranged from each other: parents from children, brothers from brothers, the household divided. Again in the *Republic*, he makes the wise alone citizens, friends, kinsman, and free (ἐλεύθερος) (DL VII.32-33).

The point in this passage is that the non-sages, in Stoic literature often referred to as the fools (φαῦλοι), were at enmity with each other, as they could not live in perfect unanimity and concord (ὁμόνοια).[66] The Sceptics seem to have criticised this doctrine for implying that children – who, according to Stoic psychology, was only mentally developed and capable of becoming wise at the age of 14 (cf. DL VII.55) – in consequence, would be hostile towards their parents (cf. DL VII.33). However, the passage expresses a core Stoic doctrine that only the sage was truly capable of perfectly performing social roles.[67] What the passage conveys is that the Stoic sage never would be hateful and she could have no enemies; her bond to other people was perfect, whether a family member, friend or stranger; she was subject to nothing but her divine rationality and was therefore not a slave. Most importantly, only other sages like her were citizens in the ideal Stoic society.

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[66] Chrysippus had defined the mob as raving mad, senseless, unholy, lawless, and unhappy (Plut. *St. Repn.* 1048e) and the often-used term for the mob was for this reason φαῦλοι in Greek (vulgar, bad, common) or *insipiens* in Latin (foolish, unwise).

[67] Epictetus would, for instance, argue that love and friendship in reality was reserved for the sage (cf. Epictetus II.22). The non-sage could in a given instance act as a sage would have done, but since the act was not grounded in perfected reason like the sage's act, the act was not virtuous and the correspondence merely coincidental.

It is possible to indicate why law-courts safely could be abolished. Since the function of law-courts is the institutional regulation of justice, they presuppose the existence of unjust social agents. Without unjust agents, there is no need for this type of regulation. The Stoic sage who embodied perfect and divine reason could, according to the Stoics, not be unjust and the sage as a social agent would therefore never induce the need for law-courts since no injustice would be committed.[68] This also indicates that the ideal Stoic community had no inhabitants who were not sages since it might be expected that non-sage inhabitants would generate a need for a social distribution of justice. The unanimity and concord of the ideal Stoic society seem to have found its guarantee in its connection to the community's tutelary god Eros. Athenaeus reports that Eros was the guarantee for the safety (σωτηρία) of the community (πόλις) because Eros was the god of friendship (φιλία), freedom (ἐλευθερία), and unanimity (ὁμόνοια) (Athenaeus *Deipn.* XIII.561c-d). Eros, however, is typically known as the god of desire and in order to make sense of this, Schofield has argued the ideal Stoic city was based on principles inspired by the Spartan city-state, in which homosexual relations served as a pedagogical mechanism inducing social cohesion (Schofield 1999a, 29-42, esp. 41f).

The tradition of interpreting the Stoic *Republic* as modelled on Sparta owes its inception to Plutarch but as pointed out by Long, Plutarch fundamentally misunder-

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68 It is difficult to establish the actual content of the knowledge that the Stoic sage possessed and this issue is therefore still a matter of debate in the scholarship. Christensen presented an abstract and idealised sage (Christensen 2012, 68) but this idealisation has been challenged by Kerferd and Liu (Kerferd 1978, 125ff; Liu 2008, 248f). The idealisation of the sage does in my mind not entail omniscient knowledge of everything in the universe, as Kerferd claims in his critique of Christensen. Kerferd presented the content of the sage's knowledge in relatively ordinary but vague and abstract terms (1978, 134). Liu has likewise argued that the content was perceived as relatively ordinary although it unlike the fool's knowledge was stable (2008, 248, 262f). Contrary to this, Long has emphasised that the sage remained exceptional in the minds of the Stoics and that the knowledge of the sage was identifiable as the dialectical capacity to judge impressions rationally (1971, 101, 109; cf. 1978). Brouwer has argued the knowledge of the sage made the sage exceptional and ordinary at the same time, but that the Stoics had a hard time identifying this knowledge due to their adherence to Socrates' statement that he only knew, he knew nothing (2002; 2014, 178, cf. chapter 4).

stood the Stoic utopian vision (cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 31,1-3; Long 2008, 55).[69] Schofield's interpretation of the tutelary god of Eros has been rejected by George Boys-Stones for numerous reasons. Firstly, Eros – as the god of desire – was usually described as an enslaver and this contradicts Athenaeus' description of Eros as the god of freedom (Boys-Stones 1998, 169).[70] Secondly, the interpretation that the social cohesion of the Stoic utopia was upheld through the kind of sexual relations common in Sparta is contradicted by a passage in Sextus Empiricus (SE *Ph.* III.245; cf. Boys-Stones 1998, 169). Thirdly, Eros, in Antiquity, could signify two different divine mythological beings: the son of Aphrodite or a primordial god. Consequently, Boys-Stones proposes another and more likely reading, that Eros as tutelary god was a reference to Eros as one of the primaeval beings (πρωτόγονος). In Hesiod's *Theogony*, it was narrated that Eros sprung from the void, Chaos, serving as the catalyst of all subsequent events and formed the world in order and harmony (Hesiod *Th.* 116-122). This account of Eros existed before the later popular version, but the earlier tradition was continued in the philosophical tradition by Parmenides and, rendering a Stoic connection probable, it was later advocated by the Imperial Stoic writer Cornutus (Boys-Stones 1998, 170, esp. n8). For Boys-Stones, Eros, as the tutelary god, reflects the kind of love the citizens would have for each other: "the love by which the disparate elements of chaos were brought together into the harmonious arrangement of the cosmos" (ibid., 172). A tutelary god like Eros should, therefore, direct the interpretation of the Stoic utopia into its cosmic framework:

> an individual's harmony with himself is just a function of his harmony with nature, since he is himself a part of nature. Insofar as the city is part

[69] Thus, Schofield echoes Tarn who considered Zeno's ideal state to be a city-state modelled after Sparta (1948 vol. 2, 418ff). This has been rejected by Tiegerstadt (1974 vol. 2, 45), Erskine (2011, 19f) Sellars (Sellars 2007, 12), and Long (2008, 55).

[70] Furthermore, Eros as the god of desire does not fit well with the Stoics' great emphasis that desire was an ailment of the non-rational soul. Schofield resolves these problems by suggesting that Athenaeus extrapolated Eros into the otherwise Zenonian content in order to express its Spartan connection (Schofield 1999a, 55).

> of nature too, it will achieve happiness and internal harmony just when *it* is also brought into harmony with the cosmos (ibid.).

The Stoic egalitarianism was sanctioned by and fulfilled through cosmic nature; the utopian community was in perfect harmony with the cosmos because every citizen-member were in perfect harmony with their divine origin, making culturally provided justice unnecessary and the need for law-courts obsolete.

The egalitarian character of the community also applied to wealth: "it must not be thought that coinage (νόμισμα) should be introduced either for purposes of exchange or for travelling abroad" (DL VII.33).[71] This passage has been interpreted as a comment on Plato,[72] but the comment echoes a Cynic influence.[73] It is sometimes

[71] The reference to travel might indicate that this ideal community was geographically demarcated, although the geographical extent is unclear. The issue here concerns whether Zeno's *Republic* describes a single city-state or an extensive world-state. Sometimes the singular of πόλις (city-state) is used (cf. Athenaeus *Deipn*. XIII.561c-d), while other sources use a plural (cf. DL VII.32-34; Stob. *Anth*. IV.27,12-14). Vogt takes the use of plural as an argument for a Cosmic City decoupled from any actual city (Vogt 2008, chp. 2) as does Vander Waerdt (1994a, 293n84). Both argues the treatise was a treatise on physics and rejects the hypothesis that Zeno's *Republic* at any point was concerned with an actual city or constitution. This is, however, a minor position in the scholarship Stressing the political unity, Margaret Reesor without much elaboration saw it as, "one universal state" (Reesor 1951, 10). DL VII.33 might support this interpretation, but it might also indicate the existence of other non-Stoic cities. Schofield takes it to describe a single city-state, as does Daniel Richter, which would later conceptually develop into a world-state with inspiration from Alexander's conquests (Schofield 1999a, 110; Ricther 2011, 64; also Tarn 1939, 63). Based mainly in Plutarch's coupling of Zeno's *Republic* to Alexander's conquests (Plut. *Alex*. 329b), Mitsis has suggested that the treatise was too utopian to be realised and eventually was coupled to Roman imperialistic thought (Mitsis 2017). The coupling to imperialism has been even greater emphasised by Pagden who interprets Greek imperialism to have been the point of departure for Zeno (Pagden 2000). Pagden, in my mind, misreads Zeno's *Republic* in the same way Plutarch did. Dawson understands the passage on coinage during foreign travel as an indication that everyone, "would be alike everywhere in that cosmos" (Dawson 1992, 180). Baldry has suggested that the indeterminacy between sources reflects a deliberate duality and the abstract nature of Zeno's argument (Baldry 1959, 8). Erskine takes a similar position and argues that the *Republic* was concerned with a philosophical argument independent of time and place, neither limited to one single city-state nor necessarily an argument for one world state (Erskine 2011, 23). Baldry's and Erskine's interpretation seems to me the most incisive and I therefore generally use the term community or society rather than city.

[72] Dawson suggests that the reference to travelling is a comment on Plato's acceptance of travel-based currency (Dawson 1992, 180; Plato *Reg*. V.741e-744a). Baldry understood this to mean that no travel at all would exist in the ideal city (Baldry 1959, 11). However, the passage dispenses with coinage, not with travelling.

[73] Cf. DL VI.20-21, 71; Phil. *De Stoic.* c. 6, col. XVI, ed. Dorandi; Athenaeus *Deipn.* IV.159c.

related that Plato abolished money in his *Republic* but it was in fact only the Guardians of his city that was barred from wealth and trade (Plato *Rep*. III.416e-417b), while the other citizens were allowed to participate in monetary circulation (Plato *Rep*. II.371b). For Plato, it was necessary to exclude the Guardians of his society from both money and property to shield them from corruption.[74] However, the Stoics believed their sage to be entirely incorruptible and therefore capable of having access to wealth without becoming unvirtuous. Zeno's proposed abolition of coinage for exchange and travel therefore suggests something else entirely but its exact meaning is not entirely clear. Either the circulation of commodities was to be conducted in something akin to a pre-monetary system – i.e. commodities exchanged for other commodities without an arbitrary medium of exchange providing the abstract measure of value (silver, or knucklebones as proposed by the Cynics) – or it might have entailed the abolition of the economic system entirely.

Both Dawson and Schofield have argued that the latter possibility seems to have been the case and it is substantiated by the fact that seemingly only Stoic sages inhabited the community. Schofield, for instance, describes the Stoic utopia as, "a community that is as perfect as may be, by virtue of its communist institutions and the moral character of its citizens" (Schofield 1999a, 56). Likewise, Dawson concluded that the abolition of coinage means that, "there would be complete communism in property in the Stoic ideal world" (Dawson 1992, 181). We cannot determine this with absolute certainty but when considering Stoic philosophy, this interpretation does seem to be the most promising. In a community inhabited solely by sages who had attained divine perfection, the accumulation of wealth would be considered unpurposeful – due to the Stoic concept of 'indifferents' (ἀδιαφὸϱαν; cf. chapter 5.1.1.1) – however, it would also be entirely irrelevant, since a sage would attach

[74] This economic arrangement might be called communism, but Peter Garnsey prefers the term communality (Garnsey 2007, 6-8). Pierson challenges the standard view that Plato's communality was reserved for the Guardians, and points to passages that reflect that Plato found it to be a healthy principle in general (Pierson 2013, 27-29).

value to neither wealth nor consumption beyond what was necessary for survival. An economic system based on supplying a demand would, at the very least, be reduced to its absolute minimum when demand was reduced to necessities of life. Furthermore, since wealth is irrelevant, it means that a Stoic sage selling a commodity would do so without any concern for maximising profit and a system with an integrated mechanism of wealth accumulation would therefore not adequately reflect the dynamics of the community.[75] It is, therefore, more likely that goods necessary for the upkeep and development of the community, as well as the sustenance of its inhabitants, would be exchanged according to a communitarian principle.[76]

These different doctrines all point to a problem of interpretation that requires to be further addressed. Citizens and inhabitants do not necessarily coincide and this made a massive difference in Antiquity. It is difficult to determine who was expected to be living in Zeno's *Republic*, but I have already made the claim that only sages inhabited the community. The question can be raised whether the community was comprised of sages only or comprised of a mix of sages and non-sages, and in the latter case, how this influenced the distribution of citizenship. Some commentators have argued that Zeno's ideal city comprise a ruling class of sages and a ruled class of non-sages,[77] while other scholars have argued that Zeno's ideal community consisted of sages only.[78] I surmise the most promising interpretation is the latter. The argument that non-sage residents were ruled and held in check by the sages is

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[75] In a Marxian reading, the Stoics' undermining of wealth accumulation dovetails with their abolition of the traditional household. According to Engels, the institution of family reflects first and foremost an economic concern of generational accumulation (Engels 2010, 95f), which in the Stoic community would be irrelevant.

[76] According to Reesor, the left-wing Stoics comprised only Sphaerus and Blossius and it is, "unlikely that the socialism of these two philosophers was typical of the political theory of Stoic school" (Reesor 1951, 60). Instead, Reesor sees a continuation in thought between the Early Stoics and the Middle Stoics. However, when considering Zeno's *Republic*, Reesor's interpretation seems widely off the mark.

[77] Cf. Tarn (1948, 418); Ferguson (1975, 114); Boys-Stones (1998, 172n14).

[78] Cf. Reesor (1951, 10); Baldry (1959, 6-8); Dawson (1992, 177f); Schofield (1999a, 56); Erskine (2011, 18f); Finley (1975, 188).

unlikely since it is stated in the sources that the sage dominates no-one, making the governing of potentially unruly non-sages quite difficult if not impossible (cf. Stob. *Anth*. II.29,3, II.99,22). As it is also pointed out by Erskine (cf. Erskine 2011, 19), the particular constellation of Zeno's ideal community that differed from conventional societies had as a prerequisite that the inhabitants had attained divine perfection. The abolition of a traditional institutional framework suggests that the issues pertaining to and the problems confronting conventional society would be absent, and it is therefore unlikely that non-wise people inhabited this society, as they must by virtue of their morally inferior character necessarily have been subversive to the dynamics, security, and wellbeing of this ideal community.

This reading results in the consequence that the ideal Stoic community also would eliminate the institution of slavery as providing for the material basis of this society. Everything points in the direction that Zeno did not envisage his society to resemble the Athenian society or any other type of society known at his time, nor anything like the type of society proposed by Plato, in which the fundamental necessity for its existence still was a large population of slaves.[79] As seen earlier, Zeno argued that only the wise was free while non-sages were slaves (cf. DL VII.33). This expresses a moral taxonomy continued throughout the Stoic tradition (cf. chapter 5.2). Moral slavery seems to have been elaborated by Chrysippus who, as reported in a passage in Diogenes Laërtius, clarified the doctrine by juxtaposing it to other kinds of slavery (DL VII.121-122). In this passage, it is stated that chattel slavery, according to Chrysippus, was defined as the slavery of subordination (ὑπόταξις) by virtue of possession (κτῆσις), and this state of slavery finds its necessary correlate in the mor-

[79] Plato included slaves as part of his ideal city outside his tripartition, but he emphasised that Greeks were excluded from being slaves (*Rep.* IV.433d; IV.471b). Though Plato did not envisage natural slavery as Aristotle did, it has been argued by Gregory Vlastos that the thought is implicit in his philosophy (Vlastos 1941). Aristotle's position can be discerned from a passage in his *Politics*, in which he recommends a strategy to avoid riots from the exploited: "Those who are to cultivate the soil should best of all, if the ideal system is to be stated, be slaves, not drawn from people all of one tribe nor of a spirited character" (Aristotle *Pol.* VIII.1330a, transl. Loeb; cf. Anderson 1974, 39f).

ally inferior (φαῦλος) state of despotism. In other words, chattel slavery would by default have been impossible in the ideal Stoic community due to the necessary existence of a morally inferior despotic slave owner, which is incompatible with a harmonious society perfectly expressing cosmic harmony, and the institution of slavery would inevitably have to be abolished.[80] Unsurprisingly, the orthodox position in the scholarship argues that slavery, according to Stoic philosophy, was contrary to nature (cf. Griffin 1976, 459; Baldry 1959, 6f; Erskine 2011, 46; Dawson 1992, 177f, 215n27). The ideal city as a perfect reflection of nature is therefore unable to give rise to an institution of slavery. The pivotal innovation of Zeno and his fellow Stoics was to completely dissolve the existing societal structure into a horizontal egalitarian outlook on both the political and philosophical level, at which point it also served as a corrective to Plato's hierarchical, tripartite structure of both soul and society.

2.2.2 The Dual Purpose

Zeno's treatise should most likely be interpreted as having two perspectives. The treatise outlined a possibility of and a beginning for the transformation of society, but it also outlined essential doctrines on how the Stoics imagined the cosmos. Thus, a double purpose seems to have structured Zeno's treatise on the ideal community.

The dual purpose might be reflected in the difficulty of determining the exact composition of the inhabitants of Zeno's *Republic*. Different sources provide various pieces of information regarding whom Zeno envisaged as citizens in this community: A: sages (cf. DL VII.32-33), B: sages and gods (cf. Diogenes of Babylon

[80] Chrysippus mentions a second kind of slavery consisting only in subordination (ὑπόταξις). The concept is discussed by Erskine, who (in my mind correctly; Schofield is less sure, cf. 1999a, 46n41) couples it to a Stoic development of an analytical vocabulary meant to describe conventional societies (Erskine 2011, 48-58; also Dawson 1992, 177f). The term ὑπόταξις usually designates a hierarchical relationship of a non-pejorative type like, for instance, subordination to a god. To the extent that this kind of slavery pertains to the ideal society, it would be in the sense as subordination to cosmic nature, since the sage would not dominate anyone (cf. Stob. *Anth*. II.29,3, II.99,22).

Fr. 117), C: all human beings (cf. Plut. *Alex*. 329a-b), D: all human beings and the gods (cf. Euseb. *Ev. Prep.* XV.15,3-5). This indeterminacy might stem from a dual perspective present in the *Republic* which is then unequally reflected by the sources. In other words, these positions can then be divided into two groups, each representing genuine content in the treatise: those sources (A, B) that points to a description of a worldly community on the horizontal level (existing as a neighbouring community to any other identifiable city-state) and those sources (C, D) that points to a transcendent community existing on the vertical level (expressing the cosmopolitan participation in a Cosmic City).[81]

Some scholars attempt to solve this problem by presenting these different sources as representing a philosophical development within Stoicism, starting at Zeno's proposition of an ideal city and ending at the Imperial Stoics' cosmopolitan idea of a Cosmic City (for instance, Erskine 2011; Obbink 2005; Schofield 1999a; Dawson 1992). However, Katja Maria Vogt has argued extensively that the differences can be reconciled by interpreting the sources as part of the same complex theory. She advocates that Zeno's *Republic* did, in fact, not convey an argument for the constitution of the ideal city but made a philosophical claim on physics in arguing for the existence of a Cosmic City. In this interpretation, Zeno's *Republic* was not intended to describe an ideal city, but rather the Cosmic City in which all, both gods and men, participated. Vogt argues therefore that, "the city in which all human beings live need not be created; it *is* the world. The 'cosmic city' is not an ideal; it is a

[81] Stoic cosmopolitanism is usually understood to have been a reversal of Cynic cosmopolitanism but this has been challenged by Moles (2007, 135, 143). A recent interpretation has attempted to diffuse the indebtedness to Cynic cosmopolitanism and underlined its Socratic source instead (see Chin 2016). According to Chin, no Stoics make use of Diogenes' neologism 'κοσμοπολίτης,' and Cicero and Epictetus refer instead to Socrates, and Stoic cosmopolitanism must therefore be Socratic rather than Cynic. However, Chin's interpretation is primarily based on the Ciceronian perspective and Cicero is known for his attempt to sanitise Stoicism from its Cynic source. Cicero is therefore not a credible source in determining the Stoic cosmopolitanism's progenitor. I will not be able to survey the indebtedness to Cynicism in relation to cosmopolitanism but an outline can be found in Dawson (1992, 111-159) and Sellars (2007, 4-8).

reality" (Vogt 2008, 4). For this reason, it was not the purpose to propose a political programme to be implemented in any institutional way, but rather an argument and unfolding of the Stoics' theory of physics (ibid., chapter 2, see especially 65-72).[82] The apparent difference is thereby overcome by bracketing the many references to an institutional framework.

Vander Waerdt has argued for a very similar interpretation,[83] by stating that Chrysippus developed elements already visible in Zeno's thought: "it is more economical and plausible to suppose that Zeno himself developed the doctrine of *koinos nomos* in the context of the cosmic city" (Vander Waerdt 1994, 276n18). Vander Waerdt continues with his interpretive preference:

> I suggest that the polity Zeno depicts in his *Republic* is none other than the *megalopolis* – the community of gods and sages […] that we consider Zeno's polity in light of the distinction, accepted by Stoics of all periods, between the two communities into which human beings are born – the natural and the conventional. […] There is every reason to suppose that it goes back to Zeno (ibid., 290; also 1991, 196).

Like Vogt, Vander Waerdt ends up bracketing the many references to a concrete institutional framework but unlike Vogt ads that they can be explained as comments on Plato's *Republic* (cf. Vander Waerdt 1994, 277; cf. Vogt 2008, 68).[84] For these reasons, he concludes that Zeno's *Republic* was never meant to be implemented in

[82] Interestingly, even though Erskine's book is the most elaborate attempt to couple Zeno's *Republic* to forces within Early Stoicism that attempted to translate Stoic philosophy into a political programme, Vogt rarely mentions Erskine's interpretation. She does refer to Vander Waerdt's criticism (Vogt 2008, 28n17) without elaborating on either position.

[83] Vogt lists Vander Waerdt as a scholar who interprets Zeno's *Republic* as a city of sages and describes his position with these words: "On this picture, the conception of the cosmic city is later than Zeno, and perhaps even later than Chrysippus" (Vogt 2008, 73). This is, however, a mistake on her part, as Vander Waerdt does not argue this.

[84] Vander Waerdt (1991; 1994) dismisses the particularity of the content because he relegates the entire treatise to a commentary or philosophical development on the second book of Plato's *Republic*. Thus, all detailed arguments can be explained as a comment on content exposited in Plato's *Republic*. Vogt, who also notes the particular references of the treatise (cf. Vogt 2008, 20ff), argues rather surprisingly that the concreteness, on the contrary, supports a purely abstract interpretation.

praxis, a conclusion he borrows from Cicero (Cicero *De Leg.* III.14; Vander Waerdt 1994, 293).[85]

For Vogt and Vander Waerdt, Zeno's *Republic* should be interpreted as a treatise that made an argument for the existence of a Cosmic City in which humanity lived. Vogt elaborates this point by clarifying how the cosmos should be understood as a city:

> Most important, the cosmos is a city insofar as it is regulated by *law*. Second, it 'consists of' citizens; the cosmos is sustained by those of its parts that have perfect reason, and is in this sense a city of sages and gods. Third, it is a habitation – it is the place in which all human beings jointly live. And fourth, it exhibits the characteristic structure of a city: there are rulers and ruled, gods and human beings (Vogt 2008, 65f).

In connection with this clarification, Vogt suggests that this is something more than a mere allegorical parallel; it was understood in a very real sense. According to Dio Chrysostom, the Stoics defined a city as, "a group of people living in the same place and held together by a communal law" (Dio Chrysostom *Disc.* 36,20 = *LS* 67J). Vogt connects this quote to Clement who argued that in this scheme of things, the cosmos was not a city like any other city, it was the city *par excellence*, a city in the proper sense and not like the worldly cities that actually were not real cities (Clement *Strom.* IV.26; Vogt 2008, 65n1).[86]

Both Vogt and Vander Waerdt makes the significant point that Zeno's *Republic* must be understood in relation to Stoic physics. However, to confine the treatise to be nothing but an exposition of Stoic doctrines on physics seems at odds with

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[85] Vander Waerdt has drawn the same conclusion in his elaborate critique of Erskine's interpretation (Vander Waerdt 1991). However, Cicero is a poor source on the matter because of his tendency to de-Cynicise Stoicism. It is well-known he detested egalitarianism and his position regarding the treatise is, therefore, not surprising. See in this regard his criticism that Cato lived as if he was living in an ideal society (Cicero *Ep. Att.* II.1; cf. *Fin*. IV.61).

[86] From a scholarly perspective, we might reasonably envisage the Cosmic City as a sort of imagined community, but it was not, as Hill writes, at the level of the Stoic perspective, "an imaginary city, a state of mind" (Hill 2015, 17). Hill's treatment does in my mind not seem to be an adequate description of the cosmo-theological description the ancient Stoics made.

many of the doxographic reports. We know from Philodemus that Zeno stressed the usefulness and suitability (τὸ πρόσφορον) of his treatise for his contemporaneous society (Phil. *De Stoic.* c. 2, cols. IX-XII, ed. Dorandi).[87] This statement might indeed indicate that the treatise was a model *for* society, rather than merely a model *of* the cosmos (cf. also Obbink 2005, 183). Furthermore, the quite concrete nature of the content in the treatise would suggest that it was not merely an exposition of physics decoupled from political analysis. In continuation of this, some scholars argue the *Republic* was meant to be a critique of contemporary society coupled to a definite programme for how society should be arranged (cf. Goulet-Cazé 2003, 30; Schofield 1999a, 148; Baldry 1959, 5f). Since divine perfection theoretically was within reach of everyone, by virtue of their rational nature, the ideal community was, at least in theory, realisable here and now on the horizontal level because it was already fulfilled on the vertical level. This sets it apart from Plato's less ambitious model, as pointed out by Schofield (Plato *Rep*. VI.499c-d; Schofield 1999a, 148).

However, this supposed confidence of the Early Stoics has been called into question by Dawson. Dawson has instead suggested that Zeno's ideal society was a 'high' utopia, belonging to the same category as Plato's *Republic*, which served as a theoretical standard, meant as a model for reform in an opaque and indefinite way (Dawson 1992, 7; also Clarke 1956, 52).[88] In Dawson's interpretation, Zeno's *Republic* was therefore meant to provide something like an indefinite and opaque regulative idea that could guide political action and thinking about society, by providing both an ideal to strive for and the principles underpinning this ideal. Dawson's interpre-

[87] It is clear that this was an attempt by Philodemus to counter those Stoics who argued it was a thought experiment. Schofield remarks that Zeno's insistence on the applicability might have been a direct rejoinder by Zeno to Plato's concession that his ideal city was difficult to realise (Schofield 2010, 446).

[88] In contrast to high utopias, the 'low' utopias serve as concrete models for reform meant to be implemented – albeit on a long-term – in a very specific way, such as the more or less decidedly *Realpolitische* examples found in Plato's *Laws*, Aristotle's *Politics* 7-8 and Cicero's *On the Republic* and *On the Laws*. Low utopianism, therefore, anticipates the modern approaches (Dawson 1992, 7).

tation of Zeno's *Republic* as a high utopia might find support depending on how one interprets the Stoics' perceived possibility of the actual existence of a sage. Seneca, for instance, would later describe the sage as similar to the mythic bird Phoenix that only came about every 500 years (cf. Seneca *Ep.*42,1; also Alex. Aphr. *De Fato* XXVIII.199,17-20).[89] The Stoics were in any case challenged in clearly identifying a sage and there does not seem to have been a consistent position on this matter. Early Stoics might have self-identified as sages but scholars are divided on the question.[90] However, there is as far as I know no disagreement concerning whether the Stoics considered the existence of a sage a possibility. This apparent reluctance to self-identify as a sage would indeed indicate that the Early Stoics thought that the Stoic community would be difficult to realise but it does not entail that they considered this task impossible or unlikely for that matter. Dawson therefore reasonably challenges the position that Zeno's *Republic* was a political proposal meant to incite a political movement fighting for the implementation of a different political constitution during his own time.[91] However, Dawson, in my mind, also disregard that the propositions in Zeno's treatise was not mere political guidelines but had a stronger claim grounded in the cosmic order.

The appealing argument provided by Vander Waerdt and Vogt emphasises that the treatise was deeply concerned with claims on physics, i.e. human nature relative to the cosmos. The problem is that their interpretations undercut what most of the sources report the treatise addressed. However, if one stress that the Stoics'

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[89] He is, therefore, more Kantian than Stoic, according to Doyle & Torralba (2016, 278).

[90] The most recent and elaborate attempt to answer this question has been provided by René Brouwer who concludes that the Stoics did not, neither the Early nor the Late Stoics, identify themselves as sages (Brouwer 2014, chapter 3; see also 2002, 223). Brouwer mentions another position in opposition to his own, in which it is argued that the Early Stoics self-identified as sages until the time of Chrysippus and from whom this self-identification then ended (cf. 2002, 181n1, 182n2).

[91] Grahn-Wilder has likewise argued that the *Republic* was a 'what-if thought experiment' and not suggestions for political reform (Grahn-Wilder 2018, 235-252). If correct, this does not entail that individual Stoics could not find the treatise to serve as a political vector that gave force and direction to their political activities.

ideal community (as a model *for* society) should be embedded into a cosmic framework, another interpretation might present itself in which the content of the treatise is maintained as a precise outline of a possible horizontal community while simultaneously retaining the treatise's substantial claim on physics and the vertical community. I would argue that the textual indeterminacy of the sources suggests that the treatise served a dual purpose in providing both a model *for* and a model *of*: firstly, the quite specific points of deliberation in Zeno's treatise suggests it was a poignant criticism of the dominant institutionalised order coupled with a positive model *for* a potential alternative order; and secondly, both this criticism and the proposed alternative order was grounded in and substantiated by the Stoics' model *of* the Cosmic City. Regardless of the unlikely nature of an immediate realisation, the treatise seems to have been an account of how society would look if a group of people on a large scale would realise their cosmic potential (cf. Stob. *Anth.* II.92).[92] In this way, the treatise simultaneously made a case for the ideal community that harmonised with the cosmos, while grounding the possibility of this community in the cosmic order of things. In other words, Zeno's ideal city was conditional on humanity's realisation of its divine nature that was expressed in the fact that they already lived in a Cosmic City.[93] It seems to have been this exact interpretation we find in Philodemus who writes that: "It is foolish to accept the doctrine of the [human] end and not the other doctrines which harmonise with it. And if we accept the doctrine of the end it follows that we must accept the things laid out in the *Republic*" (Phil. *De Stoic.* c. 4, col. XIV, ed. Dorandi; transl. Dawson 1992, 169).

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[92] As Sellars points out, Cicero reported that Zeno thought not everyone could become a sage (cf. Sellars 2007, 24n131). Cicero's report is at odds with almost all Stoic presentations of human possibility. If it is accepted as a correct reference to Zeno, I surmise it might have been a comment on likelihood and not a comment on the absolute nature of some people.

[93] In its utopian forestalling of such a development, it can be understood as an anticipation of later Enlightenment ideas about the progress of human rationality. In a Kantian reading, Nussbaum has likewise given voice to the idea that Stoic cosmopolitanism has a normative purpose on societal level: "therefore the Stoics hold out the hope that the society they live in, through the patient labors of individual souls, can itself become an enlightened one" (Nussbaum 1997, 20).

In an article that I understand to be sympathetic to this interpretation, John Sellars, who raises doubts about its programmatic purpose, echoes Philodemus point and suggests that:

> Zeno's *Republic* contained an individual cosmopolitan ethic that would, in theory, form the foundation for a future world-wide community in which everyone would be a sage, along with an intermediate state in which sages […] would acknowledge each other as 'fellow-citizens' (Sellars 2007, 16).

Sellars interpretation seems to dovetail with the proposition I recommend for reconciling the dichotomy between the virtual and the actual. Unfortunately, Sellars' argument ends with Cicero and the Middle Stoics and he does not continue with his examinations among the Imperial Stoics. He does, however, suggest that Cicero and the Middle Stoics differed from the Hellenistic Stoics and propose, as I do, that the Hellenistic and the Imperial Stoics display a larger degree of convergence in their cosmopolitan thought (ibid., 21, 24). Thus, this dual purpose of Zeno's treatise seems the most promising and shall serve as the point of departure for the ensuing examinations.

2.3 The Treatise during Imperial Stoicism

Although the Imperial Stoics to our knowledge do not seem to have engaged particularly enthusiastically with Zeno's *Republic* – they say nothing about it in our sources – the treatise, as a spectre, persisted to cause a stir, as the many doxographic reports exemplify.[94] It was not uncommon that ancient philosophies incorporated an esoteric element of initiation to a set of mysteries, as well as directing certain parts of

[94] The silence on the treatise has led Dawson to argue that the Imperial Stoics were unaware of the treatise or completely rejected it, cf. Dawson (1992, 232). Schofield doubts this but argues that the treatise was assimilated into Chrysippus's notion of a Cosmic City (cf. Schofield 1999, 94-103). Thus, Schofield takes the position that the Cosmic City was a later invention, whereas it is my argument it was contained in Zeno's *Republic*.

their philosophical doctrines to a level of secrecy.[95] It is therefore not surprising that a source, around the time of Imperial Stoicism's period of decline, tells the Stoics limited certain parts of their philosophical doctrines – explicitly mentioned are that some of Zeno's treatises were used in this manner, although none of these are mentioned by name – to the apt and dedicated philosophical student (Clement *Strom*. V.9). It seems safe to assume that the *Republic* was still taught in the Stoic school at least among advanced students, although we do not know precisely how the treatise was studied and how it was interpreted. Yet, a passage in Plutarch (45-127 CE), a contemporary of the Imperial Stoics, might give a hint that it still functioned as a utopian vision of the potentiality of society, insofar he describes the *Republic* as much honoured (θαυμάζω) because it conveyed the dream and vision of a commonwealth guided by philosophy (Plut. *Alex*. 329a-b).

The utopian vision of society presented by the Early Stoics was distilled from the doctrines concerning cosmos and humanity's status in this scheme. It developed from how the Stoics envisaged their true and non-deluded knowledge of reality but the Stoics henceforth operated intellectually in relation to horizontal actuality. Beyond this, however, was still the vertical reality that still gave rise to idealisations. This ambiguity can make it difficult to determine where on this spectrum particular writings or passages operate. Regarding some of the issues the Stoics addressed, the ideal guided their writings, but at other times the Stoics chose to propose not the ideal but the best response under given circumstances, what they found realistic here and now. Nonetheless, having presented the utopian vision that was inspired by the Cosmic City, it is now time to direct attention to the Imperial Stoics – to whom the remainder of this dissertation will be dedicated – and shed light on how the Cosmic City, which already seems to have generated a utopian vision, shaped the thought and actions of the Imperial Stoics.

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[95] Cf. Aristophanes *Clouds* 140ff, 250ff, 824ff; Plato *Symp*. 209e, *Euthyd*. 277d, *Letters* II.314a-c; Porphyry *Vit. Pyth.* 41; DL VIII.15, X.6; Plut. *Alex*. 7,3-5; *De Isid*. 382d.

3 The Cosmic City

With the subjugation of the Greek world to a superior Roman military power, the Roman confidence of its rightful superiority was high. Stoic philosophy had spread outside the Greek city-states and had gained a strong foothold among the Roman economic and political elite, who would eventually be subject to new realities in the Roman Principate. The cultural context under which the Stoics would continue to develop their thought changed drastically but Stoic philosophy largely retained the same set of core doctrines.

Stoic teachings on the cosmos and humanity's position within this cosmos continued to be at the centre of their worldview. A more extensive source material allows us to appreciate how the Imperial Stoics' belief in a Cosmic City seeped into both the public and private sphere. The Stoics seem to have emphasised that political activity should be determined by the Cosmic City and many Imperial Stoics, as Lisa Hill points out, entered the political arena in an attempt to align their society with the Cosmic City (Hill 2015, 17). In this chapter, I shall examine in what way the Imperial Stoics continued the idea that the cosmos was a city.[96] Citizenship in conventional cities were based upon lottery of birth, as Seneca pointed out (cf. *Otio* 4,1), but citizenship in the Cosmic City was, as Marcus Aurelius would underline, guaranteed, insofar humans had both the intellect (νοερός) and reason (λόγος) in common and were subject to a common cosmic law.[97] Consequently, Marcus Aurelius rea-

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[96] The Stoics imagined the entire cosmos and all of nature with all its rational emanations to constitute one city, the Cosmic City. Any reference to nature and the cosmos relative to humanity was, therefore, simultaneously a reference to the Cosmic City.

[97] The Stoics would often employ the terms 'natural law' and 'cosmic law' to designate the law provided by Zeus. I generally prefer the term cosmic law, insofar this emphasises that the Stoics articulated their philosophy within a mostly religious conception. For various reasons, many researchers prefer natural law. However, the term natural law – other than emphasising the connection to similar thoughts in modern philosophy – also conceals the inherently religio-philosophical nature of this

soned, humans were citizens who partook in a joint government, for which reason the cosmos was a city (Marcus Aurelius IV.4). Epictetus would define the citizens of this Cosmic City as comprising both gods and humans, though Zeus was the supreme sovereign (Epictetus III.22,4; III.24,19); a sentiment Marcus Aurelius repeated (Marcus Aurelius II.4).[98] A curious feature that pertained to the Cosmic City was therefore that it was thought to be ontologically existing and it must, therefore, be understood to have had certain physical qualities.[99] It is this supposed physical quality of the Cosmic City that shall be examined in this chapter.[100]

3.1 The Cosmic City and Spatiality

The fact that the Stoics described the Cosmic City as existing similar to worldly cities should divert attention to what this entails in terms of spatiality and how the Cosmic City shaped spatial relations. For this reason, some theoretical clarifications are appropriate.

According to the philosopher Henri Lefebvre, any space is comprised of three different aspects: physical space (the space we perceive), conceptual space

doctrine. See for instance Watson, whose presentation of the subject is strangely irreligious, although the Stoic God is mentioned briefly (1971, 222ff).

98 Stanton argued that Marcus Aurelius differs from Epictetus by preferring to speak in more general terms of a submission to cosmic law and the Cosmic City, while Epictetus usually speaks of submission to God (Stanton 1968, 192; cf. Long 2010, 147-156).

99 Although the human brotherhood and cosmic law apparently have no physical and spatial dimension, neither of them would have been conceivable without the physical – and consequently also spatial – existence of the Cosmic City.

100 Recently, Catharine Edwards has examined how the Cosmic City shaped Seneca's thought spatially. Edwards' examination narrowly focuses on Seneca and more specifically his essay *Helviam*, written while in exile. According to Edwards, Seneca's *Helviam* generally expressed a positive notion of the absent Rome. However, she notes how this changes in Seneca's *Letters*, written later in his life, where Rome is supplanted in priority by the Cosmic City (Edwards 2018, 172, 191). That a radicalisation occurred in Seneca's thought, where the Cosmic City vexed all horizontal communities, does in my mind seem correct, but the difference between Seneca's early and later writings could perhaps be understood as displaying a difference in intonations and not outlook or evaluation (cf. Rudich 1997, 18). Other scholars, such as Henderson (2004; 2006) and Rimell (2013; 2015, chapter 3), have examined how space is represented in Seneca's writings. However, the narrow focus on Seneca lacks the general treatment of Stoicism that will be provided here.

(space as conceived), and lived space (space as it is lived in a social world) (Lefebvre 1991, 11f).[101] All these aspects coincide in any space simultaneously and the point is that no space, even the most naturally occurring spaces, evades social construction. Space is, therefore, according to Lefebvre, a process of continuous production and not a physical container (ibid., 87). The implication of this is that natural and physical space, despite its epistemologically precedence in human cognition, disappear when symbolic weight is added (ibid., 30f). Physical space is given its symbolic meaning through the intellectual constructs of the conceptual space, which therefore also tends to be the dominant of the three dimensions (ibid., 39). The third aspect of space, lived space, is, according to Lefebvre, dominated by the imagination that seeks to change and appropriate it, and lived space then, "overlays physical space, *making* symbolic *use* of its objects" (ibid.; my italics). Any space is constructed in all three dimensions simultaneously and the spaces we live in, due to this combinatory intersection of physical and conceptual space, are therefore simultaneously real and imagined.

Examples of a conceptual space could, as pointed out by Lefebvre, be cosmologies as presented in the Aristotelian, Ptolemaic, or Christian worldview. Although conceptual space comes in many different forms, the conceptual space of cosmology is especially relevant here. Like any other conceptual space, these cosmologies effectively happen to infuse socio-spatial praxes with a combination of ideology, knowledge, and power. In other words, conceptual spaces like the Christian cosmology is coupled to physical space in such a way that physical space as lived space comes to work as interpretations of this cosmological conception. The pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela is for example interpreted as an "equivalent, on the earth's surface, of […] the Milky Way" (ibid., 45). Cosmological worldviews, therefore, infuse physical space with specific meanings and shape the way this phys-

[101] In a recent examination of spatiality in Antiquity, Fitzgerald & Spentzou also briefly discusses Lefebvre's spatial framework and its importance for how space is examined (2018).

ical space is lived. Unsurprisingly, the body plays a part in this interplay as well (ibid.). The body might be the epistemological starting point for cognition – and as such social space proceeds from the body – but the human body is, as Lefebvre sought to argue, like the space external to us appropriated by conceptual space (ibid., 405).

Space is not neutral, due to its intrinsically social nature it is laden with the dynamics of specific social relations. For Lefebvre, space is therefore intricately connected to the specific mode of production and its appertaining relations of production. Space thereby becomes an arena for the relations of power of a given society and within this arena a hegemonic struggle – in the Gramscian sense – and exercise of power happen that involves the space and seek to appropriate it (cf. ibid., 10f, 31). Any analysis of power relations, Lefebvre maintains, must, for this reason, proceed from space since it is the production of space that is the purpose of the hegemonic struggle (Lefebvre 1976, 17). Although conceptual space is abstract, it plays an integral part in social and political practice, or how lived space is shaped, insofar it has a:

> substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction – in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for 'representations' that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms (Lefebvre 1991, 42).

Thus, conceptual space (as the space of articulated and unarticulated ideology and worldviews) seeks to appropriate lived space, the space of everyday praxis. The ideology or worldview superimposes themselves on physical and lived space, seek to describe them, make use of them, dominate them, ascribe value to them, etc. – and thereby they attempt to create the spaces that guarantee their survival (cf. ibid., 44, 53). Insofar as space is socially constructed it is also the accumulated outcome of previous historical actions, it incites specific actions and rejects others, yet it does not

effectively neutralise new actions (ibid., 73). By this, Lefebvre seeks to clarify that it is in space that values are ratified but this happens through their confrontation with other competing values and ideas, what Lefebvre calls ‘trial by space’ (ibid., 416f). To be successful, they must latch on to and appropriate space, obtaining a hegemonic position in this appropriation; yet, conceptual space can never succeed in a total appropriation, since lived space is, by virtue of being lived by individuals, inherently messy, gritty, and dynamic (cf. ibid., 41f). Lived space is, as described by Edward Soja, “the space of all inclusive simultaneities, perils as well as possibilities: the space of radical openness, the space of social struggle” (Soja 1996, 68). It is therefore also in the aspect of lived space that the possibility of a counter-space arises as an alternative that can, “insert itself into spatial reality” (Lefebvre 1991, 382f, cf. 349). This counter-space can be understood to be contesting an established and orthodox grid of ordered spaces and spatial relations. This orthodox order of spaces is employed and maintained to suppress the heterodox, and this grid thereby functions to reduce radical openness and condense reality into the service of power. Counter-spaces can take many forms and, of relevance here, they can be coupled to those kinds of sites that have a particular symbolic connection to cosmological frameworks – Lefebvre enumerates examples like the mediaeval graveyard, the church, and Camiño de Santiago – which therefore are distinctively set aside from other kinds of space (cf. ibid., 45).

It is via this spatial interplay the Cosmic City should be examined, within a framework of how spatial otherness is created. As a conceptual space, it provided a framework for reinterpreting physical space and formed part of an appropriation of the lived space of everyday life. Consequently, it overdetermined how the Stoics constructed space and generated a counter-space. A particular feature of the Cosmic City, as I shall try to demonstrate, is how it simultaneously was overlaying every space while latching unto and appropriating the body of the Stoic practitioner. In order to examine what this entailed, Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of space can ad-

vantageously be employed in conjunction with another spatial term that intersects at this point, insofar it describes specific sites that express a spatial difference and otherness. The concept to which I am referring is the Foucauldian concept of 'heterotopia,' which designated more or less the same type of spatial phenomena Lefebvre termed counter-space.[102] Foucault's term heterotopia and Lefebvre's term counter-space could be understood interchangeably, as I will also do in this dissertation, but the reason for including the Foucauldian perspective in the interpretation of the Cosmic City as a counter-space is because Foucault made some general points of importance for my examinations. I shall, therefore, be arguing that the Cosmic City functioned as counter-space in a way where it displayed some of the features Foucault attached to the concept of heterotopia.

The concept stems from Foucault's interest in sites that in some ways contradict all other sites. According to Foucault, such sites come in two forms: the non-existing utopia and the existing and real heterotopia (cf. ibid., 24). This determination initially raises some questions. From an outsider perspective, the Cosmic City did only exist in the heads and writings of the Stoics and it could therefore instead be argued that the Cosmic City was a utopia. However, the concept of heterotopia should be interpreted through the theoretical framework provided by Lefebvre. First of all, at the first order level of description, the Stoics were very clear that the Cosmic City ontologically existed. From a second order level of analysis, it can, in a certain way, be said to have had existence as well. As it has just been explicated, spaces are social productions and are comprised of the three aspects of

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[102] The compatibility of Lefebvre's theoretical framework and the concept of heterotopia has also been examined by Soja (1996, 145-163) and is recently acknowledged by Fitzgerald & Spentzou in the context of Antiquity (2018, 9-13). The term was only tentatively and briefly introduced by Foucault in a short lecture in 1967 (cf. Foucault 1986b), but it has nevertheless generated some attention within various academic fields, such as human geography, urban theory, and cultural studies. Its relation within the disciplines revolving around human geography is explicated in Soja who also criticises it from this perspective (1996, 145-163). Interestingly, Soja considers the concept as part of a post-structural framework while another commentator has criticised its obvious structuralism (Saldanha 2008). A recent overview of its scholarly reception can be found in Johnson (2013).

physical space, conceptual space, and lived space. From this perspective, a heterotopia constitutes a counter-space that is socially produced as heterotopia by being coupled to a physical space that is given a different symbolic meaning through a particular conceptual space, and it is then manifested in lived space. This means that the Cosmic City came into existence, as simultaneously real and imagined, by appropriating physical space and lived space, and was therefore identifiable in everyday physical space and spatial praxes which then provided an alternative framework of otherness. In other words, the Stoics' cosmological framework reconstituted the everyday physical spaces that the Stoics inhabited, the bodies and the world they lived in, and these came now to function in a particular way that can be analysed through Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

A heterotopia is a site defined by its relation to other sites and in this relation it comprises, according to Foucault, an other-place. A heterotopia is, therefore, a counter-space that opposes the dominant spaces; simply put, it has a certain quality that sets it apart from what is conceived as being 'normal' sites and although this otherness might proceed from space, it influences other dimensions as well, such as social relations and perceptions of time. Foucault lists several examples of heterotopias but there does not seem to be limitations to which sites can be counted as a heterotopia.[103] The reason for the lack of designation has most likely to do with the negative determination of sites; sites are given their specificity in virtue of being different from other sites. Any site as such can, therefore, be a heterotopia insofar as its particular location in what might be called a spatial grid, from a particular perspective, displaces it from other sites.[104] Thus, a heterotopia is constituted in its relation-

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[103] Recent attempts to examine sites through this Foucauldian perspective has been made on libraries (Radford et. al. 2015), Highgate Cemetery (Clements 2017), and churches (van Wyk 2014). Foucault's examples suggest that the philosophical school as physical site could be examined as a heterotopia – a connection Peter Sloterdijk has made briefly concerning the ancient Academy (Sloterdijk 2012, 33).

[104] Lefebvre cautions attempts to develop an adequate and complete spatial grid, since, "there is no good reason for limiting the number of possible grids." Furthermore, as a tool of knowledge, "developed to help decipher complex spaces," a determinant spatial grid might also be a tool of power

ship to the sites it is different from, and these could, for the sake of symmetry, be called orthotopias.[105] The constellation of a spatial grid is, however, never static but is in constant flux and the constellation is dependent on perspective. A site may be a heterotopia in one spatial relationship but a part of the orthotopias in another; furthermore, the constellation of this spatial grid is entirely bound to historical conditions, cultural systems, and individual subjects.[106] It is, therefore, the responsibility of the researcher to intimate the spatial grid and specify how the chosen site functions as a heterotopia in this specific spatial grid.

The term orthotopia is a fitting term, insofar it suggests the relation between orthodox and heterodox spaces, as it is precisely Foucault's argument that heterotopias serve as counter-sites that simultaneously represent, contest and invert all other sites (ibid.). It is important to realise that this does not necessarily entail only subversive features. A heterotopia can reinforce the stability of society as an instrument for social cohesion. Take for instance the social cohesion produced in the military barrack where many different mechanisms come together to create social unity. Some heterotopias reinforce social stability by serving as sites of transgression, allowing for the continued existence of societal power relations and structures via repression. Other sites of transgression serve as venting mechanisms, such as the festival's carnivalesque inversion of everyday life. Consequently, some heterotopias can function as homeostatic mechanisms in society, but they cannot be reduced to this mechanism.

(Lefebvre 1991, 366f). I concur with this cautionary concern and underline that no spatial grid is exhaustive of what it is meant to represent. Nevertheless, a tentative intimation is necessary in order to avoid an analytical opaqueness receding beyond scrutiny and meaningful cognition.

[105] Foucault does not care to name these sites, and I, therefore, borrow the term suggested by Peter Sloterdijk (Sloterdijk 2012, 33).

[106] Some sites – the cave, the desert, the graveyard, etc. – seem typically to function as heterotopias across different historical cultures and such equivalencies in the spatial grid would suggest the social construction of a spatial grid is not arbitrary but follows a certain kind of logic or 'human pattern.'

