

THE STOICS: Lecture Notes Nick Campion

Stoic philosophy was founded by Zeno of Citium (334-262 BCE) and derives its name from the porch, or stoa, in Athens, where Zeno taught. Stoic teachings were very popular in the Roman Empire, where they tended to merge with Platonic ideas, where they encouraged the use of astrology.¹ They were also influential on Christianity: Christians approved of Stoicism's monotheism (even though I would argue that, as the Stoic God is identical with nature, there is no transcendent Stoic God and Stoicism can therefore be considered atheist) and fatalism, which accorded well those forms of Christianity which emphasised the existence of a preordained divine plan to which all are subject. Texts cited in support of Christian predeterminism include Matthew 22.14 ('For many are called, but few are chosen') and Ephesians 1.4-5 ('even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus'),

The great example of a Stoic Christian was the fifth century philosopher Boethius who, having led a devout and virtuous life, ended his days in prison after being falsely accused of treason, an allegation over which he had no control. In his *Consolation of Philosophy*, one of the most popular books in medieval and Renaissance Europe, he concluded however, one lived one's life, one couldn't control the outcome. Stoic cosmology is therefore interesting in itself and for its impact on classical astrology and Christianity.

The following notes are a summary of the teachings outlined in Diogenes Laertius' biography of 'Zeno' in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans R.D. Hicks, London: William Heinemann, 1925, vol. 2, pp. 110-263 (referenced in the footnotes as DL).

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0258%3Ab ook%3D7%3Achapter%3D1>

I have not tried to explain or interpret, just to summarise different aspects of Stoic theory.

Much of the material in Diogenes Laertius is included in Inwood, Brad and L.P. Gerson, *The Stoics Reader*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company 2008, but I would recommend the original if you choose to investigate Stoicism further.

Whereas the original works of Plato and Aristotle survived, the earliest Stoic writings have been lost. We are therefore dependent on (1) later Stoic writers and (2) accounts of Stoicism by non-Stoics. It is therefore difficult to pin point an exact Stoic doctrine. That said, although there were variations in detail in Stoic ideas, the following general principles were accepted:

¹ Frederick H. Cramer, *Astrology in Roman Law and Politics*, Chicago; Ares Publishers, 1996 [1954], pp. 51-52.

1. The cosmos is essentially good
2. All things in the cosmos are interdependent
3. All things in the cosmos can be understood as physical bodies
4. Nature and matter are fundamental to existence
5. It is important to live in harmony with the cosmos and nature.
6. The harmonious life can be achieved through virtue and reason
7. Generally, the world is subject to fate but this can be moderated by education, and the harmonious life.
8. The cosmos is permeated by soul, understood as a life force.

Philosophical Influences

Stoic ethical teachings were derived from the **Cynics**, who advocated a life of simple virtue lived in harmony with nature. The strongest cosmological comparisons are with **Platonism**, with which Stoicism tended to be conflated in the Roman world. Platonism and Stoicism share the following:

1. A good creator God
2. Penetration of God into nature and the material world
3. Periodic destruction of the cosmos
4. A spherical, geocentric cosmos
5. The interdependence of all things
6. An emphasis on subjection to fate, which can be moderated through education, reason and virtue.

However, the important distinction between Stoicism and Platonism lies in Platonism's emphasis on the soul as a transcendent entity, in contrast to Stoicism's emphasis on nature as the only reality. Stoicism also ignored the crucial Platonic theory of forms (Ideas or archetypes), the abstract structures on which all things in the material world are based.

Stoicism's emphasis on nature bears comparison with Aristotelian teachings.

Classifications of knowledge and of the world

Truth and falsity:

'Interrogations, inquiries and the like are neither true nor false, whereas judgements (or propositions) are always either true or false'.²

'Symbolical argument is a combination of full argument and mood'.³

² Diogenes Laertius' biography of 'Zeno' in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans R.D. Hicks, London: William Heinemann, 1925, vol. 2, pp. 110-263: DL VII.para 67. See also VII.79.

³ DL VII.185

According to Zeno in the *Exposition of Doctrine*, Philosophical 'doctrine' is divided into 3:⁴

'No single part, some Stoics declare, is independent of any other part, but all blend together'.⁵

1. Physical
2. Ethical
3. Logical.

Each branch of inquiry may be subdivided.

Different Stoics had various versions of this list.

In his *Lectures of Posidonius*, Cleanthes divided inquiry into six parts, including Dialectic.⁶

Dialectic falls under two heads, one of which is 'presentations'.⁷

'A presentation (or mental impression) is an imprint on the soul; the name having been borrowed from the imprint made by the seal upon the wax'.⁸

Diogenes Laertius' biography of 'Zeno' in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans R.D. Hicks, London: William Heinemann, 1925, vol. 2, pp. 110-263 (VII.45)

Two types of presentation:⁹

1. 'One apprehending a real object...is defined as that which proceeds from a real object, agrees with the object itself, and has been **imprinted seal-fashion and stamped upon the mind**.'¹⁰

2. 'the latter, or non-apprehending, that which does not proceed from any real object, if it does, fails to agree with the reality itself, not being clear or distinct'.¹¹

Diocles the Magnesian in *Synopsis of the Philosophers*, wrote, 'The Stoics agree to put in the forefront the doctrine of presentation and sensation, inasmuch as the standard by which the truth of things is tested is generically a presentation, and again the theory of assent and that of presentation and thought, which proceeds all the rest, cannot be stated apart from presentation. For presentation comes first; then thought, which is capable of expressing itself, puts into the form of a proposition that which the subject receives from a presentation'.¹²

Diocles distinguished the **process** and the **outcome** of presentation.

4 DL VI.39-41.

5 DL VII.40.

6 DL VII.41

7 DL VII.43.

8 DL VII.45.

9 DL VII.45-6.

10 DL VII.45-6.

11 DL VII.45-6.

12 DL VII.49.

1.Process is 'the act of imprinting something on the **soul**, that is a **process** of change, as set forth by Chryssipus in the second book of his treatise *Of the Soul (De anima)*. For, says he, we must not take "impression" **in the literal sense of the stamp of a seal**, because it is impossible to suppose that a number of such impressions should be in one and the same spot at one and the same time. **The presentation meant is that it comes from a real object, agrees with that object, and pressed seal fashion on the soul, as would not be the case if it came from an unreal object**'.¹³

2.Outcome is 'a semblance in the mind such as may occur in sleep'

Presentations are also divided into two:¹⁴

1. Rational, result of thought processes, as in the way a statue is viewed by a trained sculptor
2. Irrational, having no name, as in the way an ordinary man looks at a statue.

Animals are either rational or irrational.¹⁵

Sense or sensation used in three senses:¹⁶

1. 'The current passing from the principal part of the soul to the senses'.¹⁷
2. Apprehension by means of the senses
3. The sense organs.

Ethical Doctrine

Nature and Virtue

An animal's first impulse is self-preservation (not pleasure).¹⁸

But when an animal is endowed with reason (i.e., human beings), 'reason becomes the natural life'.¹⁹

Therefore the purpose of life is to live in agreement with nature (Zeno, *On the Nature of Man*).

Virtue is the goal to which nature guides us.

Therefore a virtuous life is a natural life and vice versa.

Human nature is identical with the nature of the universe:

as Chrysippus says in the first book of his *De finibus*; for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. And this is why the end may be defined as life in accordance with nature, or, in other words, in

13 DL VII.50.

14 DL VII.51

15 DL VII.61

16 DL VII.52.

17 DL VII.52.

18 DL VII.85

19 DL VII.86

accordance with our own human nature as well as that of the universe, a life in which we refrain from every action forbidden by the law common to all things, that is to say, the right reason which pervades all things, and is identical with this Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is. And this very thing constitutes the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe.²⁰

(This passage is one of the key statements of Stoic cosmology from which a rationale for astrology becomes apparent, as does the correct behaviour required in an astrological universe.