The Heterotopia enters into a dialectical relationship in its reciprocal ascription of meaning with all other sites and their concomitant social relations. Consequently, the heterotopia of, for instance, the battlefield will for the survivor forever displace all other sites and those inhabiting them. The term 'civilian' can be a legal designator on the battlefield, but will have a different evaluation when the soldier returns from the battlefield, e.g. 'those for whom…', 'those who do not know…', or 'those who did not partake…' It is through this reciprocal ascription of meaning that heterotopias have a destabilising and subversive potentiality, insofar they have the property of being related to all other sites, "in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (ibid.). The conceptual connection to Lefebvre's term counter-space is apparent, but Foucault made a further point that is significant in the interpretation of the Cosmic City.

In a fascinating passage, Foucault considers the mirror as a place where utopia and heterotopia intertwine. The mirror image is a utopia, a non-existing virtual place, a place where presence and absence comingle. The onlooker can see herself where she is not. The mirror itself is a heterotopia, a real existing object that exercises a counteraction by presenting a displacement of location that redirects the onlooker's gaze back to a reconstitution. Thus, the onlooker's position is perceived through "the virtual point which is over there" (ibid.). In describing the mirror, it is crucial that the utopian vision in the mirror image is inverted from the actual position of the observer and the onlooker is therefore not only 'not-there' but also 'not-there-and-different' from the current position. But the mirror furthermore illustrates how heterotopias work. In the heterotopia the subject sees herself where she is not – the utopia – and as such heterotopias are, "a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (ibid.). Through this reflexivity of the heterotopia, the subject is called upon for a reconstitution.

The idea that heterotopias function in the same way as a mirror is particularly interesting and particularly incisive in the case of the Cosmic City and this allows

a better understanding of the examinations in the previous chapter. Interpreting the Cosmic City through its functional workings as a heterotopia underpins the move taking place when Zeno articulated the ideal Stoic community. Zeno – via his examinations of the cosmos – would propose a doctrine explaining a more profound reality and a more accurate representation of the nature of things; a doctrine in which it turned out the cosmos was, in fact, a city. Thus, the cosmos was produced as a heterotopia. In the heterotopic mirror-function of the cosmos, a utopian vision could be observed that represented the ideal society and this was expressed in Zeno's *Republic*, the model *for* society. This utopian vision was an anticipation of the virtual fulfilment of a vertical reality on the horizontal level. The model *for* mirrored the model *of* – or as Lefebvre would have phrased it, the dual aim of Zeno's *Republic* shows how a conceptual space can seek to establish a representation of itself beyond the "symbolic and imaginary realms," in a Stoic community or city (cf. Lefebvre 1991, 42). As argued, Zeno's *Republic* should be interpreted as the attempt to grasp how an ideal society would look, if the divine potential of humanity were successfully cultivated. In this way, the heterotopological characteristics of the Cosmic City allowed Zeno to perceive his contemporary society differently. Conventional cities and societies came to be seen in a new perspective and could be identified, delineated, and classified through the otherness of the Cosmic City. The Cosmic City then, like a mirror, allowed the Stoics to perceive their society where it was not – as 'not-there-and-different' – and it served thus as linkage to something non-existing, the utopia. In other words, what Zeno envisaged as existent and truly real, the Cosmic City, allowed Zeno to imagine and articulate a 'not-(yet?)-existing' utopia.

3.2 Heterotopic Features of the Cosmic City

The Cosmic City might, of course, for some Stoics only have been an abstract notion that served as a guiding principle. However, the concept was coupled to a universalising claim; it was a proposition concerning the true nature of the cosmos and the

bulk of textual evidence establish that it was a nodal point structuring large parts of how Stoic philosophy was utilised. The entire framework of the Cosmic City and cosmic inhabitants forms an operation of differentiation, an operation in which society and the subject distinguish itself from itself. In this way, society and the subject secrete itself as different, as something different from itself, as other, and hence it is an operation of identification through differentiation. However, it is not straightforward to interpret the fact that the Stoics described the Cosmic City as being real, existing, and a material entity, but how this perhaps could have been understood by the Stoics will be suggested throughout the ensuing examinations and the following chapters. To initiate the examinations of how the Cosmic City as counter-space functioned like a heterotopia, Seneca provides an excellent passage:

> Let our soul (*animus*) grasp the two communities (*res publicus*) – the first one is great and truly in common, embracing gods and men, in which we look neither to this corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our state (*civitas*) by the sun; in the other state we have been inscribed by the accident of our birth. This will be those of Athens or of Carthage or any other city (*urbs*) that does not belong to all humanity but only to some (Seneca *Otio* 4,1).

According to Seneca, the Cosmic City encompassed the entire earth and therefore all its lesser cities. At the same time, Seneca sets the Cosmic City apart as a counter-space to conventional cities. The Cosmic City therefore encompassed the known world but was simultaneously not reducible to being merely coextensive with the physical layout of the known world. This begs the question of how the spatial grid was constituted.

Since spaces are defined through a negative relationship to other spaces it will be necessary first to establish what some of these could be. Presuming the Cosmic City as the heterotopia, the most straightforward site to form the orthotopia for the Stoics would be any conventional community, city-state, nation-state, or empire. In other words, the Cosmic City would constitute a heterotopia to a rural village in

Magna Germania, the city of Herculaneum, and even the full extent of the Roman Empire, but also sites such as Ecbatana in the Parthian Empire and the city of Meroë in Aethiopia. In relation to the Cosmic City, any site on the horizontal level constitutes an orthotopia because the verticality of the Cosmic City sets it apart in its otherness. However, as it will also become evident in the ensuing examinations, specific sites in the spatial grid were valued differently as having a closer affiliation to the Cosmic City. The Cosmic City would ascribe meaning and prompt displacements at the macroscopic and microscopic level simultaneously. Sites within the horizontal cities, such as the gymnasium, the Roman baths, the law court, the theatre, the temples, etc., (regardless of their potential heterotopic status in a different context) also constitute points in the spatial grid. However, my principal concern will primarily be the Roman Empire as the overarching orthotopia, both in the concrete as well as the abstract.[107]

Since heterotopias allow an operation in which the meaning of sites is contested, inverted, and neutralised, it makes sense to outline the symbolic meaning often ascribed to Rome in Antiquity; i.e. to intimate Rome as conceptual space. Rome and the Roman Empire was simultaneously an idea and a material entity (comprised of various public and private buildings, roads, a natural environment, human bodies, etc.). As an idea, it was of course not monolithic or necessarily universally supported but was somewhat dynamic and determined by a multi-facetted symbolic order (cf. Ando 2000, 23, 398). Nevertheless, Rome as an abstract was part of a broader ideological framework that sought to legitimate a specific order of things and it hegemonically appropriated space. For the Roman Empire, this legitimacy was especially important, since it was comprised of conquered provinces united by a decentralised system of governance, for which reason it was essential to create con-

[107] As sites are given meaning by a reciprocal ascription of meaning it is natural that Rome, as the city *par excellence*, simultaneously must have influenced how the Stoics conceptualised the Cosmic City. This is for instance the case in Seneca (cf. Edwards 2018, 174f).

sensus among local elites (cf. Goldstone & Haldon 2009, 11, 14). For the present purposes, I want to identify one specific notion of Rome in the abstract; that is, the notion of 'Eternal Rome' (*Roma Aeterna*). In the literature, this idea is most forcefully expressed by Vergil, who in his *Aeneid* would let Jupiter speak these words about the Roman people: "On them I set no limits, space or time: I have granted them power, empire without end […] these Romans, lords of the earth, the race arrayed in togas" (Vergil *Aeneid* I.278-282; transl. Fagles 2006).[108] This epic poem was written during the Roman Principate but the notion of Eternal Rome was a pervasive conception that began even before Rome had reached its full extension (cf. Dalby 2000, 8f). The notion continued even after the Roman Empire had yielded to the Goths, when the Catholic Church gave the domination of the Roman Empire new meaning through the papal seat (Wistrand 1979, 93). The concept of an everlasting empire began therefore early in Roman history and it was deeply ingrained in a mythological and religious framework, which gave it rich symbolic meaning. It was reported that the location and initial construction of Rome had been done by men who were divinely inspired and this special connection to divine inspiration meant for Livy that Rome itself had many sites where the gods resided (Livy *Hist.* V.52,2). Eternal Rome was, therefore, part of a spatial production in which a shared mythological history provided notions of cohesion and sanctioned Roman rule in the provinces. These mytho-religious connections to Rome were pervasive and, though it was uncommon, the notion of *Roma Aeterna* even transformed into a proper divinity in some provinces (Isaac 2017, 41, 44).

Many different textual sources express the idea of Eternal Rome, but the idea can also be seen reproduced and disseminated when the Romans recorded laws on bronze tablets that were themselves 'eternal' and therefore carried enormous symbolic worth (Miles 2002, 51). Consequently, Eternal Rome was a symptom of the con-

[108] See also Ovid *Fasti* II.683-684; Tibullus II.5,23; Frontinus *Aq.* 88,1.

fidence of the Romans but was simultaneously the source of severe concerns. Isaac suggests that the eternity of Rome always was an uncertainty because the general conception of history was that of decline rather than progress (Isaac 2017, 35; cf. Miles 2002, 44). It does seem that the notion came with a degree of political realism. Polybius reports that general Scipio Aemilianus, at the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE, ominously cited a passage from the *Iliad* prophesising the fall of Troy, thereby anticipating that one day Rome too would yield to another power (Polybius *Hist.* 38.21; cf. Homer *Il.* VI.448-449). Likewise, Cicero was also immensely preoccupied with the possible destruction of Rome. It is very plausible, as Isaac has suggested, that Cicero's concern for the destruction of the Roman state was due to the looming civil war (Isaac 2017, 35), but despite his concern for the possible destruction of the Roman state Cicero always coupled this concern to an adamant hope for an eternal state (cf. Cicero *Rab.* 33,4; *De Rep*. III.34, III.41; *Marc.* 22).

Eternal Rome was an idea that could be put into the service of the reproduction of the Roman state. It could be utilised in the justification of Roman imperial dominance over its many provinces and could be employed to argue for further expansions. In this sense, it served as Roman imperialistic ideology. During the Principate, an attempt was made to subsume the Emperor under this divinely decreed eternity, thereby making the Emperor indivisible from the Roman state. Once the Republic had disintegrated and the Principate was a fact, the concept of Eternal Rome was therefore coupled to the new political situation, and the notion of an 'Eternal Caesar' was envisaged (cf. Ovid *Fasti* III.419-428). Although instances of ascribing eternity to the Emperor are few in the literature, they were common in inscriptions and coinage (Isaac 2017, 40ff; Miles 2002, 41ff). Especially during the Principate, state ideology attempted to locate a shared history and political theology in the figure of the Emperor (Ando 2000, 23), who then assumed the role of "father of the fatherland" (*pater patriae*) and became Jupiter's representative on earth (ibid., 400ff; cf. Ovid *Met.* XV.858-860; *Fasti* II.130). In doing this, Eternal Rome was appro-

priated by the Emperors who could amalgamate the Roman imperialistic ideology with an Imperial ideology of the Principate and this amalgamation could then serve to counter Republican challenges from dissatisfied senators. In this framework, an attack on the Emperor could be portrayed as an attack on Rome.[109]

This spatial production of Rome constituted the orthotopia in Roman Antiquity. Eternal Rome, with all its concomitant ideas and beliefs, was part of the dominant ideology in the hegemonic struggle over the production of Roman space. In a 'trial-by-space', against this dominant space, the Stoics' Cosmic City constituted an alternative counter-space that confronted this with different ideas and values, which the Stoics attempted to establish in spatial reality. This struggle for the spatial production of Rome can only be perceived as political.

3.2.1 The Centripetal Forces of the Cosmic City

As is the case with some other heterotopias, the Cosmic City had a homeostatic quality through which it supported social cohesion. An aspect of this homeostatic quality is that it can also help to clarify in what way it is possible to envisage the Cosmic City as a material phenomenon, as perceived by the Stoics.

The Imperial Stoics were predominantly in agreement with Aristotle's conception of humans as social and political animals (ζῷον πολιτικός) that live in communities (cf. Aristotle *Pol.* 1253a). However, in their emphasis, there was a profound difference between the Stoics and Aristotle. Aristotle emphasised the political nature of humans by virtue of them living in the *polis*, while the Stoics would underscore a sociality structured less by horizontal institutionalisation and instead by vertical participation. According to Seneca, humanity was constituted in its very essence

[109] The Emperor's struggle for dominance within the Roman state has been surveyed, analysed, and discussed by numerous modern scholars and I cannot hope to give an adequate picture of the immense work done to elucidate this subject. For the context of this dissertation, a few older works are helpful, such as Wirszubski (1960) and MacMullen (1967). A recent overview can be found in Wilkinson (2012) who analyses the conflict between Republicanism and the Principate as one of competing ideologies.

as a social animal (Seneca *Ep.* 9,17; *Ep.* 95,51-52; *Ben.* VII.1,7) and had inclinations for mutual care and sociability, which were God-given and had been a part of human nature since the very first humans (Seneca *Ep*. 90,3; also Cornutus *Greek Theology* XX.39,15-40,4). This aspect of human nature was also a recurring theme in the writings of Marcus Aurelius. Friendship was immanent to the rational animal (ζῷον λογικός) and it was thus common to find communities (πολιτεία), households, and gatherings among humans, and even when this friendship was inverted and replaced by war, it was commonplace to find alliances and armistices (Marcus Aurelius IX.9,2). Marcus's point was that what at first glance could seem to go against this inherent and natural tendency could in fact not circumvent human nature; we have a natural inclination towards our (cosmic) kin. Likewise, Hierocles stressed humans as gregarious animals (συνᾶγελαστικός ζῷον), wherefore humans lived in cities where a mutual frame of reference was conducive to this friendship (*Elements of Ethics* 28,15-16).

From their doctrines on the all-pervasiveness of Zeus, that all of humanity shared a divine element, the Stoics concluded that the human race constituted a brotherhood. Since human beings were rational, and all that was rational were related, humans were inclined to care (κήδω) for each other (Marcus Aurelius III.4,4; cf. also IV.3,2 & XII.26). Humanity was therefore ontologically related and shared a divine kinship, and Seneca considered this brotherhood to be tied together by mutual love, which gave rise to a life founded in kindness and concord (Seneca *Ira* I.5,3). For the Stoics, such affiliation was secured by an innate propensity which they described in their theory of 'appropriation' (ὀικείωσις).[110] It has been argued that this theory is the source of the Stoic conception of justice (cf. Long 2007a, 251; Schofield 2007, 195-205) and it is a widely accepted to be a key term in Stoic philosophy (Striker 1996,

[110] A translation of the word is not entirely possible, the most common translation is 'appropriation' or 'affiliation', but Schofield has suggested 'what we identify with' (Schofield 2007, 203).

281).[111] At least one scholar has considered it a prerequisite *sine qua non* for Stoic philosophy (cf. Pembroke 1971, 114)[112] and many scholars identify this psychological category as a coupling move between Stoic physics and ethics.[113]

Julia Annas has controversially challenged the coupling of the Stoics' theory of appropriation to Stoic physics and since the argument presented here largely rests on the presupposition that the Stoics derived ethical and social consequences from their theory of the cosmos, her claim accordingly merits a few remarks.[114] According to Annas, the coupling is most prevalent among the Imperial Stoics and any source that grounds Stoic ethical theory in cosmic nature show "popular or vulgarized forms of Stoicism" (Annas 1995a, 160). Scholars should, she argues, be careful to explicate the theory via earlier Stoic doctrines rather than the later Stoic perspective, whereby one will arrive at the conclusion that ethics is not grounded in physics (cf. ibid., 163). However, there are some significant issues with her claims.[115] In Diogenes Laërtius it is reported that a student of Zeno, Ariston, differed from all other Stoics by prioritising ethics and rejecting physics (DL VII.160; cf. DL VII.87; VII.148; cf. also Cicero *Leg.* II.9ff). This points to the fact that the orthodox Stoics insisted on the cou-

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[111] The theory was proposed by the Stoics, but Gill has recently argued it developed in tandem with Academic and Peripatetic theories (cf. Gill 2017).

[112] The term, however, seems to be less significant in the discourses of Epictetus (Long 2010, 197), yet the underlying framework of the concept is still discernible in Epictetus's distinction between that which is in our control (ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) and that which is not (οὐκ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) (cf. I.1,10-14; II.16,27; I.19,7-15).

[113] Some scholars seek to challenge that ethics and physics were particularly close-knit but they are a clear minority, see Engberg-Pedersen (1990, 79; 1986) and Annas (1995a; 1995b; favourably viewed by Gill 2009, 147-162). For the close connection between Stoic ethics and physics, see for instance Striker (1991, 1996), DeFilippo & Mitsis (1994), Frede (1999), White (1985; 2002, 312-317; 2003), Betegh (2003), Cooper (1995; 1998), Inwood & Donini (1999), Inwood (2009), Boeri (2009), and Schofield (2003; 2007). Schofield accentuates that two approaches pertained to the process of ὀικείωσις, an empiricist and a metaphysical approach, although the metaphysical in the final analysis served as the foundation for the other (2007, 210f). For textual evidence, see Cicero (*Leg.* I.21; *Fin.* III.16-22, III.62-65) and especially Plutarch, who claims that Chrysippus made Zeus the starting point for every philosophical enquiry (*St. Repn.* 1035b-c).

[114] Elsewhere she has nuanced her position in pointing out that we find different strains within Stoicism but she still argues that scholarly 'orthodoxy' has overstated its case (Annas 1995b).

[115] As two reviewers report, some of the sources that Annas cites to prove her point does not support her position but rather the exact opposite (cf. Cooper 1995, 597f; Betegh 2003, 275).

pling between physics and ethics. Surprisingly, despite her insistence to base interpretations on Early Stoicism, Annas's point of reference for such an enquiry is actually not Early Stoicism but rather the Middle Stoic Arius Didymus, who seems to have been particularly eclectic and inspired by Aristotelianism (cf. Sedley 2003, 22, 31f). As such, his theory of ethics, acknowledged by Annas to dovetail with Aristotle's views, is hardly representative of the Hellenistic Stoics or the Stoic school of thought in general.

Annas further tries to substantiate her claim by directing attention to the tripartite structure of Stoic philosophy (physics, logic, ethics). In her mind, it goes against the Stoics' order of presentation of their philosophy to ground ethics in physics because ethics were taught prior to physics, and it follows from this, she argues, that ethics could not have been derived from physics (Annas 1995a, 163; contrary to Plut. *St. Repn.* 1035b-c). However, by wanting to streamline the chain of reasoning within Stoic philosophy according to the tripartite perspectives of Stoicism, she conflates a pedagogical principle for teaching the philosophy and the content of the philosophical system itself.[116] Contrary to what Annas argues, Cooper emphasises that it is entirely possible that specific teachings on ethics anticipated doctrines derived from physics (Cooper 1995, 597; also 1998, 283n32). This would, in fact, have been necessary since the tripartite division of Stoic philosophy, according to Christensen, was interwoven to the extent that to explicate one subject, one would have to presuppose the rest of the system (Christensen 2012, 9f). A point Annas, however, completely rejects by stating that these parts were developed completely autonomous of each other, despite being part of the same philosophic system (Annas 1995b, 603).[117] It has also been pointed out by some reviewers that psychology, according to the Stoics, was a subdiscipline of physics and it is difficult to outline the Stoic theory

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[116] That this tripartite distinction was purely pedagogical, see Hadot (2001, 82).

[117] Despite finding Annas's argument interesting and promising, Gill has echoed Christensen's point and concluded that "physics is no more foundational for ethics than is ethics – and logic – for physics" (Gill 2009, 162).

of appropriation, describing a psychological process, without reference to psychological development (Betegh 2003, 276f; DL VII.156-157). Annas's attempt to substantiate her claim by reference to this tripartite structure is therefore misguided and her overall interpretation seems to be guided by a Kantian reading.[118]

Having clarified the necessary interconnection between ethics and physics, it is now possible to outline the Stoic theory of appropriation. The term ὀικείωσις has at its root in the word for household (οἰκός) and it describes the process-relational move in which a person eventually and in an ever-increasing manner realises that other humans are part of their own identity (Engberg-Pedersen 1986, 149). The term cannot be underestimated in Stoic philosophy, as it describes a necessary development towards the human end (τέλος) (Striker 1996, 282). The theory should, as Edwards also has suggested, therefore be interpreted within a spatial framework since it was intricately enmeshed in spatiality (cf. Edwards 2018, 171). It might be understood as a process of arriving at a natural attachment to that which belongs to a person and it was, therefore, intricately connected to an analysis that proceed from space. It formed part of an operation where the Stoics' cosmological framework appropriated the body of the Stoics as it explained how cosmic nature had been inscribed in human nature, and the theory described a psychological process, starting from a care for the body which then proceeded unto the relations between one's inner disposition and externals.

A key textual passage in presenting the Stoic theory of appropriation is Cicero who, in *De Finibus*, distinguishes between two different kinds of appropriation, a personal and a social appropriation. Immediately after being born, a living being shows concern for its wellbeing in seeking the preservation of its body parts. This self-preservation is the first 'appropriate act' (καθῆκον), while the second appropri-

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[118] For Annas, the constitutive role of physics is rejected with the purpose of salvaging Stoic ethics and the entire argument seems to be derived from a wish to make Stoicism compatible with Kant (cf. Annas 1995a, 160ff; Gass 2000, 20, 30ff; Doyle & Torralba 2016, 274).

ate act is the act of cultivating that which is in accordance with nature until the end is reached and harmony with nature is secured (Cicero *Fin*. III.16-22). For humanity, this means following the rational impulse. Subsequently, the theory of social appropriation takes as a departure that the genital organs are evidence that humans naturally should procreate (Cicero *Fin*. III.62). This is followed with a natural impulse to love one's offspring that reflects an innate propensity towards forming social unions and bonds, reflecting that the cosmos is like (*quasi*) a city (*urbs*) (Cicero *Fin*. III.63-64).[119] Thus, though they are related, one approach to human bonding goes through the natural impulse to care for self-preservation and one's offspring, while another approach goes through reason that originates in the divine (cf. Reydams-Schils 2002, 224f). Appropriation thereby determined how humans behaved, first as infants and later as adults (Schofield 2003, 243). Consequently, the theory of appropriation is based on a premise on human nature that ultimately was justified by the Stoic's cosmic framework (cf. Schofield 2007, 197).

In her interpretation of Early Stoic political thought, Vogt connects the concept of appropriation to their cosmopolitan thought:

> Thus, seeing that others are, like oneself, part of one whole and belong to oneself in the same deep sense in which parts of one organism belong to each other, is integral to becoming virtuous or wise. This is tied to the core political idea of the cosmos as a city: each human being is a part of the cosmos, and this can be explained by thinking of the cosmos as one city with all humans and gods as its inhabitants (Vogt 2008, 103).

Thus, appropriation is also the process by which the Stoic realises the ontological inter-connectedness of all human beings. Hierocles provided a meditative exercise designed to bring about such a realisation, in which the Stoic through visualisation

[119] The adverb *quasi* reflects a similarity that merits comparison but not necessarily equation. This could indicate that 'city' was a mere comparison for Cicero and others, but the Stoic writers clearly attest its actual existence as a city. This passage in Cicero contradicts Annas and also Brunt who claimed that *De Finibus* III explains ethics "without the least allusion to the Stoic doctrines on physics" (Brunt 1989, 182).

would widen her concern not just to herself, family, or friends, but the entire cosmos (cf. Hierocles *Acts* 90,7-91,22). Going from the centre and outwards, the Stoic would attempt to mentally contract a set of widening circles into the centre, thus conflating her concern with self for her concern for family, friends, and fellow human beings. Consequently, the theory of social appropriation would give expression to the idea of a cosmic kinship, which was meant to be realised through the spiritual exercises.[120]

In the Stoic perspective, it was therefore only natural that humanity gathered to form communities. Since this was a proclivity grounded in the essence of human nature, it was also natural that these communities would command a degree of respect and concern. To hurt another human being was therefore as if the perpetrator had hurt herself (cf. Seneca *Clem.* 18,2; *Ira* II.31,7; Marcus Aurelius II.16; IV.29; XI.8). Some of the Imperial Stoics would therefore also advocate concerns for the wellbeing of one's country. According to Seneca, one would derive a particular joy (*gaudeo*) from the wellbeing of one's state that was in accordance with nature (*secundum naturam sunt*) (Seneca *Ep.* 66,36-37; cf. Hierocles *Acts* 68,10-12). Inversely proportional to this natural joy, Seneca would argue that the sage would suffer a blow (*ferio*) if his country suffered in war. However, the cosmopolitan attitude of Stoicism did hardly allow affiliation in this sense, and Seneca was, therefore, quick to qualify the sage's allegiance as something that would not corrupt (*perverto*) him (Seneca *Con.* 10,4). By this qualification, Seneca might have been referring to the Stoic theory of indifferents (ἀδιαφὸϱαν).[121] Construed in this perspective, a sage would prefer the wellbeing of the local community, but this preference was nonetheless never more than a 'preferred indifferent' (πϱοηγμένον), as it did not have significance for a person's development towards divine perfection, nor did the wellbeing of one's com-

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120 In Hierocles' depiction the local seems to have been more important than the cosmic kinship, as he seems to have found it silly to extend care to those who might not reciprocate the care (cf. Hierocles *Acts* 90,1-6). In my readings of the Imperial Stoics, Hierocles differs from the others on this matter.

121 For this Stoic concept, see chapter 5.1.1.1.

munity matter in a cosmic perspective. The Imperial Stoics' attempt to ascribe certain positive values to such a relationship might be an expression of the Roman value of *pietas* (i.e. reverence towards the gods, country and parents); yet, it is important to recall that the Stoic approximation to *pietas* never entailed a dichotomising enmity towards enemies. For Seneca, if two communities collided in war, it was important not to feel hostility towards those who fought bravely for their own country and liberty (Seneca *Ira* III.28,6). It is, therefore, possible to discern in Stoic thought the idea that the local community should be the object of concern and care, but this concern should never contribute or translate into feelings of animosity. Although Hierocles seems to have differed and taken the opposite position on this matter (cf. Hierocles *Acts* 90,1-6), the reason for this was that one's first allegiance was the cosmic kinship and only subsequently the conventional kinship.

Though a vertical community existed alongside a horizontal community, it did not produce radical world-renunciative sentiments or praxes. The strong communitarian strain in the Stoic worldview excluded developments of anachoretic lifestyles in which conventional society was rejected and spurned and gave way for desert-dwelling. Neither did the communitarian element give rise to the establishment of coenobitic communities in the periphery of society (cf. Cicero *Fin*. III.65). This should be appreciated in its historical context. Many salvific religions emerging during this time encouraged radical world-renunciative praxes, such as the active choice of death or complete sexual abstinence. In their contempt, devaluation, or indifferent disregard for this world in favour of, usually, a transcendent afterlife, such salvific religious movements risked becoming, so to speak, pure negation. Their social praxis would subvert their social viability because the absolute success of this radical negation brings about its own negation within one generation.[122] However,

[122] This has led some religions with such an inherent contradiction to institute counteracting mechanisms, such as the Hindu *āśrama* system which is an attempt within the Brahmanical tradition to in-

the Stoics were oriented towards this life and not a transcendent afterlife and the Stoics thereby differed from many of these contemporary movements in both their evaluation of society as well as their renunciative praxes.[123]

The Imperial Stoics had, in fact, a keen acumen of such shortcomings of negation. Although the Stoics shared some elements of renunciation and advocated that current society should be transcended, they did not argue this on the basis of world-rejection.[124] The issue was stressed by Musonius Rufus who emphasised the sexual relations between male and female as evidence of human communality. This communality between the sexes existed, Musonius emphasised, to make sure the cities would not be deserted, that they would still have households, and the human race might be everlasting (Musonius Rufus XIV.92,17-19). Even those who had undertaken a professional philosophical lifestyle should "take care of" (ἐπιμελέομαι) marriage and reproduction (XIV.96,2-4). Musonius argued that marriage and reproduction was a duty that both Pythagoras, Socrates, and the Cynic Crates had undertaken (XIV.90,1-4; contrary to Epictetus III.22,77). The philosopher was, therefore, not self-centred but should be deeply concerned with the wellbeing and cultivation of society. Epictetus also invoked the reproductive theme in a criticism of the Epicurean State. Reproduction was a significant flaw in the Epicurean State, according to Epictetus, as the Epicureans would not be able to secure a continual influx of citizens to inhabit their ideal state (Epictetus III.7.19-21).

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stitutionalise world-renunciative thought in such a way that any potential renunciator would first be required to establish a household and thus secure societal reproduction (Olivelle 2008, 277).

123 This is particularly appreciated by Shaw, although he unfortunately describes Stoicism as a secular ideology (Shaw 1985, 24f, 17).

124 DeBrabander points out that Stoicism is politically challenged by their wish to transcend traditional worldly regimes, insofar politics traditionally is constituted in dealing with worldly affairs and material conditions (Debrabander 2008, 71). The same point was made by Justus Lipsius (cf. Hadot 2001, 217) and it is an interesting problem in relation to Marcus Aurelius, who in the capacity of Emperor was supposed to secure the material wellbeing of his inhabitants while personally rejecting the necessity of what he was required to secure.

Above all, Hierocles emphasised, marriage was for the Stoics primarily concerned with the continuity of society and not related to desires for having a nuclear family (Hierocles *Acts* 80,18-20; cf. footnote 75). The reproductive praxis was nevertheless institutionalised within the nuclear family and it could therefore seem the view of the Imperial Stoics were different from the Hellenistic Stoics who, at least in relation to the ideal state, did not take the nuclear family as the basis of biological reproduction (cf. Nussbaum 1997, 9; cf. DL VII.131). It is, however, possible to argue that the social structure of biological reproduction in Zeno's *Republic* is irrelevant in a context where human potentiality has not been reached collectively, and that the Imperial Stoics simply continued a pragmatic position, instituted by their Hellenistic predecessors, of conforming to conventional norms relative to the level of societal progress towards the end.[125] But in doing so, they simultaneously suspected the conventions, insofar they revaluated reproduction by giving it new meaning through the Cosmic City and not through the Roman notion of *pietas*.

The Stoics' concern for conventional society, its wellbeing and reproduction, suggests that the Cosmic City was different from, for instance, the Christian heaven. Humans were inhabitants in the horizontal and vertical community simultaneously, and the Cosmic City was not transcendent in the sense that it existed in a wholly different realm that one had access to only in an afterlife. Spatially, the Cosmic City was imagined to be coextensive with physical space while the Christian Heaven existed elsewhere. The Cosmic City and conventional communities therefore seem to have been each other's prerequisites. Without the Cosmic City the horizontal communities would crumble since humans would then lose their inherent inclination towards communities; however, without the existence of a horizontal reality – without people to inhabit the Cosmic City – the Cosmic City would never come into existence. Why this is so may be explained by Plutarch and Galen. According to Plu-

[125] See also Grahn-Wilder for a treatment of the institution of marriage in the thought of the Imperial Stoics (2018, 253-276).

tarch, Chrysippus had argued the soul only came into existence in relation to its body-vessel and Galen reported that the soul was situated in the heart which was created first and only then subsequently generated all other parts of the body (Plutarch *St. Repn*. 1053D = *LS* 53C; Galen *Foet*. IV.698,2-9 = *LS* 53D). The Stoics might therefore have believed the soul was differentiated from its source (Zeus) only when a human body required animation, and the soul would then return to its source once the human body expired (cf. Euseb. *Ev. Prep.* XV.20,6 = *LS* 53W; Marcus Aurelius IV.14, IV.40; Epictetus I.9).[126] The creation of human bodies does, therefore, seem to have been thought to be necessary for the Cosmic City. In this necessary relationship, it is possible to discern, how the Cosmic City functioned in a way, regarding reproduction and family structure, that gave it a stabilising and homeostatic effect for conventional communities. However, the effect was a displacement of Rome to a secondary position relative to the Cosmic City, brought about by the fact that as bearers of the same divine element, everyone belonged equally everywhere.

3.2.2 Spatial-temporal Displacements

In this necessary relationship, the Cosmic City was a catalyst for conventional society and the structuring logic behind it, but in its mirror-function it was at the same time explorable and could serve as a principle to move beyond conventional society. Put in another way; it was the tacit model *for* society, which the Stoic student would come to know through philosophical inquiry. Conventional cities could converge more or less with the Cosmic City but there was no guarantee of convergence (cf. Stob. *Anth.* II.92). Consequently, we might expect there could be differences in de-

[126] According to Colish, it is possible to find two different Stoic positions. That the soul might survive until the coming conflagration (she lists Epictetus II.1, II.17-19, IV.7, IV.15) or that the soul receives celestial immortality, as Posidonius expressed it. Posidonius's position could then reflect his teacher's, Panaetius, as he rejected the doctrine on cyclical regeneration (DL VII.142). Colish also mentions Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, who nevertheless accepted the idea of cyclical regeneration, as undecided on the matter (Colish 1985, 30f).

gree in convergence between the Cosmic City and conventional societies, similar to the differences in degree between human rationality (λόγος) and the perfect godlike rationality (ὀρθός λόγος).[127] The representations of the Cosmic City's structuring logic could then converge more or less on a spectrum from the unnatural (irrational) society to the natural (rational) society (the latter examined in Zeno's *Republic*). This differentiation gave rise to displacements that had an opposite and centrifugal force.

In a particularly revealing passage that underpins Foucault's suggested features of the heterotopia, Seneca made it clear that the soul's homeland was the entire cosmos; in spatial terms, this meant everything under the rounded dome, the earth and its encircling sea as well as the upper air and stars. In temporal terms, this meant that separated from the transitory human body all time and epochs belonged to the soul (Seneca *Ep.* 102,21-22). It is thereby possible to see that the Cosmic City as counter-space promoted a displacement of things both spatially and temporally.

3.2.2.1 Heterochronic Displacements

Through the Cosmic City, ordinary time was contested and ascribed a new meaning. Instead, the Stoics provided a new heterochronic conception of time that was grounded in their cosmological framework.

The Stoics believed that cosmic time was cyclical, which meant that eventually, the entire cosmos would be subject to a conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) in which the primary fire would consume everything and after which the cosmos would subsequently be reconstituted anew (Euseb. *Ev. Prep.* XV.14,2 = *LS* 46G).[128] The idea of a regeneration of the cosmos was ascribed to Zeno by Alexander of Lycopolis (19,2-4 = *LS* 46I) and to Chrysippus by Plutarch (*St. Repn.* 1053b), but was a

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[127] This interpretation of different degrees of convergence with the divine rationality has also been suggested by Rubarth who therefore underlines that not all communities were equally valid in the mind of the Stoics (2011, 253).

[128] In this regard, the Stoics had been greatly influenced by Heraclitus's conception of a cosmic fire (cf. Schofield 1999a, 74-84). For a modern defence of the Stoics' idea of cyclical regeneration, see Long (2006, 265f).

firmly integrated part of the Stoic worldview during the Principate (cf. Epictetus III.13,4; Marcus Aurelius XI.1,2).[129] The soul of rational animals (i.e. humans) also took part in this cyclical regeneration (cf. Marcus Aurelius IV.14). The doctrine of cyclical regeneration expressed how the elements arose from fire and eventually would return to fire. In his *Natural Questions*, Seneca explained the conflagration in eschatological terms. These end-times would all be initiated by a great flood (κατακλυσμός) that would kill everything on earth when the Stoic god found it necessary, and the flood would eventually give way to the cosmic fire (Seneca *NQ* III.28,2-30,8; cf. *Marc*. 26,6). This intentionality underlines that the conflagration, as pointed out by Long, is the result of a caring and acting god (Long 1985, 25). When a cosmic cycle was ended, all substance dissolved into a pure state of fire – put in another way, during the conflagration Zeus would exist in his purest and most perfect form, which meant that only rationality existed. This intermediate phase has therefore also been termed the 'god-phase' by one scholar (Plutarch *Comm.* 1067a; White 2003, 137). After the conflagration, Zeus would reconstitute everything anew and he would permeate the cosmos as its controlling principle (ἡγεμονικόν). Everything was recreated exactly as it was: every person would be recreated with the same friends, the same fellow-citizens, live in the same cities, and relive every event exactly as in the last cycle. Thus, eternal time was characterised by eternal recurrence (Nemesius *Nat. Hom.* 309,5-311,2 = *LS* 52C). The Stoics arrived at this conclusion because a truly rational organised cosmos would not need to change from one cycle to another.[130]

[129] Boëthus of Sidon and Panaetius apparently rejected the cyclical thesis and considered the cosmos indestructible (DL VII.142; Philo *Inc. Mund.* 76-7 = *LS* 46P). However, Boëthus and Panaetius's position remained unorthodox.

[130] The doctrine of eternal recurrence does however not result in fatalism and exemption of liability since the Stoics were compatibilists (Frede 2003, 202). See Salles (2000) for how modern compatibilists have critiqued the Stoic approach to compatibilism.

The Stoic doctrine on the eternal recurrence of world-cycles points to an interpretative possibility in relation to what that entails in terms of societal development towards convergence with the Cosmic City. According to Mansfeld, the conflagration or god-phase expresses the perfect state of affairs where Zeus has become coextensive with everything, and the process towards this could be understood analogue to the spreading of fire (cf. Mansfeld 1979, 159-163 & 1981, 304-309; supported by Salles 2005).[131] In this interpretation, the reconstitution of the world is a return to an inferior state made necessary by the finite character of the matter that serves as fuel for the divine fire (cf. Mansfeld 1979, 161f). If this interpretation is correct, a cosmic world-cycle had an intrinsic teleology in which its end (τέλος) was perfect reason (ὀρθός λόγος). Consequently, a world-cycle is then characterised as a process in which Zeus's rationality attains increased coextensiveness with everything. Thus understood, when the conflagration approaches, Zeus' increasing coextensiveness with the world could suggest an increased convergence on a universal scale of all the cosmic inhabitants with Zeus' rationality, thereby suggesting the implication that the perfect society, as it was expressed in Zeno's *Republic*, might have been understood to be a teleological step prior to the conflagration.

However, a passage in Plutarch has been interpreted to propose the idea that the conflagration was expected to have a cleansing effect on remaining evils, but this passage has been rejected by both Mansfeld and Long & Sedley as unreliable and expressing a later Christian notion of catharsis (Mansfeld 1983, 220f; Long & Sedley 1987, 276). Even so, the passage does not necessarily express a cathartic notion. It reads the following: "Whenever they subject the world to the conflagration, no evil

[131] Contrary to Mansfeld's position, Long has argued that there is no qualitative difference between the world and the conflagration in terms of rationality because the, "greater extension of god during the conflagration can hardly be a measure of its superiority to the created world" (Long 2006, 272f). However, perceived with the Stoic distinction between reason (λόγος) and perfect reason (ὀρθός λόγος) in mind, the qualitative superiority of the conflagration in terms of rationality seems plausible.

at all remains, but the whole is then prudent and wise" (cf. Plut. *Comm.* 1067A = *LS* 46N). As can be seen, the passage does in fact not suggest that it is the conflagration that removes all evils but states that no evil remains when the conflagration commences. If the passage is interpreted in this way, it could support that the conflagration coincides with the increased realisation of cosmic rationality in the cosmic citizens. Long & Sedley do however note that Seneca comes close to a cathartic interpretation in *NQ* III.28,7 (Long & Sedley 1987, 276). However, the passage in *NQ* III.28,7 merely states that the conflagration will commence once it is perceived by God to be better to end the old things (*vetera finiri*). The Loeb translation has the translated addendum, "and better things to begin," but this is not found in the corresponding Latin text. Yet, this does not necessarily entail that Seneca subscribed to a cathartic interpretation and it might also fit a teleological interpretation. The intentional state of Zeus expressed in the passage might merely reflect that the process towards Zeus's coextensiveness with the world has reached its final stage and the next logical stage is the conflagration. If the Senecan passage suggests a qualitative difference between stages, it may be understood that the transition to the 'god-phase' is a transition to a stage in which *only* pure reason exists, wherefore the conflagration will always be superior to its preceding stage.[132] I therefore suggest the Stoic doctrine on the conflagration and its intermediate stages might perhaps be interpreted as expressing a teleological guarantee for the realisation of the ideal community envisaged by Zeno. Given the tendency of some scholars to read the Stoics in a Kantian perspective, it might be worth noting that historical development, for the Stoics, ra-

[132] Seneca's choice elsewhere to reproduce the common narrative, that society had declined from a Golden Age (see especially *Ep*. 90), might support a cathartic interpretation of the conflagration. However, Seneca's narrative of decline is employed in order to argue that many vices are the result of possibilities that only a technological developed society is capable of providing (i.e. luxury items); hence, making these vices impossible in the pre-developed community of the so-called Golden Age. It should be emphasised that the teleological direction of a world-cycle is not per definition a straight line of unilinear development.

ther seems to have been constitutive *a priori* in nature and thereby closer to a Hegelian philosophy of history than to Kant's regulative account.[133]

In addition to this larger cosmological framework, the heterochrony of the Cosmic City also challenged everyday notions of time by confronting them with eternity. In the cosmic eternity, an entire lifetime was an infinitesimal and somewhat insignificant point in time, but nature had mockingly (*derideo*) made the infinitesimal seem elongated, Seneca explained (Seneca *Ep.* 49,3-4; cf. Marcus Aurelius II.14; VI.36,1). The heterochronic displacements thereby underscored the impermanence of conventional time and charged any fallacious aspirations of Eternal Rome. This theme was prevalent especially in Seneca's eschatological survey in *Natural Questions* (*NQ* III).[134] Though Seneca does not express this logical consequence explicitly, even the Roman Empire would be no match for the great flood before the cosmic regeneration. I find it implausible that Seneca should find this fact too painful to contemplate, as Trevor Murphy has suggested, but I agree with Murphy's point that Seneca in keeping the description at the level of humanity potentially avoids unpleasant political implications (Murphy 2004, 187n41). Elsewhere, Seneca makes it clear that even the greatest empires have collapsed at their peak and innumerable empires have been destroyed by other empires. God, Seneca would emphasise, is constantly building new empires while ruthlessly demolishing others. The greatness of even the greatest empire is a falsehood: "We believe this to be great because we

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[133] For Kant's regulative idea of historical development and its difference from the Hegelian position, see Goldman (2012, 516).

[134] Seneca's *Natural Questions* has been grossly overlooked except for a few dedicated works. See Inwood (2002, 121f) and Beniston (2017, 7-10) for a general overview of the research history. Especially Hine (e.g. 2006, 2014) has contributed immensely to the interpretation of this underappreciated work and his work has been followed by Williams (2006a, 2012). Inwood remarks that Hine's work on this, "renders most of his predecessor's work on the topic obsolete" (Inwood 2002, 122n18). Beniston's doctoral thesis has also engaged with this work by trying to rehabilitate it as a philosophical treatise (Beniston 2017).

are puny (*parvus*); the greatness of many things are derived from our insignificance (*humilitas*) and not from nature" (Seneca *NQ* III.praef,9-10).[135]

Thus, the world was understood to be in constant flux and characterised by impermanence. The heterochronic displacements provided by the Cosmic City lead Seneca to argue that what seems great (regarding longevity, continuation, stability, etc.) is only great through wrong perception. Though conventional cities could seem great because they outlast individuals, in truth, they are fleeting and frail. This is, as underlined by Hine, not just a question of putting things into perspective but part of a consistent argument in all of Seneca's writings to revaluate conventional values and perceptions through Stoic philosophy (Hine 2006, 45). This served as a rejoinder to the general concerns for longevity and stability during the Principate, as the inversion of temporal relations allowed Seneca to detonate the notions of greatness expressed in "empire without end." Eternal Rome, as decreed by Jupiter in Vergil's epic poem (*Aeneid* I.278-279), was therefore rejected and challenged by the Stoics. The same evaluation derived from cosmic time is therefore also found in Marcus Aurelius (IV.32,2; IV.48,1; cf. also X.18; VIII.5; VIII.25). The eternity of Rome was not necessarily taken for granted in Rome, as most Romans would admit the empire required constant care and attention. However, the Stoics went further than merely pointing out Rome's potential frailty. They cloaked this realisation in cosmic terms and revalued time itself according to the cosmic truth they professed, thereby providing a challenge to any claims of a divinely sanctioned and privileged everlastingness.

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[135] It has been argued that the literary composition of Seneca's *Natural Questions* constituted a move from the earthly to the celestial, reflecting the intellectual journey from the mundane to the cosmic perspective (Hine 2014, 1-24). The cosmic perspective was not unique in Antiquity, but Seneca's *Natural Questions* was particularly coupled with personal self-development (cf. Williams 2012, 29). As such, it reflects the attempt to redirect attention from the horizontal level to the vertical. The original composition of the chapters might therefore be 3, 4a, 4b, 5, 6, 7, 1, 2 (cf. Williams 2006a, 127n20). In consequence, Seneca's *Natural Questions* are more than an inquiry into the natural world, it is an ambitious attempt at a universal reconciliation between the cosmos and the individual.

3.2.2.2 Heterotopic Displacements

As pointed out earlier, Seneca emphasised that the homeland of the soul was extended farther than the traditional confines of a single city (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 102,21-22). The fact that this homeland was not reducible to one city suggests that a specific relationship between the conventional city and the Cosmic City existed. This relationship is best understood as a relationship between something superior, the vertical reality, and something inferior, the horizontal reality. This had the consequence that the allegiance of the Stoic philosophers was overdetermined by the superior Cosmic City (cf. DeBrabander 2008, 75f).[136] Though the Stoics conceived the conventional city as a social institution that commanded one's care, the conventional city was always just a city subordinated to the Cosmic City and was as such contested in its claims to priority of care. Marcus Aurelius would make this hierarchy clear. The divine community was man's primary obligation since the rational animal's end (τέλος) was, "to follow (ἕπομαι) that reason (λόγος) and law (θεσμός) laid out by the greatest (πρέσβυς) of cities and constitutions" (Marcus Aurelius II.16).[137] In other words, the care for the conventional city was recommended as long as it did not subvert the care for the Cosmic City.

When Seneca emphasised the dual citizenship of humans, he would stress the Cosmic City as "great (*magnam*) and truly (*verus*) in common" and the conventional city as being merely a product of lottery of birth. He thereby made the distinction between "the greater and the lesser" (*maiori minorique*) state (Seneca *Otio* 4,1-2; cf. also *Ira* II.31,7). Epictetus made a similar distinction between a minor and major city and emphasised the Cosmic City's greater and more authoritative status

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[136] One commentator has attempted to challenge the view that local affinity was an accident of birth (cf. Seneca *Otio* 4,1) by arguing the Stoics were strong ethical relativists and therefore did not prioritise the Cosmic City above the conventional city (Rubarth 2011, 251f). This is a minor view in the scholarship and is in my mind mistaken.

[137] It is therefore not surprising that the Stoics argued that cosmic law served as the "absolute standard by which to correct human laws" (Cicero *Leg.* I.18; II.8-10; Griffin 1989, 19; opposite Girardet 1983, 97-105).

(cf. Epictetus I.9,4). He furthermore referred to the relationship between conventional cities and the Cosmic City as one between microcosms reflecting the macrocosm. The conventional city, being the minor (μικρός) city in the relationship, was merely an imitation (μίμημα) of a greater whole (Epictetus II.5,26). In this passage, Epictetus thereby gave expression to a common religious idea that our world reflects or mirrors a different realm and that the world in some sense is a pale reflection of a more real, significant, and true world. Continuing the same line of thought, Marcus Aurelius wrote that conventional cities had come about as an imitation of the cosmos. The way humans had come to organise their communities with a rational and legal instinct could be explained because the Cosmic City, in which we were parts, had been arranged after the same principle (Marcus Aurelius IV.4). The relation suggests that horizontal communities were derivative of the Cosmic City and there was no doubt that the Cosmic City was apportioned the privileged position in this relation. This can also be seen when Marcus Aurelius wrote that every human being is, "a citizen of the highest city (ἀνώτατος) of which the other cities are merely like households" (Marcus Aurelius III.11,2).[138]

To have the entire cosmos as the soul's homeland had direct consequences for the relations of sites. First of all, to have the cosmos as the true homeland influenced conventional dimensions and would modify their meanings according to the cosmic perspective. Accordingly, every spatial location was nothing but a small part of the universe; in the writings of Marcus Aurelius, this meant that all of Asia and Europe was just corners in the universe, the entire ocean a mere drop, and mount

[138] David Konstan has argued that this passage is a reference to Rome and not the Cosmic City (Konstan 2009, 482). It is true that Rome sometimes was presented as equivalent with the entire world in the Roman literature (cf. Edwards & Woolf 2006, 3), but this is not an instance of this, as Konstan seems to think. Marcus's reference to the highest city in this passage is clearly to be interpreted as the Cosmic City and not Rome. This passage and the passages Konstan enumerates as justification for his interpretation (IV.4,1; VI.44,2) is concerned with the Stoic theory of impressions, why the Cosmos was, in fact, a city, and externals in relation to what is a good. Why any of these passages should refer to Rome as the highest city is not clear.

Athos nothing but a clod (Marcus Aurelius VI.36,1). This was a *re*-presentation and inversion (made by its own Emperor, not the least) of an empire that was usually venerated for its impressive size from which it was possible to deduce a claim on divinely ordained superiority as Vergil had done (cf. Edwards & Woolf 2006, 4). Pliny the Elder had measured the city of Rome in great length in order to showcase and boast of its enormous size (Pliny *HN* III.5,66-67); however, the so-called impressive scales of Rome and the Roman Empire were opposed by the Stoics to the impressive scale of the Cosmic City – and paled into insignificance.

The limitlessness of Rome, a gift bestowed by Jupiter in common conception, was expressed in its ability via military force to advance the boundaries of its dominion farther into conquered territory. The driving force for military conquests was of course primarily a matter of practical necessity since the continuous expansion was a prerequisite for a steady influx of wealth, food, and slaves, and only secondarily a question of glory and greatness. Without this constant influx, Rome would quickly reach an impasse and collapse, and expansion was, therefore, an economic necessity for the Empire. However, the many conquests of territory and expansions of Roman frontiers throughout Roman history were conceptually utilised as a testament to the might of Rome and therefore served to reinforce notions of Roman superiority. Despite an undertaste of Roman superiority incommensurable with the Stoic worldview, Seneca does at times seem unapologetic about Roman imperialism.[139] However, although Seneca at times seem sure of the virtuous acquisition of Rome's many provinces and commended, "conquest in the selfless spirit of pacification, defence of the good, defeat of the wicked" (Griffin 1976, 222f),[140] Seneca could simultaneously display a critical attitude towards territorial expansion, as he also condemned, "war and military imperialism in general as violations of human nature"

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[139] Nussbaum has concluded that despite their philosophy, the Stoics did not explicitly categorise military conquest as morally unacceptable (Nussbaum 1997, 14). I think she is mistaken in this matter, as I will attempt to illustrate.

[140] See *Ben.* I.13,3; III.32,3; III.32,5; III.33,3; *Ep*. 86,1; 94,66; *Polyb*. 12,3; 15,3; *Brev. Vit.* 14,5.

(ibid.; cf. Seneca *Ep*. 95,30-32; also Epictetus II.22,22 & Marcus Aurelius X.10).[141] Seneca's condemnation usually displayed a concern for manifestations of problematic passions and it was therefore framed within the perspective of the spiritual transformation; both Crassus and Pompey had in this scheme been guided by unhealthy greed and passions for glory (cf. *NQ* V.18,10; *Ep*. 94,64).[142] Thus, his position seems to display an ambiguous attitude resulting perhaps from observational displacements between being a pragmatic Roman politician and being a Stoic.[143] However, in his treatise on nature, *Natural Questions,* Seneca would charge imperialism, land expansion, and military conquest head on from the perspective of the Cosmic City and contest such spatial praxes. This clearly sets it apart from Pliny's *Natural History* that used Rome as the ordering leitmotif in cataloguing the natural world (cf. Williams 2012, 41f).[144]

Observed through the Cosmic City, humanity's praxis of demarcation and ambitions of expansion was nothing but a trivial venture: "How ridicules are mor-

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[141] One commentator has described Stoic cosmopolitanism as constantly "under pressure by Roman imperialism," effectively reducing the ambitious doctrines of Stoicism to an unambitious and pragmatic attempt to merely secure the just rule of provinces (Hill 2000, 35, 72).

[142] The passions (πάθος) arose as an impulse (ὁρμή) disobedient to reason and expressed a movement (κίνησις) in the soul contrary to its nature. There existed four general passions, two of which pertained to what appeared (φαίνω) good – the appetite and pleasure – and two of which pertained to what appeared bad – fear and distress. In this scheme, pleasure resulted from obtaining an object of the appetite and avoiding an object of fear, while distress resulted from the failure to obtain an object of the appetite and the failure to avoid an object of fear (cf. Stob. *Anth*. II.88,8-90,6 = *LS* 65A). Epictetus followed the orthodox Stoic position (cf. I.12,20-21) but Seneca's position is more difficult to identify and he seems less consistent. The Middle Stoic Posidonius reintroduced the Platonic model to Stoic philosophy (Galen *Hipp*. *Plat*. IV.3,2-5 = *LS* 65K) and the Imperial Stoics might, therefore, have been divided between those who preferred Stoic orthodoxy and those who followed the Middle Stoic position. Marcus Aurelius' general rejection of doctrinal hair-splitting might express the typical position of the lay Stoic who would likely centre on the issue at hand to which all Stoics agreed: the passions were never rational and everything should be subject to reason.

[143] Paul Veyne has noted: "The only conquests Seneca condemns are those of others [non-Romans] – he has no word harsh enough for those of Alexander" (Veyne 2003, 146). Thereby Veyne seems to reproduce Fears' argument that particularly the non-Greek Stoics were critical towards Alexander while being little concerned about condemning their own military expansion (Fears 1974, 122f). However, Seneca's condemnation of Crassus and Pompey suggests he was not entirely blind to Roman military exploits.

[144] Williams likewise reports that Seneca in the treatise reconceptualised victory into being only self-victory and he thereby subverted the gloriousness of military victory (Williams 2012, 48-53).

tal's boundaries! […] If someone should give human intelligence (*intellectus*) to ants, will they not also divide the floor into many provinces?" (Seneca *NQ* I.praef,9-10). Thus, ants, if they were subject to what must be understood as imperfect reason (since the Sage would never wage war), would also draw arbitrary boundaries based on natural phenomena or military might. Implicitly invoking the superior-inferior relationship between the Cosmic City and conventional cities, Seneca would explain the artificial boundaries and military expansion of cities (and hence Rome) by way of intelligent ants and thereby infuse these praxes with notions of ridicules inferiority. A further point was implied in this. Such spatial praxes were characteristic of the uncultivated rationality and those advocating and facilitating imperial expansion were effectively a part of what Seneca in a corresponding passage called fools (*insipiens*) and thick (*permadesco*) (Seneca *Prov.* 4,9). In *Natural Questions* Seneca thereby expressed two crucial points inverting conventional ascriptions of meaning: 1) Some human activity (specifically one which Rome was deeply involved in) could be so ridiculous and inferior that it was best explained by reference to anthropomorphic and intelligent ants; and 2) frontiers were arbitrary constructions (established by human avarice and passion) that from a cosmic perspective could be discovered to be superfluous and non-existent (at least in terms of not being demarcations grounded in the true nature of things, cf. *NQ* III.praef,9-10). From such general criticism, it was always possible to extract a critique of the particular. As such, in the subtext to a passage such as this laid a latent critique of any military ambitious of the emperors.

In addition to being a general critique of how Roman spatial praxes were informed by military aggression, it is possible that *NQ* I.praef,9-10 should be understood as a subtext for a different passage that might have been a veiled criticism of Nero. In *NQ* VI, Seneca reported that Nero had sent centurions to investigate the source of the Nile. In the passage a flattering addendum is incorporated in which this expedition is coupled to Nero's concern for the truth, comparable in fact to Ne-

ro's passion for the virtues (*NQ* VI.8,3). Seneca's *Natural Questions* was written ca. 63-65 CE after Seneca's tutorship to Nero had ended in 62 CE and at a point where the relationship between Nero and Seneca was strained. This flattering passage might therefore have been Seneca's attempt to re-establish a good relationship with Nero, by lauding Nero for his scientific plans (cf. Sanford 1937, 88).[145] Understanding this flattering to be genuine, one recent commentator suggests that the scientific plans were conceived by Seneca himself (Williams 2006, 131f; cf. 2012, 117, 235f).[146] However, that Seneca was the instigator for the expedition has been rejected as unnecessary speculation by Hine, who points out that it is possible to explain Nero's plan by reference to precedent praxes in relation to military campaigns (Hine 2006, 63). Such a reading furthermore questions that the flattery was employed to re-establish a good relationship since the passage might then be understood as being a veiled criticism of Nero's preparation for war. It would not be entirely out of character for Seneca to articulate problematic viewpoints that countered Nero, and the focus of Seneca's writings in these years, coupled with *Natural Questions'* general critical attitude to social conventions, suggest this might be the case.[147] Seneca's seemingly flattering remark might therefore rather have been a sarcastic comment on Nero's character, which had shifted much during Seneca's period as an imperial advisor (54-62 CE). The question is, of course, why we should accept that Seneca's reference to a scientific expedition to the source of the Nile actually was a reference to preparations for war.

First of all, it is unlikely that sending an expedition to locate the source of the Nile would have been done for purely scientific reasons. There was an established praxis of different kinds of scientific enquiry (anthropological, geographical, etc.) in relation to military campaigns in the ancient world (cf. Herodotus *Histories* III.17,1-

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[145] Another passage similarly flatters Nero and could substantiate that Seneca was trying to win back the favour of Nero, cf. *NQ* VII.21,3.

[146] See Williams 2012, 235n79 for a brief overview of positions on this matter.

[147] Seneca was not shy of writing passages that would irritate Nero in his letters (cf. Griffin 1976, 360).

25,7) and this Nile-expedition would most likely have been instantiated as part of a military expedition (cf. Sanford 1937, 90ff).[148] Furthermore, Suetonius can tell us that Nero was particularly preoccupied with everlastingness and eternal fame in his reign (cf. Suet. *Nero* 55) and a military expedition could have served this purpose. To substantiate that this was, in fact, the case, we find evidence in two passages. First, Tacitus reported that Nero had secret imaginations of eastern provinces and Egypt (Tacitus *Ann.* XV.36) and second, Pliny reported that Nero had sent praetorian troops to conduct preliminary investigations prior to a possible invasion of Aethiopia (Pliny *HN* VI.35,181 & XII.8,19). These two passages are most likely referencing the same thing, Nero's preparation for a military expedition and this might indeed be what Seneca had in mind when referencing a Nile-expedition.

Notable in this regard, when Alexander the Great undertook his military campaign in Egypt, he attempted precisely to locate the source of the Nile (Arrian *Anab.* VI.1,1-4). This is valuable information because we know that Nero admired Alexander greatly and it is possible he sought to emulate him, which might also be indicated in the passage by Tacitus (*Ann.* XV.36; Sanford 1937, 90; 92f). Seneca disliked Alexander and the admiration on the part of Nero will most likely have produced some uneasiness on the part of Seneca (ibid., 86f).[149] At three occasions in his *Natural Questions*, Seneca explicitly criticised Alexander the Great's military expansions and it is likely, as suggested by Hine, that Seneca's attacks on Alexander in these instances simultaneously were veiled attacks on Nero (cf. III.praef.5; V.18,10;

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[148] Henderson and Sørensen readily accepted the scientific purpose as the primary goal of the expedition (Henderson 1905, 223; Sørensen 1984, 219) but Eva Sanford suggested that the expedition was conceived for various reasons, such as commercial and political needs, the wish to extend Roman power in the region, and the wish of oriental domination with Alexander as model (Sanford 1937, 90; 92f).

[149] This did, however, not lead Sanford to think that Seneca might have been criticising Nero's emulation. Seneca was especially critical of Alexander, see for instance *Ep.* 94,62 and 119,7 in which his desire for territorial expansion is criticised. Stoic criticism of Alexander was common at least from the Middle Stoics onwards who stressed his vices and arrogance (Tarn 1939, 55). This has been rejected by Fears, who argues ethnic affiliation determined the appreciation of Alexander; the Greek Stoics, in his mind, lauded Alexander (1974, 115, 122f; cf. Brunt 1977).

VI.23,2-3; Hine 2006, 64).[150] These attacks on Alexander located in one part of the treatise would indubitably colour any reference to Nero's emulation of Alexander in another part. Like Hine, I therefore interpret the passage to reflect that Nero was preparing a military expedition with Alexander as the model, that Seneca was aware of this, and that Seneca concealed criticism of this by sarcastically referencing Nero's supposed virtuous life and quest for truth in searching out the source of the Nile.

This passage, directing attention to Nero's military plans, should at the level of the entire treatise also be read in conjunction with *NQ* I.praef,9-10 in which military expansion in the cosmic perspective was compared to the behaviour of intelligent ants. In such a conjoined reading, the parallactic mirror perspective provided by the Cosmic City made it possible to move from the general – military expansion was inferior (and antlike) behaviour – to the particular – Nero had plans of military expansion. A general criticism of military expansions could be found in one book and a veiled reference to Nero's military ambition could be found in another book. By extension, Seneca was therefore able to cleverly ridicule Nero's aspirations as antlike behaviour, without ever making the direct reference; a strategy many other critical Romans would have to follow during the Roman Principate.[151]

Arbitrary boundaries were in truth non-essential or even ridiculous subdivisions of the earth, and Rome could not subdue the earth with divine approval. This neutralisation and inversion of the spatial grid resulted from the displacements and re-ascriptions of meaning provided by the cosmic perspective. The entire earth and not an erratic demarcated plot of land was the real homeland of human beings and

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150 For similar positions in the scholarship, see Hine 2006, 64n91.

151 It is difficult to overemphasise how problematic minor random infractions and discourses could be during the Roman Empire. For instance, Emperor Domitian (r. 81-96 CE) is reported among other things to have had a prepubescent pantomime executed for resembling his master (Suet. *Domitian* 10). Reports must, of course, be subject to a degree of scepticism as it could be sanctioned to deride a former Emperor if a new Emperor wished to distance himself from an unpopular ruler. What status such reports have is therefore difficult to ascertain with certainty but it is evident that inopportune attention could result in the wrath of a furious or threatened Emperor. Suetonius was able to paint a similar and rather extensive unfavourable picture of Nero in his biography (cf. Suet. *Nero*).

the entire cosmos was the homeland of human's better part, the soul. Through meditating on the otherness of the Cosmic City, one would eventually come to realise, via a process of digestion, that the entire world was one's true country and life was therefore not confined to the limitation of the lesser state (cf. Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 20,5; *Ep.* 28,4). This outlook was openly opposed to conventional beliefs and sentiments. For most people in Antiquity, the homeland was an important qualifier of life. As Long has emphasised, in his patriotic *Patriae Encomium* the satirist Lucian (ca. 125-180 CE) utilised Odysseus' longing for Ithaca to illustrate the standard position in this period (Long 2008, 58).[152] The Stoics thereby also contested a tendency in Roman Antiquity to couple the source of flourishing (εὐδαιμονία) to location, for instance in leisurely travelling (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 28; *Vit. Beat.* 20; *Tranq.* 2).[153] This was a common but erroneous reasoning, according to the Stoics, which would become visible as such once it was viewed in the light of the Cosmic City. Though the Acropolis in Athens might have been spectacular, it was only a pretty rock, Epictetus emphasised. No more magnificent view could be found than, "the sun, the moon, the stars, the whole earth and the sea" (Epictetus II.16,32-33). Ascribing some privileged significance to human constructions or a particular natural phenomenon were misguided, according to Epictetus, insofar the totality of the cosmos formed the perfect spectacle. This then was part of the move in Stoic philosophy where parts were subjugated a greater whole. Only by transcending the particular and appointing it to its correct status in the cosmic scheme was it possible to attain divine perfection, and this resulted in a revaluation and displacement of conventional geography.

In this scheme, it is important to remember that the Greco-Roman world operated with a sharp distinction between cities and rural areas, reflecting the spatial distinction between centre and periphery, and this distinction was also very visible in power-relations (cf. de Ste-Croix 1983, 9-19). The distinction was continued on a

[152] According to Edwards, the Stoics considered Odysseus to be the model exile (2018 ,187).
[153] How the Cosmic City redefined travelling has been briefly examined by Edwards (2018).

moral level and was even reflected in depictions of the divine sphere (cf. Aesop *Fables* 2,6-8). For the Stoics, it was different, even one as dedicated to Rome as its own Emperor would draw conclusions derived from the displacement of geography. Frequently away on military campaigns in Germania, Marcus Aurelius would remind himself that it did not matter where one lived as long as one lived like a citizen of the Cosmic City (Marcus Aurelius X.15). In other words, despite its position as the cultural and political power hub of the Mediterranean, Rome – or the Roman Empire for that matter – was no longer the privileged centre of the world. In his *Natural History*, Pliny had made Rome the centre of the world, encircled by a chaotic, miraculous, and wondrous periphery, confirming, as pointed out by Williams, Rome as the stable centre of the world (Williams 2012, 43). The Imperial Stoics however would challenge this Roman spatial conceptualisation of the world.

Although the Stoics encouraged people to engage as active citizens within the city they lived, there was no rational reason to stay particularly attached to any specific conventional city. Accordingly, Epictetus would address his student body, of which many prepared to hold office in the Roman Empire, and trivialise whether they lived in Athens or Corinth, or even outside the Roman Empire in cities like Susa or Ecbatana (Epictetus II.16,36). It is possible here to grasp how the Cosmic City as a counter-space would encourage the Stoics to rearrange the conventional spatial layout. Athens was the cultural and political centre in the part of the Roman Empire where Epictetus lived, and Corinth was a major city in southern Greece, serving as a centre for the imperial cult. Epictetus who taught in Nicopolis on the west coast of Greece would have many students for whom these cities figured as hotspots. However, Epictetus denied Athens and Corinth such a position and emphasised to his students that Susa or Ecbatana were as valuable. Any city on the horizontal sphere had its particularity neutralised – at least by conventional ways of ascribing meaning. Thereby Epictetus would undermine his students' notion of centre and

periphery when assigning the Cosmic City the privileged position as the centre, and all other cities, including Rome, were displaced to peripheral status.[154]

This fact had consequences for how the Stoics evaluated the threat of exile.[155] The exile was, as it has also recently been noted by Bhatt, part of what Lefebvre understood as the hegemonic struggle over the production of space (cf. Bhatt 2018, 219f) and the Stoics' revaluation should be understood as part of this hegemonic struggle.[156] In a lecture on exile, Musonius Rufus argued that no one actually could be in exile because the cosmos was the common fatherland. A sage would therefore not value one city over another, for the sage would acknowledge that he was a citizen in the City of God (τοῦ Διὸς πόλεως), and that conventional cities did not influence human flourishing (Musonius Rufus IX.68,15-25). For this reason, there was no reason to fear the threat of exile. Thus, the exile as penalising instrument was stripped of its threatening potential through disbandment of the conventional relation of sites. Traditionally meaning life in the periphery, the Stoics were able to subvert this notion and invert the exile's spatial relations. In fact, through this reconceptualisation the Stoics were able to subvert the exile completely and utilise it as a productive 'seclusion' that in fact constituted a re-centering of the Stoic along vertical lines, insofar it allowed the exiled Stoic to concentrate on spiritual exercises and secure the necessary development towards the end, life according to nature. Thereby, the exile was transformed into a counter-space that undermined the relations of power.

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[154] Seneca and Marcus Aurelius show more appreciation for Rome, which might suggest they saw Rome as the most successful realisation of the cosmic blueprint so far.

[155] For the use of exile as penalising method during the Principate, see Washburn (2013, 5-15).

[156] Bhatt briefly mentions Seneca's *De Clementia* but does not draw conclusions on the Stoic revaluation of the exile (Bhatt 2018, 222). In the same anthology Edwards (2018), however, examines Seneca's appreciation of the exile with a point of departure in *ad Helviam*. See also Williams who analyses the exile as a literary trope in Seneca's *ad Helviam* and examines how Seneca uses the exile to undermine Roman imperial ideology and launches an attack on the authority that exiled him (2006b, 170-173). Whitmarsh (2001a; 2001b) has also examined how Stoic philosophers utilised the exile.

Seneca addressed the issue in consolation to his mother, Helvia, when he was sent into exile on Corsica in 42 CE. The exile had triggered great distress for Helvia but Seneca was more relaxed about the matter. He would write his mother and tell her that no place on earth could be a place of exile, because no place was foreign to humanity who were equally separated from god everywhere (Seneca *Helv.* 8,5). Seneca would then elaborate his point and tell his mother how the mind itself would never be able to suffer exile because it was kindred with the gods and was inherently free and unhindered – it was admitted (*immitto*) into all of heaven and all of eternity, both the past and the future (*Helv.* 11,7). Seneca's consolation therefore expresses how the Cosmic City turned horizontal concerns into a matter of verticality, with the Cosmic City serving as the underlying basis accessible from any geographic location, i.e. through the inner divinity (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 104,7). Thus, as will be made clear below, the Cosmic City rearranged sacred geography.

3.2.2.2.1 Sacred Displacements

The Cosmic City also subverted other minuscule sites in the spatial grid; sites that were straightforwardly connected to everyday life. As has been examined, the fact that humanity was part of a Cosmic City underpinned the inclination towards gathering in communities. For this reason, it is not strange to find that those things that were particularly striking manifestations of this underlying blueprint found enthusiastic support among Stoics, and vice versa.

The Cosmic City gave a supportive thrust towards those sites that were thought to be particularly successful manifestations of the cosmic blueprint and challenged those sites that were seen as detrimental to society. Seneca would describe the activity surrounding bathhouses and other shady establishments as locations of non-virtuous activity (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 7,3).[157] These quintessential sites of bodily

[157] Seneca's treatment of bath-houses has been examined by Rimell (2013) who studies the role they play in Seneca's 86th letter.

pleasures posed a problem for the Stoics because they could serve as something similar to opiates *of* the masses. A site like a gymnasium had, in the mind of Stoics, too great a hold on the masses. Remarkably few people attempted to train (*exerceo*) their innate disposition (*ingenium*) but a lot of imbeciles (*imbecillus*) trained their muscles, Seneca would lament (Seneca *Ep*. 80,2,). Looking at Epictetus, it is possible to see how he thought such sites were utilised by many as something akin to a sedative solution to calm their spiritual distress. Specifically, he would tell his students that many people would devote their time to, for instance, the gymnasium, and this was similar to how children were calmed by receiving cookies when upset. What seems to be the problem for Epictetus, is that people were suffering from spiritual distress and they chose to address this by indulging in their bodies rather than their soul. This was merely an anaesthetic response to an illness and not a cure in itself. Instead, a cure for such distress could be positively identified, and the treatment, as Epictetus termed it, that should replace this anaesthetic "cookie" was "true doctrines" (ὑπὸ δογμάτων ὀρθῶν), i.e. Stoic philosophy (Epictetus II.16,25-29). Inversely to these damaging sites, Seneca lauded such sites as the temple, the Forum, and the assembly-house of the Senate – all traditionally conceived to be deeply connected to the wellbeing of the community. All of these had, according to Seneca, a special relationship to virtue (*virtus*) (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 7,3).[158]

Unlike what Seneca expressed in this passage, his nephew Lucan, who during his tutelage under Seneca most likely had been steeped in Stoicism (cf. Suetonius *Lucan*), wrote a piece of epic literature that challenged conventional conceptions of temples. The work *Pharsalia* was a tribute to the Stoic hero Cato who had fought

[158] See however *Ep*. 28,6 where the Forum is diminished as a threat to the spiritual transformation. Epictetus could also advocate adherence to institutional structures (cf. Epictetus III.7,19-22) and undermine them in other passages. For instance, the law court's jurisdictive capability was actually impotent if one would take the cosmic perspective (cf. Epictetus I.9,15-16). As DeBrabander has also reported it, the Cosmic City and its accompanying cosmic law reinterpreted conventional laws as being never anything more but imitations of a higher and truer law (cf. DeBrabander 2008, 75f.)

against Caesar, and Lucan's tribute emphasised Cato's Stoic character. In the ninth book, Lucan would use Cato as a literary vessel for revealing how the Stoic worldview had reshaped things in a way that had eroded the temple as a significant site. In the poem, during the civil war with Caesar, Cato visits a temple of Ammon where an oracle resides. Cato however refuses to listen to the words of the local oracle and speaks a divine truth himself; there is no need to listen to oracles because the gods dwell in all things and in how a person acts, and every person therefore already do have privileged access to the gods. Consequently, Cato leaves the temple and the oracle, not paying heed to the tradition of receiving oracular speech (*Phar.* IX.564-586). As can be seen, Lucan's depiction of Cato reflects a very Stoic conception of the nature of things and also shows how the Cosmic City potentially subverted temples. It is very likely Lucan learned such doctrines from Seneca.

For although Seneca praised temples as virtuous sites in *Vit. Beat.* 7,3, his evaluation of the temples elsewhere in the essay suggests he subscribed to a more complex view. It was a problem that the gods had been depicted entirely wrong by poets who gave them mythic or anthropomorphic attributes. Jupiter, Seneca would clarify, was not an adulterer and was not guilty of patricide and usurpation of the heavenly throne (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 26,6). The point seems to be that such depictions gave birth to false conceptions of the divine and humanity's relation to the divine. Contrary to popular belief, the gods did, therefore, not require altars and temples and they did not have a special relationship to such sites, Seneca emphasised. For this reason, Seneca was able to claim that it did not hurt the gods, as some would think, when one destroyed (*everto*) an altar, and it would not prompt an angry response by the gods either (*Vit. Beat.* 26,5; cf. *Ep*. 41,1). Similar to Seneca's subversion of the sacred, Epictetus would internalise the notions of sacred and profane, and link them directly to a person's inner daemon (cf. Epictetus II.8,11-14). It is, therefore, possible to identify a charge against the traditional order of religious values in Stoicism; the tendency to locate specific sites as being uniquely connected to the divine

sphere, and in extension its concomitant material (buildings, statues, cultic artefacts, etc.) and social expression (priestly office, temple prostitution, etc.), was challenged by the Stoic notions of humanity's participation in the Cosmic City. As a logical consequence, the mytho-speculative prioritisation of Rome via sacred geography was also undermined by the Stoics (cf. Livy *Hist.* V.52,2).

As is evident, the Stoics did, however, not dissolve notions of sacred and profane but rearranged the way such notions were understood and employed. Sacred and profane were coupled to the Cosmic City and its specific manifestations, which resulted in a rearrangement and charge against the existing religious order. As a result, Seneca could therefore suggest that the reverence (*verecundia*) for the gods that people expressed when participating in ceremonial and ritual activity in the temple should be proportionally larger when studying celestial bodies and the nature of the divine (*NQ* VII.30,1). Implicitly, the traditional cult had no real relation to the sacred, while the activity proposed here by Seneca in reality did. In other words, religious activity was detached from ordinary cultic praxis and coupled to philosophical praxis and formed part of a philosophical religion meant to supplant traditional religion (cf. Comella 2015, 495; Frede 2002).

Since Stoic criticism of society was based in a reconceptualisation of the nature of things, it is, in fact, possible – although the Stoics were never explicit on this matter – to identify traditional religious conceptions of the divine as a cause of the spiritual illness pervading society. Stoicism was therefore not an alternative to a religious worldview but constituted something like a reform-movement instead, seeking to provide the correct religious worldview. It is in this scheme of things Cornutus's allegorical interpretations of the mythological depictions of the gods should be read, as a philosophical corrective to the natural apprehension of the divine which had been distorted (cf. *Greek Theology*, see also Cicero *Nat. Deo.* II, III). In Stoicism, the relationship between humanity and the divine was inverted compared to traditional myth. Whereas the gods in traditional myth had been given human attributes

and corresponding faults, the Stoics deified humanity and emphasised an entirely different interpretation of the divine. Greco-Roman myth had, according to the Stoics, anthropomorphised the gods, resulting in a severely wrong conception of things. This anthropomorphised view of the gods had resulted in a projection of specific defective mental dispositions onto the gods that could sanction the corresponding human praxis. As a result, the Stoics could therefore also treat religious sites as hubs for spiritual illness and, one might speculate, infection. Ceremonies in the temple had attracted mortals with ambition and desires, seeking – prompted by their slavish dispositions – the aid of the gods (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 95,48). Epictetus would locate precisely ambition and desire as the predominant motivations for sacrificial rituals. If people valued what was truly good, they would instead give thanks to the gods when they were virtuous and followed their rational impulses (ὁρμῆσαι κατὰ φύσιν) (Epictetus I.19,24-25). This reconceptualisation motivated Seneca to consider that ideally, the religious praxes carried out in the temple should be outlawed and replaced by a religious praxis in which worship was constituted by contemplation and imitation of the divine (Seneca *Ep*. 95,50-51; also *Ben.* I.6,3; compare with Epictetus *Ench*. 31,1). Accordingly, the temples were significantly being challenged in Stoic thought.

However, this intellectual charge does seem to have eluded translation into praxis. Despite the radical inversion of the temple as a site, the Stoics did not translate their worldview into a similar radical corresponding praxis in which ordinary cultic participation was terminated wholesale, since it, according to Seneca, was unwise to upset traditions (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 14,14). Augustine could therefore report that the Stoics kept an inward attitude while conforming to tradition in praxis (Augustine *Civ. Dei* VI.10). This 'negative' participation in the religious ritual can nevertheless be understood in its own subversive way, but notwithstanding this, in a passage in *De Beneficiis*, where Seneca continued the idea that the gods reside everywhere and that everything belongs equally to the gods, he chose to emphasise that some

things have been dedicated to the gods and therefore are sacred. Although sacrilegious acts, like the overturning of an altar (cf. *Vit. Beat*. 26,6), does not harm the gods, the perpetrator is nonetheless punished by his own and society's opinion (*opinio*) (Seneca *Ben.* VII.7,2-4). The Stoics therefore seem to have advocate measured respect for the temple cult.

Keimpe Algra has proposed that Seneca's ambivalence towards popular religion can be explained either by an analysis on the part of Seneca in which the traditional cult belongs to the Stoic category of indifferents or as an expression of a general conservative adherence to social conventions (Algra 2009, 241, 248). For Brunt, the Stoics' acceptance of the cult was indicative of their conservative conformism (cf. Brunt 2013, 117). Similarly, Francis's interpretation of Imperial Stoicism underpins this hypothesis, insofar he emphasises the fact that social and political duties were turned into moral obligations, which can explain why participation in the traditional cult might seem to have continued unabashed (cf. Francis 1995, 3). The social conservative hypothesis does seem a likely explanation when considering these various passages (i.e. Seneca *Ben.* VII.7,2-4; *Ep*. 14,14; Augustine *Civ. Dei* VI.10). However, the passage in *De Beneficiis* might also be interpreted in light of the centripetal force of the Cosmic City. Seneca's appreciation of sanctity in this passage seems to be that sanctity is sacred by virtue of having been socially constructed as such and the concomitant punishment for sacrilegious acts is identified as being at the level of social relations. Seneca therefore seems keenly aware of the social nature of both religion and the sacred, as well as the social cohesion it creates. This (proto-Durkheimian) appreciation on the part of Seneca might indeed be the reason why the Stoics never entirely rejected popular religion. The sacrilegious act hinted at in *De Beneficiis* is therefore not the de-sanctification of the consecrated item but the de-sanctification of the sacred bond between human beings living in a community. This would underline the interpretation that conventional communities expressed an underlying divine blueprint as well as support the social conservative hypothesis; any act that

would upset the general population was destabilising for concord and harmony and could therefore be seen as a sacrilegious act towards a divine bond. In this perspective, it is also possible to see why social and political duties were described as a sacred duty by Seneca elsewhere (cf. *Tranq*. 11,2).

Despite being critical, the Stoics, and especially Seneca, showed an ambivalence to the traditional cult, but in the final analysis they do not seem to have concluded, that they should end their participation in the cultic praxes. Notwithstanding this, the Cosmic City prompted a reconstitution of the observer who contemplated a deeper and more profound reality, as the observer would realise that the privileged access point to the divine was found within, not in external objects or sites, and the cosmic framework therefore spatially centred around the body of the Stoic practitioner. As the locus of the soul, the body took centre stage in how the Cosmic City as conceptual space appropriated all spaces, and the body thereby came to constitute itself, as will be explicated in the next chapter, a counter-space.

4 The Spiritual Transformation

As many cosmological frameworks do, the Cosmic City appropriated the bodies of the individual Stoics in an operation where the truth it represented should be embodied by the Stoics. The appropriation of the body formed the most important arena for how the conceptual space of the Stoics was sought represented in a way where it did not, "vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms" (cf. Lefebvre 1991, 42). The scheme of the Stoics' cosmological doctrines entailed that humanity was to be appreciated as citizens in the Cosmic City by virtue of humanity's divine nature. In addition to serving as a mirror for society, the Cosmic City would therefore simultaneously serve a mirror-function for the individual. The Cosmic City would in its mirror-function therefore have a re-constitutive effect on the Stoic by directing the gaze back upon herself as a privileged yet morally and existentially obligated citizen of this Cosmic City. Stoic philosophy therefore contained a model *for* the individual as well.[159]

The spirituality of the Stoics refers to the constitution of the subject through a principle of self-government, a training regime designed to obtain access to the truth and this resulted in the manifestation and the testimony of this truth in one's conduct and being, in embodiment (cf. Foucault 2011a, 320f). In one of his lecture series, Foucault examined how it is possible to discern four different ways the concept of

[159] The Stoics are often described as being particularly focused on the moral constitution of their political leaders, as can be seen in Seneca's mirror for princes-literature, cf. *De Clementia*, which was dedicated to the young Nero (cf. Braund 2009; Star 2012, chapter 4). From this, Debrabander argues the Stoics were primarily concerned with the moral constitution of the ruler and only secondarily the ruled (Debrabander 2008, 77). I surmise this priority has been overstated in the scholarship, as we also find in Stoicism a substantive and general interest in the moral constitution of their fellow citizens. It is this broader perspective that informs my examinations. This general aim of their moral-political transformative thought is often neglected, perhaps because the Stoics so visibly influenced the mirror for princes-literature of the Renaissance.

truth (ἀλήθεια) was qualified in Classical Greek thought: 1) truth was understood as that which was not concealed; 2) truth was understood as something that was not mixed or supplemented with something other than itself; 3) truth had the meaning of something being straight; and 4) truth's existence was immutable and incorruptible. These qualifications of truth extended beyond the truth-value of propositional statements and Foucault emphasised that these interconnected notions of truth were applicable to ways of being as well (Foucault 2011b, 218-220). Truth was therefore relevant in terms of qualifying the particular life of a person and Foucault attempted to outline the different ways these notions of truth structured the life of the ancient philosophers (cf. ibid., 221-225).

Although Foucault's primary focus was on the Cynics, we also find the same themes in Stoicism: 1) The true life was an unconcealed life that could stand up to scrutiny in the full light of day. Seneca's *Letters* expresses some of the very first historical instances of such self-scrutiny as does Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*.[160] In the *Meditations*, he reminded himself to demonstrate his soul to the gods continually; that is, to live in a way where he was able to show the gods confidently the disposition of his soul at any given moment (cf. Marcus Aurelius V.27; see also Epictetus III.2,13-14). 2) The true life as unmixed life was also present in Stoic thought. For instance, Seneca argued philosophy should be the primary priority in life that informed everything else (Seneca *Ep.* 72,3). Likewise, Epictetus emphasised that having commenced on the philosophical life, one should be consistent and not mix this life with other ways of living, whether a tax collector, a rhetorician, or a procurator (Epictetus III.15,13). 3) The truthful life was straight, insofar that this life was in line with the principles presented in the philosophical doctrines. Epictetus makes it clear that one could rest easy if one lived consistently with and did not deviate from the Stoic doctrines (Epictetus III.2,13-14; cf. Seneca *Ep*. 108,13-16). 4) The

[160] See Edwards (1997) for an examination of how self-scrutiny is coupled to self-transformation in Seneca's thought.

immutability of truth showed itself in the Stoic sage who was incorruptible in the face of perturbations and the sage's knowledge that was unalterable and entirely secure (Marcus Aurelius V.26; Seneca *Con*. 10,4; Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att*. XIX.1; cf. Arius Didymus II.7,51 = *LS* 41H).[161]

The Stoics should embody the truth and this was only possible if one underwent the necessary self-transformation.

4.1 Transforming Subjectivity

In this self-transformation, it is possible to see how the cosmological worldview of the Stoics appropriated the bodies of the Stoic practitioners through a regime of asceticism, as one needed to subject oneself to a set of meticulously tailored praxes of the body and mind. The Greek word ἄσκησις translates into 'training,' 'exercise,' or 'practice' and this provides the starting point for a theory of asceticism. According to Gavin Flood, asceticism is a "range of habits or bodily regimes" employed to subject the body according to an ideological framework, "that maintains that in so doing a greater good or happiness can be achieved." In this way, asceticism refers to how such an ideological framework, "patterns the body or imposes order upon it" (Flood 2004, 4). Although I agree with this, Flood, unfortunately, over-emphasises asceticism as the entextualisation of a religious tradition on the body (cf. ibid., 9). He stresses asceticism's connection to an underlying existing religious framework under which it is encompassed and his point of departure is, therefore, asceticism as part of a well-developed religious institution. Flood's insistence on coupling asceticism to a religious tradition is in risk of slighting that ascetic practices is instantiated as part of a self-transformation that is not necessarily part of a religious institution nor neces-

[161] It was discussed among the Stoics what the pattern of reaction of the sage would be in relation to external perturbations. Bonhöffer argued that the sage, according to Epictetus, was emotionally unmoved from the outset (1890, 309f) but this view has been challenged by Sorabji (2002, 50n102). Although some Stoics argued that the sage would be subject to wrong impressions (φαντασία), they simultaneously concluded that the sage never would give assent (συγκατάθεσις) to those impressions. Thereby, the immutability was maintained.

sarily religious. Instead, I would suggest asceticism as a phenomenon is spiritual in the Foucauldian sense and is aimed at any sort of self-transformation of one's being for a higher or existential purpose. As a phenomenon, it furthermore seems rather to be opposing tradition and not supporting it; it is, as Valantasis argues, not training for the sake of a dominant society but training for an alternative and subversive identity (Valantasis 2008, 82).[162] Flood's initial and correct determination serves as an excellent point of departure but can advantageously be elaborated by ascetic theories that emphasise the criticism that follows from self-transformation.

For Nietzsche, certain individuals have an inner spiritual tension; that is, a tendency to seek, "the continual 'self-overcoming of man'" (Nietzsche 2003a, §257: 192).[163] This overcoming presupposes something that needs to be overcome and asceticism – if one understands it as a praxis of overcoming – is necessarily deeply ingrained in counter-cultural praxes. The counter-cultural impetus in self-overcoming arose for Nietzsche directly in relation to the social relations of power. It has and will only develop, in Nietzsche's mind, in aristocratic societies, by which he meant those societies in which an initially barbarian group has had the will to subjugate a peaceful group and ratify its nobility (cf. ibid). In other words, this inner spiritual tension as a will to overcome one's own limited being arises, for Nietzsche, from externality – from the uneven hierarchy of aristocratic societies – and this externality of difference is then projected inwards. Asceticism is, therefore, intricately connected to social relations in a quite specific way that breaks with the existing order and tradition. This aspect of asceticism is also emphasised by Valantasis who describe asceticism as

[162] A point in case that asceticism is not unproblematically coupled to a religious tradition is the Christian monasteries. The monastery represents how a religious institution, like the Catholic Church, attempted to enclose the counter-cultural praxes of the hermits and coenobites within a Church sanctioned institutional framework.

[163] Nietzsche opposed the life-negating ascetic priests of Christianity to the life-affirming ascetics of philosophers, artists, warriors, etc. (Nietzsche 2003b, §III.28: 118). See Sloterdijk for insightful treatment of Nietzsche's ascetic ideals (Sloterdijk 2013, 29-39).

being, "designed to inaugurate an alternative culture, to enable different social relations, and to create a new identity" (Valantasis 2002, 548; 2008, 54f).

Nietzsche's appreciation of the inner tension to overcome oneself and become something beyond one's current self is prevalent in his authorship and it shares an apparent affinity to the thoughts about transformative spirituality in a post-Nietzschean thinker like Foucault. Nietzsche's concern has also shaped Sloterdijk's recent examination of the function of asceticism in human history. Taking as departure the inner spiritual tension, Sloterdijk explains that history is ample with examples of how the individual experiences an inner vertical axis, which demands a self-transformation. According to Sloterdijk, this inner vertical axis forms a part of human psychology in much, if not most, of human history, but it became especially prevalent from the time of the so-called Axial Age onwards, insofar this marks the point in time where humanity's relation to itself became deliberately self-transformative (Sloterdijk 2013, 197). For the individual who senses this inner tension, her current subjectivity must be rejected and she must become a 'mountain climber' to attain the desired subjectivity found at the 'summit' of the figurative 'Mount Improbable' (cf. ibid., 188).[164] With this allegory, Sloterdijk seeks to explain how a spiritual tension results in a set of ascetic praxes, implemented in order to ensure the vertical ascension and the self-overcoming of one's self.[165]

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[164] Sloterdijk borrows the term 'Mount Improbable' from the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins who uses it to convey the improbable direction of biological evolution (ibid., 118). This underlines Sloterdijk's interest to account for humanity's evolutionary history on both the biological and cultural level through the phenomenon of asceticism. Sloterdijk's entire survey forms an argument for a collective evolutionary demand in the future (ibid., 451).

[165] Sloterdijk's examinations are captivating but his philosophy of history is problematic, I believe. He explains how humanity vertically has ascended this figurative evolutionary mountain by virtue of individual actors existentially driven by their inner vertical tension. The exploits of these individual actors have then continually elevated the 'base camp' (where the rest of society resides), and they thereby provide the basis for human development. Sloterdijk's perception of history prioritises the unique and exceptional historical actor as the driving force of history and this focus on the unique individual is continued in his other works. *Die Verachtung der Massen* (2000) forms a critique of how contemporary society (the base camp) rejects natural and innate differences between themselves and the extraordinary individual (the mountain climber). This should be read in connection with his

A common feature in asceticism as phenomenon is, therefore, as Valantasis argues, the concern with, "the articulation and construction of a particular subjectivity that defines the sort of agency and identity toward which the ascetic moves," as well as articulating a particular subjectivity, "away from which the ascetic withdraws" (Valantasis 1995, 795; cf. 2008, 42f). This was also the focal point of Foucault's term spirituality that entailed a praxis set up against a background of errors, bad habits, and deformities which needs to be eliminated (Foucault 2005a, 94; 1990, 91f). Between this rejected subjectivity and the desired subjectivity, the ascetic is located; that is, in a position not identifiable with neither subjectivity (Valantasis 1995, 800f). This description of asceticism dovetails with Stoicism as a philosophy intent on the existential transformation of one's being. In other words, the Stoic – as an ascetic – was stretched between two images of herself; a rejected subjectivity and the desired subjectivity. Once these subjectivities provided the schematics for an individual re-orientation, the Stoic practitioner would initiate the progress (προκοπή) towards the desired subjectivity (the sage) and would become what in Stoic terminology was called a προκόπτων, a person who was doing progress (cf. Epictetus *Ench*. 12, 13, 48; Seneca *Ep*. 75,8-18).[166]

4.1.1 Bridging the Gap

According to Sellars, Stoic philosophy was understood as a distinct craft belonging to an overall genus containing different crafts (τέχναι) (such as navigation, medi-

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book *Rage and Rime* (2010), in which he criticises how mass movements historically have utilised social indignation in an attempt to transform society. Unlike mass movements, the individual heroic actor serves as an adequate transformative device as long as it is done according to the Lockean dictum of rights to life, freedom, and property (2010, 228). Sloterdijk therefore continues Nietzsche's estimation of 'slave morality,' while embedding it in a justification of a Lockean liberal worldview (cf. Sloterdijk 2013, 130). A similar point has also been made by Zižek (2008, 165) and van Tuinen (2012).

[166] According to Diogenes Laërtius the Stoics did not operate with intermediate categories between virtue and vice (DL VII.127), which indicates that the category of προκόπτων might have been a later development in Stoicism. According to Bonhöffer, the category owes its inception to Chrysippus (1996, 193), while Sellars suggests that it might have been an even later conception (2009, 63n45). Either way, the distinction is visible in Imperial Stoicism.

cine, fishing, dancing, etc.). To explain what this entails, Sellars refers to Socrates who distinguished a craft (τέχνη) from mere tricks insofar a craft was constituted by a special relationship between theory and practice. As such, the technician who mastered a craft was able to both give a theoretical and rational account (λόγος) of why certain actions were required, while simultaneously being able to do these acts skilfully (Plato *Gorg*. 465a). For Sellars, because Stoic philosophy was seen as a craft, we are able to identify both a practical aspect – i.e. doing the acts of philosophy, which, like the skills of the builder, was learned through exercises (ἄσκησις) – as well as a know-how that forms the theoretical backdrop of these acts (cf. Sellars 2009, 49). As noted in 1.1.1, I find it more likely that the Stoics' appreciation of the similarity between philosophy and other crafts (like medicine) served as a communicative and conceptual strategy and not as a definite (and botanising) determination of philosophy as a distinct species within a genus; however, the distinction to which Sellars points is nevertheless present in the ideas of the Stoics. For Seneca, Stoic philosophy was comprised of both theory (*contemplativus*) and practice (*activus*), as it concerned itself with both observation (*specto*) and conduct (*ago*) (Seneca *Ep*. 95,10). From this distinction, it is possible to appreciate that the realisation of true nature, what could be termed truthful being, required two different training regimes, one concerned with rational thinking and one concerned with rational acting. Both of these were essential if the rational and divine nature was to be realised.

Discoursing, lecturing, the writing of treatises and commentaries, attacking logical inconsistencies, discussing syllogistic fallacies, etc., all these different expressions of philosophy might be subsumed under the term proposed by Hadot, 'theoretical philosophical discourse' (Hadot 2004, 138), and it was primarily within this regime that the Stoic worldview was presented coherently and through a logical chain of arguments. In this regime, the Stoic axioms and dogmas were presented, explained, examined, and defended against attacks from the rival philosophical schools, as well as forming the dimension where the positions of the rival schools,

their axioms and their dogmas, were corrected, challenged, and refuted. Besides inquiries into truth, the purpose of this regime was to secure the right tools and abilities to assess and distinguish between true and false statements, what the Stoics labelled 'sayables' (τὰ λεκτά). It was, as Epictetus phrased it, the purpose of this regime to establish a standard of measurement, without which the entire endeavour would be impossible (Epictetus I.17,4-12).

However, despite its fundamental position, the Stoics did not value it for its own sake. Seneca bemoaned to his friend Lucilius that many contemporary philosophical teachers were rather concerned with teaching arguments than how to live. Philosophy had, according to Seneca, transformed into a study of words rather than wisdom (Seneca *Ep*. 108,24; *Ep*. 88,37). Likewise, Seneca would lament that syllogisms were given a much too prominent position within the philosophical teachings, as they now seemed to be some kind of intellectual play and not a matter of wisdom: "A 'mouse' is a syllable. A mouse eats cheese; therefore, a syllable eats cheese" (Seneca *Ep*. 48,6). These kinds of amusements did not fit the serious philosopher, who should have interest in how to live and how to die (Seneca *Ep*. 24,7-8). But Seneca did not reject the theoretical regime; he rather pointed out that it should never occupy a role that was isolated from the end goal of life: living according to nature.[167] The same position was expressed by Musonius Rufus who criticised anyone who overemphasised the theoretical regime, as he advised that women and men who took up philosophy should not do so for arguments (λόγος) and cleverness (δεινότης) (Musonius Rufus IV.48,20-23).[168] Neither men nor women should overemphasise the

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[167] Griffin points out that Seneca seems to continue the Panaetian redefinition of this Stoic dictum into 'life according to the starting point given by nature' (Griffin 1976, 179). I agree with Griffin insofar Seneca clearly allows that Stoicism could be taken up by anyone and he allowed for degrees of commitment. Thus, like the rest of the Stoics, Seneca expressed the idea that any specific conventional role in society could be conducted rationally. That being said, Seneca does in my mind never convey the idea that conventional social roles will ever be able surpass the privileged role of the philosopher in relation to living according to nature.

[168] Among the Imperial Stoics Musonius Rufus is the most vocal exponent of philosophy's claim on women. His 'feminism' has been discussed by G.E.M. de Ste. Croix (1983, 98-111), Foucault (1986a,

philosophical discourse: "Praxis (ἔθος) takes precedence over theory (λόγος), because it is better at (ἐστι κυριώτερον) leading people to action (πρᾶξις) than theory is" (Musonius Rufus V.52,2-4). As Valantasis has noted, theory, for Musonius, is only of value once it is being performed (Valantasis 1999, 218). Similarly, Epictetus was not impressed by syllogisms or treatises. In fact, Epictetus criticised those who would strut around in borrowed plumes, calling themselves philosophers while only having interest in the theoretical dimension (Epictetus II.17,26-27; II.19). Theory in itself could prepare one for neither death nor political exile but needed the practical exercises for this (II.1,31-38). Those who preferred to engage with theory and never went beyond the philosophical treatises had not even crossed the border into the domain of philosophy, Epictetus emphasised (II.16,34). It was most likely for the very same reasons that Marcus Aurelius would give thanks for having had avoided the pitfalls of theoretical sophistry (Marcus Aurelius I.7). It is visible here that philosophy as a phenomenon was being debated and the Imperial Stoics were clearly in opposition to philosophers who prioritised only the theoretical philosophical discourse. However, these points of criticism were not a rejection of the regime of theoretical philosophical discourse *per se*, but simply a reminder that the end goal of self-transformation should ultimately determine all endeavours within this regime.[169] To aid this transformation the regime of theoretical philosophical discourse needed to be coupled to a regime of philosophical praxis.[170]

173-216), and especially Martha Nussbaum (cf. 1994, 2002). See also Grahn-Wilder's recent treatment that discusses Nussbaum's work on the subject (2018, 159-176).

169 Sellars argues that the theoretical elements functioned as the privileged regime with the practical exercises serving as a supplement (Sellars 2009, 108f). Pierre Hadot has likewise stated that the theoretical element would initiate the studies, followed by practical exercises and with the theoretical element concluding the programme (Hadot 2001, 98). Epictetus makes it clear that the theoretical regime is necessary (cf. Epictetus I.17,4-12) but remains somewhat ambiguous elsewhere where he seems to have given priority to the practical element (Epictetus II.16,3-4; III.2,4; *Ench*. 52,1-2). Given the reciprocal interplay between theory and praxis, it is perhaps feasible that any of these two elements could serve as the starting point of the other – as long as one started philosophising.

170 It is these philosophical praxes that Hadot examined as spiritual exercises. I would argue – and I surmise Hadot might agree despite making them oppositional (cf. Hadot 2004, 138) – that the theo-

The philosophical discourse and the philosophical praxis were mutually complementary and enhancing. The philosophical discourse provided the instrument of measurement and gave reason for the philosophical praxis and the philosophical praxis gave expression to the philosophical discourse. Both were initiated for existential reasons. For the Stoic, both regimes were needed to bridge the gap between her current subjectivity and the desired subjectivity. The philosophical praxis itself took two different forms: intellectual meditation and physical exercises.[171] Epictetus recommended daily training centred on exercises of meditation (μελέτη) and physical exercises (γυμνασία) (Epictetus I.1,25) and he might herein have continued a distinction which was also present in the thought of his teacher Musonius Rufus, who discussed two types of training: training intended directly for the soul – which we might identify as intellectual meditation – and training centred around bodily exercises, that indirectly influenced the disposition of the soul, which we might then identify as physical exercises (Musonius Rufus VI.52,5-56,11).[172]

4.1.1.1 Spiritual Digestion

For Foucault, the intellectual meditation could be described as an imaginary and contemplative preparation (μελέτη) for possible future events (Foucault 1988, 36f). Μελέτη (lat. *meditatio*) was a technical term from the rhetorical discipline and translates into 'exercise' or 'attention.' In rhetoric, its precise meaning was that of mentally anticipating a specific rhetorical situation and argument (ibid.). Its background in the rhetorical discipline seems, however, to have misled Foucault slightly. Although it does refer to mental anticipations, as Foucault suggested, it also seems to have encompassed a larger framework of intellectual meditation on and digestion of the

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retical discourse equally should be subsumed under the spiritual exercises, since it too was a necessary requirement for the spiritual transformation of the subject.