Individuals are interdependent with the universe

Individuals and the universe have the same nature

Therefore it is plausible that an examination of the universe provides information or insight into human beings

But the very fact of the interdependence of humanity and the universe provides serious ethical limits on human behaviour).

There are nuances of disagreement over the emphasis – whereas Chrysippus considers both individual and universal nature, Cleanthes takes universal nature as his starting point.

Justice exists by nature and not by convention (Chrysippus, *On the Morally Beautiful*)²¹

Nature

Is 'A force moving of itself, producing and preserving being its offspring in accordance with seminal principles within definite periods, producing results homogenous with their sources...[it] aims at both utility and pleasure'.²²

'Nature...is an artistically working fire, going on its way to create; which is equivalent to a fiery, creative, or fashioning breath'.²³

Virtue:²⁴

Is 'the state of mind which tends to make the whole of life harmonious'.²⁵

Therefore is something people desire, rather than have forced on them.

Can be defined as perfection, like a statue.

Can be non-intellectual, like health, strength.

20 DL VII.88

21 DL VII.128

22 DL VII.149

23 DL VII.156

24 DL VII 89-90,

25 DL VII.89.

Can be intellectual, like prudence, justice and wisdom (defined as knowledge of good and evil)²⁶

To be virtuous is natural, therefore lack of virtue results from 'the deceptiveness of external pursuits or...the influence of associates'.²⁷

But virtue **can be taught**, which is why bad men can become good and philosophers like Socrates made moral progress.²⁸ (NB: this throws Stoic determinism into relief – can be moderated by **education**).

Good people worship God.²⁹

Good people honour the gods first, parents and brothers second.³⁰

Rationality

There are three types of life³¹:

1. Contemplative
2. Practical
3. Rational; preferable because the rational man is then fit for both contemplation and action.

The Soul³²

'A nature capable of perception'.

'the breath of life, congenital with us'.

A body

A warm breath

It animates us and enables us to move

Soul of the Universe

Is indestructible

Individual soul survives death, although is perishable (Chrysippus says continues to exist until the general conflagration, Chrysippus says only souls of wise do so
Is a part of the soul of the universe.

Soul divided into eight

1-5: the five senses

6.generative power

7.speech

8.reasoning

26 DL VII 92

27 DL VII.89

28 DL VII.91.

29 DL VII.119

30 DL VII 120.

31 DL VII.130

32 DL VII 156-7

Semen is mingled with the parts of the soul and is 'identical with the vital breath or spirit'.³³

Fate

'all things happen by fate or destiny'³⁴ (DL VII. 49) Chrysippus *De fato*, Zeno, Posidonius *De fato*, Boethius *De fato*.)

Fate is 'defined as an endless chain of causation, whereby things are, **or** as the reason or formula by which the world goes on'.³⁵ (DL VII.149)

Suzanne Bobzien argues that the chain of causation does not involve events, but the relationship between bodies. Thus each body can still act as an autonomous agent.³⁶ Bobzien, Suzanne, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

See above: But virtue **can be taught**, which is why bad men can become good and philosophers like Socrates made moral progress.³⁷ (DL VII.91 (NB: this throws Stoic determinism into relief).

Courage, as a virtue, is defined as 'knowledge of what we ought to choose'.³⁸ (DL VII 92-3)

'For if a man be possessed of **virtue**, he is at once able to discover and to put into practice what he ought to do. Now such rules of conduct comprise rules for **choosing**, enduring, staying and distributing'.³⁹ (DL VII 126)

'he [the wise man] alone is **free** and bad men are slaves, **freedom** is the power of independent action, whereas slavery is the privation of the same.'⁴⁰ (DL VII. 122)

Slavery therefore has three definitions:

1. Lack of wisdom
2. Subordination – ie to be a slave
3. Lordship – to own slaves.

Therefore the wise are kings because kingship, being 'irresponsible rule' can only be maintained by wise man.⁴¹

33 DL VII.158-9

34 DL VII.149

35 DL VII.149

³⁶ Bobzien, Suzanne, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

37 DL VII.91.

38 DL VII.92-3.

39 DL VII.126

40 DL VII.122

41 DL VII.122

The knowledge of good and evil which is an attribute of wisdom, is a necessary quality of kingship.