[171] There is a plethora of textual evidence for the ascetic thought and practices of the Imperial Stoics and a complete examination of these in their own right would require a study of its own. I shall limit my treatment to a brief outline of how the ascetic praxes seem to have been structured.

[172] Francis is therefore mistaken in claiming that Musonius's dual distinction is not reproduced in Epictetus's teachings (cf. Francis 1995, 16).

philosophical doctrines. The specific purpose and mechanics of this type of spiritual exercise seems to have been conceptualised as a sort of spiritual digestion by the Imperial Stoics and Sellars therefore terms this dimension 'digestion' (πέψις) (cf. Epictetus II.9,18, III.21,1-4 & *Ench*. 46; Seneca *Ep*. 2,2-4; Marcus Aurelius X.31,2; Sellars 2009, 121f). The purpose of this digestion was, as the term implies, to digest the philosophical doctrines and let them become part of one's being. As Hadot demonstrated it, the Stoics operated with a set of exercises that corresponded to each branch of their philosophical system (i.e. 1: physics, 2: logic, 3: and ethics). These three branches explicated three different domains of reality (1: cosmic nature, 2: the faculty of judgment, 3: and human nature) from which it is possible to identify three different kinds of activities (1: desire, 2: judgment, 3: and action) that needed to be monitored and properly adjusted if necessary by three corresponding attitudes (1: by consent to destiny, 2: by objectivity, 3: and by justice and altruism) (cf. Hadot's table 2001, 44). For instance, logic was used as a tool for monitoring cognitive judgments and was, therefore, "applied to the problems of everyday life. Logic was thus the mastery of inner discourse" (ibid., 135). Likewise, cosmic nature (i.e. the Cosmic City) gave rise to the spiritual exercises of contemplating reality beyond the filter of conventions, passions, and prejudices (ibid., 136). Thereby, Hadot concluded, "the philosopher is always perfectly aware not only of what he is doing, but also of what he is thinking (this is the task of lived logic) and of what he is – in other words, of his place within the cosmos. This is lived physics" (ibid., 138).[173]

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[173] The literary composition of Epictetus's *Enchiridion* was structured along these lines (cf. Hadot 2001, 326n30; for a similar identification of the themes but slightly different compositional division of the text, see Sellars 2009, 134ff). See also Epictetus I.4,11 and III.2,1-2. For the same composition in Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*, see VII.54, VIII.7, IX.6. Bonhöffer initially proposed the existence of this division in 1894 (Bonhöffer 1996, 32-165) and according to Hadot, it was Epictetus's most significant contribution to the Stoic philosophical system (Hadot 2001, 83). The strict insistence on division has, however, been criticised by Dobbin (Dobbin 1998, 164) and it has therefore been nuanced slightly by Sellars (2009, 136n31).

The contemplative exercises could manifest itself in various exercises, of which I shall mention only a few. This could be morning meditations, in which the Stoic would mentally prepare for her day: what could she expect of the day and what kind of Stoic doctrines could she employ to master possible or definite events (cf. Marcus Aurelius II.1). It could also take the form of evening meditations where the events of the day were scrutinised and thoroughly examined to determine if one had met any event (whether expected or unexpected) as it was philosophical required (cf. Seneca *Ira* III.36). Hiercocles presented another exercise, commonly referred to as Hierocles' Circle, and seems to have been firmly established in the psychological theory of appropriation (οἰκείωσις).[174] Expressed in outward going circles, moving from the individual at the centre and outwards, the Stoic would attempt to contract the widening circles into the centre mentally, thus conflating her concern with self for her concern for family, friends, and fellow human beings (cf. Hierocles *Acts* 90,7-91,22).[175] Marcus Aurelius especially showed a liking to an exercise in which he would visualise himself as an onlooker from above. Taking a high vantage point – like a bird, he writes – he would contemplate everything in the cosmos and meditate on its proper relations and its proper nature, thereby allowing himself to make a detached analysis of the things that initially would stir him (Marcus Aurelius VII.48; IX.30). The most famous of the Stoic exercises was the *premeditatio mallorum*, in which the Stoic would visualise the worst possible events she could imagine; this could be an exile, imprisonment or torture, or the death of a child (cf. Epictetus III.24,88). Rationally analysing these seemingly bad events would help to reveal their true relation to the Stoic and reveal that such things were not in one's control and

[174] Mitsis has questioned that Hierocles' circle expresses the theory of social οἰκείωσις and furthermore challenges that it was meant to negate intersubjective difference (cf. Mitsis 2017, 176ff). I follow the orthodox interpretation.

[175] Hierocles' circle thus corresponds somewhat in outlook and purpose to *metta* (loving-kindness) meditation as it is practiced in Buddhism. Despite obvious differences, there are also clear similarities between Buddhism and Stoicism, especially in its soteriological structure (cf. Kapstein 2013).

therefore were indifferent to the spiritual transformation. Forestalling the events, the Stoic would thus be mentally prepared to employ the rational conclusion of her analysis in the case such an event ever took place.

Connected to this intellectual contemplation was the personal notes (ὑπομνήματα). Most famous are Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* – which were not a journal in a modern sense, although it has sometimes been read as such[176] – that constituted a spiritual exercise, in which Marcus Aurelius would contemplate events in his life and write short reminders to himself on how to overcome them on the basis of Stoic philosophy. These personal notes served as a method to digest the Stoic dogmas and principles. The notion of digestion is especially clear in a passage where Marcus encourages himself to continue with his training until the Stoic dogmas have been assimilated (ἐξοικειόω) with himself like the digestive system assimilates food (X.31,2). Another example of a collection of personal notes was Arrian's *Enchiridion.* The *Enchiridion* was a collection of shorter excerpts from Epictetus's lectures, which presented Epictetus's Stoicism in a condensed form. The *Enchiridion* does not contain any sophisticated philosophical arguments but is entirely related to the philosophical praxis structured by the three branches of Stoic philosophy (cf. Hadot 2001, 326n30). The *Enchiridion*, coming from the word ἐγχειρίδιον (knife, dagger), was a philosophical handbook. According to the Neo-Platonic philosopher Simplicius, the word ἐγχειρίδιον has its root in χείρ (hand) and this denoted the implication that the philosopher should have this handbook ready at hand like a soldier would his dagger (Simplicius *Epic. Ench.* 1,25-27; 2,30-44; ed. Brittain & Brennan 2013). The purpose of these personal notes (ὑπομνήματα) was to keep the philosophical dogmas and principles close at hand (πρόχειρος) and mentally present at all times (cf. Epictetus *Ench*. 1,5).[177]

[176] It was therefore, as pointed out by Rutherford, not intended for publication (Rutherford 1989, 10).
[177] Cf. Epictetus I.1,21, I.27,6, II.1,29, II.9,18, III.10,1, III.10,18, III.11,5, III.17,6, III.18,1.

All Stoics would have practised some of the methods of spiritual digestion, as the underlying function of these within the Stoic training programme was to aid a transformation of their being. Through mental repetitions of doctrines, the intellectual anticipation of future events, and retroactive analyses of previous events, it became possible to convert the Stoics' theoretical doctrines into mental praxis and thereby it was possible to change one's subjectivity.

4.1.1.2 Spiritual Habituation

The spiritual digestion of philosophical doctrines was closely connected to a concomitant set of physical exercises which was understood as spiritual habituation. As pointed out by Sellars, the term translated as 'habituation' (ἐθισμός) is derived from 'habit' (ἔθος), which in turn is related to 'character' or 'disposition' (ἦθος), and it therefore indicates that this type of spiritual exercises was employed to acclimatise one's being to the philosophical doctrines (Sellars 2009, 119).

The Stoics found that their doctrines should be reflected in the habits of everyday life and they therefore regarded habituation as a vital element of the spiritual transformation (cf. Epictetus *Ench*. 10; Marcus Aurelius 10,37).[178] The contemplative exercises of spiritual digestion were therefore augmented by this praxis of habituation. Habituation was intricately connected to a set of physical exercises (γυμνασία) in which the philosophical doctrines were tested and incorporated into the Stoic practitioner's being. According to Foucault, this took two forms: firstly, as training in relation to random events – a natural disaster, the death of a friend, being exiled, etc. – that constituted obvious possibilities for testing and training one's disposition (cf. Epictetus IV.4,45). Secondly, if such events failed to happen, or the Stoic practitioner simply wanted to prepare for such events, the physical exercises could centre on artificially constructed events (cf. Foucault 1988, 37). The latter was self-

[178] See also Epictetus II.9,10, II.9,14, II.18,4, III.8,4, III.12,6, III.25,10 & Marcus Aurelius IV.36, V.16.

induced and proactive while the former related to maintaining the correct attitude in everyday life.

The progressing philosopher should reconceptualise any event as an opportunity to test her current disposition. Particularly suited for such testing, the Stoics argued, would be events like exile. Epictetus made the case that the real punishment was not the exile but to remain in the same mental and subjective condition (Epictetus I.12,21). The exile therefore served as a way of testing to what extent the philosophical doctrines had been digested and successfully transformed the soul. To be exiled could reveal one's progress and, if this was one's fate, serve as a proper opportunity for further personal development. In the lectures of Musonius Rufus, it is possible to see, as Whitmarsh points out, that exile, "is not merely a juridical state, but also a metaphor for a philosophical identity. Indeed, to be exiled is to undergo a form of *rite de passage*. […] the subject travels abroad in a state of ignorance and returns in a state of wisdom", and Whitmarsh therefore concludes that the exile is, "a form of 'training' turning the inchoate human into a fully-formed philosopher […] a philosophical initiation, a transition to mature manhood" (Whitmarsh 2001a, 147f; cf. also 2001b). The exile was therefore reconceptualised into something for which the Stoic philosopher could actively hope. This might seem extreme but the transformation of one's soul required hardship and testing; one needed the mentality of the athlete, Epictetus told his students:

> I suppose some of you seated here are in anguish and say to yourself: "why have such crisis (περίστασις) not yet come to me as has come to him? I am wasting my life in the corner while having the ability (δύναμαι) to be crowned at the Olympic Games. When shall a struggle (ἀγών) such as this be announced to me?" All of you need to think like this! (Epictetus I.29,36).

Like Epictetus, Seneca considered the philosopher in the same athletic terms. Similar to the wrestler (*athleta*) who only trains with the strongest opponents to secure the proper progress, the virtue (*virtus*) of the philosopher could only thrive by having

strong opponents (*adversarius*) (Seneca *Prov.* 2,1-4). Testing and development through hardships were given their existential meaning through the Cosmic City in which Zeus ruled as the supreme sovereign. This framework of divine hierarchy was presented as a contractual relationship by Epictetus: it was Zeus' right to present the hardships (προτείνω), but everyone else's obligation to contemplate (μελετάω) a good plan to manage them and then go about and do it (Epictetus I.29,40).

If such life crisis failed to happen, a commendable praxis was to introduce a training regime on one's own initiative. Musonius Rufus and Epictetus emphasised physical exercise (γυμνασία) as an important element in the spiritual transformation, since this, as Musonius Rufus taught his students, had an indirect influence on the disposition of the soul. Thus, Musonius Rufus would tell his students that:

> We will use the training (ἄσκησις) which is common to both [i.e. both body and soul] when we habituate (συνεθίζω) ourselves to cold, heat, thirst, hunger, lack of sustenance, a hard bed, when we maintain moderation in pleasures and endures suffering (Musonius Rufus VI.54,11-14).

This kind of physical habituation also played a large part in the life of Marcus Aurelius, who gave thanks that he had been accustomed to the 'Greek disciplining' by his teacher Diognetus (Marcus Aurelius I.6). Likewise, Seneca wrote to Lucilius that: "If you want leisure (*vaco*) for the soul (*animus*), you should either be poor (*pauper*) or live like a poor man. Studies cannot be useful unless you make sure to practice temperance, and temperance is voluntary poverty" (Seneca *Ep*. 17,5). Poverty constituted an excellent climate for training, but if one, like Seneca, was rich, one should devise training sessions just like the athlete would; that is, sections of time in which the body was subject to a different kind of bodily regime. For this reason, Seneca suggested that the festival of Saturnalia served as an excellent occasion for such a training session. Seneca advocated fasting and dressing modestly while everyone else indulged in the festivities (*Ep*. 18,5). As such, the festival – being itself a heterotopological inversion and venting mechanism – was inverted by the Stoics. These events

of material abundance, Seneca clarified, served the most excellent opportunity to test (*experimentum*) oneself and provided an obvious potential for strengthening (*firmo*) the soul (*Ep*. 18,6-7).

While the Stoics showed clear appreciation of proactive engagement with methods for spiritual transformation, the methodology was, however, not well-developed and the Stoics did, as far as we know, little in terms of treating their methodology extensively or analytically (see for instance Musonius Rufus rudimentary treatment in VI.54,27-30). The physical exercises were not based in a comprehensive training manual but seem to have followed a principle of individual dosage. If a Stoic practitioner had certain bad habits or problematic inclinations, she (or her teacher) could administer a dosage of a set of corresponding exercises ideally suited to counterbalance the specific habit or inclination (cf. Epictetus I.27,3-6; II.18; III.12). In other words, if the Stoic in question had a propensity towards luxurious and excessive feasting, this could be counterbalanced by eating grout or not eating at all for a given period. Thus, the physical exercises followed a principle of an individually tailored treatment based on the specific ills that needed to be addressed. Eventually, however – and this seems to have been an important point in Musonius Rufus's distinction between exercises for the soul (μελέτη) and exercises for both soul and body (γυμνασία) – the training connected specifically to bodily exercises would prove less and less necessary as the Stoic practitioner progressed. This indicates that as the soul transformed, the soul was expected to become increasingly able to exercise its authority more forcefully on the body.

Through the digestion (πέψις) and habituation (ἐθισμός) of the philosophical doctrines, the Stoic practitioner would strategically provide a new set of habits and transform old habits (ἒθος) until a different character (ἦθος) was achieved and the thoughts and actions naturally flowed from truthful being. It is pertinent to emphasise that this transformation in one's being was not understood as being merely a matter of a change in moral or mental attitude but it was a change in the disposition

of the soul. The soul (ψυχή) was a corporeal entity and it was identified as the divine breath (πνεῦμα) at a certain tension (τόνος), and the further the soul had developed towards cultivation of its divine nature, the more the soul had reached an increased state of tension; like trained vs untrained muscles, Sellars points out (Sellars 2009, 125f). As it was expounded by the Stoics, since the soul was a material entity, their spiritual exercises resulted in a different disposition of the soul like the difference between an open and a clenched fist (SE *Ph*. 2,81-83 = *LS* 33P). In other words, the spiritual transformation envisaged by the Stoics was an actual physical transformation of the soul.

4.1.2 Displacements of Identities

Paying heed to the demands following from cosmic citizenship, the Stoic practitioner commenced on the path of spiritual transformation towards the desired subjectivity, leaving a rejected subjectivity behind. With his analogy of the so-called Mount Improbable, Sloterdijk distinguishes between the summit of the mountain, the mountain climber, and the base camp (similar to Valantasis' distinction between the desired subjectivity, the ascetic, and the rejected subjectivity). In the intermediate category between these two poles, the Stoic practitioner was left with an unresolved subjectivity and this intermediate state of any ascetic finds, according to Sloterdijk, expression in an ascetic 'height psychology' (Sloterdijk 2013, 111-130). This tripartition embedded in the mountain analogy is a testimony to Sloterdijk's Nietzschean perspective, as he explicates the ascetic height psychology by taking as departure a passage in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in which the self-overcoming of humanity throughout successive generations is laid out (Sloterdijk 2013, 111; cf. Nietzsche 2006, 51).

To explain this height-psychology, Sloterdijk rightly emphasises how Nietzsche incisively appreciates the change in social dynamics that result from the process of self-overcoming, as it is in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that Nietzsche presented

his distinction between the 'superman' (*Übermensch*) and 'the last human being' (*der letzte Mensch*). Nietzsche's 'anthropological' presentation of these two groups of people, whom he found to populate the world (the latter being in the majority), explains the displacement of the ascetic when she articulates a new identity for herself. In the book, written with Nietzsche's contemporaries in mind, one passage reveals the counter-cultural impetus that Valantasis emphasised defined the ascetic. As the harbinger of self-overcoming, Zarathustra descends from the mountain on which he has stayed and attempts to morally encourage his listeners by appealing to their inner vertical tension and tells them that:

> It is time that mankind plant the seed of their highest hope. Their soil is still rich enough for this. But one day this soil will be poor and tame, and no tall tree will be able to grow from it anymore. Beware! The time approaches when human beings no longer launch the arrow of their longing beyond the human, and the string of their bow will have forgotten how to whir! […] The time of the most contemptible human is coming, the one who can no longer have contempt for himself. Behold! I show you *the last human being* (Nietzsche 2006, 9).

Not everyone gives credence to the vertical tension's existential demand, as is the point of this scene. Complacent with their current subjectivity, the spectators of Zarathustra have seized to strive beyond themselves (beyond man) because they no longer despise their own inadequacy. These were, according to Nietzsche, the last men. At this point, Zarathustra's listeners interrupt him and exclaim: "Give us this last human being […] Make us into these last human beings!" (ibid., 10). The majority rejects Zarathustra's moral teachings and desire the pleasant and safe life of the last man. The last man is without ambitions of personal development, is complacent with current affairs, and even more problematically believes the current disposition is the highest for which man could and should strive. In the imagery of Sloterdijk, these last men are the inhabitants of the base camp; in the terminology of Valantasis, they form part of the rejected subjectivity. The ascetic praxis, therefore, reorganises the social relations between the ascetic and the rest of society to the extent that vari-

ous social positions are differentiated from and defined against each other, often minting the new social relations with a negative imprint (Valantasis 1995, 796). The Stoics, in other words, articulated a new schematic of identity to which one could belong. First, the identity of the sage; second, the identity of the Stoic προκόπτων who is progressing towards sagehood; and third, the identity of the fools (φαῦλοι) from whom the Stoics were actively separating themselves. The gravity of this radical rejection should not be easily underestimated; the spiritual transformation could even require terminating old friendships if friends ineptly were stuck in the rejected subjectivity (cf. Epictetus III.22; IV.2,1-5; Foucault 2011b, 170ff). However, more importantly, it was the fools whom the Stoics attempted to persuade to undertake a self-overcoming.

4.2 The Semiotics of Embodiment

By this counter-cultural move, i.e. their spiritual transformation, the Stoics' bodies became effectively counter-spaces that were displaced from their fellow Romans in different ways. This led to a complex interplay between resentful rejection and compassionate care. Ideally, the sage – whom the Stoics should identify with – was, as Seneca wrote, "a pedagogue of the human race" (Seneca *Ep.* 89,13). This pedagogical role to their fellow human beings found expression in two different but interconnected ways: first, as a testimony of truth which should be displayed in the actions relating to everyday life as well as in physical appearance; second, as a strategy of truth-telling that was employed in speech.[179] These two expressions of truth both functioned as a semiotic system by pointing beyond themselves to the more significant underlying truth, the existence of the Cosmic City. Whether this truth had successfully been realised in the spiritual transformation or not, the Stoics would

[179] See also Foucault's examinations of four different modes of truth-telling in Antiquity, of which he found the ancient philosophers to mix the truth-telling of the 'sage' and the free-spoken 'parrhesiast' (Foucault 2001b, 15-28; also Nehemas 1998, 164-168 & Brown 1992, 62-70).

consciously as well as unconsciously communicate this truth through the medium of testimony and the medium of speech, and the Stoic life itself thereby constituted a continual communicative act that imparted a different worldview.

4.2.1 Testimony of Truth

According to Valantasis, a common characteristic of the ascetic praxis is performativity. Thus, an ascetic performs in front of an audience, whether this is herself, society, or a watchful god (Valantasis 1995, 798). In this performativity lies, therefore, a communicative dimension. The fact that physical actions can communicate meaning is apparent if we take the religious ritual as an example. Roy Rappaport extensively argued that ritual action has both an *allo*-communicative and *auto*-communicative function, insofar the physical performativity communicates information to those who observe (*allo*) the ritual performances as well as those who participate (*auto*) (Rappaport 1999, 51; see also 1979c).[180] Thus, ritual action contains meaning that is communicated externally as well as internally. However, other kinds of performativity can likewise communicate information and meaning, and it contains the same kind of dual-faced communication as the religious ritual does. The performativity of everyday life might be experienced unreflectively, but this does not mean that no information is attached or decipherable in it.[181]

Thus, the physical acts of the Stoics were themselves a sort of communication. Having had their bodies appropriated by their cosmological framework, the Stoics would conduct everyday life differently. Some parts of this everyday praxis became appropriated in the framework of ascetic abstention and self-privation but

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[180] Rappaport argued that in terms of communicating certain kinds of (especially existential) meaning, the performativity found in ritual action could be interpretatively clearer than an equivalent discursive statement (Rappaport 1999, 143f).

[181] That action is capable of being meaningful and that it can be analysed as such has similarly been argued by Paul Ricoeur (cf. 1973). Like Rappaport, Ricoeur sets about to argue for this through, among others, the speech act-theories of Austin and Searle (Ricoeur 1973, 99ff).

for the moment, one specific element of everyday life should be examined: public life in the service of the horizontal community.

4.2.1.1 Public Life as Testimony

Relevant for interpreting how the Stoics organised their participation in public life is their theory of actions. The Stoics' theory on actions was derived from their theory on appropriation (ὀικείωσις) (Cicero *Fin.* III.17,20-22 = *LS* 59D). In the spiritual development envisaged by the Stoics, it was possible to analyse a set of actions justifiable or suitable according to the developmental stage one had attained. The acts came in two different forms: the appropriate acts (καθήκοντα) and the perfect acts (κατορθώματα).[182] The first category described those acts that were justifiable and in accordance with one's nature and for this reason, both humans, non-rational animals, and plants could display this kind of activity (DL VII.107; Stob. *Anth*. II.85,13-86,4 = *LS* 59B). The second category pertained to humans only and described the kind of activity that was limited to the activity of the sage. The perfect acts were therefore also appropriate but the appropriate acts were not necessarily perfect (cf. Sellars 2006, 121). However, appropriate acts could be performed by anyone and they could coincide with the perfect acts of the sage (cf. Cicero *Fin*. III.58-59 = *LS* 59F), but while the actions could be similar in expression and outcome, the actions performed by the sage was qualified differently by being grounded in her virtuous disposition (cf. SE *M*. 11,200-201 = *LS* 59G; Gill 2009, 139). Diogenes Laërtius reported that appropriate activities for humans were in accordance with the rational impulse and they were therefore dictated by reason. Some of these were general (e.g.

[182] For the etymology of καθήκοντα, see Cooper (1998, 281n22). For an introduction to these ethical terms, see Tsekourakis's extensive treatment (1974, 1-60) or Bonhöffer (1996, 244-289). For a set of shorter but helpful examinations, see Cooper (1998, 275-279), Inwood & Donini (2005, 697-699), Long & Sedley (1988, 364-368). Although Tsekourakis found there to be a development from Hellenistic to later Stoicism, the content of the ethical theory seems, according to Brunt, to have been reasonably stable throughout Stoicism (cf. Brunt 2013, 122). However, Long has pointed out that Epictetus does not seem to employ the distinction between appropriate and perfect acts (Long 2010, 257).

taking care of the body) while others were circumstantial (DL VII.108-109). Thus, the concept of appropriate acts was an intermediate category that allowed the Stoics to distinguish in everyday activity between those acts that was unjustifiable in relation to their nature and those acts that corresponded to their nature as citizens of the Cosmic City.

Epictetus would often describe holding public office as similar to being an actor playing a particular role. If governorship presented itself, it was an opportunity to play that role to the best of abilities, while being vigilant to never misjudge the 'theatre props' as part of oneself (Epictetus I.29,41-44; cf. Epictetus III.7,21; Marcus Aurelius VI.30,1). This passage strongly implies that these political positions should not be actively pursued; it was not an argument for seeking careers, but they did require certain rational ways of acting. It was evident that actors would not confuse themselves with the part they played or confuse the theatre props with their property. Similarly, Epictetus argued, one should make sure not to make this mistake about one's part played in society. Continuing the analogy with a stage-play, Epictetus emphasised that public office functioned like a particular role in a play and to each role was a corresponding set of appropriate deeds (τὰ οἰκεῖα ἔργα) (Epictetus II.10,10-11). Thus, the various positions in society one could belong to (e.g. mother, daughter, governor, inn-keeper, etc.) had a discernible set of appropriate actions attached that could be identified partly through common sense (the suggested activity of an inn-keeper is obviously different from the activity of a blacksmith) but also by virtue of one's rational nature and participation in the Cosmic City. Marcus Aurelius, for instance, told himself when he was reluctant to leave bed in the morning that he was supposed to rise and do the work fitting for a rational animal. Just like the plants, animals, and insects all did their part to the orderliness of the cosmos; likewise, Marcus should do his part (Marcus Aurelius V.1).

One's status as a citizen in the cosmos therefore overdetermined the appropriate acts performed on the horizontal level. First, Epictetus explained, one

was a member of the Cosmic City and only then a member of a conventional city. In this latter scheme, individual standards were relative to one's societal position as, for instance, a musician, a carpenter, rhetor, or philosopher but all were determined by the primary citizenship (Epictetus III.23,4-5). In this, however, it might be argued that it is possible to discern a dynamic that would underpin a static society by carrying notions of 'cobble, stick to your last.' Such static notions might be visible when Hierocles addressed the question of procreation and disclosed a notion of social immobility and reproduction of social structures by stressing a relationship of debt to one's city: the priest owes priests; the ruler, rulers; the orator, orators; and the citizen, citizens (Hierocles *Acts* 80,20-22). It is, however, unlikely that the Stoics gave much thought to social mobility since this expresses the ambition to transcend one's current socio-cultural status. Ambition, they argued, was rooted in the appetite (ἐπίθυμος); for this reason, it should be rejected (cf. Stob. *Anth*. II.90,19-91,9 = *LS* 65A). Especially Hierocles seems to have displayed a conservative and static ideal, but the purpose of Stoic philosophy was in the final analysis not to make mobility possible within a structural and social hierarchy but to end the hierarchy altogether. Nevertheless, these horizontal standards were subject to the overarching framework in which one possessed the divine rationality.[183]

The appropriate acts that followed from being a member of the Cosmic City continued a centripetal force in the domain of Stoic ethics, as can be seen in Diogenes Laërtius who reported that reason dictates the appropriate activity of valuing (τιμάω) family and country (πατρίς) (DL VII.108).[184] This line of reasoning was

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[183] The close connection between appropriate acts and the cosmo-theological framework suggests that these acts could be interpreted as sacred acts (cf. Seneca *Tranq*. 11,2). A similar interpretation can be glimpsed in Hadot who pointed out the appropriate acts in themselves formed a spiritual exercise (cf. Hadot 1995, 86). For Francis, this sanctification of appropriate acts displays a conservative impetus (cf. Francis 1995, 3).

[184] It has been pointed out by Brunt that Panaetius's engagement with καθήκοντα led him to argue that one should, "act within the limits fixed by the place in society into which he was born and by his early choice of career" (Brunt 2013, 119). In this way Panaetius was able to provide a theoretical acceptance of following certain social patterns, insofar these patterns were conventionally under-

prevalent among the Imperial Stoics; Epictetus would distinguish among different kinds of appropriate acts, and some of these commanded a larger degree of care because they were determined by one's rational nature: the worship of God, citizenship, marriage, and care for offspring (Epictetus III.7,26). The appropriate acts could, therefore, be identified by the social relationship in which they were conducted. The relationship between a parent and child or between siblings defined what kind of activity was appropriate, and this was even so if one person in this relationship inadequately performed the social role that was expected for this relationship (cf. Epictetus *Ench*. 30). In other words, one sibling's bad behaviour did not justify the other sibling's bad behaviour; the appropriate activity was still that pertaining to a sibling. Epictetus's concern here was specifically traditional social relations but the social relations flowing from cosmic kinship was naturally also expected to have an appropriate activity incumbent upon someone. In a relevant passage, Epictetus emphasised the connection between appropriate acts and titles (e.g. the title as a parent, sibling, etc.). The title pertaining to any person was, first and foremost, that of a human being, and a human being was a citizen and privileged part of the Cosmic City. As such, it was possible to comprehend the divine plan of the Cosmic City, and this entailed that one should disregard private interests and not perceive oneself as cut off from the rest of community. Only secondary to this was one a member of a particular family or managing a particular political position (Epictetus II.10,1-12).[185]

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stood to be conducive to a particular social role in society, e.g. recreational hunting, a house suitable for entertaining, landed estates, etc. (ibid.). The Imperial Stoics continued the idea that certain social roles required specific social patterns (albeit heavily determined by Stoic moderation), but they did not express the notion of the fixity of an early choice of career; in fact, they seem rather to have stressed the futility of careers. The concept of appropriate acts indicates something incumbent upon someone, or, as pointed out by Cooper, "what it is your turn or your place to do" (Cooper 1998, 269). It is this meaning the term καθήκοντα connotes in both the thought of Zeno as well as Epictetus (cf. ibid., 281n22). Panaetius's reading of the term as a justification of the social conduct of a landed class is therefore not indicative of the general Stoic position, as Brunt however presents it.

[185] According to Dawson, the Imperial Stoics, unlike their Hellenistic predecessors, diluted the cosmic citizenship into the regular citizenship (cf. Dawson 1992, 235). Contrary to Dawson, I do not find

Social activity of different kinds should therefore be modelled by reference to the comprehension of the underlying reality. In other words, it was above all as a member of the divine cosmos that appropriate activity should be determined. Only through this perspective was one able to fully comprehend and grasp what actions were required on the horizontal level.

In a passage in Cicero, Cato explains the concept of appropriate acts and directs attention to a political consequence of this doctrine: that it is wrong to abandon (*prodo*) one's country (Cicero *Fin*. III.32 = *LS* 59L). Even though the concept of appropriate acts, as seen in this passage, provided an ethical basis for the centripetal underpinning of society, it does not express blind obedience to society, which Cato's actions also accentuated. The determinant of social and political activity in Rome was not Rome as a specific political entity, but rather Rome as a horizontal manifestation of the divine blueprint. The cosmic perspective thereby guided the political and social activity of the Stoics and infused it with meaning from this perspective. According to the historiographic sources, the Stoics were especially active during the last years of the Republic and the formative years of the Principate in what has sometimes been labelled the Stoic Opposition.[186] It is not the purpose of this dissertation to reconstruct how Stoic philosophy was coupled to particular political events but a brief intimation of how Stoic philosophy seems to have been involved in

any indications that the Hellenistic Stoics differed notably from the Imperial Stoics in this matter, both seem to me to emphasise a dual claim on humanity.

[186] In the scholarship, the interpretation of the political acts of these Stoic adherents is generally divided into two camps. The first camp is most forcefully expressed in MacMullen 1967, who saw the opponents of the Principate in the early Empire as being motivated by their philosophy (MacMullen 1967, 54). Brunt has interpreted these events along similar lines, though more cautiously (Brunt 1975). Wirszubski (1960, 136-171) and Syme (1958, chapter 41) however interpreted the motivations of these political actors rather as a matter of *realpolitik* than of philosophical doctrines, see also Rutledge (2001, 115, 357n23). Some scholars have attempted to balance these two camps (cf. Rutherford 1989, 59-80) while it has recently been argued that the struggle was one of competing political ideologies, Republicanism and Imperialism, and therefore neither philosophy nor *realpolitik* (Wilkinson 2012). As pointed out by Shaw, it is unlikely that anyone is mentally compartmentalised and have motivational factors layered and hierarchized (Shaw 1985, 48). I want therefore to emphasise that the survey I am about to present is an intimation, as we will never be able to establish with certainty the exact motivational factors informing the historical agents.

some capacity will be useful to underpin the point that the Stoic doctrines was embodied in political performativity.

Cato the Younger (95 – 46 BCE) was a stern Stoic who came to occupy a prominent position in the Stoic tradition. His figure loomed large in the mind of the Imperial Stoics who admired him greatly and equally to Socrates. In the defence speech for Lucius Murena, Cicero began by noting that Cato – who were the opposing jurist during this trial – organised his entire life according to the Stoic system (Cicero *Mur.* 3). Despite Cato's many virtues (54), the entire trial was needlessly pursued by Cato (58), mainly because Cato had been schooled in the Stoic system, a stern and uncompromising philosophy (*doctrina non moderata*) that exceeded even the intentions of nature (60-61). Cato had internalised these doctrines to a way of life (*sed ita vivendi*) (62), but this had made Cato rigid and stern, in need of a more lenient attitude, which Plato and Aristotle (Cicero's teachers) – who were not as radical as the founding Stoic, Zeno – could help him with (63-64). Consequently, Cicero's defence was based in launching an attack on Cato's Stoicism, which he considered too dogmatic and unfit for politics. Cicero also levelled this criticism in a personal letter, raising the concern that Cato lived as if he was an inhabitant in Plato's Republic, which in Cicero's mind made him dangerous to the wellbeing of the Roman Republic (*Ep. Att.* II.1; cf. also *Fin.* IV.61). Cato, in other words, were a Stoic idealist.

In 49 BCE, concerned by Julius Caesar's rising influence, Cato convinced the Senate to revoke Caesar's proconsular immunity and ordered him to return from Gaul to Rome as a civilian. Afraid of a possible trial, Caesar chose to march against Rome with his army (Plut. *Pomp.* 60,1). The Senate, led by Pompey, declared Caesar an enemy of Rome, but Caesar's swift move surprised his enemies and Pompey fled to Greece together with Cato to raise an army. Pompey's army was eventually defeated but Cato refused to end the civil war and fled to Utica. When Cato's cohort Metellus Scipio was defeated at Thapsus in 46 and the entire army slaughtered, Cato

admitted military defeat. Unwilling to accept Caesar's rule, Cato retreated to his room where he discussed Plato's conception of the soul with friends and subsequently committed suicide by gutting himself, thereby refusing Caesar the total victory (Plut. *Cat.* 70,5-6; 72,2). Suicide was customarily considered cowardice by the Greeks because it was seen as a desertion of duty but the Stoics challenged this view. For the Stoics, Cato's suicide had him raised to an ideal status equal to that of Socrates. Socrates' suicide was however slightly different, as it was sanctioned by Athenian law, and Socrates' compliance with the verdict, which he considered to be an unjust verdict, displayed subservience to the law. Cato's suicide, on the other hand, was imbued with contempt for an unjust authority. Though both acts were much lauded in Antiquity, Socrates' suicide was one of subservience to authority, whereas Cato's suicide was a political assault, a politicisation and weaponisation of the suicide. Normally reserved for military victors, Pliny the Elder gave Cato the cognomen *Uticensis* (the Utican) and his suicide was therefore honoured as a victory over Caesar's tyranny. It is therefore particularly interesting that Cato remained a model Stoic for all Stoics under the Principate that Caesar instigated.

Despite his military victory, Caesar did not succeed to remain in control of Rome. On March 15th in 44 BCE, Caesar was assassinated, among others, by Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 BCE). Brutus was a learned person who had studied philosophy. He was raised in the household of Cato, his uncle, and married Cato's daughter, Porcia Catonis, in 45 BCE. At the outbreak of the civil war in 49 BCE Brutus, like Cato, joined the side of Pompey. At the battle of Pharsalus in 48, he was captured alive, forgiven by Caesar, and made part of Caesar's inner circle (given his affairs with Brutus' mother, Caesar might have suspected that Brutus could be an illegitimate son) (Plut. *Brut.* 5,1-2). Eventually, Brutus joined a conspiracy when Caesar's behaviour became too king-like and the conspirators assassinated Caesar at the Senate. Various reasons for Brutus' participation in the conspiracy has been given, all of them beyond sufficient substantiation, as MacMullen concedes (1967, 6). MacMullen

however lists three possible motivations for the tyrannicide: 1) family descent, 2) philosophy, and 3) a love of freedom. Although it is difficult to ascertain how philosophy figured in Brutus' reasons for joining the conspiracy, both family descent and the love of freedom is in some ways also intersected by his philosophical interest. Brutus' marriage to Cato's daughter emphasised a particular political allegiance to Cato's Stoic political position, insofar "family ties were used to cement pre-existing political, literary, social and ideological ties" (Wilkinson 2012, 76). Brutus' philosophical allegiance seems to have been a mix between Platonism and Stoicism and, according to MacMullen, his actions in his later years seem to align with this Platonic-Stoic model (1967, 12; cf. 298n13). The love of freedom was a typical aristocratic value, but it does also fit neatly into a philosophic framework where particularly the notion of free speech (*libertas*, παρρησία) was a consistent theme. Nevertheless, Brutus's actions were most likely the result of numerous contributing factors, yet philosophical position might have been one of them. Though both Cato and Brutus failed in their endeavours to secure the Roman Republic, they came to be examples to whom one could refer if one were hostile to the Principate yet did not want to endanger one's life (ibid., 18f), and the Stoics would often reference them both.[187]

The fight against kingship was lost. However, various Stoics remained in opposition to the newly formed Roman Empire. Thrasea Paetus, a Roman senator (d. 66 CE), was known for a disapproving attitude towards Nero's regime, which primarily was showcased as defiant silence and non-participation. Such non-participation was significant disapproval of the Emperor and it is possible to see in

[187] MacMullen points out that Cato quickly received a status devoid of subversive potential, insofar Cato could be invoked as a stereotype of virtue (ibid., 19; cf. George 1991, 239). Although references to Cato often were meant to point to his virtuous disposition and not his political activity, I would argue that the semantic significance of invoking Cato surely was a matter of context. The context determined whether the reference could be to 'virtuous Cato as defiant in the face of death' or 'virtuous Cato as defiant of tyrannical authority,' cf. chapter 5.3.

this disapproval that Nero fell short of the Stoics' concept of just ruler (cf. Wistrand 1979, 99; Reydams-Schils 2005, 107). Thrasea was accused by the politician Capito of subversive opinions by disregarding the wellbeing of Nero, opposing claims of Nero's wife Poppaea's divinity, refusing obedience to the first Emperors, Julius Caesar and Augustus, and scorning reverence of the gods (*religio*) (Tacitus *Ann.* XVI.22). As Wilkinson underlines, Thrasea's non-participation was loaded with political and revolutionary meaning since the Emperor needed the Senate to legitimise his rule as *princeps* (2012, 72). Eventually, Capito's charges resulted in the demand for Thrasea's suicide, which he modelled after those of Socrates and Cato (Tacitus *Ann*. XVI.34-35).[188] Opening his veins, he reportedly spilt the blood on the ground as a libation to Jupiter the Liberator (*Ann*. XVI.35). This suicide was as Stoic as they come and the invocation of Jupiter the Liberator should not be misunderstood as deliverance through death, but rather as an act that in the Stoic framework was understood as an exercise of power in the assertion of absolute and untouchable freedom. Proclaiming that, "Nero can kill me, but he cannot hurt me" (Cassius Dio *Hist*. LXII.15,4), in his death Thrasea embodied Stoic philosophy and rewrote the Emperor's power as inadequate. Thrasea's challenge was significant and in 94 CE Emperor Domitian had Arulenus Rusticus executed for calling Thrasea holy (Suet. *Domitian* 10; Tactitus *Agr*. 2).

The son-in-law of Thrasea and the statesman Helvidius Priscus (d. 75 CE) had, according to Tacitus, wished to underpin his politics with Stoic philosophy and therefore married Thrasea's daughter (Tacitus *Hist*. IV.5). As was the case with Brutus' marriage to Cato's daughter, he thereby also affirmed his political affiliation to

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[188] Toynbee attributed Thrasea's activities to Stoic principles (Toynbee 1944, 43ff) but Wirszubski and Griffin have challenged this. Griffin suggests that Stoicism provided Thrasea with a later justification but this was enough substance for contemporary charges against Stoicism as problematically subversive (Griffin 1976, 366). Though Thrasea's Stoicism might not have been the primary motivation in his opposition to Nero (cf. Wirszubski 1960, 142), the modelling of his death on Socrates and Cato and the charges against him does indicate that Stoicism was, at the very least, a model for his activity.

Thrasea's position. Like Thrasea, who had been a champion of free speech in the Senate, Helvidius was known for the same commitment towards truth and freedom of speech (Tacitus *Hist*. II.91; IV.9; IV.43). Although it is impossible to determine beyond conjecture, Helvidius seems to have enforced a counter-political position by employing the Stoic framework in which actions would have been justified and given meaning through the Stoic notion of appropriate acts (καθήκοντα). In a passage that should be understood as a philosophical sanctioning of Helvidius's actions, Epictetus reported on an incident between Helvidius and Emperor Vespasian and encouraged his students to conduct themselves in public affairs with the same level of philosophical expression as Helvidius did. Epictetus reports that Vespasian, after Helvidius demonstrably had opposed the wishes of the Emperor, attempted to bar Helvidius from attending the Senate, to which Helvidius replied by claiming it was only appropriate in the capacity of being a member of the Senate to attend the meetings. Vespasian then asked for at least his silence during Senate meetings, to which Helvidius replied, "do not ask me for my opinion and I shall remain silent." As the Emperor, Vespasian was obligated to discuss matters with the Senate and ask for their advice, and as a member of the Senate, Helvidius insisted on answering truthfully. At this gridlock Vespasian threatened Helvidius, to which the Stoic could only point out he had never claimed immortality. If his part as a member of the Senate would lead to his death, it could be no different (Epictetus I.2,19-21). The strained relationship is also reported by Dio Cassius who relates that Vespasian hated Helvidius for his contempt for kingship (βασιλεία) and his deference for democracy, and Dio Cassius goes on to report that Helvidius exchanged Thrasea's non-participation principle with outright insults, stirring of the masses, subversion of the established order, and revolution (νεωτερίζω) (Dio Cassius *Hist*. LXV.12,2).[189]

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[189] Wirszubksi reports that Dio Cassius's report is unreliable since Cassius's charge of anarchism is incompatible with Helvidius' Republicanism (Wirszubski 1960, 149). However, Cassius does not report that Helvidius was an anarchist in terms of ideological or political stance. He attacked Helvidi-

Thrasea had been friends with Seneca and associated with Seneca's nephew, Lucan. Lucan had initially been friends with Nero but eventually came to a disagreement with the Emperor. Whereas Seneca primarily opposed unjust Emperors, Lucan eventually seems to have opposed the Imperial constitution in itself (George 1991, 245). His epic poem *Pharsalia* was set around the war between Pompey and Caesar and tells of tyranny's total victory over freedom – both Pompey and Caesar were autocrats; Pompey, a master (*dominus*; IX.257) and Caesar, a tyrant (VIII.835; IX.279). The poem therefore depicted both unflatteringly and instead he appraised the 'king-slayer' Brutus as an ornament of Rome and last hope of the Senate (cf. MacMullen 1967, 25).[190] Adding insult to injury, Lucan's eulogistic praise of Cato and depiction of his opposition to Caesar in *Pharsalia* was problematic, because at the time of writing the relationship between Thrasea and Nero was likened to that of Cato and Caesar, and Lucan's validation of Cato would simultaneously sanction the political acts of Thrasea (cf. Tacitus *Ann.* XVI.22). The nature of Lucan's poem was, therefore, disturbing for Nero who thought it best to prohibit its publication.[191] The relationship deteriorated beyond saving and Suetonius reports that Lucan became highly involved in the Pisonian conspiracy in 65 CE and began to praise tyrannicide and the execution of Caesar (Suet. *Lucan*). During the unravelling of the conspiracy, Lucan was arrested, tortured, and forced to commit suicide. Upon doing so, he recited a passage from *Pharsalia*, invoking the suicide of a soldier in the epic (Tacitus

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us for being a republican and democrat who radicalised his political activity and therefore incited revolution and hence, in Dio's mind, anarchy. Like Thrasea, Helvidius character was problematic for the Emperors to the extent that his character prompted the execution of Herennius Senecio who wrote a biography on Helvidius (Tacitus *Agr*. 2).

[190] Praising Brutus was not without a threat of repercussion, which Tiberius already had shown by burning all eulogies of Brutus (Suet. *Tiberius* 61,3).

[191] The poem is not unequivocally critical towards Roman Imperialism but has its share of panegyric passages as well (cf. MacMullen 1967, 24). This inconsistency has perplexed scholarly circles and the flattering passages of Nero might either be taken as satire or testimony to a friendship still in the process of deterioration.

Ann. XV.70).[192] Despite being forced, his act of suicide was in this way reframed as a defiant act and followed the pattern of Stoic suicidal praxis in which the suicide was politicised and weaponised.

Lucan's uncle, Seneca, did also veil attacks on the Imperial system of government in his dramas. *Thyestes* contained anti-imperial content (cf. MacMullen 1967, 303n42) and the satire *Apocolocyntosis Claudii* – that translates into the *Pumpkinification of Claudius* – challenged the tradition of Imperial apotheosis. Emperor Claudius had exiled Seneca to Corsica and upon his death Seneca repaid by satirising about Claudius's apotheosis. In this satire, Seneca was, however, not shy of flattering the new Emperor, Nero, who would be the recipient of veiled attacks in Seneca's later work *Natural Questions* (cf. chapter 3.2.2.2). Eventually, Seneca was also coupled to the Pisonian conspiracy by Nero (despite this, most scholars today doubt Seneca's involvement with the conspiracy; cf. Rutledge 2001, 166-168), he was forced to commit suicide and burnt without the traditional funeral rites (Tacitus *Ann*. XV.60-64).

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Imperial Stoics, among those Romans who supported the Principate, came to be conceived, as reported by Tacitus, as arrogant and inciting (*peto*) revolutionary (*turbidus*) actions (Tacitus *Ann*. XIV.57). According to Wirszubski, in first-century Rome, philosophy primarily meant Stoicism or Cynicism (1960, 144) and Stoicism seems to have been the first choice of many critical nobles (MacMullen 1967, 48).[193] Thus, MacMullen points out, to philosophise was to be 'stoicising' and this seems at times to have been equal to a treasonous act (ibid., 57). Consequently, it is not surprising that philosophers at times were exiled wholesale, which both Musonius Rufus and Epictetus experienced first-hand. However, in the second century CE, the relation between Stoicism and the Principate be-

[192] Scholars have not been able to locate the exact passage that Lucan recited since there are different possibilities, cf. Asso (2010, 9n38).

[193] This standard interpretation was challenged by Jocelyn (1977) who found no textual evidence for this. However, Lucian's *Philosophies for Sale* explicitly reports that the Stoics had the most followers among the elite (cf. in that regard Bragues 2004, 233, 246f).

came less strained. Wistrand even described it as a Stoic Principate and pointed out that Emperors such as Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius received some Stoic approval (Wistrand 1979, 101). Compared to the dissent of the Stoic opposition in the early Principate, the later Stoics showed a markedly gentler attitude towards the Principate. Eventually, of course, even the position as Roman Emperor was occupied by a proclaimed Stoic. This gentler attitude towards the Principate could suggest a defeatist acceptance or loss of stamina. However, as Wistrand pointed out, most Stoics were more interested in opposing individual, unjust Emperors and not necessarily the institution, which could take both just and unjust forms. Perhaps the Stoics had gained a firmer influence on the Emperors – or the Emperors incidentally behaved in a way approved by the Stoics.

Nevertheless, these examples from the so-called Stoic Opposition seem to display how Stoic philosophy was sought embodied in political activity. Although these upright political attacks waned, the Stoics did not seize with political activity. The Stoics were from the beginning very clear on their expectation that the sage, their model for imitation, would participate in politics (Plut. *St. Repn.* 1034b), but the Stoics did not operate with a narrow definition of the political as some modern commentators do (cf. chapter 1.2). Political participation could not be reduced to one single praxis; instead, the Stoics differentiated between various modes of participation. Stobaeus reports that the Stoics preferred three ways of participating politically that to a certain extent was determined by lottery of birth: the kingly, the political (coupled to the institutional structures), and the scholarly (Stob. *Anth.* II.109,10-110,4 = *LS* 67W). All three designates participation and, as Epictetus emphasised, it was therefore appropriate (καθήκοντα) to be a proper citizen (πολιτεύω), i.e. to partake in governing the community as a free, noble, and modest person (Epictetus III.7,26-27). This is a description of three different modes of participation in conventional society, but the scholarly mode of participation was understood as the mode that qualified the other two.

Stobaeus noted that the Stoic sage would participate in the institutional framework if society had undergone enough progress (προκοπήν) in its transformation towards the end (τελείας), the perfect community (Stob. *Anth.* II.92), and in Diogenes Laërtius it was stated that the sage would participate if not hindered (DL VII.121). This can be misinterpreted as a dispensation from political participation but it was only a dispensation from participating within the political institutions, not a dispensation from political participation in society.[194] In other words, it was expected that the sage (and in extension those who modelled their life on that of the sage) would assist the community by participating in or advising the political body and the community. However, one could serve society in other ways. In *De Otio*, Seneca would describe it in the following terms:

> Some give care (*dant operam*) to both states, the greater and the lesser, simultaneously, others only the lesser and some only to the greater. We can serve this greater state zealously in leisure; in fact, I surmise perhaps (*nescio*) even better in leisure (Seneca *Otio* 4,1-2).

This Senecan passage underpins that it was possible to serve the cosmic community in a position of withdrawal from the political institutions. The purpose of Stoic philosophy was to train the philosopher so she could deliver her kin from fear and spiritual distress, to make herself and her students into proper citizens, and provide a philosophical framework for holding office that would guarantee the (spiritual, not material) wellbeing of the community (cf. Epictetus II.23,38-39). Depending on context, this was sometimes better secured by not participating within the institutional framework, but political participation it was, nonetheless.

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[194] Reydams-Schils has examined how the Stoics were faced with two opposing forces in their philosophical outlook, world-rejection and world-affirmation, that was closely connected to the difference between philosophical ideals and messy *realpolitik*. This was reflected in their discussions of public participation and public withdrawal and the Stoics ultimately preferred participation (Reydams-Schils 2005, chapter 3, esp. 103-107; cf. Brown 2009). I agree but would like to emphasise that the predicament between withdrawal and institutional participation was determined by a context in flux.

Seneca would point to the very general notion of what such dispensation entailed, and that even withdrawal from public affairs could constitute a service to the community (Seneca *Otio* 3,3-5; *Tranq*. 1,10). The somewhat abstract cause for dispensation shows situational flexibility that would allow a person to recognise the opportunity or impossibility in a given situation and consequently direct her capacities towards the most beneficial resolution (i.e. mode of political participation). To counter the prevailing conception in their time that withdrawal equalled inactivity, Epictetus insisted on actually being active (πρακτικός) when tending his daily philosophical training (Epictetus I.10,7-8). Philosophical training and contemplation were, therefore, not equal to de-politicised inactivity. This is further substantiated by Seneca who, referring to Zeno and Chrysippus, points out that they accomplished greater things for society by their philosophical endeavours than they could ever have hoped to achieve through leading armies, holding public office, or framing laws (Seneca *Otio* 6,4). Likewise, in discussing the social position of the Cynics, Epictetus gave a lecture on the nature of their political praxis. Asked if the Cynic should be active in politics (πολιτεύω), Epictetus questioned whether it was possible to find any greater political praxis than that of the Cynic's. The Cynic, Epictetus argued, had made all of humanity his children and was concerned with what constituted flourishing (εὐδαιμονία) and unhappiness (κακαδαιμονία), slavery (δουλεία) and freedom (ἐλευθερία). As such, no greater political praxis or any more magnificent office could be conceived (Epictetus III.22.81-85; cf. Seneca *Ep*.68,2).[195]

The withdrawal from public affairs was closely connected to the individual's personal development. Therefore, Musonius Rufus was able to recommend a complete retreat from the sophistry of city life and chose the life of a farmer, because this would give the necessary leisure for the soul (ψυχή) to contemplate one's spiritual

[195] According to Colish, Marcus Aurelius would rather let institutional service override what might be termed politico-moral service (Colish 1985, 40; cf. Marcus Aurelius IV.29). Yet, Marcus Aurelius did generally show a larger appreciation for professional philosophers than the role of Emperor (cf. VI.30,1; VIII.3).

transformation (παίδειος). In some ways, an agricultural life was, "even more according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν)," because it meant being brought up (τρέφω) by the earth through strenuous masculine labour (Musonius Rufus XI.82,8-9). However, this in no way meant a renunciation of political participation, insofar Musonius simply argued for the displacement of philosophical teachings from formal presentations in the city to demonstrations through menial and hard labour in the fields (XI.82,22-31). Colish correctly reported that, "the sage may also fulfil his obligations to his fellow man by leading a life of retirement and philosophical contemplation" (Colish 1985, 40). The Stoics, in other words, reconceptualised withdrawal as a different kind of political praxis and since the best society was achieved only with the realisation of human potential through a spiritual transformation, this withdrawal could be interpreted as superior in its method.

The Stoics' active participation within the conventional political framework could be perceived as problematic by their political opponents, but from the perspective of the surrounding community withdrawal into retirement was, of course, also a very political action in itself, and Emperors would look with suspicion at these withdrawals (James 2002, 280). The problem with this self-chosen withdrawal was that it was a charge against the state of affairs and was, as Wistrand writes, "a silent accusation of the government, which is more serious than outspoken opposition" (1979, 99).[196] In other words, withdrawal from the political institutions was a charge against and subversion of the legitimacy of the prevailing order of things. In this hegemonic struggle for legitimacy, the Stoics provided a counter-spatial praxis that charged the heart of the Roman social organisation. This was something Seneca was acutely aware of and he emphasised, when considering this in relation to physical

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[196] Brown examines three different ways of 'withdrawal as criticism' from the public proposed by Plato and Aristotle, Epicurus, and Socrates. As he notes, the Stoics seem to have echoed each of these proposals (cf. Brown 2009).

safety, that sometimes it was best not to seek this withdrawal openly (Seneca *Ep.* 14,8).

The reconstitution of political praxis by withdrawal was not a rejection of being engaged in politics but merely a different mode of political participation conducive to the spiritual development of society, yet this could also carry with it a substantial element of subversive meaning. The Stoics herein provided a novel model for political participation. Although it was envisaged as a service to the community, their philosophic framework gave rise to praxes and a re-positioning in social roles that displayed varied types of disobedience and historically gave rise to kinds of revolutionary dissent. In other words, what Stoic actors found conducive to the wellbeing of their community was not necessarily appraised similarly by the community. These kinds of praxes served the dual communicative function, briefly noted above, that Rappaport had examined. At the one end, these acts formed part of an *auto*-communication of the Stoic actor, communicating and affirming to herself through performativity a truth of her divine and cosmic nature. At the other end, these activities communicated the message to the external observers that a very different worldview informed the Stoic's life. The actions of the Stoics, in addition to potentially generating specific political results, would serve as evidence that the cosmic truth had been digested and habituated into a truthful life. The activity should reveal the spiritual transformation of the Stoic and serve as a frame of reference, a source of inspiration, for Stoics and non-Stoics alike.

4.2.1.2 Appearance as Testimony

This *allo*-communicative function of performativity might be understood in conjunction with a different communicative medium employed by the Stoics. Generally speaking, physical appearance, such as clothing, beards, general hygiene, etc., should be understood as a type of semiotic system, insofar one’s appearance communicates something about oneself. One might engage more or less actively with

one's appearance as a form of communication but even the most slapdash appearance communicates something. This was forcefully pointed out by Roland Barthes, who proposed the idea that at the moment a piece of wearable, used initially for physical protection, is appropriated by a group of people, it becomes part of a, "formal and normative system that is recognized by society" (Barthes 2013, 6f). Like Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, Barthes understood clothing to be constituted both by a formal system of rules and specific expressions of this underlying system (ibid., 8).[197] Consequently, in Barthes's terminology, dress refers to the formal system that is separated from dressing, which in turn is the concrete phenomenological expression of this system. As a semiotic system, clothing conveys, according to Barthes, intentional meaning, and an outfit therefore signify a social need that can be analysed for its, "degree of participation in the system (be it total submission, deviations, or aberrations)" (ibid., 13). In consequence, clothing is inherently social, and its meaning is found through its specific expression of a, "expected collective behaviour" (ibid.).

Although Barthes' aim was an examination of modern fashion culture, clothing has served as a semiotic system for large parts of human history and specific ways of dressing have here followed certain structural conventions or sought to break with these. In addition to clothing, other parts of one's physical appearance can also be part of this semiotic system and I shall take this broader view here.[198] For any philosopher in Antiquity, two things especially set their appearance apart from their fellow non-philosophers: the philosopher's way of dressing (cloak, purse, and

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[197] Barthes thereby introduced the insights from the structural linguistics of Saussure to the analysis of clothes and fashion. Barthes would forestall the criticism against his structuralism as being overly static in its conception of the structures and underline that the system into which clothing is inscribed is, "a collection of balances in movement, of institutions in flux" (ibid., 8).

[198] I shall retain myself to physical appearance subject to intentionality. Physical deformities are also a part of this semiotic system and might also be given specific meanings in a particular cultural context, but my aim is to show that the Stoics intentionally employed appearance as a communicative medium.

staff) and the philosopher's beard. The Cynics were the most radical in their dedication to the philosopher's appearance, but the Stoics were also attentive to appearance as a symbolic marker that could both challenge and underpin the conventional expected behaviour. The purpose of appearance for the Stoics was primarily to point beyond the mundane life to the more profound cosmic truth, and through visual representation the Stoics made an effort to be distinguishable from their fellow members of the horizontal community.

Within Roman society the different ways of appearance served a symbolic function that communicated ideas, identities, status, values, etc. – i.e. it signalled belonging or disassociation of membership in the community (cf. Huskinson 2002, 7, 9). Typically, in ancient cultures, clothes served as a social marker that would reflect the stratified society. Take for instance the dresses worn by high priests, royalty, magistrates, etc. in various ancient cultures. In Rome, the prime example was the toga. The white toga (*toga virilis*) represented manhood and citizenship and was typically worn by commoners; the *toga candida* was worn by candidates for office; citizens of the equestrian order wore the *toga trabea*; and the *toga picta*, or the purple dyed toga, represented the imperial connection. The toga was primarily employed as a specific Roman piece of garment, claimed to originate from the Etruscan *tebenna* and it therefore came to serve as an intentional Roman contrast to Greek dressing (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 43).[199] The Roman *toga* thereby provided a way of demonstrating belonging to the Roman community and identity, but, as in any social group, this identity could be challenged, altered, or transformed by members of the social group in question, whereby the social order was subverted. The philosopher's dress (gr. τρίβων; la. *pallium*) was a specific Greek dress and it is interesting because it served

[199] This intentional contrasting against the Greeks on the Roman side was a 'mirror of difference' and served the Romans in the construction of their own identity, see Wallace-Hadrill's excellent examination (2010). Janet Huskinson has argued that the identity of the Romans were less fixed than the Greek identity (Huskinson 2002, 12) but it is a point of Wallace-Hadrill's that the Greek identity largely was established by the Romans as the 'other' in this mirror of difference.

as a symbolic mode of communicating difference by cultural and social displacement. The *pallium* served as the opposition to the Roman toga in the construction of Roman identity but simultaneously allowed the Romans, who were interested in this, to transgress norms and customs (ibid., 55). The *toga* and the *pallium* constituted two antipoles of appearance. The *toga* was, as Wallace-Hadrill writes, "associated with Roman luxury and decadence" (ibid., 56), and the philosopher's *pallium* was then associated with counter-cultural criticism, dissent, and cultural subversion and rejection. Since 'Roman' was a judicial category and 'Greek' was a cultural category (cf. ibid., 41), the philosopher's *pallium* could therefore also indicate the rejection of Roman hegemonic superiority and emphasise the identification with a cosmopolitan position that transcended specific political and juridical sanctioned constellations (cf. Philostratus *Vit. Apol*. 1,35).

Closely connected to the philosopher's way of dressing was the other symbolic marker of the philosopher, the beard. This shall be singled out for the moment, because it, unlike the *pallium*, was thought to have a special relationship to nature itself and the Stoics therefore conceptualised it in a particularly interesting way. To sport a beard had been commonplace in ancient Greece until Alexander the Great assumed leadership of the Hellenic league. At this point, the beard started to disappear since Alexander was clean-shaven. Alexander thereby instigated a new fashion trend and anyone who did not follow suit was considered traditionalists and democratic-minded in opposition to Alexander's monarchy (Zanker 1995, 108). Likewise, it became commonplace in the Roman Empire to be clean-shaven and the philosopher – for whom a beard was a sign of the order of nature and a life according to nature (κατὰ φυσίν) (cf. Sellars 2009, 16f) – stood out as different, which pointed to the fact that the philosopher was culturally, politically, and socially an

outsider.[200] Thereby, the beard came to symbolise the philosopher and the philosophical life, and this could generate conflict. This potential conflict was introduced in Epictetus' lectures (either because Epictetus had experienced this conflict or because he anticipated it). Epictetus insisted – in what seems to be a fictitious polemic with an authority figure – that the philosopher should be steadfast in insisting on sporting a beard:

> Come now, Epictetus! Cut your beard.
> (Epictetus): If I am a true philosopher, I shall say "I will not cut it."
> But then I will cut off your head!
> (Epictetus): If that serves you well, then cut it off! (Epictetus I.2,29).

Epictetus would not, he emphasised, as a philosopher, compromise the severity of the truths expressed in the Stoic doctrines; if he had cut his beard, it was the same as if he had chosen a life according to customs and not according to nature. Also defending the beard, Seneca would argue that those phenomena found in nature that could produce a reflection (and thereby serving as a mirror) were not provided by nature for man to shave his beard (Seneca *NQ* I.16,2). If a man, and most men were, was given a beard by nature, Epictetus elaborated on the matter, it was proper to leave it be, as it was against nature to cut it – if Epictetus's point did not cause his students to leave the beard, it was furthermore also womanish (Epictetus III.1,27-28).[201] Epictetus would go on and explain that the beard was a natural embellishment

[200] For the strained relationship between Roman culture and the philosophers, see for instance Harris (1977); Brown (1992, 61-70); Zanker (1995), Lendon (1997, 90-95); Trapp (2007, 226-257). The older examinations of MacMullen are also helpful (1967, 46-94). For the philosopher's beard in general, see Horace *Satires* I.3,132ff, II.3,35; Plut. *De Isid.* 352c; Dio Chrysostom *Disc*. 72,2; Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* IX.2,1-6; Lucian *Icarom.* 5, *Piscat.* 11, *Demon*. 13; Athen. *Deipn*. V.211e, XIII.565a-d; Alciphron III.55.

[201] Since the beard usually is a masculine feature, this could indicate that at least the Imperial Stoics valued gender-specific signs, contrary to Zeno's argument for gender-neutral appearance in his *Republic*. However, a beard, unlike clothing, is a natural occurring phenomenon and does therefore not express the same type of culturally established custom Zeno tried to abolish. Yet, addressing imperfect men in and imperfect world, Epictetus might pragmatically have appealed to their fear of the effeminate (cf. Grahn-Wilder 2018, 117f).

of men, similar to the lion's mane but even more magnificent. That is, an embellishment given to man by nature and for this very reason it was a symbol of god (τὰ σύμβολα τοῦ θεοῦ) (Epictetus I.16,14). The beard was, therefore, a natural reflection of the providence in nature and did thereby symbolise the participation in the Cosmic City. As a symbol of Zeus, it showed both affiliation and belief, and pointed as a visual marker towards a specific worldview, a specific truth, and the social interpretation of the function of the philosopher.[202]

The philosopher's beard was, therefore, a semiotic sign and a communicative device, and how radical this symbolic representation was expressed differed among the Stoics. Despite the Stoics' insistence on becoming a visual representation of life according to nature, Seneca was careful not to take this point too far:

> Avoid coarse appearance (*cultus*), an untamed hair, to ignore the beard, to proclaim public aversion against silverware, to sleep on the ground, and avoid striving for other methods of gaining popularity through subversion (*perverto*). The name 'philosophy' provokes enough anger as it is (*satis invidiosus est*), even though it is practised discretely. Which kind of reaction would we get, if we began to dismantle societal norms (*hominum consuetudini*)? Inwardly, everything should be different, but externally we should assimilate with the masses (*populus*) (Seneca *Ep.* 5,2).

Thus, Seneca attempted to balance between the world-negating impetuses in Stoicism as an world-critical philosophy and reproducing the common praxes of the elite to which he belonged. This is also clear in the passage immediately following this, in which he made it clear that a *toga* should be neither lavish nor musty (Seneca *Ep.*

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202 Reydams-Schils has pointed out that the beard was important primarily because it pointed to masculinity and manhood. Thus, the fear of losing the beard was a fear of losing the status of masculinity and not philosophy (Reydams-Schils 2005, 46). While masculinity was important, it was uncommon for men to sport a beard during this period and I would therefore argue that the beard represented first and foremost philosophy and only secondarily masculinity. It has been argued that Epictetus' considerations of the philosopher's beard show a strange mix between thoughts of constructionism and appeals to nature (Gleason 1995, 73) but this mix is, according to Grahn-Wilder, explainable within the Stoic framework. The beard was not a necessary criterium of the philosopher and would not eliminate the possibility of female philosophers; the beard, she argues, had a selective value as a preferred indifferent (Grahn-Wilder 2018, 111-116). My purpose is to indicate that choosing to sport a beard was done as part of a communicative strategy.

5,3). Panaetius or Panaetius's pupil Hecato might have influenced Seneca (cf. Cicero *Off*. I.130; Brunt 2013, 126) but his concern clearly showed an attempt to adopt the philosophical attire in a suitable way for a non-professional philosopher from the elite classes.[203] The Stoics seem partly to have stressed a moderate approach to appearance because those philosophers who emphasised their appearance too much was guilty of problematic self-promotion. Seneca, who criticised a popularity based self-promotion in the above passages, reveals that it was commonplace to attach prestigious evaluations to the philosophical lifestyle and that it was a lifestyle many people admired. Epictetus would continue this point: since the professional Stoic philosopher could usually be recognised on his beard and the philosopher's cloak (cf. Epictetus III.1,24), it was not uncommon that anyone who wanted, for self-promoting reasons, to identify as a philosopher would sport these precise features (cf. IV.8,15). This self-promotion led Epictetus to scorn his students and claim their philosophical endeavours were nothing but wrongly based imitations of a philosopher (II.17,26). Since prestige and self-promotion were closely connected to desire, it was against Stoic doctrines to seek philosophy for these reasons. Therefore, Marcus Aurelius would remind himself that it was possible to become divine (θεῖον ἄνδρα) while remaining anonymous and not receive the public recognition that a public and professional philosopher would get (Marcus Aurelius VII.67; cf. Epictetus III.12,17). Musonius Rufus addressed the same issues when he told his students that one did not need traditional philosophical attire to be a philosopher, even though, "this is suitable for the professional philosophers" (Musonius Rufus XVI.106,12-15).[204] The

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[203] The passage in Seneca shows, according to Dawson, an upper-class prejudice and differentiation from ordinary people's expectation of the physical appearance of philosophers (Dawson 1992, 245). Unlike Dawson, I do not find Seneca to be expressing a concern with establishing a cultural status hierarchy within the philosopher's dress modelled over social elite versus masses. For any Stoic, intentional appearance was, in the final analysis, part of the indifferents. The difference between the Cynic inclination of Epictetus and Musonius Rufus compared to Seneca's approach has also been pointed out by Marcia Colish (cf. 1985, 48).

[204] Cynthia King's (2011) translation of the sentence, "πρέπει μὲν γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς φιλοσόφοις· ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐν τούτοις τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν ἐστιν" differs from Cora Lutz'. King's translation goes like this:

fundamental idea was that philosophy's primary purpose was to be displayed in action and character, appearance could too easily take the function as borrowed plumes and should, therefore, be subject to a rational and truthful implementation.

John Sellars has commented that as a rule of thumb, it was possible to discern a person's philosophical allegiance in the person's appearance, in which the Stoics moderated the Cynics' wild and untimely appearance (Sellars 2009, 19).[205] As a communicative device, the Stoics were conscious that their appearance could cause strong aversion, wherefore one should take care of one's grooming and hygiene in such a way as not to offend, Epictetus argued (Epictetus IV.11,33-34). In his moderation, Seneca displayed a keen appreciation of the fact that the philosopher was subject to both an appreciative and a censorious gaze from the rest of the community. In relation to this, he was of the firm belief that a too manifestly different lifestyle from the masses (*vulgus*) would result in aversion and resentment from those the Stoics tried to influence (Seneca *Ep*. 5,3). Thus, it would seem the Stoics preferred a beard that had been groomed, which Seneca tried to justify by referring to the fact that nature had created man as a neat and well-groomed animal (Seneca *Ep*. 92,12). However, excessive grooming, which was the social convention at

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"This is what we expect from people who want to be taken for philosophers, but studying philosophy does not require such things," whereas Lutz translates the sentence as: "To be sure, such things are well enough for professional philosophers, but philosophy does not consist in them." King's translation dovetails with the Stoic concern for imitation based in desire, while Lutz' translation expresses a distinction between professional philosophers and lay philosophers. I understand the passage primarily as a distinction between what is fitting for the professional and what is expected of the lay philosopher.

[205] Sellars does however also point out that this is meant as a 'light-hearted' presentation of what philosophical lifestyle entailed and, "should not be taken too seriously" (Sellars 2009, xii). This is obviously true, not everyone sported a beard, but these sources also imply that the Stoics clearly did take the beard as part of their appearance serious. Zanker has analysed a bust of Zeno and claims Zeno's beard and hair indicates a wish to distance himself in appearance from the Cynics (cf. Zanker 1995, 96). Chrysippus, Zanker argues, was depicted with an unkempt, sparse, yet ugly beard with bushy patches, which among his contemporaries indicated something animalistic and disgusting. This kind of beard was therefore often used to represent low-born and slaves and Chrysippus's insistence on sporting this unflattering beard was a clear testimony to the Stoic doctrines that all humanity, slaves and nobles, were alike (ibid., 111f).

that time, should be avoided. In the pre-civilised times of the first men, Seneca relates – before the incessant perversion of luxury – grooming had consisted in washing the beard in a stream, brushing and shaking it like a lion's mane (Seneca *NQ* I.17,7). As these passages suggest, the Stoics conceptualised appearance as proselytising communication. In this line of reasoning, Epictetus pointed out, it was a crucial element of the life of the sage that he should show the masses the quality of his soul. Through his physical appearance he could show the masses that it was possible to be both good and excellent (καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν) without all the luxury that they admired (Epictetus III.22-87-88; cf. Seneca *Ep*. 51,2). Although tending towards a coarse appearance, this was not equal to a repulsive appearance, as could perhaps be expected of the Cynic philosopher.

The act of dressing different than their peers therefore had a clear communicative purpose and it functioned both *allo-* and *auto*-communicatively in the process of appropriating the Stoics' bodies. Wearing a coarse cloak – or at least non-luxurious clothing – had an *auto*-communicative function for the practising philosopher as a self-referential mechanism within the spiritual transformation. By practising modesty in dressing, one would continually communicate to oneself the underlying worldview and learn to disregard conventional evaluations of appearance. It furthermore served an *allo*-communicative function, insofar as it communicated to external observers a message containing certain information regarding values, ideas, identity, worldview, and so on (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 114,2). However, different expectations existed pertaining to how pervasive the appropriation of the body should be; the lay philosopher was not expected to show the same kind of dedication as the professional philosopher. Furthermore, both the *allo*- and *auto*-communicative acts should ideally constantly be checked in terms of cause and effect. If the effect was deemed problematic (if the public was intimidated by this communicative act) or if the cause was 'unhealthy' (by being based in a desire for self-promotion), the communication should be reassessed. As Seneca made clear, it was not how one dressed

that constituted the good but it was the deliberate choice regarding appearance that was a good (*bonum*), and this choice should conform to reason (Seneca *Ep*. 92,11-12).

The Stoic should be able to showcase that her way of life, her entire being, was successfully structured according to this truth, and her actions and appearance should manifest the spiritual realisation of this truth. In other words, her way of life and her being did not only point to the truth; her being should itself be true. Epictetus therefore gave expression to the idea that life entirely according to nature would result in a natural bodily radiance that would attract the attention of the common people (Epictetus III.22-87-88). Thus, the symbolic reference pertaining to appearance was not just an intentional device, but the spiritual transformation was also expected to express itself in the physiognomy of the transformed person (cf. Epictetus IV.11,19; Seneca *Ep*. 66,4). As pointed out by Seneca, the disposition of one's soul would reflect itself in how one talked and walked (*incessus*), since a healthy soul would display itself in a vigorous, energetic, and manly being (Seneca *Ep*. 114,21-22). Through appearance, the philosopher was able to communicate to the masses a particular set of ideas and values and furthermore that these ideas and values could be internalised in a way uniquely beneficial even to those who had not yet commenced on the philosophical path. The philosophical appearance, whether through changes in physiognomy or intentional communicative expression, would therefore in conjunction with the performativity represented in truthful action present the philosopher in such a way as to serve as what we can understand as a 'beacon' of truth. Thus, through appearance, the body of the Stoics became spatial representations of the Stoic worldview and formed a visible counter-spatial manoeuvre in the hegemonic process of establishing spatial dominance.

The embodiment of truth required the Stoic to bear testimony of their relation to truth, and the life of the philosopher was, therefore, the life of the martyr. Upon death, Seneca wrote, one should bear witness (*testor*) that one's life had been lived according to nature (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 20,5). The radical consequence of this for

one's life was expressed by Seneca in the story of the philosopher Stilpo who, after the sacking of Megara by the Macedonian king Demetrius, was questioned by Demetrius. Gloatingly, Demetrius asked Stilpo if he had lost anything during this sacking. Despite the loss of his estate, his daughters, and the city, Stilpo claimed an unchanged status in his possessions. Thus, according to Seneca, Stilpo bore witness (*testor*) to a superior truth and therefore wrested the victory away from Demetrius (Seneca *Con.* 5,7). Likewise, Epictetus told his students the philosopher's life should be led like a witness (μάρτυς) summoned by Zeus and this life should be led in a way so that it constituted a worthy witness for Zeus. More important than the customary quibbles in the philosophical discourse, those purporting to be philosophers should bear witness (μαρτυρέω) to the arguments outlined in the discourse through their actions (Epictetus I.29,46-47; 56-57; see also Musonius Rufus VIII.64,10-34). One's entire life should therefore be lived as if one lived in the open, always under the scrutinising gaze of both fellow man as well as Zeus (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 83,1; cf. also Marcus Aurelius V.27). Every aspect of the philosopher's life therefore served a communicative function through example; through the manner of eating and drinking, the philosopher's appearance, the way the philosopher married, begat children, and especially how the role as fellow citizen was honoured, both in the conventional city and most importantly in the Cosmic City; through these manifestations of the Stoic worldview, the masses would be made knowledgeable of their false consciousness and realise the truth (cf. Epictetus III.13,23; III.21,5-6; *Ench.* 46).

4.2.2 The Veridictive Function

The specific monopoly on truth that was claimed in the philosophical tradition was, as also pointed out by Foucault, therefore underpinned and substantiated by both behaviour and appearance (Foucault 2011a, 320). Having underpinned and justified this monopoly through these mediums, the Stoics could forcefully follow suit with an accompanying truth-telling (*libertas*, παρρησία) in the role as philosophical

parrhesiasts. This veridictive role of the philosopher was historically initiated by Socrates, whose political thought began a tradition of:

> searching for the truth about humanity and society apart from the opinions of 'the many', and then bringing these [truths] to 'the many' […]. The trial and death of Socrates is a powerful symbol of this quest and its potential consequences (Rosen 2017, 62).

The Stoics continued this tradition and the truth they presented to the masses took the form of a critique of their contemporary society and its inhabitants, as such it constituted a spiritual critique in demanding the listener's spiritual transformation. Elements of this critique will be examined further in chapter 5, but for the moment the purpose and method of this critique shall be outlined.

In one of his discourses, the Cynic-Stoic philosopher Dio Chrysostom addressed what he regarded as the unfortunate case of the Alexandrians. The people of Alexandria were displaying a frivolous attitude, they preferred laughter and enjoyment and did not take care of themselves as citizens. It was not entirely their fault, however, since they were being bereft a necessary truth-telling from the philosophers who withdrew from the public, similarly to how some wrestlers preferred sparring at the gymnasium over wrestling in the stadium. There was a direct and detectable consequence of this, whenever the philosophers withdrew from the public a multitude of quarrels and lawsuits arose (Dio Chrysostom *Disc*. 32,19-20). For Dio, these incompetent philosophers could therefore be divided into three groups by virtue of their relation to truth-telling: some philosophers found the general public to be incorrigible and abandoned truth-telling, other philosophers preferred to remain in the lecture hall where the truth-telling was heard only by likeminded, and lastly there were the Cynic philosophers who practised truth-telling in the open, but whose coarse public behaviour earned all philosophers ridicule (*Disc*. 32,8-9). The blame was therefore not the Alexandrians' alone since the philosophers, whose purpose it was to care for their fellow human beings, had failed their entire purpose.

From Chrysostom's admonition, it is clear that the philosopher were expected to have a genuine responsibility of telling the truth and to serve as a sort of public intellectual.

For the Stoics, this truth-telling conveyed a spiritual critique based in a compassionate concern for society and the wellbeing of the souls of society's inhabitants. With a starting point in their religio-philosophical doctrines, the Stoics provided an analysis of their fellow members of humanity and the horizontal community they inhabited. In their spiritual critique, the Stoics found it relevant to address a wide range of different subjects they thought to be problematic expressions of spiritual ailments in their peers.[206] This spiritual critique operated with the idea that the problems that faced people and society could be explained in virtue of false or delusional beliefs that were based on epistemologically false presuppositions. Their Roman peers were subject to false consciousness, a set of false beliefs and a false knowledge of the order of things, and it could be explained by their imperfect knowledge of the truth.[207] The knowledge of this truth could only be successfully obtained through the spiritual transformation advocated by the Stoics. Through this spiritual critique, the Stoics attempted to analyse, criticise, and correct this false consciousness, and it was the purpose of their veridiction to convey this message of

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[206] This goes all the way back to the Hellenistic Stoics. For Chrysippus, the emotions should be interpreted as beliefs, and the acceptance of non-rational emotions was in this sense the acceptance of false beliefs (cf. Brennan 2003, 275). That this spiritual critique was levelled from a concern of the spiritual ailments of their fellow inhabitant can be seen in many sources, for instance DL VII.158; Seneca Ep. 75,11-12; Cicero *Tusc*. 4,1, 4,30; *Off*. I.101-102. Seneca provides an interesting passage in which he argues that it is the purpose of the philosopher to function like a physician and cure the Roman state of anger (*Ira* I.6,1-5).

[207] The choice of nomenclature, with its innuendos of a critique of ideology, is intentional. The Stoics' spiritual critique should indeed be understood as an early example of this type of criticism of false ideas, which obviously cannot be reduced to a modern Marxist critique of ideology. I do, however, avoid the term critique of ideology because this loaded term would require a substantial exposition, which I am unable to pay heed to here. The affinity to what we know as critique of ideology is clearly visible in Eagleton's survey of ideology (2007, esp. chapter 1). Elsewhere in this dissertation, I employ the term ideology but I only do so in relation to and as part of my engagement with other scholars' unreflective use of the term, either in their exposition of theory or their exposition of competing system of ideas in the Antique world.

truth. For this truth-telling to be successful, the Stoics contemplated the best layout and method.

Their truth-telling dovetails largely with what Foucault examined as the parrhesiastic mode of truth-telling. This mode was defined by a relationship in which one part dared to tell the whole truth, while the recipient of this truth had the courage to listen wilfully. Historically, it pertained to the political institutions and the original meaning was to say everything, but it is often translated as free speech and usually designates an outspoken person (Foucault 2011a, 43ff). Despite originating from the Athenian Assembly, Foucault's interest led him to examine how this fundamentally political notion came to be associated with spiritual guidance. The function of the parrhesiast was, however, still profoundly political in purpose and implication. The parrhesiast's truth-telling was centred on the spiritual disposition of the recipient and expressed the parrhesiast's concern with helping the recipient overcoming a blindness in self-observing and overcoming a moral deficit based either in weakness, complacency, or inattention (Foucault 2011b, 16). The parrhesiastic truth-telling therefore challenged the bond between the truth-teller and the recipient, since the parrhesiast was required to tell everything and relentlessly question the recipient; the parrhesiast would do so even in the threat of death (ibid., 18).

Seneca acknowledged this contractual relationship. According to Seneca, a friend of his, Tullius Marcellinus, kept away from Seneca because he was afraid to hear the truth. However, this was without reason, Seneca wrote, for telling the truth should only be done if the recipient wanted to hear this truth (Seneca *Ep*. 29,1-3). Truth-telling could easily transgress decorum by being enforced upon unwilling recipients and Seneca censured the Cynics for indiscriminately employing freedom of speech (*libertate promiscua*) against anyone who crossed their way. Such unqualified effort, it seems from the passage, was sure to result in an unacceptable rate of conversion success. One should only engage with those who would be able to make progress and leave the hopeless cases to their own devices (Seneca *Ep*. 29,1-3). Epic-

tetus would emphasise the role of the philosopher as public intellectual in a similar way. One should serve as a guide for the ignorant masses if possible, but if this guiding function was impossible one should focus the attention on oneself and address one's own shortcomings (Epictetus II.11,2-4). This concern with telling the truth and criticising their peers was derived from a sympathetic concern for their fellow human beings. Seneca would argue that it was easy to lose faith in humanity but it was important not to be disheartened by the many vices of the masses. In fact, one should meet their shortcomings with tolerance, sanguine laughter, and an indulgent spirit (Seneca *Tranq.* 15,1-3). Similarly, Epictetus advised his students to observe the conduct of the mob with the same indulgent attitude as one who witnessed a display at a festival (Epictetus I.12,21; IV.4,24; cf. I.29,31-32). Although most people acted in ways that deserved criticism, Epictetus would hold back on his criticism because one should acknowledge that the mob was actually like children (Epictetus I.29,31-32; cf. II.11,24-25). The childlike character of his foolish (φαῦλοι) contemporaries pointed to the fact that they were spiritually underdeveloped. This underdevelopment did not call for ridicule, which was incapable of instigating the necessary spiritual development, but rather called for a careful concern for their spiritual wellbeing (Epictetus II.11,2-4).

However, Seneca would also underline that the care for oneself was possible only through the care for the other, and he would therefore emphatically argue that the parrhesiastic truth-telling should be widened to as many people as possible at the outset, and only a reduced group of people if the initial wide concern was impossible (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 48,2; Seneca *Otio* 3,5). Even though the receiving part in the parrhesiastic relationship ideally should be willing, Seneca could therefore also insist on the necessity of unwelcome veridiction (Seneca *Ep.* 87,1; cf. Epictetus I.29,64-66). Like Seneca, Epictetus would, in the capacity of being a professional teacher, underline this potential necessity. His concern with truth-telling was directed at a general audience and he likened his position and his truth-telling to that of Apollo as oracle.

Like the oracle's indiscriminate truth-telling, Epictetus did not think he could be blamed if the recipient refused to obey whatever the truth demanded. Referencing Socrates, he argued that a post had been assigned, like that of a divinely instituted oracle, which it was impossible to abandon even at the threat of death (Epictetus III.1,16-20).

It is crucial to realise that the Stoics' dedication to truth-telling was articulated as unwavering. Seneca would explain it in the following terms: "Let us speak of what we feel (*sentio*) and feel what we speak; let speech (*sermo*) harmonise with life. […] Our words should not charm (*delecto*) but be beneficial (*prosum*), […] it is the soul (*animus*) that impels (*ago*) our business here" (Seneca *Ep*. 75,4-5). Veridiction was, as can be seen, concerned with the most important subject, the soul. The Stoic spiritual critique therefore involved ascertaining and revealing the truth, both when it was unbeknown to the recipient as well as when it was intentionally concealed. This can be deciphered from a passage in which Seneca would compare the act of unveiling the truth to the act of buying a horse or buying a slave, during which one would scrutinise the horse or slave's physical state, and therefore remove the blanket covering the horse or remove the garments concealing the slave's physical condition. Similarly, when judging a person, one should remove their cover to be able to see the truth of their being: "Their happiness is worn like a mask (*personatus*). Rob them of it and you will value them little" (Seneca *Ep*. 80.8; cf. Marcus Aurelius VIII.11). The Stoics thereby engaged in a parrhesiastic truth-telling by illuminating their interlocutor's shortcomings and faults. This care could, according to Seneca, be interpreted along the lines of a medicinal treatment:

> The sage has compassion (*affectus*) towards all men, like the physician's compassion towards the ill: he does not find it repulsive if they are in need of treatment or repulsive to come in contact with their faeces or vomit, and he does not mind receiving angry outcries by those in pain. The sage knows (*scio*) that all who march around (*incedo*) in purple togas, as if they were valiant (*valeo*) and sane (*sanus*), are – despite their dyed fabric – wicked (*malus*), and he perceives them no differently from the ill

> who are without self-control (*intempero*). Likewise, he is not enraged if they in their illness act ill-behaved (*petulans*) towards him (Seneca *Con.* 13,2).

Thus, the Stoics imagined their social praxis as an analogue to the physician and this treatment could lead the recipients of the treatment to lash out in some way. Epictetus continued the similitude to medicine in an attempt to defend the so-called Stoic paradoxes as a method of treatment. The Stoic paradoxes were well-known and would at face value often induce laughter or anger (see Cicero *Mur.* 61),[208] but all the Stoic paradoxes, however, needed explanation from the Stoic philosophical system, and they were, therefore, not paradoxes at all, but merely appeared that way because they were presented as reduced statements and as counter-intuitive to conventional beliefs. In this regard, being untrained in philosophy was tantamount to being untrained in the art of medicine, a discipline in which one could easily find what appeared to be paradoxes, Epictetus emphasised; under certain circumstances, for instance, the physician would treat the eye by penetrating it with a needle. For the untrained person, this seemed counter-intuitive and even paradoxical, but the well-trained physician would be able to appreciate its proper relation to the illness at hand. The same relation between knowledge and treatment was found in philosophy, Epictetus argued (Epictetus I.25,32-33).

Despite the analogy, the truth-telling did not make the Stoics physicians. The purpose of philosophy was much more severe. As the Stoics had explained, Zeus had sent forth the philosophers on earth to serve as living examples, as martyrs, that would testify to the masses that Zeus governed the universe well, that he cared for humanity, that the conventional assessment of good and evil was illusive, and that

[208] A few examples of these Stoic paradoxes: there was no difference between slave and slave owner (Seneca *Ep*. 47,1; Epictetus IV.1,6-9; IV.1,172-174); only the wise would know how to return a favour (Seneca *Ep*. 81,10-11); and only the wise was really capable of love (Epictetus II.22,3-5); all non-sages were exiles (Cicero *Mur.* 61); a traditional burial was trivial and there was no genuine reason to prefer this over being buried during an earthquake (Seneca *NQ* VI.2,7-8; cf. *Ep*. 92,34; Epictetus IV.7,32).

everything they valued was based on wrong assumptions. In continuation of this, Epictetus explained his function as a philosopher as being Zeus's messenger (ἄγγελος), and in the function of being a divine messenger he would point out to the masses that they had gone astray from what Zeus intended (Epictetus III.22,23).[209] Epictetus even articulated this mediating role as a messenger of truth within the framework of a traditional cultic praxis: Epictetus advised his students not to mistake his words as his own but realise that it was Zeus who spoke through Epictetus as mediator. His students should therefore realise that his teachings were the same kind of divine sign-giving (σημαίνω) they usually expected from ravens (Epictetus III.1,36-37).

The Stoics philosophers saw themselves as messengers of Zeus. As Seneca would point out, virtue (*virtus*) was elevated by a touch of an instigator and this instigator was the philosopher (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 94,29). The purpose of the Stoic truth-telling was, therefore, to induce the spiritual transformation of the recipients, but it was not necessarily received with gratitude. However, a true philosopher would, according to Seneca, be brave and steadfast and not timidly lay a bond on the truth-telling (Seneca *Ep*. 100,4). The potential for violence that this truth-telling could induce would lead Epictetus once more to reference Socrates, who during his defence had likened his adamant parrhesiastic activity to that of a being stationed at a military post. Having been stationed at this post by the gods, he would hold this position until death, and he would do so without desertion (Epictetus I.9,23-25; cf. II.13,24). Consequently, a life of truth altered and challenged the relations of power, which will become increasingly clear in the next chapter. The boldness of the philosophical truth-telling that Epictetus advocated to his students was in this regard coupled to the Cynic as a model. Epictetus would single out events from Diogenes the Cynic's life to make his point: when pirates captured Diogenes, he had contrary

[209] See also Ierodiakonou who has examined the philosopher's role as messengers for the gods (Ierodiakonou 2007, 66).

to expected normal behaviour spoken parrhesiastically to them, and when the pirates later sold him at a slave auction, Diogenes would continue his parrhesiastic speech targeted against both buyers and auctioneer. But most famously, when Alexander the Great is said to enthusiastically and admiringly have sought out the famous Diogenes, Diogenes would even subject Alexander the Great to his bold and provocative truth-telling. Diogenes's actions were not just the model for the Cynic philosophers; this unwavering truth-telling should be the model of imitation for all those of Epictetus's students who were courageous – the cowards, Epictetus emphasised, could cower in the corner and spin syllogisms (Epictetus II.13,24-26).

5 The Spiritual Critique: Notions of Ownership

Zeno's *Republic* proposed an ideal community in which both the economic system and the hierarchical structure of society were abolished. This was possible insofar humanity had successfully cultivated its divine soul. The sources do not indicate that the Imperial Stoics dedicated much attention to Zeno's *Republic*, but it is interesting that the Imperial Stoics in their spiritual criticism provided a substantial amount of criticisms that often echoed these themes present in Zeno's treatise. Since their spiritual critique was targeted against their contemporaries, it is natural that the critique was shaped in conjunction with social developments specific to the times. It is, therefore, possible to discern in the critique that it was levelled during a period in Western history where the ownership of property increasingly came to the centre of attention in society, especially as private property.[210] Their spiritual critique formed an operation where a particular concern of the Roman elite, property ownership, was suspected, rejected, rearticulated, and displaced into a subversive position in relation to the social reality that gave it primacy. The notion of ownership was extrapolated from its immediate domain and utilised in an analysis and critique that centred on existential necessity to embody the true nature of things, and this was, in other words, challenging the existing order of things.

The Romans' preoccupation with ownership of property was reflected among the Stoics who addressed the issue from a conceptual perspective structured by their cosmological worldview. The most innovative response to the Roman preoccupation with property was the Stoics' spatially laden notion of external versus internal ownership that gave rise to an idea of self-ownership, but the Stoics also

[210] For the increased importance of private property in Rome and how it historically developed in Rome, see for instance Wood 2008 (chapter 3) and Pierson 2013 (chapter 2).

addressed the matter of external property relations in its own right from the perspective of the Cosmic City. Property relations, the accumulation of property, as well as the consumption of property formed interconnected themes that were determined by the Stoic idea of self-ownership, which was given its meaning through the Cosmic City. The notion of self-ownership was carried further than this; it also shaped how the Stoics reconceptualised slavery and it was employed into the question of power relations. As shall be demonstrated, their spiritual critique, structured by notions of ownership, provided the basis for an economic critique, a redefinition of slavery, and a political challenge to the authority of the Emperor.

5.1 Divine Property

Anticipations of the modern understanding of private property seem to have slowly emerged in Greek thought without ever being fully articulated. In Greek political thought, Plato had discussed how the Guardian class in his ideal city, unlike the other inhabitants, should share property, but he did not dedicate much attention to a theoretical account for property and property ownership (cf. Plato *Rep*. II.371b; V.416d-e; VII.458a-d). Questions of property ownership received the first extensive attention in Aristotle's account of different types of property arrangements in society, and he is sometimes interpreted as providing the first defence for private property. However, he did not conceive of private property the way it is understood in modern times since he, in his account, did not express the possibility that property could be both privately owned and put to private use simultaneously (cf. Aristotle *Pol*. II & VII; Pierson 2013, 29f). Of the different kinds of arrangements Aristotle preferred that property was private while being used with the common good in mind (Aristotle *Pol*. II.1263a). The conceptualisation of private property as it is understood today is, according to Pierson, a later development that emerged primarily with Roman society. Although Zeno seemingly found no reason for the existence of private property in his ideal community, the Stoics did still participate in the burgeon-

ing intellectual conceptualisation of this type of economic arrangement, as they would naturally engage themselves with analysing and discussing the less than ideal community in which they lived (cf. Erskine 2011, 103).

However, the source material for the Stoics' treatment of private property is scant and lacks any thorough and coherent theorising, but it might be possible to intimate how it was conceptualised in scattered remarks in the literature. According to one scholarly position, the Stoics – despite Zeno's abolition of property in the ideal community – advocated private property in the non-ideal community (Long 2006; 2007a; Annas 1989; 1995a, 302-312; Griffin 1976, 204n1; 2013, 331). For the present purposes, I will focus on the argument provided by Long since his is the most extensive and bold argument. According to Long, the Stoics anticipated modern liberal thought on two key issues: 1) that every human being is entitled to self-ownership, and 2) that human nature, "inclines human beings to acquire private property and to interact with one another as property-owners" (Long 2006, 338). While I agree with Long in relation to the first anticipation, I strongly disagree with Long on the second interpretation for reasons I will explain below. Concerning his second interpretation, Long himself makes the interpretative difficulty clear, by stating that Stoic thought seems compatible with radical communism, yet, in his mind, the Stoics nonetheless anticipated Hegelian and Lockean liberalism (Long 2006, 357; 2007a, 242). Long's interpretation is based in two sources primarily, a passage in Hierocles and a couple of passages in Cicero.

Since Hierocles is the only actual Stoic source Long is able to reference, I shall briefly start with the passage in question, where Hierocles describes the Stoic theory of appropriation (ὀικείωσις). Long correctly points to the fact that the root of ὀικείωσις is οἰκός (household) and therefore is derived from a term that has something to do with ownership and belongings. Hierocles describes how appropriation relates first to oneself, then kindred beings, and then external material objects. In relation to the latter, the process of appropriation impels a person to choose

(αἱρετικός) and selectively determine (ἐκλεκτικός) those material things that are useful to preserve a person's constitution, and this indicates, according to Long, that the Stoics argued for the accumulation of private property (Long 2006, 355ff; cf. Hierocles *Eth*. col. IX, 3-10 = Ramelli 2007, 24f). Hierocles seems to have aligned himself more with the Middle Stoics, and if a defence of private property is to be found among the Imperial Stoics, he will most likely have proposed it. However, as I read the passage, Hierocles does not employ the theory of appropriation to defend private property but uses the theory of appropriation to express how a person's relation to oneself, fellow human beings, and external objects should all follow the natural process. In this process it was expected that external objects, such as property, were something the Stoics would come into contiguity with – no wonder, all Stoics during this period lived in a society in which property existed and was important for social relations – but that does not make it a defence for the existence of private property or for participating in property relations. Hierocles explains how the purpose of appropriation in relation to external objects is the ability to let these external objects underpin the appropriate psychological development, and he does not at all seem interested in the accumulation of property. In other words, what Hierocles was describing was that a person should rationally choose only those external objects that were useful to their physical and spiritual constitution – i.e. the choice to either come into contact with or completely reject certain external objects – and the passage therefore addresses how property should be subservient to the spiritual transformation, not how property ownership and accumulation were justified judicially or morally as part of human nature.[211] As far as I see, the passage does for this reason not support Long's interpretation.

[211] Long thereby also counters the interpretation proposed since Bonhöffer, and which I surmise is the correct interpretation, that the Stoics, "never strives for the possession of external goods for their own sake, but only in order to be active according to reason in this too" (Bonhöffer 1996, 290).

Long's most persuasive case is, however, Cicero. The Ciceronian passages are the most important for Long's argument since these allow him to substantiate that Chrysippus, Panaetius, and Hecato preferred private property and the social arrangement therefore found significant support in Stoic thought. It is, however, important to realise that Cicero generally is understood to be a uniquely stern defender of private property in his time; his treatise *De Officiis* was a favourite of John Locke and the intellectual affinity does, therefore, not come as a surprise, but Cicero also provides some passages that are interesting when reconstructing the Stoic position, as Cicero sometimes referenced the Middle Stoics and Chrysippus. In *De Officiis* Cicero would stipulate that although private property was a cultural and not a natural phenomenon property had become private due either to occupancy for an extended period, conquest, by law, purchase, etc. (Cicero *Off.* I.21). Despite not having been established by nature but by cultural and historical specificities, Cicero would defend this circumstance fervently. As such, Cicero reported how a politician, in Cicero's mind a demagogue (*popularis*) – i.e. one who appealed to the masses – had delivered an oration that deserved the capital punishment, insofar it was an argument for the equal distribution of wealth (*aequationem bonorum*). This politician basically misunderstood society, Cicero argued, since humanity from nature was endowed for communities and these communities developed into larger states with the precise purpose to protect private property (*Off.* II.73). Cicero therefore interpreted human bonding and solidarity in light of a propensity to what he understood to be the just protection of private property. Many scholars have noted that Cicero provides the earliest example of a politician who saw the state's primary function as the protection of private property, wherefore Cicero by some is also considered the most influential ancient political thinker on modern politics (cf. de Ste. Croix 1981, 426; Wood 1991, 130). It does not seem obscure to argue from this that Cicero's political thought seems deliciously compatible with modern liberal democracy.

However, Long argues that Cicero's advocacy of private property was based in Stoicism and represented: "a secularized Stoicism, which has dropped the edifying but unhelpful talk about a *divine* city shared by gods and men" (Long 2007a, 239). Contrary to this, my examinations so far substantiate that this so-called 'secularised' Stoicism, decoupled from notions of the Cosmic City, at best seems to have been a negligible position and certainly did not represent the Stoicism expressed by the Hellenistic or the Imperial Stoics. Nevertheless, on the basis of Cicero's writings on private property, Long argues that the Stoics came close to advocating a modern liberal defence for private property, and that they envisaged human beings as social agents who can only fully realise themselves as free human beings by acquiring and using private property (cf. Long 2006, 359). However, before basing an interpretation of the Stoic position on Cicero, it is important to pay careful heed to two things: first, Cicero was perhaps the most fervent defender of private property in the antique world; second, Cicero always presents a picture of Stoicism in which all 'left-wing', as Dudley termed it, and Cynic elements are eliminated. Any attempt to reconstruct a general Stoic position on private property on the basis of Cicero's writings should therefore be made with caution (cf. chapter 1.2.1). There are unquestionably interesting anticipations in Cicero of modern liberal thought on private property, but it is not at all clear that it reflects an accurate or actual trend in Stoic thought (see especially Mitsis 2005; also Pierson 2013, 49-51; Barlow 2012). Long's interpretation might indeed be correct in relation to Cicero's position and might perhaps even reflect a genuine Middle Stoic position, but it seems neither to be representative of Hellenistic nor Imperial Stoicism.

Long nevertheless thinks Cicero's position is representative for the Stoic position for two reasons: *De Officiis* was modelled on a treatise written by the Middle Stoic Panaetius, and Cicero would also reference both Panaetius' student Hecato and more importantly Chrysippus (Long 2006, 343, 349f). The Middle Stoic Hecato, whose position we know through Cicero, is generally accepted to have been one of

the most vocal Stoic defenders of property and on the basis of the writings of Cicero, Long thinks that Hecato imagined a Stoic sage who, "has become a careful and strongly motivated property-owner on the evidence of *Off*. III.63" (Long 2007a, 239). Indeed, when reading *Off* III.63, Cicero made Hecato defend the accumulation of property, but the passage also suggests that this accumulation is justified by virtue of the benefit it will do society. From this, Long then concludes that in the Stoic scheme wealth is something worth accumulating (Long 2006, 343f). Although the Ciceronian passage presents wealth as something worth striving for, Hecato's argument that personal property was beneficial to the community is not an anticipation of Reaganite 'trickle-down economics,' but rather reflects a position thoroughly similar to Aristotle's. It is, therefore, important to realise that, even if Cicero presented Hecato's Stoicism correctly, it does not reflect a modern approach in which property is obtained for the sake of further accumulation or for the sake of individual consumption.

To substantiate his argument, it is vital for Long that Cicero seemingly also lets Chrysippus advocate private property and wealth accumulation, because the position then is visible in more orthodox versions of Stoicism and makes the connection to a prolific Hellenistic Stoic as well. This too would have been important for Cicero, since Chrysippus was esteemed as a Stoic authority in Antiquity. If Cicero could present Chrysippus's position as aligned with his own, Cicero's endeavour to rid Stoicism from its Cynic elements would substantially have been furthered. To what extent it is accepted as credible that Chrysippus defended private property rests on a passage in Cicero in which an argument, supposedly introduced by Chrysippus, might be interpreted as defending private property (cf. Cicero *Fin*. III.67). This is the famous theatre-analogy in which Cicero makes the argument that possession of property is analogue to occupying a particular seat at the theatre. The argument goes that even though a theatre is owned in common, the seat a person occupies in the theatre can rightfully be called that person's own. This then is also true of

the world that is in common, while individual persons can have property of their own. For Long and others, this passage proves Chrysippus defended private property (Long 2006, 350f, 357; cf. also Annas 1989, 167; Griffin 1976, 204n1; 2013, 331). However, it is not at all clear that the theatre-analogy was attributed to Chrysippus by Cicero. As both Erskine and Dawson emphasise, the passage is ambiguous regarding where the analogy has its origin. The passage itself is very compressed and starts by discussing Chrysippus's argument that humanity has a right of disposal over non-rational animals, but it then takes a sudden leap to introduce the theatre-analogy. This leap could suggest that Cicero is no longer reporting the position of Chrysippus but perhaps rather that of either Panaetius, Hecato, or Cicero himself (Erskine 2011, 105-110; see also Dawson 1992, 189f; Mitsis 2005, 235). The ambiguous nature of the passage led, for instance, Jeremy Waldron to report the passage as reflecting Cicero's position without mentioning either Chrysippus or the Stoics (Waldron 1988, 154).

Nevertheless, Long accepts that the passage is meant to designate Chrysippus as the originator of the analogy. However, the actual meaning of the analogy is in fact still difficult to determine, as Long also acknowledges (cf. Long 2006, 351). What Long completely disregards in his interpretation is the fact that even if the theatre-analogy is cautiously accepted as having its origin in Chrysippus, scholars are still confronted with the fact that Cicero's de-Cynicised presentation of Stoicism remains an interpretative issue. Long admits that Cicero detested egalitarianism (Long 2006, 349), but he does not take this and Cicero's de-Cynicising project sufficiently into consideration when determining the credibility of the passage. We know very little about Chrysippus' opinion on the issue of property but we do know that Chrysippus had advocated the same kind of ideal egalitarian community that Zeno had done, and there is, therefore, good reason to suppose that Cicero would have sanitised Chrysippus's position and bended it towards Cicero's own (cf. Mitsis 2005,

235). Therefore, even if the passage is accepted as being Chrysippean in origin, the argument Chrysippus supposedly was making is still debatable.

Mitsis has argued that even though Cicero undoubtedly and generally advocates private property, the theatre-analogy, even if accepted as Chrysippean, does not necessarily prove that Chrysippus argued for private property. The analogy seems, in Mitsis's mind, to fit better with the Stoic proto-communist ideal of common property because in a community in which everything is shared equally, "we still need principled procedures for allocating shares of things that cannot be used simultaneously" (Mitsis 2005, 234). Mitsis's argument is incisive because the theatre-analogy's point of departure is how communal property is allocated. The temporariness of seat allotment during theatrical plays do not adequately reflect owning private property but seems instead to be pointing to how objects that are shared in common from the outset (like a Greek theatre) can be allotted for private use for a restricted period. If we accept that the analogy had its origin in Chrysippus, it might exactly have been an elaboration of how the Stoic utopia was imagined to function in regard to external objects and the property shared by all inhabitants. This interpretation finds support among the Imperial Stoics as well.

Among the Imperial Stoics, Seneca devoted the most attention to property. In *De Beneficiis* he attempted to defend the Stoic doctrine that all things belong to the sage. This was a Stoic core doctrine also linked to Zeno's point that property would be held in common in the ideal community, and it appears to have been puzzling to Seneca's Roman contemporaries, living in a society in which property laws were quite comprehensive. To give a solution to how this doctrine was compatible with conventional society, Seneca claimed that even though everything belonged to the sage, each person did still have a right of disposal over their property. They had this, however, in the same way that all property in a kingship belonged to the king by right of sovereignty, yet the king could allow his subjects the right of individual disposal (*Ben.* VII.5,1). This suggests that the Stoics conceptualised property in the sense

that one entity was the owner of a thing, while another entity could be the user (cf. *Ben.* VII.6,1). In relation to Roman society, Seneca therefore seems to have been justifying how it was possible that Roman law could dictate a set of rules concerning property, while simultaneously maintaining the Stoic doctrine that all things belonged to the sage (*Ben.* VII.8,1; cf. Erskine 2011, 120). This has been interpreted by some scholars as a clever way to pay heed to the Stoic doctrines, while the existing property relations in Roman society could be maintained; in other words, serving to maintain the status quo (cf. Wood 2008, 147). However, as also pointed out by Mitsis, Seneca's concern in this passage was not private property but rather how property transcended private property (Mitsis 2005, 235, 237). If it was supposed to be a Stoic justification of private property, it was a rather odd one.

Mitsis's point finds substantiation elsewhere in *De Beneficiis* and other parts of Seneca's writings. Elsewhere in the treatise, Seneca attempted to elucidate how it was possible for two friends to give each other a gift even though friends already have things in common. Of course, Seneca explained, "the sharing of property (*consortium*) exists only between the wise (*sapiens*) among whom there exists friendship. The rest are as great friends as they are united (*socius*)" (*Ben*. VII.12,1).[212] The point for Seneca was that the non-wise were neither united nor friends. They do not share real friendship because they are not wise and for this reason they are not capable of holding things in common. Compared to the fools, actual friends, i.e. sages, have things in common but they can still give a gift, and in order to show this Seneca employs the theatre-analogy.[213] In the theatre, the rows reserved for the Roman knights were to be held in common among those who belonged to the equestrian order, but

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212 Seneca uses the term *socius*, which according to Griffin is a technical term from trading and used in the relationship between business partners (Griffin 2013, 330f). This implies, I surmise, that Seneca thought cooperation between people was characterised by unhealthy competition that regarded only personal gain and not the common good. In other words, the egotistic and individual pursuit of wealth accumulation was anti-social and problematically undermined social bonds.

213 The theatre-analogy is also found in Epictetus, but he employs it in relation to adultery (cf. Epictetus II.4,9-10).

whenever a particular Roman knight was occupying a seat, this seat did become his property during the duration of the show.[214] Consequently, a Roman knight might have the right to any seat among the equestrian section but if he arrives late and everything is occupied, he does not have the right to any particular seat because it is currently occupied. In this case, another knight could therefore choose to give up his seat for a friend and thereby, Seneca argues, it is possible for two friends to exchange gifts though having shared ownership (Seneca *Ben.* VII.12,3-6). In this passage Seneca displays a concern with securing equal access to property, insofar property is owned in common but cannot be occupied by numerous persons at a time. Thus, this Senecan version of the theatre-analogy seems to support the reading of the supposed Chrysippean theatre-analogy suggested by Mitsis, but it also finds further support in Seneca's other writings.

Property, Seneca stressed at numerous occasions, was not something one could own privately but something one could occupy for a period. Seneca would elaborate this on account of a heterochronic perspective. Throughout a lifetime one would receive different things. Most people would treat this as if these things belonged to them, but they were merely a loan. Some things would be claimed by their 'owner' early on in life and maybe a few things would remain in one's possession for

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[214] According to Erskine, Seneca's introduction of the equestrian order into the theatre-analogy is an indication that the theatre-analogy in Rome functioned to justify private property, but that it served this purpose in Rome and not in Chrysippus. He therefore thinks that the later Stoics might have altered it to counter Chrysippus's egalitarian doctrines and defend private property (Erskine 2011, 105ff). Contrary to Erskine's point, I do not think the introduction of the equestrian order to the analogy implies it was a defence for private property. Brunt generally finds Erskine's reading of the theatre-analogy (i.e. of Cicero *Fin.* III.67 and this Senecan passage) "perverse," but he does not make it clear why he thinks so. Brunt suggests that Seneca introduces a hierarchy in the analogy to underline the superiority of the sage as compared to non-sages (Brunt 2013, 47n37). The superiority of the sage is a basic Stoic doctrine but the reason that Seneca introduced this hierarchy seems to me rather to be for situational purposes. *De Beneficiis* was dedicated to a Roman knight (cf. Griffin 1976, 455) and Seneca could rhetorically have framed the analogy so it would mirror this.

an entire lifespan (Seneca *Marc.* 10,1-2).[215] Seneca would reiterate this in his letters: just as one's life would eventually come to an end, likewise one would inevitably also have to take leave of one's possessions and give it back to the original owner (Seneca *Ep.* 98,10). Some things such as land, Seneca emphasised in another letter, could stay in a family for generations, but since property could not become private just by having been occupied for an extended period (Seneca here countered Cicero, cf. *Off.* I.20f), the land occupied by a family was actually the common property of all mankind (Seneca *Ep*. 88,12). These passages suggest that Seneca critiqued the misconceptions of his contemporaries and underlined that despite their best knowledge, their property was only temporarily occupied and borrowed from the real owner, humanity. It seems clear from these passages that Seneca assumed that all things and objects, all property, belonged to the communality of humanity. Property was in this way not conceptualised in legal terms but in relation to humanity's share in the divine. As such, private property did not exist, and property was conceptualised in a way where we might label it divine property. The property acquired throughout a lifetime was merely a loan from this collection of divine property. The purpose of the theatre-analogy seems therefore to have been to serve as principle for allocating temporal usage of this property since no one could claim to have the right of disposal of an object while someone else currently occupied it, and when Seneca employed it, he did not defend private property but rather seems to have articulated something akin to a religiously conceptualised *usus-* or *ususfructus*-law – a principle for the use of shared divine property.

Epictetus only addressed property (in a very disinterested way) in a few instances. For instance, he addressed the matter by stressing that the implication of living in an imperial state was that one should let other people's property be and not

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[215] Elsewhere Seneca would frame it in different cosmic terms and state that wealth could only be obtained by incurring a debt to Fortune (Seneca *Ep*. 87,7). Wealth was therefore never one's own but would have to be paid back eventually.

take it from them (Epictetus III.7,21). However, the admonition is not completely clear regarding what kind of unjust usurpation of property of which Epictetus are talking. He explicitly mentions wives, boys, and silver and gold plates and this elaboration indicate that Epictetus is not addressing the issue of, say, the redistribution of wealth but rather that of thievery and adultery. The passage should therefore not be misunderstood as expressing the modern refrain that taxation is theft. The passage seems directed against these acts, thievery and adultery, as detrimental to the current social order, and this more general concern would suggest that Epictetus was concerned with the importance of trust between fellow neighbours. The passage does, therefore, not necessarily express the idea that property could or should be conceptualised as private but is fully compatible with the idea that property, although in common, could be occupied for a period. Furthermore, Epictetus's choice to specifically designating an imperial state – and not a republic or an ideal state – implies that Epictetus thought the imperial constitution was dependent on this kind of 'social contract,' but simultaneously that he was open to the idea that other kinds of political constitution could give rise to different constellations and requirements.

Nevertheless, even though Epictetus in this specific passage seems to accept that a person in his contemporary society justly could occupy property, he would also emphasise that property should be neglected and disregarded completely (cf. Epictetus I.1,10; IV.1,82). Long acknowledges that these two passages in Epictetus challenge his argument that human nature in Stoic philosophy would make a person inclined to the acquisition of property. However, he discounts these passage as representative for Stoicism on two points: Firstly, even though Epictetus makes the argument that property is irrelevant, Long points to the fact that the Stoics argued that property was a preferred indifferent (Long 2006, 345). While this is true, it was also an analysis challenged by the Stoics, as I will outline below. Secondly, Long argues that, in his depreciation of external possessions, Epictetus relied on the concept of possession relative to self-ownership and the Stoics could therefore not be indiffer-

ent to property (ibid.). However, it is difficult to see how Epictetus' notion of internal possession and self-ownership – which he shared with the rest of the Stoics – is the same as accepting external private property since he employs it exactly to challenge his contemporaries' evaluation of private property. The Stoics' doctrine of self-ownership is, as Long also notes, one of their most important contributions to social thought but the purpose of this notion was to subvert their fellow Romans' ideas of private property, not to support it.

Epictetus's apparent disinterest in private property shows that he did not dedicate any effort to maintaining or defending the current property relations in Roman society, and that he showed a complete disinterest in the legal rights that pertained to property in Roman society. This is underpinned by a passage in which Epictetus reports that the only object in his home, an iron lamp, was stolen. Epictetus is not at all concerned with his legal ownership of the lamp but contemplates that the thief must have been influenced (πάσχω) by an impulse he was unable to resist. Epictetus, in other words, immediately contemplates the situation in terms of the thief's spiritual disposition. Epictetus left it at that and Epictetus – who needed a lamp – would buy one made of less valuable material instead (Epictetus I.18,15-16). Epictetus' solution to this thievery underlines a very important point made by Mitsis about the Stoics' appreciation of property: the violation of Roman property laws causes no harm and Mitsis correctly concludes that, for the Stoics, "any loss or violation of property must remain a matter of indifference", and this indifference, "ultimately undermines any attempt to attach a right to it." For the Stoics, Mitsis emphasises, private property is, "merely an illusion" (Mitsis 2005, 242f).

As such, the Stoics' commitment to addressing property formed part of an operation in which the Roman values, categories, concepts, etc. that were being developed at the time on private property were subverted. Epictetus belittled any importance his students would attach to property and Seneca emphasised that property relations should be conceptualised in terms of being an inhabitant in the Cosmic

City. Thus, property was neither important, nor was it conceptualised as something that could be privately owned, or should be put to private use for that matter, as will become clearer below. Nevertheless, Long argued that the Stoics advocated not only private property but also that the acquisition of private property could be a commendable part of a Stoic lifestyle, that it was part of human nature, and that human nature impelled a person to enter into property relations. However, the social praxis of wealth accumulation was also challenged by the Imperial Stoics. This is an important yet under-appreciated point about the Stoics' treatment of property and it simultaneously sets the stage for the ensuing examinations of the consumption of property.

According to a passage in Diogenes Laërtius, the Stoics argued that while the sages would share property, the accumulation of property by non-sages was possible only through some sort of unjust praxis (cf. DL VII.125). Whether this refers to an analysis provided by the Hellenistic Stoics is difficult to ascertain with certainty, but the Imperial Stoics articulated the same analysis. In one passage, Seneca would address it in the following way: Parents would understandably wish for their children to receive property in abundance, thereby allowing a luxurious lifestyle, but Seneca would hope the parents' wish remained unfulfilled and that the children would despise all this property. The object of Seneca's concern here is not, as it so often was, luxury, but rather the fact that if the parents' wishes were to come true it would mean that many people had been plundered (*pilo*) so one person could be enriched. As Seneca expresses it in the passage, "whatever is transferred to you, must be removed from another" (Seneca *Ep*. 32,4-5; also *Vit. Beat.* 23,1).[216] Seneca did not relativise his statement (i.e. usually, often, perhaps, or sometimes removed from another) and therefore shows an appreciation for the fact that the accumulation of wealth is possible *only* through a transferral of objects from one person to another and that

[216] Seneca's radical reading of the problems of private property, it has been argued by Pierson, would influence similar interpretations in later Christianity (Pierson 2013, 56, 71-76).

this is often done through plundering. Thus, no object can be occupied by two persons at the same time (cf. the theatre-analogy) and it must be transferred in some way, and Seneca's language suggests that the accumulation of wealth, in this zero-sum game, most likely, if not always, is an unjust act. This was an analysis that Musonius Rufus also seems to have supported, insofar he states that an act of acquisition based in desire would result in injustice (ἀδικία), because the desiring person would keep on acquiring excessively and this was not possible with just methods (Musonius Rufus XX.126,17-22; cf. Epictetus I.24,11).[217] The Imperial Stoics therefore seem to have coupled the accumulation of property and wealth to some sort of economic exploitation that was willfully ignored by the profiting person who was ruled by a damaging desire. This desire would lead a person to extract property from another person, who in some way was forced to transfer the property the person was currently occupying.[218]

The Stoics explicitly coupled their understanding of property relations to their cosmo-religious framework. The true knowledge of these relations, which the Stoics had realised, was possible to obtain because the soul allowed a person, Seneca stressed, to transcend this world's limited consciousness, and from the cosmic and divine perspective the true nature of ownership looked very different (Seneca *Ep*. 92,31-33). Epictetus would make his charge against private wealth accumulation

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[217] Seneca does not specify in *Ep*. 32,4-5 whether all accumulation, only accumulation after a certain level (expressed in the word 'abundance,' *copia*), or – like Musonius – that only accumulation starting from desire, results in 'exploitive' plundering.

[218] In my mind, a passage in Cicero, if accepted as credible, supports that this was a general Stoic position while also pointing out that the Stoics argued the acquisition of externals could take a just form. Cicero reported that Chrysippus found it legitimate for a person and apparently even in this person's interest to acquire external objects, as long as this was not done by harming others (Cicero *Off.* III.42; cf. Hierocles *Eth*. col. IX, 3-10). As in his other passages on property, Cicero is very clearly bent towards justifying private property and Cicero presents Chrysippus's position in a way that reverberates with the modern liberal definition of negative liberty. However, to present Cicero's reading as Stoic should, I think, be cautioned, because the Stoics in every way seem to have been opponents of any positive evaluation of acquisition beyond what was necessary according to nature. And necessity was, in the final analysis, a matter of biological survival. This will become increasingly clear below. I surmise it is this kind of necessary property acquisition Chrysippus had in mind.

explicitly from the vantage point of the Cosmic City. Once his students had fully realised that they were citizens of the Cosmic City, they would understand the logical consequences of what that citizenship entailed. The implications of understanding one's participation in the Cosmic City was, according to Epictetus, that the philosopher never would treat anything as a source of personal profit. It seems that the very concept of personal profit to Epictetus entailed the detachment from the social and that the act of obtaining personal profit, and hence also private property, was incompatible with being part of a greater whole (Epictetus II.10,3-5).[219]

Epictetus's invoking of the parts and whole offers no surprises since it continues the basic Stoic line of thought. The acquisition of property and wealth was in the Stoics' mind possible primarily through the exploitation of their fellow human beings. Since exploiter and exploited were parts of the same larger whole, one part had damaged another part to the detriment of both. Some material objects were, of course, imagined to be the premise for sustaining life but the Stoics said little on how this could and should be obtained. From Epictetus, it seems the act of obtaining these objects could be understood analogue to participating in a banquet at which dinner plates are passed around. Before the plate arrives, the desire for the plate should be held in check, when the plate was offered, Epictetus told his students, they would be allowed to take a polite portion and immediately pass it on without unjustly trying to possess it (Epictetus *Ench*. 15).[220] From this passage, it is clear Epictetus thought a desire for possession informed the typical act of obtaining objects (i.e.

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[219] Profit, as a concept, did in the Stoic perspective only make sense in relation to the virtues and not external objects (cf. Tsekourakis 1974, 68-75). Any notion of profit in relation to external objects that remained within the external sphere did not make sense. From this Epictetian passage (II.10,3-5) it becomes increasingly clear that the Stoics' distinction between parts and whole was qualified by the whole. The whole was never the sum of its parts since the parts only find their meaning in relation to the whole.

[220] In this line of thought, I see a similarity with Chrysippus's position as reported in Cicero (*Off*. III.42), see footnote 218. Thus, what is needed – this need is biologically determined and rests in the end on rational analysis – may be obtained only if it is not taken from another.

wealth accumulation) and that the only permissible way of obtaining objects was inherently passive; it should never be the object of determined efforts.

Long's claim that Stoicism tended towards Lockean liberalism is therefore not substantiated by Seneca, Epictetus, or Musonius Rufus' treatment, and only seems to find support in Cicero's interpretation of the Middle Stoics (and perhaps Chrysippus). Scholars should therefore be very precise to call Cicero's interpretation of Stoicism for what it is, Ciceronian Stoicism. In his rejoinder to Long, Mitsis concludes – and this seems more likely – that private property in the Stoic framework, "is theft and that rationality, virtue, and happiness require that all property be held in common. In short, one should think less Maggie [Thatcher] and Ronnie [Reagan] and rather more Kropotkin" (Mitsis 2005, 243). The sources reflect that the Stoics argued that property was shared and in common, that this communality of property required guidelines for the temporal occupation and usage of this shared property, and furthermore – since the Stoics were fervent advocates of communal thinking – that occupied property should be put to use with the community and not the individual in mind.

However, as far as we know, the Imperial Stoics did never come to be stern advocates of political redistribution of wealth, although a few passages suggest the idea was somewhat adjacent.[221] Seneca seems to have been most vocal about wealth redistribution, but Marcus Aurelius also wrote passages in his journal that might perhaps be understood as going in this direction. In one passage, he would remind himself that whatever would be a 'benefit' to the individual would be benefitting the whole as well. This denotes the Stoic idea that society was a close-knit unity comprised of individual parts in a larger whole. By 'benefit' Marcus Aurelius seems to have been employing the Stoic analysis in the capacity as Emperor, as he referred to the benefits as those things that are 'intermediate' (μέσος) (Marcus Aurelius VI.45;

[221] Some Hellenistic and Middle Stoics might, however, perhaps have given this idea expression in political action, see Erskine 2011.

cf. also cf. V.22 & X.6,1). The term usually translates to 'middle' or 'intermediate' and the term could sometimes be used to express a political notion of that which is shared in common,[222] but it might also specifically reference the Stoic concept of indifferents (ἀδιαφὸραν). In other words, in this passage, Marcus Aurelius could have expressed that what was an interest to the individual (health, wealth, freedom, political rights, etc.) was a benefit to society and should be distributed in equal and just measure. If this passage is read to be referencing the distribution of indifferents, that he had the fair distribution of these indifferents in mind might find substantiation in the introduction to his *Meditations*, where Marcus thanked Severus who – in addition to having introduced Marcus to such Stoic political heroes as Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, and Brutus – gave Marcus a love for the conception (φαντασία) of a state where everyone had equal rights (ἰσόνομος), equality (ἰσότης), freedom of speech (ἰσηγορία), and was ruled by a king who values the liberty of his subjects (ἂρχω) (Marcus Aurelius I.14). According to Christensen, this passage might indeed indicate that Zeno's ideal community served as a regulative ideal in Marcus's thought (Christensen 1984, 53), although the influence can equally be derived from elsewhere.[223] The passage nevertheless substantiates that Marcus Aurelius's ideals dovetailed with the general Stoic evaluation of a community of equals, which ultimately was expected to lead to the Stoic utopian community.

While these passages in Marcus Aurelius might only insinuate the political redistribution of wealth, Seneca was slightly more explicit. In one letter, Seneca would reiterate a fundamental principle: everything that belonged to both gods and men was part of a whole and therefore constituted *one* unit (i.e. the Cosmic City). In this unity, each person was made for every other, since everyone shared the same

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[222] For how the term μέσος was related to politics and the notion of communality, see Vernant (2006b; 2006c).

[223] Pierre Hadot read in the passage a Platonic influence and interpreted the passage as expressing the Stoic idea of justice in which benefits are distributed according to individual merit (cf. Hadot 2001, 299).

divine ancestry and the same end. Analogously to a stone column that would collapse without the mutual support of the individual stones, so people should uphold each other materially. For this reason, Seneca would conclude: "Let us possess things in common (*habeamus in commune*); for birth is ours in common" (Seneca *Ep*. 95,52-53). Furthermore, as Inwood has pointed out, one of Seneca's major concerns in *De Beneficiis* is precisely the fear that Roman society could become too economically stratified and that some people would be unable to participate in the reciprocal exchange of giving benefits (a traditional Roman mechanism of wealth redistribution) and thereby undermine social stability (Inwood 2007a, 263; cf. Seneca *Ben.* II.35,3).[224] These passages indicate that wealth distribution did concern Seneca. In another of his letters, Seneca seems to have considered to what extent it was feasible or preferable to ameliorate the negative consequences of wealth accumulation through the political assembly:

> Let us imagine that we been summoned to an assembly; a law concerning the abolition of wealth (*divitiae*) has been proposed. Do we support or oppose this proposal with these examinations (*interrogatio*)? Will these examinations cause the Roman population to seek out and support poverty (*paupertas*) – poverty, the cause and foundation of their Empire – and instead be dreading their wealth, contemplating that it was obtained among those whom they have defeated, and that this wealth intrude (*irrumpo*) on the city with ambition, corruption, and disorder, that this wealth, plundered from other nations, results in a too lavish display of luxury […] It is better to support this proposition by assaulting one's

[224] For an examination of *De Beneficiis*, see also Griffin (2003; 2013). Patronage *(beneficia)* was a social institution sanctioned by the Roman ruling class which not only expressed a certain structure of power and hierarchy but also helped to cement this power constellation. According to Griffin, Seneca displays an appreciation of benefits or gift-exchange that mirrors points made within the field of sociology in relation to 'primitive' societies (Griffin 2003, 101), but the treatise ultimately affirms the general order of things during Seneca's lifetime: "Seneca was not challenging and unmasking the morality that policed the activity of gift exchange in the upper orders. Rather he was reinforcing the code […] grounding it in a metaphysical theory of man and the universe" (ibid., 113). As I read it, the treatise is, therefore, a Stoic take on a *realpolitische* question, as Seneca argues that the Emperor should strengthen the praxis that existed prior to the Principate. In other words, society was becoming too stratified and a method to counter this was the model of gift-exchange that in a Roman perspective already was tested and generally accepted as a reasonable redistributive method.

> problematic mental disposition (*affectus*) than by circumventing it with deliberations (Seneca *Ep*. 87,41).

This passage is very interesting. First, Seneca was not debating the feasibility or profitability of political action against the problems related to wealth. That this could be ameliorated politically seems acceptable to Seneca (it is also clear he thought wealth preferably should be eliminated entirely), but Seneca was instead suggesting that it would be better to ensure support for such a position, not by providing arguments and deliberations at the assembly, but through a specific conduct resulting from the spiritual transformation – that is, through political spirituality.[225] In other words, the best way to ameliorate inequality was through securing the spiritual transformation of his peers. Second, Seneca pointed out that the wealth of the Roman Empire had been acquired by plundering other nations and that the wealth this had created was corrupting the Roman community. This leads to a second part of the Stoics' spiritual critique, the consumption of property.

[225] There is a Senecan passage (*Brev. Vit.* 6,1) in which he likens Livius Drusus's legislative reforms (91 BCE) to the evil (*malus*) advances (*moveo*) of the Gracchi. Tiberius Gracchus attempted to introduce agrarian reforms (133 BCE) that would redistribute land from the wealthy to the poor and the reforms seem to have found both support and opposition from two different Stoic camps (cf. Erskine 2011, chapter 7). Panaetius and Cicero opposed the land reforms and it appears from *Brev. Vit.* 6,1 that Seneca agreed with their anti-Gracchi position. This can therefore be read to undermine the interpretation of Seneca's position which I have presented here. If *Brev. Vit.* 6,1 is interpreted as a disapproval of the content of the Gracchi's reforms, it is noteworthy that *De Brevitate Vitae* was written ca. 49 CE (Smith 2014, 161-166; or 55 CE if Griffin's suggestion is followed, cf. Griffin 1976, 401-407) while the other passages in which Seneca addressed property and equality, and the ones referenced in this chapter, was written in 58 CE (*Vit. Beat.*), 63 CE (*Ben.*), and 64 CE *(Ep.*). This could indicate that Seneca's position developed over the years from being against wealth equality to being advocating it. It is also possible that Seneca's reference to the Gracchi represented a merely conventional idiom. The anti-Gracchi propaganda overwhelmingly succeeded in Rome and Seneca might simply have reproduced this idiom in *Brev. Vit*. 6,1 where Seneca was making the argument that life was too short for premature (*immaturus*) ambitions like these radical reforms (*Brev. Vit.* 6,2). One final point, Seneca did not necessarily specify that it was the content of the Gracchi's reforms that were evil since the verb *moveo* (move, stir, disturb) could indicate it was the means and not the end that was the problem. This find support in his use of the adjective *immaturus* that points to an interpretation in which Seneca thought such ambitious reforms needed a more spiritual developed Roman society. In this case it would actually corroborate with *Ep*. 87,41 where Seneca favours the spiritual transformation over traditional political channels as the directing force for social transformation.

5.1.1 Property Consumption

The second part the Stoics' skirmish with the question of property ownership centred on how material consumption structured the lives of their fellow Romans. Thereby, by critiquing praxes of property consumption the Stoics provided a social critique of ancient Roman consumerism, and they charged that dimension of society – the desire for consumption – which made property ownership relevant in the first place.[226] In continuation of Max Weber, Moses Finley had argued that the Roman economy was a consumer-driven economy in which the cities' inhabitants consumed the goods produced by the rural producers (cf. Finley 1999, 191-196). Some issues pertaining to this dichotomy between urban and rural economies might be voiced, but the general appreciation of the Roman economic model has recently been restated by Wallace-Hadrill, who argues that consumption in Roman society provided, "a major economic stimulus in a dynamic and mobile society," and served much like the economic mechanisms argued for later by Adam Smith (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 346).[227] At the time of the Imperial Stoics, Roman society was undergo-

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[226] Unlike consumption that pertains to the individual, consumerism is an attribute of society (cf. Bauman 2007, 28). Consumerism is often defined as a modern phenomenon which did not exist prior to the 18th century. According to Peter Stearns, ancient intimations of consumerism differentiate from modern consumerism on three different points and can therefore not be characterised as consumerism at all (cf. Stearns 2001, 3-6). However, each of Stearns' points are challenged by new research on consumerist behaviour in Roman Antiquity (cf. Greene 2008, 75, 79; Walsh 2014, 178, 180), which appears to have taken a form that resembles Bauman's concept of 'liquid consumption,' usually reserved for 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2007, 29f; Greene 2008, 66f, 79).

[227] The Roman economy is challenging to analyse since the Romans did not engage systematically or scientifically with economics or economic thought (cf. Vivenza 2012, 25). Moses Finley's *The Ancient Economy* (1999) has stood as the seminal work since its first publication in 1973; see Andreau for an assessment of the legacy of Finley's book (2002, 33-49). Weber's basic description, which Finley supported, has similarly been reproduced in de Ste. Croix's Marxian examinations of ancient class relations and struggles (cf. 1981, 9-19). Since grain was the basic commodity, it is natural that the rural area had a privileged role in the ancient economy. The issue with the urban-rural dichotomy is, of course, the presupposition of a unified model applicable across a diverse geographic area and a wide temporal period. It is difficult to identify one single city and rural community as the 'ideal type' (Cartledge 2002, 16) since there seems to have been disparate systems in operation throughout the ancient world (Andreau 2002, 36). The economic dichotomy between urban and rural area is, therefore, a division that at times can be difficult to justify in the sources (Osborne 2002, 115).

ing a 'consumer revolution' which allowed new and distinctive patterns of individual and social consumption (cf. Hunt 1996, 225; Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 315-440).

Related to this consumer revolution, there was in Roman Antiquity and in the Roman notion of frugality (*frugalitas*) a significant concern with individual consumption and how this reflected a broader tendency of consumerism in society. This was especially so because the highly stratified society contained individuals with enormous reserves of wealth, and their consumption and the consumerism they participated in was a visible and extravagant example of costly signalling (cf. Walsh 2014, 84, 180). In the early Principate, Roman literature differentiates between two terms, *luxuria* and *magnificentia*, which identify this kind of costly signalling (Greene 2008, 68). *Luxuria* can be translated into 'luxury,' 'riotous living,' 'extravagance,' and 'excess,' it was understood as something someone did in private and therefore a vice. *Magnificentia* translates into 'greatness,' 'nobleness,' 'splendour,' but also less positive words as 'bragging.' In the literature *magnificentia* was opposed to *luxuria* and often connoted something positive, insofar it denoted public display and something that benefitted the community; the prime example of *magnificentia* was the phenomenon of euergetism, i.e. the practice of donating wealth to the community by constructing, for instance, public buildings (ibid., 71). Thus, the consumption of wealth was in Roman times understood as either private or public, which were then usually assigned different moral values. The Romans did often see luxury as a threat to the fabric of society and many sumptuary laws were therefore passed in the last centuries of the Roman Republic.[228] Luxury was viewed with anxious suspicion and a Stoic like Posidonius, among many others, used luxury – and its associated vice softness (τρυφὴ) – as an explanation for any perceived social and political decline.[229] Although the Stoics reflected this general concern with luxury, they also differed

[228] This analysis went back to the ancient Greeks (cf. Berry 1994, 58ff), but it was only the Romans who legislated on luxury (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 339).

[229] This was a prevalent narrative among the Romans, see for instance Sallust *Cat*. 5, 9-10; Livy *Hist*. praef.10; Juvenal *Sat.* 6

from the rest of society in their reasons, as the concern for the corrosive effects of luxury for some non-Stoics seems to have been rooted in aristocratic concern for 'new money.' Because luxury was a status-marker among the aristocratic elite, it served as a possibility for the non-aristocratic, 'inferior,' and 'crude' economic elite – freedmen and merchants alike – to imitate and commingle (and hence dilute) with those of noble birth (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 352f). The Stoics did not care for these hierarchical sentiments.

The preoccupation with luxury, splendour, softness, and indulgence is a testament to a lifestyle that enjoyed popularity. The incessant need to attribute all sorts of vices and personal and social disorders to excess reveals that indulgence in bodily pleasures of the extravagant sort was a common practice among the wealthy Romans and something of which the less wealthy would dream. For instance, the Greek poet Archestratus praised luxurious dining decorum and hedonistic indulgence against those who advocated frugality (cf. *Fr*. 60), and he travelled the Mediterranean like a gastronomical connoisseur and wrote poems about local delicacies:

> Ainos has large mussels, Abydos oysters,
> Parion bear-crabs, and Mytilene scallops…
> You shall buy Peloriac clams in Messene, where the sea's strait is narrow,
> And excellent smooth-shelled ones in Ephesos.
> (*Fr*. 7: Brought in Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 340f).

Archestratus was well-known and copied in Rome, and these types of gastronomical guidebooks formed, according to Wallace-Hadrill, a body of discourse on luxury that served as input and inspiration for further luxurious praxes. The consumption of foodstuff played a dominant role in both cultural praxes, satire, and criticism and was therefore particularly sensitive to regulation and legislation. But the regulation of foodstuff seems to have diverted consumption into other areas and legitimised these, such as funerary monuments, monumental housing construction, and lavish interior decoration. It seems that the sumptuary laws' narrow focus on foodstuff

resulted in the escalation of competition in other areas and ended up, "encouraging rather than blocking the advance of luxury" (ibid., 345). In 22 CE, Tacitus reported, the Roman Senate seized to attempt to regulate consumption (Tacitus *Ann.* III.52-55). According to Wallace-Hadrill, this change in politics was pragmatically supported by Emperor Tiberius, primarily because of the boost to the economy this was presumed to have.[230] The imperial regime wanted to promote trade to secure a steady influx of grain (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 332), which, as pointed out by Goodman, was the, "most important product of the ancient economy" (Goodman 2012, 152). Though some luxury items were produced at specialised centres within the Empire, luxury and trade were inextricably linked together, as luxury items were usually imported from Arabia, China, India, and northern parts of Europe or secured through military conquest (cf. Goodman 2012, 153).

In a society in which the masculine was valued almost above everything else, luxury was often coupled to the effeminate, the womanish man. Power and masculinity were intricately connected in the minds of the Romans; power in no small degree flowed from wealth but wealth also made luxury possible. It is therefore apparent why luxury was perceived to have essential connections to the exercise of power. Consequently, luxury was often problematised and opposed to the just and reasonable exercise of political or martial power. This can, for instance, be seen in the historian Cassius Dio who saw in luxury a weakening effect, which he coupled to aggressiveness, dishonesty, greed, and unholy deeds (ἀνόσιος) in the political sphere (Cassius Dio *Hist*. LXVII.6,4). Luxury was, therefore, as it has been argued by Berry, a significant component of political morality (cf. Berry 1994, 19-21). Luxury was criticised for being, "a threat to liberty in the boundless uncontrollability of human bodily desires", and it was feared that it would undermine the virtue of both

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[230] It might also have allowed Tiberius to encourage rivals from wealthy families to deplete their wealth, "through competitive spending" (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 332). Tacitus, anyways, reported that many aristocratic families eventually had succumbed to their taste for splendour (*magnificentia*) (Tacitus *Ann.* III.55).

citizens and rulers (ibid., 20). With this disruptive potentiality, luxury was, therefore, a political question that required policing of human desire (ibid., 63). At this point, a traditional Roman concern merged with the 'world-rejecting' ideas presented in the philosophical schools, such as Stoicism.[231] For the Stoics, their Roman values and Stoic doctrines came to comprise a perhaps undifferentiable amalgamation of mutual supporting values. However, whereas the sumptuary laws display one manifestation of the policing of luxury, the Stoics' spiritual critique formed another manifestation. The Stoics found their 'policing' more useful than juridical regulation because it – in the minds of the Stoics – addressed the root of the problem from the vantage point of truth.

5.1.1.1 Luxurious Disorders

The Stoic critique was expressed in many ways and intersected at many different topics, but in this chapter I shall examine it primarily in terms of the interconnection between luxury and wealth accumulation which were the material prerequisite for luxury. As it has also been pointed out by Berry (cf. ibid., 72), the Stoics were chiefly concerned with luxury within a dichotomous framework of the natural versus the unnatural. In this framework, the Stoics valued the natural, as being congruent with life according to nature, over the unnatural. Luxury was in this dichotomy the unnatural antithesis to the natural poverty.[232] Despite acknowledging this, Berry locates in the Imperial Stoics' tendency to moderate the Cynic position a turn and displacement from an idealistic position to a realistic position, a displacement that set luxury

[231] See Brunt (1973, 16) for a similar point about Dio Chrysostom's assault on luxury.

[232] Long concludes contrary to this and in relation to property ownership that poverty was 'contrary to nature' while wealth was 'according to nature' (Long 2006, 358). I find it puzzling to conclude on the basis of the sources that material wealth was seen as 'natural' for the Stoics and Long's conclusion is therefore directly opposite to the argument I will make here. Rather, the Stoics saw poverty as a basis for the good society, of course provided that basic physical requirements were covered. This is also displayed in how they addressed wealth distribution, which was not aimed at making the poor richer but rather lessening the wealth of the rich. This dovetails with Moses Finley's point that utopian thought in Antiquity was ascetic in nature (cf. Finley 1975a, 185f).

on a trajectory in which it would eventually be de-moralised and culminate in the unproblematic use of the term in modern day advertising (ibid., 66). Even if this is meant at the most general level, I think Berry here takes the matter further than what is warranted, since the Imperial Stoics were more adamant in their criticism than Berry lets on. In fact, as Brooke has argued, elements of the Stoic critique of luxury, and their argument that consumption should be trimmed to a proper and natural limit, would resurface and be rearticulated in the early 18th century by the bishop of Cambrai (Brooke 2012, 151-153). Part of the Stoics' spiritual critique of luxury consumption was a result of their challenge to property ownership and gave rise to a reconceptualisation of the notion of ownership as self-ownership.

Of all the Imperial Stoics, Seneca's writings form the most extensive body of material on the matter. This might be so because Seneca was one of the wealthiest Romans alive in his time and he will supposedly have been confronted with the issues at all times. His analysis and conclusions seem, however, also to have been shared by his fellow Stoics. The Imperial Stoics' criticism of luxury could be levelled from two different points of departure: from the spiritual wellbeing of the individual or the spiritual wellbeing of the horizontal community; both were of course intricately connected with each other and could not be isolated. Common for both entry points to the critique, however, was that the Stoics' cosmic framework substantiated the truth-value of the critique. This is forcefully underlined by Seneca who wrote that the philosophical critique of wealth – whether it was delivered through discourse or testimony – often would leave the philosopher in a position of social displacement, but this should not be of concern for the philosopher, Seneca emphasised, because the philosopher had the true knowledge (Seneca *Ep*. 90,19; also *Ep.* 17,9).

The communities on the horizontal level differed markedly from their vertical source. They did so because their inhabitants' divine nature remained unrealised and these communities were therefore ridden with vices, typically related to the ap-

petite (ἐπιθυμία), which showed itself in symptoms, such as luxury, greed and ambition.[233] Seneca would make it clear that when luxury and greed festered in a community it had the consequence that the divine bonds of brotherhood were broken (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 90,36). This point was also raised in Seneca's attempt to present the historical narrative of humanity. The first human beings enjoyed their fellowship in an uncorrupted form in what seems to be complete egalitarianism – according to Pierson, Seneca herein anticipated an idea of primitive communism (cf. Pierson 2013, 54) – until avarice corrupted their community. Thus, the horizontal communities had in their current disposition a corrupting influence on the disposition of their inhabitants – a corrupting influence initially not shared by earlier communities – and this corruption seems to have been conceived as being instilled early in human history. Society thereby became corrupted, having the unfortunate consequence that newborns quickly became corrupted (cf. Seneca *Con*. 12,1-2). Seneca used the Golden Age-narrative to explain that with the emergence of greed a dual poverty emerged. Firstly, the unequal distribution of wealth introduced material poverty and secondly, even those who had accumulated material wealth became poor because of their desire for things that were not truly theirs (Seneca *Ep.* 90,3; 90,36). By this, Seneca points to a common Stoic interpretation that the desire for external possession results in cessation of internal and spiritual possession, i.e. self-ownership. Thus, this problematic preoccupation with wealth and riches went back to those ancestors who were otherwise greatly admired, as they had commenced the practice of digging into mountains to obtain riches (Seneca *NQ* V.15,2). To Seneca, the problematic nature of digging into the ground to obtain riches could be read from a spatial ordering of the physical world, from God's geological ordering. The beneficial things that earth had produced were easy to obtain (e.g. fruits, grain, etc.); however, gold and silver were hidden deep in the ground because these were harmful and evil (*malus*) to humanity

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[233] For the Stoic theory on the appetite, see footnote 142.

(*gens*) and should preferably never see the light of day (Seneca *Ben.* VII.10,2; also *Ep*. 92,31). Spatially, the earth had been made in such a way that gold and silver had been hidden deep underground far away from humanity, but the ingenious mind of the early men had devised crafts that allowed their mining.

Thus, in discussing humanity's prehistory, Seneca disagreed with Posidonius's claim that those ingenious men in prehistory who had invented tools were sages. Posidonius was wrong, according to Seneca, insofar those who had made these technological discoveries were preoccupied with "looking to earth." Contrary to these merely skilful men, the sage's sight was set to "loftier heights." Posidonius's identification of these ingenious ancestors as sages was in other words incorrect, since their inventions did not bring humanity closer to its divine nature but was used to dig out the problematic precious metals. As such, they had introduced superfluous technology. Seneca could easily highlight examples from his own time: take for instance the decorated ceilings that could change with each dinner course or the saffron dispensing pipes in the roof aimed at pleasing the olfactory sense (*Ep*. 90,15).[234] Technological 'gadgets' were essentially dispensable, and even the most rudimentary tools were unnecessary, Seneca would underline. To explain his point, Seneca would refer to how a sage was one who upon seeing a boy use his hand for a cup would rebuke himself and throw away his cup with the words: "How stupid a man I am, to have carried such a superfluous burden" (Seneca *Ep*. 90,10-14). In other words, the cosmos was designed providentially, and nature had already provided humanity with a naturally occurring and functional cup (the hands), and the time and effort put into a material object like a wooden or iron cup was superfluous and wasted. For Seneca, it all came down to the fact that people had false knowledge of

[234] During this period the wealthy Romans developed an impressive array of technological adjustments and ornamentations of their household. This was, in the mind of Hierocles, superfluous when the household only required a well-functioning marriage (Hierocles *Acts* 76,6-19). Likewise, Musonius Rufus would scorn the praxis of superfluous ornamentations of what should actually only serve as a shelter from the elements (Musonius Rufus XIX.122,12-26; cf. also Seneca *Ep*. 8,5).

these objects, stemming from a poor analytical framework, leading them to confuse what was necessary with superfluous objects (Seneca *Ep*. 39,6).[235]

A false consciousness would lead people to value unnecessary objects, but nature itself did only require a minimum of objects and the sage would have adjusted the perceived needs to the actual needs following from nature (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 17,9). To convey the same point, Musonius Rufus would – like Chrysippus also did – quote a particular passage of a Euripidean poem, in which it is stated that nothing but grain and water is needed in life (Musonius Rufus IX.70,29-31; cf. King 2011, 44n43, 46n45). Everything surpassing biological necessity was, in other words, superfluous and, according to Seneca, the philosopher should reduce belongings and needs to the most basic biological requirements, since no possession was essential if the philosopher lived according to nature (Seneca *Ep*. 25,4).[236] Likewise, the limit of necessary wealth was to have the necessities and have enough of these, and everyone was in this sense already wealthy, Seneca argued (Seneca *Ep*. 2,6; *Ep*. 27,9; cf. footnote 235). The issue remains then to determine what constituted a necessity and what precise amount of these necessities could be determined as being enough. Seneca would elucidate the point and state that 'enough' was that which was readily provided for, whereas the superfluous objects could be identified as whatever entailed breaking a sweat (Seneca *Ep*. 4,10; cf. also *Ep*. 90,16).[237] Seneca was very vague in defining the actual difference between the necessary and the superfluous, but

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[235] A concern for Seneca's peers seems to have been that the rejection of material objects would result in a lack of basic life necessities. This was rejected by Seneca who claimed that if the law inscribed in nature was followed, nature would take care of everything (Seneca *Ep*. 25,4). According to Long, Seneca's 'faith' in nature's care in this passage might express an Epicurean influence (Long 2006, 341). This does, in my mind, seem correct, since the Stoics rarely attached this kind of care to nature, which usually was described as generous, fickle, and merciless at the same time.

[236] The Stoics were firm in their belief that nothing external was necessary to live a good life and they therefore differed markedly from Aristotle, who found external goods to be a necessity in 'human flourishing' (εὐδαιμονία) (cf. Aristotle *NE* 1170b). Even life itself was not per definition something 'good' and worth maintaining.

[237] Compare Seneca's 'Epicurean' interpretation to Musonius Rufus' appraisal of toiling in the countryside.

from these sources it appears that the rational analysis, when it is taken to its logical conclusion, will reject everything that is not necessary for biological survival.

At odds with conventional consciousness, no matter how much wealth was mined from under the mountains, none of it was worth the slightest reaction from the sage, Seneca would state (Seneca *Ira* III.33,4). For the Stoics, the sage had nothing but disdain for this so-called 'valuable' and Epictetus would similarly tell his students that if they abstained from wealth completely – even when it was freely given – they could rule together (συνάρχω) with the gods (Epictetus *Ench*. 15). Thus, Epictetus would make the point that wealth was detrimental to human divinity and Seneca joined in (Seneca *Ep*. 98,13). That the desire for these superfluous things was not reflecting humanity's rational nature becomes especially clear in a passage by Seneca in which he states that a baby desires only that which is required for its survival, but as it grows older a corrupted society will instil it with unnatural desires and political ambitions (Seneca *Ep*. 20,13). The corrupting influence of society required an ambitious and determined self-overcoming. However, false consciousness led people to prioritise a 'self-overcoming' that missed the mark completely. According to Seneca, humanity's indwelling God, the soul, awaited to be made worthy of its divine kinship. This required a spiritual transformation and this moulding (*fingo*) of the soul could be likened to the moulding of the statues in honour to the gods, which in the Golden Age had been done in clay. But now, Seneca's point seems to be, people attempted to mould and make everything better, including themselves, with gold and silver, but this – as was also the case with social titles – were born (*natus*) from wrong ambitions and injustice (*injuria*) (Seneca *Ep*. 31,11; also *Ep*. 98,13; see also *Ep*. 92,31).

The Imperial Stoics argued for an entirely different consciousness and worldview than their fellow Romans. As it can be seen, the Stoics did not find the desire for material objects to be innocent. This preoccupation with wealth was so pervasive that it, according to Seneca, took most of the time of the courtrooms, that it

turned father against son, that it resulted in assassination via poisonous concoctions, that people would take up arms to obtain it, and that cities were laid to waste in order to collect it from the rubbles (Seneca *Ira* III.33,1). These evils all resulted from a spiritual ailment, the Stoics argued, and this spiritual ailment required treatment. The Imperial Stoics would therefore provide a set of guidelines conducive to the spiritual transformation, and the actions resulting from these guidelines are difficult to overestimate as political and as intentional political communication. Seneca makes this clear in a passage in which he expresses the idea that scorning luxury in one's own life could take the form of being a counterpoint to the excess of the rest of Roman society. For instance, Cato chose to ride a mule with demonstrative intent, which constituted a part of his arsenal in his war (*bellum*) with the decay of Rome's morals (Seneca *Ep*. 87,9). Choosing a lifestyle devoid of luxury was, in other words, politicised by the Stoics; in addition to the personal transformation, it could thereby be a tactical manoeuvre in ensuring the transformation of society (cf. *Ep*. 87,41).

It is crucial to appreciate the political framework into which these countercultural praxes were inscribed. They simultaneously formed a set of conscious tactical operations in a broader political 'strategy' – the eventual transformation of society – and constituted acts that were expounded politically by the Stoics' fellow Romans. I have pointed out elsewhere that the withdrawal from public affairs became a politically charged action and this was also visible in another but similar context relevant here. One of Musonius Rufus's lectures was dedicated to the lifestyle of farming lands (cf. Musonius Rufus XI). The purpose of this lecture was to argue that the lifestyle of a farmer was perfectly suitable for whoever wished to undertake the philosophical lifestyle. In many ways, Musonius argued, agriculture was the best career for the philosophical inclined because it gave the soul time for reflection (XI.80,27-29), and the physical proximity to nature and the act of drawing sustenance directly from the earth, in toil and sweat, could hardly be a life more according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν) (XI.82,8-11; cf. footnote 235). Furthermore, staying in the coun-

tryside had the benefit of serving an immunological function, insofar it by its sheer peripheral location in relation to the city would protect the philosopher from those evils that festered in town (XI.84,10-11). By this suggestion, Musonius rejected the urban (political and economic) centre, but with his emphasis on manual labour he also rejected the landed aristocracy's valuation of the rural area as the source of their wealth, created by others than themselves who strenuously worked the land on their behalf.[238]

Thus, despite the Stoics' positive evaluation of human communities, they also found these communities deeply troubling and they toyed with ideas of more radical forms of world renunciation. The issue with horizontal communities for the Stoics seems partly to have been related to the desire for wealth that the communities generated. Leaving the urban scenery for the countryside, as Musonius Rufus professed, was part of a more general spiritual transformative treatment in which the Stoics would advocate the relinquishment of all material objects that gave rise to the spiritual illness. For Seneca, the benefit of eliminating wealth was less trouble and less envy (Seneca *Ep*. 42,9; cf. *Ep*. 25,4). According to Seneca, having wealth was conducive to being envious of other people's wealth in a sense where one's envy was directly proportionate to one's wealth – i.e. more wealth resulted in more envy. The best way for a person to reduce their envy of other people's wealth was therefore to relinquish personal wealth. The relinquishment of wealth was furthermore also believed to be one of the most effective initiatives a person could do to cultivate wisdom and attain divine sagehood (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 84,11; Epictetus *Ench*. 15).

[238] Agriculture was the chief mode of surplus production in Antiquity and was primarily controlled by the landed aristocracy. Despite earning their wealth from agriculture, most aristocrats would spend their time in cities where they served in some sort of public office, and many aristocrats clearly preferred the luxurious urban lifestyle (cf. Cicero *Rosc.* 27,75). However, agriculture was idealised by many among the Greco-Roman elite, see for instance Xenophon (*Oecon.*), Cato the Elder (*Agr.*), Cicero (*Off*. I.42), and Columella (*Res Rustica*). However, Musonius Rufus differed from these by not referring to the lifestyle of the landed aristocracy but that of the farmer who farms the land. This evaluation he passed on to his student Dio Chrysostom (cf. Brunt 1973, 13).

Seneca seems to have ideologically radicalised the Stoic position on the issue of wealth. The sage, according to Seneca, did not value wealth as a good and, contrary to the orthodox scholarly interpretation of the Stoics' relation to wealth, Seneca would furthermore go on to argue the sage would wish to be completely free from all possessions (cf. Seneca *Ben.* VII.8,1-2; also Epictetus I.1,10, IV.1,82). Wealth was in the Stoics' analysis usually described as a preferred indifferent and therefore something one rationally could attempt to pursue with moderation, but Seneca seems to have challenged the orthodox Stoic evaluation of material wealth. The Stoic evaluation of wealth was connected to their theory of judgments (συγκατάθεσις), i.e. their theory on what value – good or bad – people could rationally ascribe to a specific phenomenon or event. The Stoics argued that it was important to be able to make an analytical distinction between valuables. Of things that existed, some were good (ἀγαθός) and some were bad (κακός). The virtues (ἀρετή), such as prudence (φρόνησις), justice (δικαιοσύνη), courage (ἀνδρεία), and moderation (σωφροσύνη) were good. Their opposites were bad. Between good and bad were a whole range of things which did no good but equally did no bad; these were indifferent things (ἀδιαφὸραν) and comprised such things as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, reputation, noble birth as well as their opposites. Most Stoics allowed an analytical distinction within the category of indifferents, dividing the indifferents into preferred indifferents (προηγμένον) and dispreferred indifferents (ἀποπροηγμένον) (cf. DL VII.101-102; Cicero *Acad.* 1,36-37).[239] In this analysis, wealth was not something good in itself and, contrary to what some of Seneca's

[239] Chrysippus might have introduced this subdivision but it cannot be ascertained with certainty. Zeno's student Ariston seems to have had introduced the concept of indifferents (DL VII.37) but then rejected the further subdivision of indifferents (DL VII.160), which indicates that it was introduced early in Stoic philosophy. Although the distinction was important in the Stoic analysis, Epictetus usually prefers a more straightforward distinction between 'what is ours' and therefore 'up to us' (ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) and 'what is not ours' and therefore 'not up to us' (οὐκ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν). The underlying idea is despite the difference in terminology still coupled to the Stoic conception of what constitutes an actual value for a person, see Long 2010, 183ff.

peers seem to have believed, a man who possessed wealth in abundance could be inherently bad while another person lacking wealth could be inherently good (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 76,12). This displaced the Stoics from many of their contemporaries who would often couple a person's moral worth to their wealth. However, even though the possession of wealth would reveal nothing about a person's character, it did not mean that wealth was not in some way preferable in the Stoic framework. As a preferred indifferent, wealth was something the sage rationally could prefer (cf. Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 21,4; 23,1). However, a passage like *Ben.* VII.8,1-2 suggests that Seneca was not entirely or consistently in agreement with this analysis.

Further passages substantiate Seneca's possible revaluation of the Stoic analysis. As already surveyed, Seneca argued that materials like gold and silver had been hidden from sight by being spatially located deep underground. This physical displacement was consistent with gold and silver's moral displacement from what was considered good, as gold and silver were imbued with a corrupting, corrosive, and evil influence on humanity (cf. Seneca *Ira* III.33,1-4; *Ben.* VII.10,2). This was an evaluation that had been presented at least as early as Posidonius who – according to Seneca – argued that although wealth was not an efficient cause of evil, it was an antecedent cause (*praecedo*) of evil, insofar it encouraged men to do evil (Seneca *Ep*. 87,31). Seneca therefore seems to have engaged with the orthodox Stoic position in a discussion on the traditional analysis that defined wealth as an indifferent and tried to rebuke this position by arguing that wealth was instead an evil (*malus*) (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 87,29). Elsewhere, Seneca continued the revaluation. Wealth was, at best, utterly devoid of any quality that might be termed good and was, at its worst, something that should be wholly rejected (Seneca *Ep*. 42,6). Echoing this revaluation of wealth as a preferred indifferent, Musonius Rufus seems to have made the point that a positively evil and devious person was unworthy of good things and as a consequence, Musonius stated, such a person deserved to be wealthy (Musonius Rufus L.142,29-144,2). Although this might be part of a moralising and not a theoretical venture,

wealth was nevertheless tilted towards being a dispreferred indifferent in the thought of the Imperial Stoics. This indicates that the Stoics' standard analysis of wealth was subject to challenges among the Stoics themselves, or perhaps that the orthodox Stoic analysis had been utilised to defend wealth to such a degree the Stoics found it necessary to counter this. At any rate, the conventional Roman evaluation identified it as something good, and this was a wrong perception which Stoics of all times thought needed to be addressed and corrected (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 74,12; also Epictetus I.2,5-8; I.18,12).

5.1.1.2 Wealth and the Spiritual Transformation

Wealth could easily entice a person to be structured by luxurious indulgence and consumption, and by providing their philosophical analysis and appertaining philosophical training, the Stoics therefore sought to facilitate a healthy relation to material wealth in their contemporaries. Here, the Stoics inverted the idea of ownership into a notion meant to subvert the importance of external ownership, as they provided a training regime meant to acquire self-ownership by relinquishing external ownership. Seneca identified luxury as a symptom indicating that an underlying illness had struck a person or a community, and this illness was brought forth by an imbalance of the mind (*animus*) (Seneca *Ep*. 114,11; cf. also *Ep*. 61,4). Moreover, Seneca argued that the symptom was itself a source of infection and once a person had been infected the condition was degenerative. In other words, partaking in a luxurious lifestyle would render a person familiar with luxury and the level of luxury that had been enjoyed would constitute a new unconscious baseline; that is, the familiarity with luxury would make that particular luxury seem like something natural and not particularly luxurious. In that sense, Seneca argued, it was an evil that could only be cured with difficulty, insofar the dependence on luxury was accumulative (Seneca *NQ* IVb.13,11).

The Stoic's rejection of a former subjectivity resulted, as can be seen, in the levelling of criticism, a set of negative statements, against those who were identifiable with this rejected subjectivity. The issues that pertained to this group of people was directly coupled to the disposition of their souls, as is evident in Seneca who argued the fool who had succumbed to luxury had a soul that had become sluggish (*permadesco*) and was sleeping (Seneca *Prov.* 4,9; cf. also Musonius Rufus I.34,7-12; XX.126,4-31). This sluggishness and sleep-like state were directly coupled to how the fools were overdetermined by their bodies (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 80,2). Musonius Rufus would pinpoint that nowhere did this problematic relationship with the body become more prominent than in relation to food:

> We humans devise many different devices and techniques (τέχνη) in order to fool the palate into feeling enjoyment in eating. With this greed and refined way of living we have strayed so far, that some have even written treatises on cooking – like one would do with music and medicine – by which the enjoyment of the palate will surely increase greatly but our health will be destroyed (Musonius Rufus XVIIIa.114,3-8; cf. Archistratus fr. 7).

Musonius's concern is not that of physical health, his concern is his students' spiritual wellbeing. A lack of restraint and excessive indulgence in luxurious gastronomy had, according to Musonius, made beasts of man and was therefore something bad (κακός) (Musonius Rufus XVIIIb.116,12-16). Epictetus expressed the issue in the following way: "It is a sign of an unfit man to waste time on the body, such as excessive exercising, excessive eating and drinking, to defecate much, and to have much sex. Surely, these must be regarded as subservient (πάρεργον) insofar the focal point is the mind (γνώμη)" (Epictetus *Ench*. 41). As it is implied in the term subservient, the desired relationship to the body was not one of absolute renunciation for the Stoics, since nature through the process of appropriation had endowed humanity with a propensity for the care of the body. Seneca expressed it in the following way: "I admit we all have an innate affection for our body […], but I refuse to be its slave.

He who is a slave of the body, who fears excessively for the body and refers (*refero*) everything to it, is surely slave of many things" (Seneca *Ep*. 14,1).

An extensive training regime could counter this slavery to the bodily appetite. As Musonius Rufus told his students, the correct relationship with wealth was something a person could only attain through a rigorous disciplining (παιδεία) of one's desire (ἐπιθυμία); for instance, by the training (ἀσκέω) of abstention (Musonius Rufus VII.56,26-28). The training of abstention was also highly praised by Seneca who observed a sense of careless and pleasant freedom (*securitas*) in frugal living, both as part of a tailored training regime as well as in involuntary poverty. Seneca's wealthy friends might have found this implausible and Seneca would therefore clarify that for this involuntary abstention to be pleasant it required prolonged preparation (*meditor*). Specifically, Seneca would therefore advise his friend Lucilius to set aside a few days in which simulated poverty resuscitated the soul (animus) (Seneca *Ep*. 20,12-13; cf. also *Ep*. 17,5; *Ep*. 18,5; *Ep*. 80,6), and Seneca would himself seek to conduct himself in ways in which he moderated his expenditures (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 87,2-4). This simulated poverty was healthy for the soul but also had the added benefit of providing a person with a firm spiritual disposition adequately capable of handling a case in which their wealth was suddenly removed, which was a constant threat in the Roman world (cf. Seneca *Marc.* 9,2, 10,1-2).

Seneca also introduced the idea that poverty should be simulated to further the spiritual transformation in childrearing and this was formulated in genuinely egalitarian terms. Commenting on childrearing, Seneca would stress the susceptibility of youngsters and how nurturing affected their spiritual disposition. Entirely in tune with many of the precepts he gave elsewhere, Seneca advocated that a child's food and clothing should be simple. The lifestyle of a child should remain similar to its equals (*aequalis*). The interesting thing here is that Seneca by equal referred to humanity in general and not the child's immediate friends; thus, the material lifestyle he advocated was absolute and not relative to social status. Seneca was there-

fore broadening his perspective in taking as a common denominator the majority, who lived in poverty, and not people in the same social strata as himself. Seneca's reason for this advice, which was meant to counter anger, was an altruistic and egalitarian one: "A child whom you have made equal (*par*) with many from the beginning shall not be angry with anybody being counted as his equal (*comparo*)" (Seneca *Ira* II.21,11). Seneca's point is clear: people are naturally equal, and the effective way to accustom a person to this knowledge and let it display in one's being was to remove the gap in material lifestyle. The passage simultaneously underlines the Stoic notion that horizontal communities had a potentially corrupting influence on children equal to the general level of social corrosion. Anyone should therefore intentionally subject themselves and their children to a necessary training regime in order to further egalitarianism, reject slavery to externals, and regain self-ownership.

Seneca would further elaborate on the idea of having self-ownership in his 42nd letter.[240] Self-ownership was often relinquished in the effort to own externals. Externals would either belong to the category of indifferents, by virtue of serving no real purpose (*commodus*) to the transformation of the soul or they would be a detriment (*incommodus*) to this spiritual transformation, in which case they were bad (*Ep*. 42; also Epictetus I.2,5-8). Thus, Seneca and the Stoics attempted to challenge the traditional measurements of value by insisting that objects should be analysed according to what we might understand as their 'spiritual use value' and not their monetary exchange value. But they also gave rise to notions that might be understood as 'spiritual exchange value.' Seneca would express the idea that the soul (*animus*) was a treasure room of riches (Seneca *Ep*. 92,31). This should be

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[240] Apparently, he had accumulated roughly 300 million sesterces in nothing short of four years (Tacitus *Ann.* XIII.42; Dio Cassius *Hist.* LXI.10,3) at a time where a Roman legionnaire made around 1.000 sesterces annually (cf. Abbot 1901, 381). Seneca's detractors would often bring attention to Seneca's vast wealth and its discrepancy with his teachings. Seneca's response to these accusations was: "No one has condemned wisdom to poverty" thereby justifying his own wealth by implying it, for him, simply was an indifferent (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 23,1). On Seneca's response, see Fuhrer (2000).

interpreted in conjunction with the fact that the Stoics also had the idea that a commodity usually would be obtained in exchange for a spiritual price, i.e. a part of their self-ownership. This price could have the form of anxiety, of peril, a loss of decency, of freedom, of time, etc.; in effect, the means of payment were spiritual self-ownership. To the chagrin of Seneca, people were unable to determine the true value of themselves in relation to the value of the external that was acquired, and for this reason they sold themselves cheaper than they should. If no externals had been obtained at all, this spiritual 'wealth' would remain undivided; consequently, as Seneca would write: "we would belong to ourselves if these things did not belong to us" (Seneca *Ep*. 42,6-8; see also Epictetus I.2,11). Seneca would elaborate this idea elsewhere: if external things had been acquired without an exchange of oneself – without anxiety, loss of freedom, loss of decency, loss of time, etc. – then the first prerequisite for an unproblematic relationship to wealth was attained. The second prerequisite was related to wealth management. If the management of one's wealth could be done without having costs related to anxiety, loss of time, loss of decency, loss of freedom, etc., then wealth management had been done in accordance with a proper analysis.[241] If these two prerequisites were satisfied, then wealth could remain a preferred indifferent since no spiritual price had been paid and self-ownership was maintained. Seneca would claim this successful attainment of mental attitude for himself and could therefore answer his detractors with the following statement: "I own my wealth, your wealth owns you" (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 22,5).

However, the Stoics would have to admit that most people did not share their analysis and found the Stoics to be boorish (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 90,19). The predominant part of the population did value wealth and they did this due to false consciousness of the true nature of things, Epictetus told his students (Epictetus III.17,9). This was something Seneca found particularly troublesome. Contrary to popular

[241] Likewise, Seneca would challenge the time-waste linked to wealth management in administering slaves (cf. *Brev. Vit.* 3,2; 12,2).

opinion, Seneca emphasised, wealth was a diploma of slavery because it came with many obligations and because it in most instances, as an external, influenced the internal disposition – whereby self-ownership was relinquished – and wealth was, therefore, better rejected altogether (Seneca *Ep*. 104,34; *Ep*. 17,1-5; cf. also *Vit. Beat.* 22,5). Consequently, Seneca would analyse the situation analogue to the medicinal diagnosis. He expressed the notion that his contemporaries' desire for wealth was a pathological illness or disorder of the soul and he was troubled by the fact that they revelled in their illness (Seneca *Ep*. 39,6). He was not concerned with their existential anxieties over potentially losing this wealth and he was not necessarily attempting to provide them with a pre-emptive coping mechanism. His concern was more generally their spiritual wellbeing – and in continuation hereof society's spiritual wellbeing. That a person's existential anxiety was irrelevant seems clear in Seneca's suggested course of action: for some people poverty could be prescribed (*monstro*), while for those in desperate need of relief and treatment it should be force-fed (*inculco*) (Seneca *Ep*. 27,9).

Although some of the Imperial Stoics argued that wealth was an evil, insofar it was an antecedent cause of evil and vice, it received this negative evaluation only relative to a subjective determination. In other words, even though the Stoics found it difficult to imagine that the accumulation of wealth could be done justly, already possessed wealth was only a problem if it was utilised incorrectly. It was necessary to deploy one's rational faculty to determine whether the utilisation of wealth was problematic or not (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 84,11). Thus, wealth was a critical substance for the person with a weak mind but Seneca thought a person could wield it with a well-cultivated mind (Seneca *Ep*. 5,6). This analysis could be explained in the following way:

> For whenever I adopt a fitting attire, or walk as it is proper, or dine in the manner I am bound to do, it is not my dinner, walk, or attire that are good

> (*bonus*), but my determination (*propono*) regarding these, in securing the harmonisation of each of these with reason *(ratio*) (Seneca *Ep*. 92,11).

According to Seneca, if wealth was not relinquished, it was not enough to have mastered one's desire for it – which could only be done when one could lose wealth with an indifferent mind (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 18,13) – it was also necessary to make sure the utilisation of wealth was done according to reason and that wealth was not misused by indulging in luxury (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 8,5; *Ep*. 94,23; see also Marcus Aurelius I.3). This was something the sage, when living in conventional society, unlike the foolish counterpart, was perfectly able to do (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 5,6; *Vit. Beat.* 23,3-4).

Both Seneca and Musonius Rufus could therefore give expression to the idea that the sage who lived in a non-ideal society could welcome wealth. As Seneca argued, wealth provided the sage with extensive material that could be managed virtuously (*virtus*). By virtuous management, Seneca was referring to the sage's ability to practice moderation (*temperentia*), generosity (*liberalitas*), diligence (*diligentia*), and nobleness (*magnificentia*); the greatness of which was proportional to the greatness of their material basis (Seneca *Vit. Beat.* 21,4-22,1). Similarly, Musonius Rufus would preach moderation and abstention because it would increase the amount of wealth that could be employed to show kindness (εὐεργετέω) either to private individuals (ἴδιος) or the Commonwealth (δημόσιος) (Musonius Rufus XIX.122,22-32). Although they elsewhere suggested it was best to reject wealth entirely, the Stoics also expressed the idea that it could be a useful tool to those capable of wielding it, and that it should be utilised to the benefit of the wellbeing of their community.

Nevertheless, the sources overwhelmingly underline the problems associated with wealth. Most people who had acquired wealth had forfeited self-ownership, and although it could be used to do good, it would most likely result in anti-social behaviour. To underline how serious a threat wealth was to the individual and the fabric of society, Musonius Rufus told his students it was better to have an illness

relating to the body than it was to live in luxury. Unlike a physical illness – which was only harmful to the body – luxury was harmful in a dual way. It was harmful to the body because it made a person weak and powerless, but it was also harmful (and this was more serious) to the soul, insofar it made the soul undisciplined and cowardly. Furthermore, Musonius Rufus described luxury in the passage as conducive to a detachment from one's soul, since the person living in luxury would have an increased propensity to act according to was perceived to be his own – and not the social – wellbeing. Musonius here gives expression to the idea that an individualistic and egoistic orientation would result in an estrangement from one's soul. In my mind, this reflects that the soul (and therefore the cosmic citizenship) was humanity's only social possibility, while the failure to let the soul rule was equal to omitting this social possibility. Wealth and the self-seeking lifestyle of luxury that usually followed would inevitably lead a person to be unjust (ἄδικος) against the gods and society, as the person would be unable and unwilling to perform the required duties to society. The wellbeing of society therefore demanded that luxurious living was completely avoided (Musonius Rufus XX.126,14-31).

5.2 Slavery and Self-Ownership

The Stoic critique of wealth accumulation and wealth consumption charged vital mechanisms in the dynamic of Roman society as a consumer economy. But the Stoics' focus on the importance of self-ownership naturally also gave rise to an analysis of the institution of slavery. This social and economic institution was of tremendous importance during the Principate. But, as pointed out by Finley, ancient slavery is more complex than one expects since different statuses, privileges, modes of subjugation, etc. within the legal category of 'slave' existed, and it is, as emphasised by Scheidel, difficult to arrive at a statistical sound picture of the institution of slavery (Finley 1999, 63ff; Scheidel 2012, 90ff). Nevertheless, slavery remained an essential source for the extraction of surplus value throughout Greco-Roman Antiq-

uity (Finley 1999, 80; 83f; Scheidel 2012, 96-102; Vivenza 2012, 32), and most researchers agree with Finley who concluded that, "classical Greece and Italy were slave societies in the same broad sense as was the American south" (Finley 1999, 79; cf. Anderson 1974, 21f). Some scholars have questioned this conclusion and argued that the rate of profit was low and slave labour ineffective – a point recently reiterated by Goodman (Goodman 2012, 157; also Wood 2008, 118-120) – but as Finley pointed out, this analysis would have surprised the ancient slave owners who continued the praxis believing they profited greatly from slavery.[242] Slaves were an indispensable part of the productive forces in Roman society, they were valuable commodities that could be sold with profit and employed for the accumulation of wealth, and they were themselves luxury items. Consequently, Imperial Rome was a society that was highly dependent on the exploitation of slave labour (Scheidel 2012, 108, 113n70). The ubiquitous nature of slavery is revealed in the fact that no system of thought – neither Stoicism nor Christianity – seriously toyed with the idea of politically abolishing slavery (cf. Vivenza 2012, 32; Finley 1999, 89).

The Stoics' most ambitious challenge to the institution of slavery might have been Zeno's *Republic*, but from the beginning of Stoicism it seems as if the Stoics accepted slavery as a social fact, and something it was impossible or unimaginable to challenge within the existing social organisation.[243] According to Griffin, Seneca's view on slavery as an institution was neither particularly conservative nor progressive for his time (Griffin 1976, 266), and this does also seem to fit the other Imperial Stoics. The Imperial Stoics seem to have conformed to society and taken the institution of slavery for granted (cf. Epictetus *Ench.* 33,7; Musonius Rufus XII.86,29-88,6;

[242] Most of the Ancient Greco-Roman world's surplus value was generated in agriculture but since slavery largely dominated agriculture it has been argued that, especially in Roman society, slavery remained the dominant mode of extracting surplus value (cf. de Ste. Croix 1981, 52f, 133; Anderson 1974, 19, 21f). According to de Ste. Croix, this dependence on slave exploitation resulted in the eventual disintegration of the Roman Empire (1981, 502f).

[243] This is the general consensus in the scholarship, cf. among others Brunt (2013, 125); Colish (1985, 37); Shaw (1985, 41); Finley (1980 120ff); Westerman (1955, 116f, 140ff).

Seneca *Ep*. 80,9; *Con*. 11,3-12,1) and also acknowledged its useful purpose (cf. Hierocles *Acts* 92,23-31; Epictetus II.23,24-25). However, the Stoics rejected that slaves were the property of other people and they did critique slavery, and this critique remained the same throughout history (cf. DL VII.121-122; Colish 1985, 37).[244] According to Seneca, Chrysippus defined slavery as, "a hireling (*mercenarius*) for life" (Seneca *Ben*. III.22,1). This definition points to two things: first, that slavery was acknowledged as a human-made and not a natural condition and second, that the Stoics did not conceive of slaves as property that someone could own. In this instance, Stoic philosophy unquestionably opposed Roman law.[245] As Longs reports, the Stoics' understanding of human nature was framed by their notion of self-ownership – the only true ownership that existed was that ownership which one had over oneself – and this undermined any justification of slavery: "what is essentially yours and mine can never belong to anyone else" (Long 2006, 340).

However, the Imperial Stoics seem to have accepted the institution of slavery and also acknowledged that this institution had legal ramifications.[246] In his analysis

[244] As pointed out by Brunt, the most radical critique of the institution of slavery was levelled by Dio Chrysostom (cf. *Disc*. 14 & 15; Brunt 1973, 18) but it is not entirely clear whether it was Stoicism or Cynicism that informed his critique. Wegehaupt argued that Dio's inspiration was the Cynic Antisthenes (Wegehaupt 1896, 64f; DL II.31; VI.1; VI.4; VI.16) and Brunt has accentuated that Dio Chrysostom differed from the Stoics, insofar they rather focused on the moral disposition of the slave owner, not the conditions of slaves (Brunt 1973, 18). Although slave conditions were not the most important issue for the Stoics, I think the sources reflect that Brunt's point is slightly off the mark. Contrary to Wegehaupt and Brunt, I surmise Dio Chrysostom's position on this issue might have expressed a genuine Stoic position. Dio's 14th discourse mirrors the Stoics' reconceptualisation of slavery through the notion of self-ownership, which I will examine here, and in his 15th discourse he reproduced Chrysippus's subdivision of slavery (cf. DL VII.121-122). Since Dio Chrysostom is usually accepted as a Cynic-Stoic or Cynic, I have however chosen not to incorporate his critique of the institution of slavery.

[245] When Seneca elsewhere treats slaves as if they were property it forms part of Seneca's attempt to reduce his fellow Romans' positive evaluation of the accumulation of slaves as property since slaves could be a hindrance to the spiritual transformation like any other luxury item (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 17,3; 31,2-3; *Helv*. 11,3; 12,4; *Ben*. VII.10,5; *Tranq*. 8,7-9; *Brev. Vit*. 3,2; 12,2). These passages do in my mind not reflect that Seneca supported slaves as legal property.

[246] Epictetus would even go so far, being a former slave himself, as to trivialise the entire institution of slavery as well as the praxis of manumission, i.e. legally freeing a slave. Epictetus, for instance, rejects that it was a particularly laudable act to manumit a slave. As he would tell his students, the

of Marcus Aurelius's position on the matter, Brunt notes that he might have believed the institution of slavery was part of the divine plan and the providential ordering of the universe (Brunt 1998, 140f; cf. Seneca *Ep*. 91,16). However, this seems unlikely, Marcus Aurelius did take measures to ameliorate the situation of the slaves, he scorned his own officers' common practice of capturing slaves in battles, and explicitly envisaged a state in which everyone was equal under the law (cf. Marcus Aurelius *Historia Augusta*; *Meditations* I.14; X.10). The Emperor was always in a precarious situation and would have to navigate conservatively lest he wanted an uprising by dissatisfied schemers, and to expect Marcus Aurelius to abolish slavery in a society in which slave labour generated much of the surplus value is probably expecting too much.

Rather than proposing the legal abolition of slavery, the Stoics attempted to ameliorate the conditions of slaves. Many slaves were severely mistreated and these conditions could generate conflict. Such conflicts had historically resulted in three servile wars (135-132 BCE, 104-100 BCE, and 73-71 BCE) and especially Seneca were aware of the potential for conflict (cf. *Ep.* 47,5; *Ep*. 105,4; *Cle.* I.24,1). This looming threat might have caused Seneca to consider how to resolve the tensions and his response was, according to Schtajerman, a humane but ultimately self-serving treatment of slaves (1964, 56-59). Both Brunt and Griffin argues that Schtajerman's conclusion is too cynical and that Seneca displayed genuine humane care (Brunt 1973, 19; Griffin 1976, 274). According to Strasburger, Posidonius had argued that the humane treatment of Rome's subjects reflected the moral constitution of the state in general, and therefore that the brutality of the slave owners would make the

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slave had been freed from one master, but the slave was only seemingly freer than before. In fact, as a freedman, the slave would still have masters (money, position, desire, creditors, superiors, the Emperor, etc.) and was for this reason still a slave (Epictetus II.1,25-26). Seneca also treated slavery as a social fact that reflected a person's unhappy fate but this could be ameliorated by learning to love one's fate (Seneca *Ep*. 61,3; cf. Epictetus I.12,8; *Ench*. 8). This should not be misunderstood as an attempt to defend the institution of slavery – although it might have had that consequence – but was partly a result of the Stoic analysis of ownership.

slaves brutish and unreasonable (Strasburger 1965, 48). Given Seneca's interpretation that society was able to corrupt or nurture human beings into being either good or bad, it seems reasonable that Seneca shared Posidonius's view on this matter. Whatever reason Seneca had, he suggested that masters should seek their slaves' respect and not their fear, as this found justification in the divine sphere (Seneca *Ep*. 47,18).

The slaves were equal to their masters in the Stoic analysis and this equality demanded better conditions for slaves. Slaves, Seneca would argue, were humans and they were, therefore, subject to a law common to all inspirited (*animo*) beings, and consequently they should be treated fair and according to their nature as equals (Seneca *Cle.* I.18,1-2; cf. Epictetus II.23,24-25). According to the Stoics, slaves were, like all other humans, inspirited beings; that is, endowed with the divine seed of Zeus. Epictetus would therefore remind his many well-to-do students of this kinship they shared with their slaves: both had Zeus as forefather (πρόγονος) since both were offspring of the same seed (σπέρμα). Consequently, he would state, when his students treated their slaves as slaves and not as kin, they were acting as tyrants. If any of Epictetus's students attempted to counter this aggravating juxtaposition by referring to their legal deed of ownership, he made sure they knew this was nothing but a manmade and miserable (ταλαίπωρος) law, a law only fit for the pit (βάραθρον) of Athens into which murderers and criminals were thrown (Epictetus I.13,3-5).[247] In other words, the law that gave these future statesmen and senators a deed on another person was opposed to the immutable divine laws of the Cosmic City. In this dichotomy, Epictetus had made the Stoic position quite clear. Seneca would make a similar point about the human equality between slave and master:

> Please consider this carefully, he whom you call slave arose from the same seed as you, finds delight in the same sky, and equally to you he

[247] Recall that Roman laws was coupled to the notion of Eternal Rome by being symbolically envisaged as 'eternal' (cf. chapter 3.2; cf. Miles 2002, 51). For the pit of Athens, see Herodotus *Histories* VII.133; Aristophanes *Clouds* 1450.

> breathes, lives, and dies. So much so that you can see a free-born (*ingenuus*) in him and he a slave in you (Seneca *Ep*. 47,10).

Seneca's choice of words lacks Epictetus' sting but it is still crucial to realise that the point he conveys is the same. Slave and master are, when the layer of false consciousness is stripped off, the same. It is, therefore, not surprising that it seems to have been a well-known fact that the Stoics argued slaves should study philosophy (cf. Lactantius *Inst. Div.* III.25). The reason was elaborated in one of Seneca's letters:

> If there is any good in philosophy, it is this; it does not look into pedigree (*stemma*). Everyone, if traced back to the primal source, stem from the gods. You are a Roman knight and your diligence led you to this class; but by Hercules, many men are barred from the fourteen rows; not everyone have access to court; likewise, the army is fastidious in whom it picks out for work and peril. But a good soul (*mens*) is attainable for all, through this soul we are all high-born (*nobilis*). Philosophy rejects and chooses no one, it shines for everyone. Socrates was not an aristocrat. Cleanthes hauled water and laboured by watering a garden. Philosophy did not receive Plato a high-born but made him one (Seneca *Ep*. 44,1-3; cf. *Ben.* III.18,2).

Conventional societies were structured by an unequal distribution of rights, privileges, duties, etc., but according to Seneca true nobility was inherent to the soul, and this nobility was something that could be attained and cultivated even by a slave.

Equality was thereby transposed into the realm of human nature wherefore it for Seneca entailed some sort of human rights (*iuris humani*) (Seneca *Ep*. 44,6; cf. *Ep*. 66,34). This meant, according to Seneca, that nobility was not a privilege of the ruling classes, since nobility came from how moral virtue had been habituated and not social convention (Seneca *Ep*. 47,15). Consequently, the Imperial Stoics would subvert the horizontal hierarchy and reconceptualise it in spiritual terms.[248] A godlike soul could dwell in any person regardless of social position and the attainment of divini-

[248] Contrary to my argument, Reydams-Schils writes that the Imperial Stoics never questioned social stratification (2005, 101).

ty could be earned even from the slums. This was possible because the soul could be free from all externals, such as the external relation of slavery:

> Only the body is subject and conscripted to the master. In fact, the soul (*mens*) has authority over itself, wherefore it is so very free and free-roaming (*vagus*) that indeed this body, in which it is imprisoned, cannot retain it from employing its force, pursue greatness, and withdraw into the infinite to adorn (*como*) the celestial planes (Seneca *Ben.* III.20,1).

The external relations of slavery would therefore never be able to influence the freedom of the soul, which easily transcended these relations. For the Stoics, the further one had progressed in the spiritual transformation, the easier it would be to realise that social fact was nothing but a convention. Social and legal position, according to Seneca, was nothing more than, "titles (*nomen*) born of ambition and unlawfulness (*injuria*)" (Seneca *Ep*. 31,11). Social hierarchy did not correspond to a natural hierarchy and contrary to Aristotle's notion of natural slavery, the Stoics articulated a notion of natural egalitarianism (cf. Brunt 1998, 139). Through the Cosmic City, the stratified, hierarchical social structure of Rome was dissolved into a egalitarian community where freedom belonged equally to everyone (cf. Epictetus II.1,21-23). This was no mere intellectual ploy; the purpose seems to have been to undermine any notions of legal and moral status coupled with slavery.

However, not only were slaves and masters equal, the Stoics also inverted the categories in such a way that they could charge the masters with being slaves. Epictetus would elucidate this point to his students by recounting what seems to have been part of his firsthand experience. A person who complacently relished in having been honoured with a consulship twice could be met with the critical proposition that he was, in fact, as much a slave as his chattel slaves. Naturally, Epictetus continued, the consul would react incredulously; name his pedigree, name his positions in society, his influential friends, and his many slaves. No one, he would claim, had a deed of sale for him. Epictetus would counter this response by rejecting the con-

sul's pedigree which most likely consisted of slaves as well. However, even if his family descent had been free, the consul could not deduce his freedom from their status. Epictetus would then explain to the consul that legal status, despite his false beliefs, was irrelevant to slavery and that slavery was instead a non-transferable spiritual quality. To finalise his point, Epictetus then attempted to show his students that by their definition, the consul, in fact, everyone, was a slave. Slavery had to do with doing something against one's will under compulsion, and the consul was subjugated to the Emperor and thereby a slave to a master other than himself. However, slavery pertained even to the Emperor, for everyone was a slave in the great house (μεγάλης οἰκίας) (Epictetus IV.1,6-12; cf. Epictetus IV.1,55; IV.1,128). In other words, in the Cosmic City, everyone was subjugated to Zeus and fate.

Epictetus would conceptualise this new type of slavery and ownership in spheres of influence in which some things were under a person's influence (ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) and some things were not (οὐκ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) (cf. Epictetus IV.1,25). Contrary to popular opinion, things such as wealth, health, social position, etc. were external to a person and outside the sphere of influence. These externals could be influenced to some extent – under certain circumstances, it was possible to attain more wealth, to care for the body, and to strategically further one's social advancement – but this influence over externals could never be guaranteed. Despite one's best efforts, incurable illness could strike, and wealth and position could be stripped instantaneously or gradually by external events. Ultimately, a truly hegemonic influence could only be attained within the realm of internals, whereas externals ultimately remained outside this. The internal, spiritual disposition was, therefore, humanity's only domain of freedom and anyone who was determined by externals became slaves in Epictetus's framework.

Slavery herein became reconceptualised as a matter of internal disposition and in this internalisation, the Stoics provided a spatial conceptualisation where the analysis started from the body. According to the Stoic's developmental theory of

appropriation (ὀικείωσις), the first impulse (ὁρμή) of an animal was its own constitution and self-preservation. For this reason, an animal would reject harmful things and accept whatever was appropriate for this self-preservation (DL VII.85). It was clear that the initial drive towards self-preservation was based in the wellbeing of the body. It was a matter of survival, and this impulse towards self-preservation was one of physiological needs. However, for the rational animal, reason (λόγος) was the ultimate craftsman (τεχνίτης) of the impulses (DL VII.86), and when the Stoic theory of indifferents was coupled to this, it would for the Stoic be clear that this rational impulse was more important than the physiological impulses. To the extent that the physiological preservation of the body was opposed to the rational impulse, the body and its preservation were rejected. The body became something external to a person. However, most people, according to the Stoics, were either ignorant or indifferent to this critical analysis. These people misidentified bodily essentials and had a tendency to refer everything to the body (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 14,1). Consequently, they were more concerned with their body than their soul and for this reason they were, as Seneca would describe them, slaves of their body (Seneca *Ep*. 65,21). Characteristic of this slavery was both an appetite for bodily pleasure (such as feasting, drunkenness, excessive copulation, exercising, etc.) as well as a fear of bodily distress (such as illness, ageing, torture, death, etc.). A person who was a slave to the body could therefore not be free, Seneca would emphasise (Seneca *Ep*. 92,33). In this way, the body shackled the soul which nevertheless would be able to transcend the body with the correct training (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 65,21).

Slavery to externals did not stop at the body, although it was a nodal point that connected many of these externals. As pointed out by Wood, the driving force of the Roman elite was generally the "acquisition and management of property," and most public participation served intentionally as an opportunity to increase property (Wood 2008, 118; 108). Most members of the elite were, therefore, decidedly preoccupied with such externals, but the Stoics attempted to challenge this social evalua-

tion and praxis. Seneca would challenge their social activity like this: "Everything that coincidence (*casus*) has dominion over is a mark of slavery – wealth, public office (*honor*), and the body are all feeble, dissolving, destined to die, and have an uncertain disposition" (Seneca *Ep*. 66,23).[249] Such things as the body, wealth, and public office were all characterised by their impermanence; they were valuable only by the measurement of the horizontal community where they were given meaning according to a system of values that was mutable and defective. Reiterating his resentment to these externals, Seneca argued some people would be chained by public office (*honor*), some to wealth, some to their high birth, some by priestly office, and others would submit to their own empire (Seneca *Tranq.* 10,3).

Epictetus likewise attempted to influence his well-to-do students and make them realise that these pursuits for externals were making them slaves. All his students would describe freedom as a supreme value and pivotal privilege of the ruling class. However, Epictetus would use this generally acknowledged value to counter the ruling class's *modus vivendi*. Social relations among the elite were characterised by a desire to ascend the social hierarchy and it was necessary to remain well-connected and give special care to those relations in which there was something to be gained. Epictetus highlighted this aspect of social ascension, clarifying to his students that whenever anyone adopted a cringing and flattering position towards a superior they relinquished their self-ownership. Contrary to his students' perception, they were, in fact, even greater slaves (μεγαλόδουλος) than those people who toiled for basic survival (Epictetus IV.1,54-55). Externals, such as property, had, according to the Stoic analysis, a weakening effect on the disposition of a person and was making slaves of most people (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 104,34; Epictetus II.2,12; IV.1,25). Particularly troublesome to Seneca was the fact that this slavery was only possible through choice, a choice many of his friends had made. Contrary to his friends' pop-

[249] Much of the Stoic analysis was reproduced by the Christian Church father Lactantius in his *Divine Institutes* book VII.

ular belief, this choice made it more reprehensible and disgraceful than conventional slavery (cf. Seneca *Ep.* 47,17; *NQ* III.praef.17). The Stoics found this kind of spiritual slavery to externals more genuine, more troublesome, and more widespread than the conventional institution of slavery (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 22,11).

The essential move advocated by the Stoics was to transcend these externals and become one's own master. Marcus Aurelius, for instance, would remind himself not to busy himself with idle distractions, i.e. being a slave to external concerns, but instead take ownership of himself: "set yourself upon being your own master (ἐλεύθερος) and look upon affairs as a man, a human being, a citizen, as a mortal animal" (Marcus Aurelius IV.3,4; cf. also Seneca *Ep*. 75,18). In the affirmation of self-ownership lied the potential for subverting the existing social hierarchy. Epictetus would explain it in the following way: some people found it acceptable to hold a chamber-pot for others to defecate in, a job performed by slaves, while others found this unacceptable. If one was under the influence of externals (food, health, wellbeing, life etc.), it was reasonable to hold the chamber-pot under the threat of punishment. However, if one's system of value was decoupled from externals, if value was ascribed according to a proper spiritual disposition, it was easy to see that those people who valued externals were selling (πιπράσκω) themselves cheaper than their actual value (Epictetus I.2,8-11). In other words, it was only necessary to accept the demeaning position of holding the chamber-pot if one was a slave to externals. A slave's submission to the master could, if necessary, be rejected. The rejection of slavery to externals as part of asserting self-ownership was therefore also readily coupled to political action.

In his 28th letter, Seneca briefly employs Socrates' standoff with the Thirty Tyrants to describe slavery and in the process he politicises the Stoic notion of slavery. Seneca writes: "The Thirty Tyrants, it is said, surrounded Socrates, and yet they were not able to subdue (*infringo*) his soul (*animus*)" (Seneca *Ep*. 28,8). It is worth considering this narrative for a moment. It was common to employ Socrates' death scene in

order to express how a free spirit would handle the threat of death, but it is significant that Seneca also invoked this scene. The narrative refers to the period when anti-democratic oligarchs had abolished the democratic Assemble in Athens and instead installed the Thirty Tyrants. These oligarchs and reactionary rulers attempted to reduce the Athenians' possibility for political participation, as only a few Athenians retained their citizenship, and Socrates was one of them. That Socrates remained a citizen during this reactionary rule might have contributed to his death sentence when Athenian democracy was restored one year later. However, Seneca's mentioning of Socrates' standoff with the Thirty Tyrants points to the fact that Socrates during this period had some falling out with the tyrants. Socrates himself recounts how he refused to carry out an order to deliver Leon of Salamis for execution, which, he states, would have cost him his life if the tyrants' rule had lasted longer (Plato *Ap.* 32c-d, cf. Plato *Letters* VII.324d-325c).

Thus, these two historical events, Socrates' standoff with the tyrants and his subsequent death sentence when democracy was restored, form a nexus in which Socrates' character supersedes any political system. His relationship to the political institutions of his time was characterised by something that transcended the prevailing structures of power, as he was serving the community the way he saw fit, irrespective of whatever political constitution existed. Socrates' willingness to heed the restored Assembly's call for his suicide and his opposition to the oligarchs exemplify that political allegiance was secondary to transcendent principles that supersede any given contingent situation. This is part of the subtext of the reference to this specific Socratic scene. Seneca's immediate point in utilising this narrative was to convey a point on slavery. Even though the Thirty Tyrants surrounded Socrates, his resolve was unchangeable because he, by virtue of his perfect disposition, knew that some things superseded political submission. In the final analysis, Seneca argued, it was not important how many tyrants that were putting pressure on Socrates. Slavery was singular, and if Socrates had been submissive, he would have been a slave to some-

thing or someone external to himself (Seneca *Ep*. 28,10). Consequently, for the Stoics, slavery should not be understood as a material condition or as something that pertained to social stratification, instead it was a moral condition that came about by choosing to relinquish self-ownership; and self-ownership could and should always be reclaimed.

5.3 Weaponising Self-Ownership

The Stoics' notion of self-ownership provided them with a conceptualisation of a personal spiritual disposition that should be displayed in personal and social life. By virtue of the spiritual critique's basis in a strong notion of natural egalitarianism, it undermined any claim of political legitimacy that rested on natural hierarchy, and through the idea of self-ownership, attempts at establishing hierarchy was further subverted. Moreover, the Stoics' revaluation of ownership would also subvert traditional methods of subjugation, and self-ownership could therefore also serve as a political weapon. This weaponisation allowed the Stoics' truth-telling to be launched indiscriminately and where necessary, without paying attention to irrelevant matters, such as brute force. The object of such subversive operations was any source of horizontal authority and eventually, of course, the Emperor. With the advent of the Roman Empire, the political institutions became, as noted by Hegel, "united in the person of the Emperor" (Hegel 2011, 287), and it was ideologically expressed by Ovid who lauded the Emperor for mirroring the patriarchal kingship of Jupiter at the level of mundane relations (Ovid *Met*. XV.858-860). The Roman Emperor had at all times to deal with dissenters, rebels, and insurgents from his many conquered provinces, but the Stoic philosophers, by virtue of being significantly represented among the political elite, forced the Emperor and defenders of the status quo to locate potential enemies within.

One scholar has argued that the Stoics' cosmopolitan worldview substantiated the Principate and the Emperor because the Emperor was accepted as

an ethical subject in Stoicism (Chin 2016, 141), but in my mind, the Stoics' worldview was pulling in the opposite direction. As Hardwick writes, the philosophical doctrines of, "Stoicism had important political implications in its rejection of authority and hierarchy in favour of the autonomy of the individual conscience" (Hardwick 2002, 359). This manifested itself historically in individual Stoic actors and it coloured the general appreciation of the Stoics in Roman Antiquity. As Wistrand notes, in some ancient sources, the Stoics are described as being surly party-killers due to their heresy against the ideology of the Principate, the Principate's legitimacy as regime, and through their evaluation of individual emperors as a *tyrannus* that falled short of the Stoic demand for a *rex iustus* (Wistrand 1979, 97-99). Consequently, although all Imperial Stoics conceded the Roman Emperor an important political role, as the institutionalised ruler of Rome, the emperors could only earn support from the Stoics by being adequate manifestations of the Stoics' value system. Whenever an Emperor was falling short of this demand, the Stoics advocated a spiritual opposition in their service as public intellectuals. Coupled with this oppositional praxis, their notions of ownership provided the Stoics with the intellectual basis for counteracting and mitigating any use of force available to the Emperor.

Epictetus would tell his students that many things they fought dearly for, such as titles, could be stripped from them without they had lost anything, and that true freedom was only possible if these things could be happily rejected in an instance (Epictetus I.24,12-14; III.24,71 cf. Seneca *Ep*. 85,28). Being able to reject externals allowed true freedom, and in the final analysis the proper relation to death could serve as the ultimate guarantee of freedom. For Seneca, this meant that, "whoever has learned to die has unlearned to be enslaved, he has transcended (*supra*) all political authority (*potentia*); certainly, he is beyond (*extra*) everything. What is a prison, confinement, and bars to him?" (Seneca *Ep*. 26,10). In a lecture dedicated to the consequences of humanity's kinship with the divine, Epictetus would underline the same point to his students and tell them that neither tyrants nor

law courts (δικαστήριον) had any power over those who had habituated the Stoic doctrines. These could, according to Epictetus, not wield any power over the person who disregarded both body and property (κτῆμα), and the impotence of their authority should be made known (δείκνυμι) to them through diligently enduring the station as martyr assigned by Zeus (Epictetus I.9,15-17). Seneca would at numerous occasions emphasise that none of the devices of subjugation available to the authorities, whether exile, imprisonment, torture instruments, the sword, or even the bull of Phalaris, could subdue the sage (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 66,18; 71,26; 76,33; 78,18; 92,35; cf. Epictetus I.18,21-22). Stoic philosophy even allowed women to exemplify this courageous subversion of authority (cf. Musonius Rufus III.40,33-42,2). One of these threats, the exile, was subverted as punishment precisely by the spatial displacements provided by the Cosmic City (cf. chapter 3.2.2.2). But the disregard for the use of force was not unique for the sage, as Seneca could also name examples of historical persons who had overcome the authorities' methods of subjugation (cf. *Ep*. 24,3-11). The obvious point was that the sage could manage these threats perfectly, and through emulation the ordinary Stoic could achieve this disregard for punishment as well.

The possibility of countering authority in relation to a notion of ownership was coupled to the heterochronic displacements provided by the Cosmic City. Attributing value to a long life was an example of false perception in which one would confuse past and future as something one could own. The very notion of life defined in terms of accumulated time was therefore faulty because accumulated time entails ownership. Ownership meant to have control of a thing and the fundamental Stoic appreciation of time was that neither past nor future was in person's control. The past could not be altered and the future was not in our control until it became present, at which point it also seized to be future. Having no ownership over past and future, one could therefore not lose it either. For this reason, the individual's lifespan was irrelevant, because what was lost was never more than the present moment (see

especially Seneca *Ep.* 49 & Marcus Aurelius II.14; but also VI.49). Heterochronic time would nullify both past and future and deem them irrelevant time for the individual. Cosmic time's disbandment of the conventional conception of time as accumulative reflects a move where time dispersed on a horizontal line is rejected for verticality. The past and future were eliminated as substantial categories and only the present moment remained, which could then be qualified by how truth was embodied in the actions of the present moment. This reinterpretation of time was one of many operations in which moral evaluations of death were neutralised. It was, for instance, irrelevant if Zeus were to give, "the signal to retreat" at this very moment, Epictetus would tell his students, and they should therefore be ready to die at any moment (Epictetus I.29,29; cf. I.1,32). In other words, the present moment was qualified by how well the truth was manifested in it; in the face of death, this meant a calm and determined self-possession.

Like any other of the Stoic doctrines, this ability to counter political power by subverting authority's arsenal was only possible if it was the object of dedicated training. Seneca would write how Epicurus had admonished people to meditate (*meditor*) on death, which was equivalent to meditating on freedom (Seneca *Ep.* 26,10). Despite taking Epicurus as his point of departure, the position was thoroughly compatible with Stoicism and expressed the core idea that the philosophical practitioner should meditate and mentally anticipate those so-called evils that could befall a person, and in the process realise that the correct relation to one's death would set a person completely free. In other words, once it was realised that death and punishment were not actually evil they would seize to nourish the fears of a person and would therefore seize to suppress virtuous activity. Epictetus would reference Socrates and Zeno as models for emulation. Both, Epictetus told his students, constituted excellent models for behaviour when meeting people of authority (ὑπεροχή) (*Ench.*

33,12; see also III.7,34-35).[250] Elsewhere, Epictetus would underline this aspect of training and use members of the Stoic opposition as the source of emulation. While being ordered decapitated by Nero, a member of the Pisonian conspiracy, the senator Lateranus, had adamantly presented his neck, and similarly Thrasea Paetus had been fearless in preferring instant death over the threat of exile. A fearless mentality like this, ready to brush aside any threat made by the Emperor, could be attained by having ready at hand (πρόχειρος) the knowledge of what was in one's possession (ἢ τί ἐμὸν). The philosopher could attain this mentality through purposeful training on the subject, through meditation (μελέτη), by writing down the Stoic doctrines (γράφω), and by physical training (γυμνάζω), Epictetus clarified (Epictetus I.1,21-25).

Seneca did not shy away from criticising individual emperors if they conducted their role unbecomingly, and neither was he afraid to couple this to their legitimacy as Roman Emperors (cf. *NQ* V.18,4; *Helv*. 10,4; also Epictetus IV.5,16-17; Marcus Aurelius III.16,1). The Emperor was an object of great suspicion for the Stoics and they insisted on the relevance of his moral character in relation to power. Musonius Rufus would therefore also emphasise the importance of why a sovereign should become a philosopher, given that only a philosopher was able to rule well and not succumb to the passions (cf. Musonius Rufus VII). Musonius thereby called for a philosopher-king and gave expression to a popular analysis that had been entertained by philosophers since Plato (cf. Marcus Aurelius *S*. 3). Even though Marcus Aurelius in the capacity of a Stoic emperor attempted to satisfy this admonition, he also presented the role of Emperor as incompatible with being a philosopher. In this

[250] People with authority could, for the Stoics, serve perfectly respectable purposes in society (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 73,9-10; *Cle*. I.4,1-3 *Ira* III.18,1-3; III.19,5; III.23,5; *Pol*. 7,1; 12,3). Despite this, Rudich concludes that taken all sources into consideration, Seneca's attitude is predominantly negative, and the conclusion must inevitably be that, "in Seneca's eyes there never was an authentic *rex iustus* and never will be" (Rudich 1997, 70, cf. 66-72; see for instance Seneca *Ep*. 76,31-32; *Ep*. 80,10). Epictetus would likewise point to the potential purposeful role of the Emperor but immediately follow with enumerating the Emperor's shortcomings in matters of actual importance (cf. Epictetus III.13,9-11).

regard, he preferred the persona as philosopher over that of Emperor. As such, he warned himself not to be 'Caesarified' (ἀποκαισαρόομαι) and be 'dyed' (βάπτω) by the Imperial colours. Instead of acting like an Emperor, Marcus Aurelius reminded himself to act socially (πράξεις κοινωνικαί), to care (σώζω) for humanity, and struggle laboriously to act according to the philosophical doctrines (Marcus Aurelius VI.30,1).

The philosopher was, in the Stoic scheme, far superior to the Emperor. Neither Alexander the Great, Gaius Caesar, or Pompey could measure up to philosophers like Socrates, Heraclitus, or Diogenes, Marcus Aurelius would tell himself. These sovereigns in the horizontal community were, in Marcus's mind, nothing but a pack of slaves (πόσων δουλεία), while the philosophers had a hegemonic power (ἡγεμονικός) that belonged to them alone (Marcus Aurelius VIII.3). For Epictetus, this ruling faculty (δαίμων), the guarantee of self-ownership, demanded total allegiance from a person, similarly to – but even more so – how soldiers swore allegiance to the Emperor (Epictetus I.14,11-15). As Seneca would phrase it, "the soul is our king" (Seneca *Ep*. 114,23), and this soul was, as Epictetus emphasised, inviolable by even the worst events (cf. Epictetus I.25,2; IV.1,89). These points should be understood as a subversion of the Emperor's authority by emphasising the possibility of complete and undivided self-ownership, and the seriousness of this subversion for a Roman Emperor, always in danger of usurpation, is difficult to overestimate. Interestingly, while Epictetus was a former slave, the same subversion of the authority of the Roman Emperor was also expressed by Seneca, the advisor of an emperor, and Marcus Aurelius, an emperor.

While they did not encourage open rebellion, the Stoics did provide a framework for internal dissent. This was, of course, unacceptable for any authority. The subversive nature of Epictetus' teachings was however not particularly well concealed in his lectures. As Epictetus told his students, although the Emperor had the power to strip a person of rank and property – or exile a person, such as had

happened to Epictetus – nothing of that which had been removed did, in fact, belong to the person from whom it had been removed (Epictetus I.24,12-14). Neither were these externals of any actual value and the Emperor could therefore not claim to have authority over his subjects. This resulted, Epictetus emphasised, from the Stoic analysis (Epictetus I.25,2). In a fictitious conversation with a tyrant, Epictetus underlined that the tyrant might misinterpret his ability to remove rank and property with authority, and the tyrant could argue extensively for his superiority which he might have thought was reflected in that people paid close attention to him. But as Epictetus would argue, people also paid attention to their dirty dishes and their donkey, yet this made neither dishes nor donkey superior to them. In other words, people paid attention to a sovereign as someone that could service them. Epictetus would continue, nobody esteemed such a sovereign as a person, and the sovereign did not have followers who wished to emulate him in the way they would a philosopher like Socrates. Epictetus immediately doubled down on the subversion of authority when he imagined these statements of his could lead to a threat to his life from the tyrant. To this Epictetus would respond: "Beautifully said! I had forgotten that I was required to pay attention (θεραπεύω) to you as I would a fever or cholera" (Epictetus I.19,1-6). The message would have been clear to Epictetus's students – and the Emperor, had he listened – the Emperor's ability to carry out a threat on the philosopher's life ranked him along cholera, scarcely the acknowledgement of his claim on legitimacy of violence he expected. For the Stoics, the authority of the Emperor was, therefore, no authority at all - his authority was granted to him entirely by those over which he sought to exercise it, and they too could remove it again. Epictetus would go on to reject that his students' fears arose from the Emperor or his henchmen; rather, Epictetus told them, they were free by nature and only their wrong judgment gave rise to their fallacious fear (Epictetus I.19,7ff). Elsewhere, Epictetus emphasised that his students desired the pleasures the Emperor could provide and feared the distress his penalising instruments would inflict (Epictetus IV.1,60). In

consequence, since both – in the Stoics analysis – were indifferents and could be countered by self-ownership, the successful digestion and habituation of this knowledge would render the Emperor an impotent sovereign.

Consequently, Stoic philosophy was thought to give its adherents the knowledge to distinguish the just from the unjust, and give the mental strength to challenge agents of injustice imperviously. In the Stoic tradition, Cato served as the prime example. Cato had, according to Seneca, been fearless (*impavidus*) in his attack (*incesso*) on both Pompey and Caesar's armies. When everyone else was taking sides between the two contenders for power, Cato had with determination challenged (*provoco*) both and fought for the Republic. Cato had, in the face of numerous enemy legions, been throwing forth words of freedom (*vocem liberam mittat*) and encouraged the Roman Republic to fight along with him for freedom. Seneca would enthusiastically write how he admired Cato's unconquerable steadfastness (*invictam constantiam*) and unflinching resolve when the Roman state came tumbling down, and that it was a pleasure to declare Cato had a, "chest abundant with muscle and courage" (Seneca *Ep*. 95,69-71; see also 104,29-30). This was a possibility because he successfully had claimed self-ownership, and he had thereby been able to fight so that his fellow countrymen, not himself, could be free. When that fight was finally lost, Cato – a despiser of all worldly authority (*contemptoremque omnis potentiae*) – took his own life and wrested from Caesar the power to punish and pardon (Seneca *Ep*. 24,6-8).

The Stoics would also underline how Stoic philosophy would fashion the Stoic practitioner in such a way as to be unconquerable (cf. Senecea *Con*. 6,6-8). The sage was invincible (ἀήσσητος) as he could only partake in struggles in which he was superior. By that Epictetus meant the sage's moral purpose (προαιρετικός) was untouchable and that the sage was willing to surrender all external property, the body included, if it was necessary (Epictetus III.6,5-7). Hence, for the Stoics, the philosopher could be superior to any threat of repercussion. Because external things such as property, titles, the body, etc. were irrelevant, the philosopher should be ready to

sacrifice everything and hurl herself into death at any moment, thereby nullifying the threat of brute force as an instrument in establishing authority. Borrowing the words of Diogenes, Epictetus would tell his students, "consequently, who has authority (ἐξουσία) over me? Philip, Alexander, Perdiccas, or the Persian King? From where should they get this authority?" (Epictetus III.24,70-71; cf. I.19,6-9; I.29,6-8). In this way, the Stoic notion of self-ownership constituted a philosophical defiance that could be employed as part of a political arsenal.[251]

As it can be seen, the Stoics provided a theoretical and practical framework meant to undermine and erode the authority of those rulers the individual Stoic found illegitimate. They assaulted the notion that victory could ever be achieved when confronting a philosopher because the philosopher never entered a battle over externals, but instead entered a battle in which externals, such as property or the body, readily could be discharged and sacrificed as part of their arsenal. In other words, when confronting unjust authority, Stoicism was thought to provide the doctrines that would allow the Stoic practitioner to remain indifferent to any threat of punishment. The politically motivated suicide could constitute one final blow to an oppressor by rejecting the authority to dole out punishment, but for Seneca even the punishment could be weaponised. If the Stoic wilfully would accept an offence, for instance by accepting a king's unjust punishment, the punishment would come to serve as a testimony (*testis*) to the character (*natura*) of the king and thereby be conducive to cementing the position of the Stoic as one of righteous opposition to tyranny (cf. Seneca *Ira* II.30,1-2).

The purpose of cultivating this political defiance was precisely to facilitate the philosopher's uncompromising service to humanity. In a lecture in which he discussed obeying one's parents, Musonius Rufus would extend his argument to

[251] This reverberates with a point made by Lefebvre, that the body, "at the very heart of space" – and in a certain way a nexus of the relations of power – is both vulnerable and subversively resistant to power (Lefebvre 1976, 89). The Stoic notion of self-ownership allowed them a possibility to overcome the vulnerability of the body.

anyone who was usually understood to be superior. Disobedience was shameful and problematic, but if disobedience arose from the refusal to perform a wrong, unjust, or shameful action on behalf of either a father, a political leader or a tyrant, it was not disobedience but rather a good and honourable action (Musonius Rufus XVI.102,14-19). Philosophy, Musonius made clear in the lecture, was exactly such an activity his students could honourably continue to engage in while refusing to obey horizontal authority. The philosopher, having a firmer comprehension of the cosmos and the purpose of philosophy, could rightfully neglect such an order because the order given by Zeus superseded everything else. It was a duty to comply with this order, and any attempt to prevent Musonius's students from philosophising was doomed to be a failure because the body was irrelevant to the activity of philosophy, which was performed, according to Musonius Rufus, by something completely in one's belonging and therefore free from all external hindrance (cf. XVI.104,4-106,12).

Consequently, self-ownership pertained to more than the individual's spiritual disposition. It was also coupled to counteracting brute force when conducting the perceived service to humanity. Commencing the philosophical life was an existential demand that entailed entering dangerous terrain. How long this noble life lasted was irrelevant, but often – Seneca would conclude – it was not very long (Seneca *Ep*. 101,15). The reason and purpose behind the Stoics' defiant insistence on the philosophical activity were in the end to render service to humanity. If Epictetus's students ever found themselves in the same situation as Socrates had done, in which Socrates could choose between seizing his philosophical activity or death, Epictetus told them to go for the latter, because this would be the choice that reflected their divine kinship (Epictetus I.9,23-26). This Socratic choice, according to Seneca, had already been made by Cato (*Ep*. 104,29-30). For the Stoics, the philosopher should therefore never seize with the philosophical activity or any other kind of action that was substantiated by philosophy, even when faced with execution or gruesome torture (cf. Seneca *Ep*. 66,2; Epictetus I.2,29). To become one's own master and gain total

self-ownership would relinquish a person from all negative externals, including threats or punishment. In consequence, the self-ownership of the individual allowed the unstoppable service to humanity.

6 Conclusion

Only a surface reading could lead to the conclusion that the Imperial Stoics were apolitical and their philosophy depoliticised. The Stoics were deeply concerned with utilising their philosophy to make a better world. Does this mean that we should expect Marx would have revisited his infamous 11th Feuerbach thesis? I imagine not. But I hope my examinations have indicated that the political activity of the ancient Stoics was more complicated and more focused on social transformation than what Marx's broad-stroked critique of philosophy could capture. In his third Feuerbach thesis, Marx polemicised that true revolutionary praxis was possible only when social transformation and individual transformation (*Selbstveränderung*) converged in action (Marx & Engels 2011, 793). Although Marx indubitably would have concluded the Stoics fell short on numerous issues in relation to actual world-transformation, by emphasising the Cosmic City as model *of* and model *for* society and underlining humanity's divine and transformative position in this Cosmic City, the Stoics in their own way forestalled Marx's point: social transformation and human transformation is inseparably connected. There are definite hints that the Stoics attempted to induce some sort of transformation of society through the political institutions, but the specificity of their political spirituality accentuated that humanity's spiritual transformation was the prioritised driving force of change. For the Stoics, social transformation could therefore only proceed with the realisation of true consciousness and the concomitant embodiment of this truth.

It is possible to argue that any social organisation is met with criticism that is its own inverted mirror-image; for instance, in a society where everyone was confronted with the powerlessness of having to submit to nature and social authority, where life was determined by strict hierarchies, where most people had

nothing and few had everything, where large parts of the population were enslaved and had no right to their own life, in such a society it is perhaps not surprising that abstract ideas would be articulated that professed its negation: a worldview were powerlessness could be overcome, where egalitarianism existed, where material imbalance was eliminated, and where everyone was granted total self-ownership. Like any other worldview, the Stoic worldview formed a constituent part of the Stoics' reality. The beliefs and values of the Stoics were projected unto nature and gave rise to a totalising demand on the Stoic practitioner who needed to transform life according to this worldview. Stoicism was, therefore, as a social and cultural phenomenon an ascetic movement in which a spiritual self-overcoming was demanded on the backdrop of a personal and social criticism that was levelled from the vantage point of a transcendent point of reference.

The entire cosmos was, according to the Stoics, a Cosmic City in a very literal and real sense. We should therefore attempt to appreciate that this particular feature. The Cosmic City was framed in spatial terms by the Stoics and it appropriated and reinterpreted all physical space: nature, temples, Rome, human bodies, etc. The Cosmic City therefore gave rise to displacements of the dominant spatial relations, and from the social relations that pertained to the Cosmic City (being comprised of cosmic citizens) followed an inversion of the social relations of conventional society. As I have argued, it can be understood to have had a mirror-function in which both individuals and conventional society could be perceived differently and valued according to how well the horizontal actuality converged with the vertical reality. This conceptual space appropriated an extensive array of spatial dimensions. How a full convergence on the horizontal level looked was explained in Zeno's utopian vision, the *Republic*, a fully realised and perfect community comprised of individuals who had realised their divine nature. However, in terms of their contemporary society, the Stoics overwhelmingly found the convergence to be wanting. For this reason, they emphasised the necessity of a spiritual transformation and provided an ambi-

tious programme for how this transformation successfully could be ensured and cosmic citizenship be embodied. As part of this transformation, the Stoic practitioner should become an agent of truth and actively seek to transform the consciousness of fellow members of humanity. In consequence, a substantial body of critical rejoinders to their peers was levelled and parts of this critique were structured in a way where it reflected and charged the pervasive concern for ownership and property of their time. These many points still call for more scrutiny than what it has been possible to provide here. Nevertheless, what has been provided here is the charting of both a visible topography and a subterranean terrain in Stoicism that display certain dynamics and indicate certain political possibilities.

However, the Stoics do at times seem to have been somewhat pessimistic of the potential for successfully transforming society after their ideals (cf. Marcus Aurelius IX.29; Seneca *Otio* 8,3-4); importantly, this also reflect that social transformation was on their mind. Taken at large, the Imperial Stoics can be identified as neither revolutionaries nor reactionaries, but the Stoics were nevertheless deeply concerned with the spiritual transformation of their community. Humanity should cultivate its divine nature and if successful on a full scale this would result in the realisation of a utopian community that mirrored the Cosmic City. Interestingly, the Stoics' vision of a community that converged with cosmic reality displays anticipations of much later thought and might be described as a sort of proto-communistic thought. Despite not being particularly revolutionary in praxis, the social critique they articulated anticipated the development of Marxism in later political thought, insofar the Imperial Stoics' social critique had a strong emphasis on egalitarianism and the propertyless community.[252] Although none of the later Stoic sources engaged with Zeno's treaty,

[252] This conclusion finds an interesting parallel in Brooke, who from a very different perspective has examined the Stoic influence on political thought from Justus Lipsius to Rousseau and argued that the Stoics inspired, "three intellectual streams that fed into what was eventually to become Marxism" (Brooke 2012, 204). I surmise it could be interesting to conduct a conjoined reading between

it is not surprising that some of the same ideas, following from Stoic doctrines on nature, is visible in the thought of the Imperial Stoics.

Since this political spirituality was contingent upon their cosmo-religious worldview, it is obvious why the Stoics were unable to realise what they thought was the end-goal of society and humanity. However, this does not exclude that a more considerable degree of success in externalising their ideas could have been achieved. The Stoics were not able to secure that their worldview successfully appropriated the spaces they inhabited, as the displacements provided by the Cosmic City never amounted to anything more than a counter-space. In the perpetual hegemonic struggle taking place in space, the Stoics' worldview fell short of inserting itself into reality to such a degree that the existing power relations were successfully inverted. Intellectually, the Stoics attempted to navigate between notions of world-rejection typical for ascetic movements and world-affirmation. For Schopenhauer, the Stoics failed in not radicalising the world-rejecting strains within their philosophy (Schopenhauer 2011, 178, esp. chapter 16). This world-rejecting impetus in Stoicism, being too moderate and insincere for Schopenhauer, seems exactly to have been the problem for Hegel. The Stoics succeeded only in articulating abstract freedom and this freedom had "withdrawn from existence only into itself, [and] it has not there achieved its consummation as absolute negation of that existence" (Hegel 1977, 122). The Stoics' negation of society remained, for Hegel, a negation only in thought and could therefore not successfully advance the dialectical development of society.[253]

my interpretation and Brooke's examinations in order to elucidate the possible intellectual connection further.

[253] What is at stake was Hegel's master-slave dialectic, which Francis Fukuyama described in the following way: the slave "must consider freedom in the abstract before he is able to enjoy it in reality, and must invent for himself the principles of a free society before living in one. […] The slave does not begin by challenging the master, but rather goes through a long and painful process of self-education as he teaches himself to overcome his fear of death and claim his rightful freedom" (Fukuyama 2012, 195).

The Stoics' inability to translate their ideas into external manifestation might be a coincidence but it is more likely the result of numerous intersecting things. Although it is a delicious principle to 'start with the man in the mirror,' the Stoic insistence on letting social transformation follow from personal transformation is perhaps a key issue.[254] Stoicism therefore seems to have been lacking something that could generate the necessary transition from thought into external manifestation. The Stoic philosophical system might indeed have contained internal contradictions that undermined its own unity and would lead to incapacity in relation to this. For instance, the Stoics actively engaged with human psychology and much of the philosophy were centred around attempting to extirpating desire and emotion. But what does this entail regarding social transformation when the desire for a different world itself could be argued to be a desire that should be extirpated? How does the amelioration of social problems fare when these problems could be shrugged off as indifferent matters of no real importance? What problems, if any, result from the Stoics' rejection of emotions such as anger and indignation which might be a vital source for the possibility of social transformation?

These latter emotions have indeed been the source of hazardous and problematic events in human history, yet they arguably constitute an important part in shaping the world for the better. For Francis Fukuyama, human emotions like, "anger, shame, and pride, are parts of the human personality critical to political life" (Fukuyama 2012, xvii).[255] However, the Stoics actively sought to extirpate the passions and emotions. The 19th-century pragmatist philosopher and psychologist Wil-

[254] The issues pertaining to this is currently visible in how some today insist that climate change should be tackled first and foremost by individual actors as climate-conscious consumers and not through structural changes at the levels of society.

[255] The centrality of this dimension of politics was pointed out by Carl Schmitt, but Fukuyama's point reflects a renewed interest in anger and rage that has been taken up by Fukuyama and Sloterdijk (cf. Sloterdijk 2010). See Hancock (2015) for a discussion of how this focus on rage and politics, expressed in the term 'thymotic politics,' is visible in the context of Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, Fukuyama, and Sloterdijk.

liam James argued the Stoics' emphasis on rational evaluation of emotions partly led to a pessimistic, "resignation to necessity," and therefore lacked the necessary emotional capability of meliorating externality (James 2002, 37).[256] It could therefore seem that the Stoics were unable to utilise emotions in addressing political questions adequately. This perspective on politics and emotions does however seem to be at odds with the position advocated by Martha Nussbaum, for whom the control of emotions is a central question in politics. She argues the Stoics provide a compelling case for a rationalist theory of emotions where any emotion is required to subject to rational evaluation and judgment.[257] What might be understood as Stoicism's weakness according to the former positions, is for Nussbaum its strength and, normatively speaking, of central importance for any political activity. These two positions on political psychology are well-beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I think they highlight some crucial questions for interpreting the Stoics' political capability: is emotional 'detachment' and rational cool always the proper avenue for social transformation in the less-than-ideal society? Nevertheless, the dichotomy and incommensurability of 'emotional' and 'rational' politics is currently, for better or for worse, at the centre stage of world politics and might both affirm and challenge Nussbaum's rationalist evaluation.

Capabilities aside, the Stoics were not shy of world-transformational thought and the Stoics strongly emphasised that only cowards prefer philosophical quibbling. True philosophy, they emphasised, demanded a radical social praxis.

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[256] See also Lachs (2012) who for the same reason attempts to couple Stoic 'pessimism' with pragmatist philosophy.

[257] For Nussbaum's examinations of the Stoics on emotion and the coupling to politics, see for instance 2001, 2009, 2013, and 2016.

7 Appendix – Notes on Sources for Musonius Rufus and Epictetus

Neither Musonius Rufus nor Epictetus seems to have written philosophical treatises, and no sources from their hand exist. This prompts a few remarks on the credibility of the source material on these two philosophers.

Musonius Rufus seems to have envisaged himself in the tradition of Socrates, who did not write anything himself. The transmission of Musonius's lectures is probably due to a student of his, Lukius (Houser 1997, 2, 5). Our knowledge of the content of his philosophical position is derived primarily from Stobaeus's *Anthologium*, although a few passages exist in the writings of Aulus Gellius, Plutarch, Aelius Aristides and Epictetus. The way Musonius is presented in the sources reflect how Xenophon presented Socrates (Lutz 1947, 12n33), which might indicate the image of Musonius is an idealised one. However, Lutz does not find reasons to question the credibility of the content, although she notes that Lukius might have written the discourse after the death of Musonius, wherefore the content might have been slightly diluted (ibid. 12; also Houser 1997, 6). Inwood has recently argued that there is a better reason to interpret Musonius as a Cynic, that he was not an orthodox Stoic, and that he perhaps was merely a spokesperson for 'philosophy' and not a particular school (Inwood 2017, 257). This is a novel interpretation that deserves further debate but it is more than I can do here. However, the majority of scholars accept Musonius as a Stoic and the content expressed in the sources is generally accepted as credible and I find no reason why this should be questioned.

In the tradition of Socrates and his teacher, Epictetus likewise wrote nothing himself. Epictetus's lectures were written down and presented by Arrian of Nicomedia in perhaps eight books and one handbook, the *Encheiridion*. Only the

Encheiridion and four of the books have survived. Aulus Gellius attests to the existence of at least the fifth book by quoting it, and it does not seem to have significantly differed in content from the first four books. However, we do not know the content of the missing books, five to eight, and they might have presented a slightly different and more theoretical content. (Hadot 1995, 63f). According to Dobbin, a minority position within the scholarship argues that Arrian's work was entirely his own and does therefore not accurately reflect the content of Epictetus's teachings. However, since other works written by Arrian reflects an entirely different style of writing, it is implausible that Arrian's writings on Epictetus were the object of his own creative writing (Dobbin 1998, xxi). Dobbin proceeds from this and argues that Arrian's transmission of Epictetus's lectures was, in fact, written by Epictetus in all secrecy, who nevertheless wanted to present himself in the Socratic tradition of not writing (ibid., xxii).[258] This has, however, been rejected by Long as unlikely (Long 2010, 64). Long instead argues that Arrian wrote the books, but the content reflects genuine content from Epictetus's lectures. Since Epictetus was famous in Antiquity, Long argues, it is likely any significant discrepancy between Arrian's books and Epictetus's teaching would have been revealed (ibid., 40f). Although I agree with this, I surmise Hadot had a relevant point in stressing that Arrian would never have been able to present a complete picture. Arrian was only a student of Epictetus for a couple of years, and Epictetus's teachings seem to have spanned across 25-30 years. This will inevitably have limited Arrian's knowledge of Epictetus's teachings and the scope of his books (Hadot 20014, 60f).

Furthermore, it is also reasonable to suggest that Arrian wrote down what he found most relevant. Like most of Epictetus's students, Arrian did only attend courses for a short period of a few years, as part of his general education and prepa-

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[258] It is commonplace to assume that Socrates chose not to write, but Epictetus does in fact claim that Socrates did write material of his own (Epictetus II.1,32). According to Oldfather, Socrates might have written personal notes but not treatises (Oldfather 1998, 216n8).

ration for holding public office. He was born into a provincial aristocracy of Bithynia in Greece, and he was a Roman citizen. Among other things, he was appointed to the Senate by Hadrian in 126 CE and served as Consul in Cappadocia, eventually retiring to Athens as Chief Magistrate (*archon*). Arrian was, therefore, a prime example of the well-to-do student, of which Epictetus had many. His interest in philosophy seems to be genuine, but the teachings were first and foremost supposed to serve him as part of a training (παιδεία) meant to strengthen him in his future career as a member of the elite. Arrian might have neglected any content in Epictetus' teachings that was irrelevant to this purpose. Additionally, we might also suspect that any content of Epictetus's teachings that too decidedly counterposed Arrian's worldview and purpose for attending the classes might have been glossed out, forgotten, or ignored by Arrian. Although I accept Arrian's work as decidedly credible and do not suspect his presentation differed markedly from the actual content of Epictetus's teachings, it is possible that Epictetus might have emphasised more Cynic and 'left-wing' elements in Stoic philosophy than what Arrian presented. This, of course, is purely speculation on my part, but it is important to realise that our only real source for Epictetus was a member of the elite that followed the philosophical courses with a very specific purpose in mind. This fact has not, to my knowledge, been adequately appreciated.

8 Abbreviations

Author	**Abbr.**	***Text***	***Abbr.***
Alciphron	---	*Letters*	*[259]
Alexander of Lycopolis	Alexander of Lycopolis	*Against the Manicheans*	*
Alexander of Aphrodisias	Alex. Aphr.	*On Fate*	*De Fato*
Aristophanes	---	*Clouds*	---
Aristotle	---	*Metaphysics*	*Metaph*
		Nicomachean Ethics	*NE*
		De Partibus Animalium	*Anim.*
		Politics	*Pol.*
Arrian	---	*The Anabasis of Alexander*	*Anab.*
Augustine of Hippo	Augustine	*City of God*	*Civ. Dei*
Aulus Gellius	---	*Attic Nights*	*Noc. Att.*
Athenaeus of Naucratis	Athenaeus	*Banquet of the Philosophers*	*Deipn.*
Calcidius	---	*Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*	*Comm. Tim.*
Cassius Dio	Dio	*Roman History*	*Hist.*
Cato the Elder	---	*De Agricultura*	*Agr.*
Cicero	---	*Academica*	*Acad.*
		Letters to Atticus	*Ep. Att.*
		On Duties	*Off.*
		On Ends	*Fin.*
		On Laws	*De Leg.*
		Pro Marcello	*Marc.*
		Pro Murena	*Mur.*
		Nature of the Gods	*Nat. De.*

[259] The designation '---' implies that the full name of author or text is used when a reference is made. The designation '*' implies that the text in question is not named because it is the standard reference for the given author.

		Pro Rabirio	*Rab.*
		Republic	*De Rep.*
		Pro Roscio	*Rosc.*
		Tusculan Dispotations	*Tusc.*
Clement of Alexandria	Clement	*Miscellanies (Stromateis)*	*Strom.*
Cornutus	---	*Compendium on Greek Theology*	*Greek Theology*[260]
Dio Chrysostom	---	*Discourses*	*Disc.*
Diogenes Laërtius	DL	*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*	*
Epictetus	---	*Discourses*	*
		Encheiridion	*Ench.*
Epiphanius of Salamis	Epiph.	*A Concise, Accurate Account of the Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church*	*De Fide*
Eusebeius	Euseb.	*Evangelica Preparation*	*Ev. Prep.*
Frontinus	---	*On Aqueducts*	*Aq.*
Galen	---	*On the Formation of the Foetus*	*Foet.*
		On Hippocrates' and Plato's doctrines	*Hipp. Plat.*
Herodotus	---	*Histories*	---
Hesiod	---	*Theogony*	*Th.*
		Works and Days	*Op.*
Hierocles	---	*On Appropriate Acts*	*Acts*[261]
		Elements of Ethics	*Eth.*
Homer	---	*Iliad*	*Il.*
		Odyssey	*Od.*
Horace	---	*Satires*	*Satires*
Juvenal	---	*Satires*	*Sat.*

[260] All references to Cornutus are to the Greek text found in Lang (1881). The reference system is comprised of a reference first to chapter number in roman numerals, followed by a reference to page number and the relevant lines in Lang's edition (i.e. *Greek Theology* XVII.26,7-28,4 is a reference to chapter XVII, page 26, line 7 extending to page 28, line 4).

[261] All references to Hierocles's *On Appropriate Acts* and *Elements of Ethics* are to the Greek version found in Ramelli (2009). The reference system is comprised of a reference to the page number in Ramelli succeeded by a reference to the relevant lines (i.e. *Acts* 80,18-20 is a reference to page 80, line 18-20 in Ramelli).

Lactantius	---	*Divine Institues*	*Inst. Div.*
Livy	---	*Histories*	*Hist.*
Lucan	---	*Pharsalia*	*Phar.*
Lucian	---	*Icaromennipus*	*Icarom*
		Demonax	*Demon.*
		Piscator	*Piscat.*
Marcus Aurelius	---	*Meditations*	*
		Sayings	*S.*
Musonius Rufus[262]	---	*Discourses*	*
Nemesius	---	*De Natura Hominis*	*Nat. Hom.*
Origen	---	*Against Celsus*	*Cels.*
		On the First Principles	*De Princ.*
Ovid	---	*Metamorphoses*	*Met.*
		On the Roman Calendar	*Fasti*
Philo	---	*On the indestructibility of the world*	*Inc. Mund.*
Philodemus	Phil.	*On the Stoics*	*De Stoic.*
Philostratus	---	*Life of Apollonius*	*Vit. Apol.*
Plato	---	*Alcibiades*	*Alc.*
		Apology	*Ap.*
		Euthydemus	*Euthyd.*
		Gorgias	*Gorg.*
		Laws	*Leg.*
		Letters	*Letters*
		The Republic	*Rep.*
		Phaedo	*Phaedo*
		Protagoras	*Prot.*
		Symposion	*Symp.*

[262] All references to Musonius Rufus are to the Greek version found in Lutz (1947) and follow the same system as references to Cornutus. The reference system is comprised of a reference first to chapter number in roman numerals, followed by a reference to page number and the relevant lines in Lutz's reproduction (i.e. XIV.92,17-19 is a reference to chapter XIV, page 92, lines 17-19).

		Timaeus	*Tim.*
		Theaetetus	*Tht.*
Pliny	---	*Natural History*	*HN*
Plutarch	Plut.	*On Common Conceptions*	*Comm.*
		On Stoic Self-Contradictions	*St. Repn.*
		On Isis and Osiris	*De Isid.*
		Life of Alexander	*Alex.*
		Life of Brutus	*Brut.*
		Life of Cato	*Cat.*
		Life of Cicero	*Cic.*
		Life of Pompey	*Pomp.*
		Life of Lycurgus	*Lyc.*
Polybius	---	*Histories*	*Hist.*
Porphyry	---	*Life of Pythagoras*	*Vit. Pyth.*
Sallust	---	*Conspiracy of Catiline*	*Cat.*
Seneca	---	*On Anger*	*Ira*
		On Benefits	*Ben.*
		On Clemency	*Clem.*
		Consolations to Helvia	*Helv.*
		On the Happy Life	*Vit. Beat.*
		On the Shortness of Life	*Brev. Vit.*
		On Leisure	*Otio*
		Letters	*Ep.*
		On the Firmness of the Wise	*Con.*
		Consolations to Marcia	*Marc.*
		Consolations to Polybius	*Polyb.*
		Natural Questions	*NQ*
		On Providence	*Prov.*
		On Tranquillity of Mind	*Tranq.*
Sextus Empiricus	SE	*Against the Professors*	*M.*
		Outlines of Pyrrhonism	*Ph.*
Simplicius	---	*In Epicti Enchiridion*	*Epic. Ench.*
Stobaeus	Stob.	*Anthology*	*Anth.*

Suetonius	Suet.	*Lives of the Emperors, Domitian*	*Domitian*
		Lives of the Poets, Lucan	*Lucan*
		Lives of the Emperors, Nero	*Nero*
		Lives of the Emperors, Tiberius	*Tiberius*
Tacitus	---	*Annales*	*Ann.*
		Agricola	*Agr.*
		Histories	*Hist.*
Tertullian	---	*On the Soul*	*De Anim.*
Theophilus of Antioch	Theo. Ant.	*The Apology to Autolycus*	*Ap. Aut.*
Tibullus	---	*Poetry*	*
Vergil	---	*Aeneid*	---
Xenophon	Xen.	*Constitutions of the Athenians*	*Const. Ath.*
		Memorabilia	*Mem.*
		Oeconomicus	*Oecon.*

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10 Dansk resumé

I de sidste årtier har et stigende fokus på de hellenistiske og romerske filosofier rehabiliteret de antikke filosofiers praktiske dimension. Dette praktiske aspekt har været en del af filosofiens udtryksform siden Antikken, men den har af forskellige grunde ofte været nedprioriteret eller ignoreret til fordel for filosofi som et abstrakt tankesystem. Som konsekvens af denne fornyet interesse i de antikke filosofiers praktiske dimension er den livsfilosofiske udtryksform igen blevet gangbar og bredt accepteret som en del af filosofiens væsen. Med den øgede interesse i filosofiens praktiske element rejser sig et interessant spørgsmål: hvilke konsekvenser har dette for, hvordan vi analyserer og fortolker de antikke filosoffers politiske filosofi og politiske praksis? For at undersøge dette spørgsmål kastes der i nærværende afhandling lys på de Romerske Stoikere, hvor deres politiske filosofi analyseres som udtryk for en særlig form for 'politisk spiritualitet.' Typiske læsninger af de Romerske Stoikere har enten vurderet, at de var apolitiske, eller at de – modsat deres forgængere, de Hellenistiske Stoikere – var udpræget konservative, reaktionære eller grundlæggende støttede bevarelsen af status quo i samfundet til trods for en til tider subversiv fernis. Disse typiske fortolkninger vil i denne afhandling blive udfordret.

I det indledende kapitel argumenteres der for, at de Romerske Stoikere skal analyseres med fokus på filosofiens praktiske formål og med øje for, at Stoicismen som historisk fænomen var en levet filosofi og ikke blot et teoretisk foretagende. Her redegøres der i forlængelse af en række forskere for, at Stoicismen skal forstås som en 'spirituel filosofi,' der bekendtgjorde en 'kosmisk sandhed,' og at adgangen til at få viden om denne kosmisk-religiøse sandhed nødvendiggjorde en selvtransformation af individet. Stoicismen var derfor en asketisk bevægelse – forstået med afsæt i det græske ord *áskēsis*, der betyder træning – og filosofien udtrykte en eksistentiel

fordring, der afkrævede en overskridelse af selvet. Denne selvtransformative fordring var affødt af deres kosmo-religiøse verdenssyn, og dette betød, at det filosofiske livsvalg ikke blot var et æstetisk valg vedrørende 'det gode liv,' men at filosofien også gjorde krav på mennesket, fordi Stoicismens doktriner for Stoikerne var indskrevet i naturen. Det Stoiske verdenssyn og den dertilhørende filosofisk-asketiske praksis var dermed kritisk i sit syn på den eksisterende verdensorden. I stedet tilbød Stoikerne en alternativ vision for samfundet og koblede denne vision til en personlig og social praksisform, der skulle sikre det gode samfund ved at transformere menneskehedens spirituelle væren. De Romerske Stoikere var derfor grundlæggende politiske, idet deres spirituelle filosofi var uløseligt forbundet til deres politiske spiritualitet.

Kapitel to fungerer som optakt til afhandlingens primære undersøgelser. I et forsøg på at sandsynliggøre, at en større grad af kontinuitet i politisk tænkning eksisterede mellem de Hellenistiske og de Romerske Stoikere, fokuseres der i dette kapitel på de Hellenistiske Stoikeres utopiske visioner for samfundet. Den Stoiske vision for en alternativ og bedre samfundsorden blev beskrevet i Zenons afhandling *Republikken*. Der forsøges en tilnærmelse af denne afhandlings indhold og der argumenteres for at afhandlingen beskrev et egalitært samfund, hvor både den private ejendomsret og det økonomiske system var afskaffet. Denne særlige samfundsorganisation var en mulighed, fordi det var en nødvendig konsekvens i det tilfælde, at menneskeheden med succes havde undergået den spirituelle transformation. Dette var i sig selv muligt, fordi mennesket var blevet skabt som havende del i Zeus' guddommelige rationalitet. Dermed afspejlede konventionelle samfund en vertikal virkelighed, at kosmos faktisk var en by, og Zenons *Republikken* beskrev, hvordan den perfekte realisering af menneskets potentiale så ud på horisontalt niveau. Selvom de Romerske Stoikere i de overleverede kilder ikke adresserede Zenons afhandling, argumenteres der i resten af nærværende afhandling for, at der fortsat var idémæssig konvergens.

I tredje kapitel flyttes fokus til de Romerske Stoikere. I dette kapitel tages der udgangspunkt i, at Stoikerne beskrev kosmos som en reelt eksisterende kosmisk by, der eksisterede på et vertikalt plan over for konventionelle byers horisontale eksistens. Det tages som udgangspunkt, at denne forestilling afkræver en passende analytisk og teoretisk ramme. Stoikernes forestilling om den kosmiske by og menneskehedens status som kosmiske borgere i denne by analyseres på baggrund af Henry Lefebvres teoretiske forståelse af, hvordan rum produceres. I dette kapitel søges det påvist, at denne spatiale dimension af Stoikernes verdensbillede og den måde det indgik i en spatial produktion medførte, at den kosmiske by fungerede på samme måde som den type rum, Michel Foucault kaldte 'heterotopier.' Ved hjælp af dette begreb påvises det, hvilke spatiale konsekvenser den kosmiske by medførte. Stoikernes kosmologiske verdensbillede tilegnede sig alle eksisterende rum, inklusiv kroppen, på en sådan måde, at de konventionelle rum og spatiale relationer blev anfægtet og undergravet af en alternativ meningshorisont. Her er særligt Rom som konceptuelt rum i fokus, og det analyseres, hvordan den kosmiske by som 'modrum' udfordrede og revaluerede Rom og Romerriget.

I kapitel fire undersøges det, hvordan Stoikernes kosmologiske verdensbillede tilegnede sig de praktiserende Stoikeres kroppe og dermed resulterede i forskydninger af Stoikerne i forhold til deres romerske medborgere. At have statsborgerskab i den kosmiske by afkrævede, at den vertikale virkelighed skulle manifesteres på den horisontale plan. Stoikerne forestillede sig, at de kunne realisere deres iboende og guddommelige ophav ved hjælp af række af mentale og praktiske træningsøvelser. Denne asketiske praksis resulterede i sociale forskydninger, idet den var tæt knyttet til en artikulation af en ny idealiseret subjektivitet, der kom til at stå i opposition til den almindelige romerske borger. Der argumenteres i afhandlingen for, at det var forventet, at en del af den spirituelle transformation forudsatte, at Stoikerne kropsliggjorde den kosmiske sandhed, som var præsenteret i deres filosofiske doktriner, i deres væren og sociale praksis. Denne kropsliggørelse havde konsekvenser

for Stoikernes handlemåder og udseende, og disse skulle tjene den kommunikative funktion, at informere Stoikernes romerske medborgere om eksistensen af en alternativ og mere reel virkelighed, og at deres levemåder var problematiske og krævede en substantiel korrektion. Dermed havde de Stoiske filosoffers levemåde både et missionerende og pædagogisk sigte, der også var koblet til filosoffens rolle som sandsiger, der ubøjeligt ville udspørge og kritisere sine medborgere for deres spirituelle mangler og lidelser.

Stoikernes sandhedstale resulterede i en spirituel kritik af deres romerske medborgere. I kapitel fem argumenteres der for, at denne spirituelle kritik blev formet af samtidige udviklinger i politisk og økonomisk tænkning. I perioden omkring det romerske kejserdømme var romerne i udpræget grad, og mere end man hidtil havde været, interesseret i idéen om privat ejendom, og Stoikernes kritik var struktureret af en tilsvarende interesse i ejerskab, der kom til syne i forskellige spørgsmål. I første omgang argumenteres der for, hvordan der i de Romerske Stoikeres tanker ligger en kritik af både begrebet og eksistensen af privat ejendom, og at Stoikerne i stedet synes at konkludere, at der kun eksisterer et guddommeligt fællesejerskab. Deres romerske medborgeres fokus på at tilegne sig rigdom blev koblet til et problematisk begær for et liv i luksus og var derfor udtryk for en spirituel lidelse. Det analyseres, hvordan Stoikerne formulerede en kritik af både akkumulering og forbrug af rigdom, og der redegøres for, hvordan Stoikerne koblede denne sociale praksis sammen med en afståelse af selvejerskab. Stoikerne analyserede og kritiserede dermed deres samtid ud fra en forestillet modsætning mellem eksternt ejerskab og internt selvejerskab. Dette fokus på selvejerskab resulterede også i en revurdering af den i det romerske samfund allestedsnærværende slaveinstitution. Slaveri som begreb blev af Stoikerne afkoblet den sociale institution og blev i stedet udtryk for et moralsk slaveri, der udtrykte en persons evne til at cementere selvejerskab i mødet med eksterne omstændigheder og genstande. Stoikernes verdensbillede og dertilhørende sociale og personlige praksis udfordrede dermed den dominerende sociale

orden, og Stoikerne var klar over dette. Til slut analyseres det, hvordan Stoikerne også benyttede deres idé om selvejerskab til at underminere enhver politisk autoritets magtbeføjelser. Et reelt selvejerskab kunne dermed sikre den fortsatte og kompromisløse sandhedstale, uagtet ubehagelige politiske konsekvenser.

Det samme verdensbillede og de samme filosofiske doktriner de Hellenistiske Stoikere brugte til at formulere et ideal blev af de Romerske Stoikere benyttet til at adressere den aktuelle sociale orden. Gennem synkrone læsninger af de Romerske Stoikere, styret af en tematisk og teoretisk ramme, udgør denne afhandling et argument for, at de Romerske Stoikere ikke blot var politiske, men også at deres politiske filosofi i overvejende grad lå i forlængelse af de Hellenistiske Stoikeres politiske filosofi.

11 Summary

In recent decades a renewed focus on the Hellenistic and Roman philosophies has rehabilitated the practical aspect of ancient philosophy. This aspect of philosophy has continued to be part of the philosophical discipline but it has often been surpassed in importance and appreciation by philosophy's theoretical discourse. With the increased focus on ancient philosophy's practical outlook, an interesting question emerges: what does this practical outlook entail regarding how we interpret and analyse the political philosophy and political praxis of the ancient philosophers? In order to examine this question, this dissertation sheds light on Imperial Stoicism and examines this group of philosophers' political philosophy in view of the concept of 'political spirituality.' The often-reiterated interpretation of Imperial Stoicism is that these philosophers were either entirely apolitical or that they, unlike their Hellenistic predecessors, were markedly conservative, reactionary, and generally supported the status quo of society despite an apparent subversive veneer. Both these interpretations will be put significantly into question in this dissertation.

In the introductory chapter, it is argued that the Imperial Stoics should be examined with accrued attention to their practical outlook and the historical fact that it was, first and foremost, a lived philosophy. It is here suggested, in continuation of a number of scholars, that the ancient Stoics should be interpreted as a 'spiritual philosophy' that declared the existence of a 'cosmic truth' and that the access to this cosmic-religious truth required the self-transformation of the individual Stoics. The Stoics were therefore inherently ascetic in outlook – i.e. ascetic in the ancient Greek sense as connoting training – and their philosophy was centred on an existential demand of self-transformation. The need for this self-transformation was derived from

their cosmo-religious worldview, and how one lived did therefore become not only an aesthetic choice but also a demand inscribed in nature. It is argued that this worldview and its concomitant philosophical-ascetic praxis was critical of the existing order of things and provided both an alternative vision of society but also a social and personal praxis instituted to secure the transformation of society through transforming the spiritual disposition of the individual. Imperial Stoicism was, therefore, inherently political and their spiritual philosophy was intricately connected to a political spirituality.

The second chapter functions as a prelude to the rest of the dissertation. In order to render it probable that a more considerable degree of continuation in political thought existed between Hellenistic Stoicism and later Imperial Stoicism, this chapter focuses on the Hellenistic Stoics' utopian vision. The Stoic vision for an alternative and better society was described by Stoicism's founder Zeno in his *Republic*. The content of this treatise is intimated and it is argued that this treatise described an egalitarian society in which private property and the economic system was abolished. The social formation of this utopian society was possible because it was imagined to come about when humanity successfully has secured a spiritual transformation on a large scale, which was a possibility because Zeus had created humanity with a share in his divine rationality. In this way, conventional communities mirrored a vertical reality, that the cosmos was a city, and Zeno's Republic was thereby imagined as a perfect realisation of human potentiality on the horizontal level. Although the Imperial Stoics did not engage explicitly with Zeno's utopian vision, the rest of the dissertation sets out to argue that an ideational convergence persisted.

In the third chapter, the attention is shifted to the Imperial Stoics. This chapter takes as its departure the fact that the Stoics described the cosmos as a Cosmic City, having vertical existence in opposition to conventional cities' horizontal existence. Here it is argued that this way to conceptualise the cosmos should have conse-

quences for how we study it. The Stoics' argument that the cosmos was a city and that humanity was citizens in this city is analysed through Henry Lefebvre's theoretical framework designed for understanding the production of space. It is argued that the spatial dimension of the Cosmic City made it function similar to the Foucauldian concept of 'Heterotopia.' As such, it is argued that the perceived existence of the Cosmic City had various spatial consequences. This cosmological worldview appropriated all existing spaces in a certain way as well as the bodies of the Stoics. Through this appropriation, the Cosmic City provided an operation in which conventional spatial relations was contested and subverted which had consequences for the evaluation of wide array of spatial phenomena, Rome, the exile, temples, etc. Especially in focus is Rome as conceptual space – the state without temporal and geographical boundaries, as decreed by Jupiter – that were challenged by the Cosmic City as a 'counter-space.'

The fourth chapter takes as a departure that the Stoics' Cosmic City appropriated the bodies of the Stoics and thereby also contributed to a displacement of the Stoics from their fellow Romans. Citizenship in this Cosmic City required that this vertical reality become manifest on the horizontal level as well. In this chapter, it is examined how the Stoics imagined they could become one with the Godhead. For this purpose, the Stoics developed and initiated an ascetic praxis consisting of various mental and physical exercises which could secure a successful self-transformation. This ascetic praxis displaced the Stoics from the rest of Roman society as they articulated a very different kind of subjectivity that was formulated up against conventional Roman subjectivities. As part of their spiritual transformation, the Stoics were expected to embody the cosmic truth expressed in their philosophical doctrines. This truth should be embodied in a way were both their social praxes and their physical appearance served a communicative function that could inform their fellow Romans of their errors and problematic subjectivity. In this way, this communication had both a proselyting and a pedagogical purpose. This embodiment of

truth was coupled with the philosopher's role as truth-teller, who relentlessly would question and criticise people for their spiritual inadequacy and ailments.

The Stoics' truth-telling resulted in a spiritual critique of their Roman peers. In chapter five it is argued that this spiritual critique was coloured by particular developments in political and economic thought during the Roman Principate, since a notion of ownership structured the critique. During this period, the Romans became increasingly preoccupied with the concept of private property. First, it is examined how the Imperial Stoics criticised the idea of private property and argued for the existence of a shared divine property. Their fellow elite Romans' excessive focus on attaining wealth was coupled to a problematic desire for living and indulging in luxury. The Stoics therefore made a charge against both wealth accumulation and the consumption of wealth. This problematic preoccupation with wealth and luxury, it is argued, resulted, according to the Stoics, in a cessation of self-ownership, and the Stoics therefore directly opposed external owner-ship to internal ownership. The Stoics' emphasis on self-ownership gave rise to a revaluation of the notion of slavery, which the Stoics decoupled from the traditional institution of slavery and attached to a moral evaluation of one's ability to claim self-mastery. The Stoics' worldview and its adjuvant social and personal praxis significantly challenged the dominant order of things, and the Stoics were aware of this. Their notion of self-ownership was therefore also employed in an operation where the authority of the Emperor and his tools for securing subjugation of his subjects was undercut and subverted, thereby allowing for the continued and uncompromising truth-telling of the Stoics.

The same philosophical doctrines and worldview the Hellenistic Stoics used to explicate the ideal, the Imperial Stoics employed to address the actual state of affairs. Through this synchronic reading of the Imperial Stoics, guided by a thematic concern and specific theoretical framework, it is argued that the Imperial Stoics were

not only political, their political philosophy was also predominantly in agreement with their Hellenistic predecessors.