An exposition of the Stoic point of view on fate written by the 1st/2nd century astrology Vettius Valens.

But those occupied with the prognostication of the future and the truth, by gaining a soul free and not enslaved, think slightly of fortune, and do not obstinately persist in hope, and do not fear death, but spend their lives without disturbance by training the soul ahead of time to be confident, and neither rejoice excessively in the case of good nor are depressed in the case of foul, and are content with what is present. And those who are not in love with the impossible carry along that which is ordained, and being estranged from all pleasure or flattery, they are established as soldiers of fate.⁴²

The Wise Man

'Nor indeed will the wise man ever feel grief; seeing that grief is irrational'.⁴³ (citing Apollodorus, *Ethics*)

'They are also, it is declared, godlike; for they have a something divine within them'.⁴⁴ Takes part in politics.⁴⁵

Never forms mere opinions – because opinions are false.⁴⁶

Should be a Cynic.⁴⁷

'he alone is free'.⁴⁸

Offers prayers and asks good things from the gods.⁴⁹

Alone is able to enjoy friendship.⁵⁰

Does all things well.⁵¹

'Overhastiness in assertion affects the actual course of events'.⁵²

Chrysippus says the soul continues to exist until the general conflagration, Chrysippus says only souls of wise do so.⁵³

Moral Improvement

⁴² Vettius Valens, *The Anthology* Bk V, ch 6, p. 21 Schmidt.

43 DL VII.118

44 DL VII.119

45 DL VII.121

46 DLVII 121

47 DLVII 121

48 DLVII 121

49 DL VII.124

50 DL VII.124

51 DL VII.124

52 DL VII.48.

53 DL VII.157

Stoic philosophy tends to emphasise moral and ontological dualities which are absolutes. All truths are equally true, all falsehoods are equally false. All goods are equally good and distinct from all sins, which are equally sinful.⁵⁴ A tick is either bent or straight, not both. Unlike the Peripatetics (Aristotelians) the stoics do therefore not believe in moral improvement.⁵⁵ One is either virtuous or not.

Virtue, once gained, can never be lost, and is preserved by the good man by exercise of the mind, 'which is perfect'.⁵⁶

Other social policies

Non physical love between men and youths on the basis of beauty and virtue.⁵⁷

Voluntary suicide in the case of social or political necessity, physical pain or terminal illness.

Wives should live as a community with a free choice of partners.⁵⁸

Divination

Justified by determinism. General view in favour

'divination in all its forms is a real and substantial fact, if there really is providence. And they prove it to be actually a science on the evidence of certain results'.⁵⁹ (Zeno, Chrysippus *De divinatione*, Athenodorus, Posidonius, *Physical Discourse*, *De divinatione*).

Minority view against divination, e.g., Panaetius.

Physical Doctrine

Everything is a body.⁶⁰

Citing Chrysippus, *Physics* bk 2: 'For whatever produces an effect is a body'.⁶¹

Therefore voice is a body, because it has an effect (+ it results from percussion of air)

Archedemus, *On Voice*).⁶²

Sympathy is a body.⁶³

Tension is a body.⁶⁴

Incorporeality

54 DL VII.120.

55 DL VII.127.

56 DL VII.233

57 DL VII.130

58 DL VII.131.

59 DL VII 149

60 DL VII.55

61 DL VII.55

62 DL VII.55, 158.

63 DL VII.140

64 DL VII.140

Although everything is a body, some phenomena are incorporeal, meaning 'that which, although capable of being occupied by a body, is not so occupied'.⁶⁵
the void outside the cosmos
time

Corporeality

A body has three dimensions; length, breadth and depth.⁶⁶

Division of Physical Doctrine into species:⁶⁷

1. About bodies
2. About principles
3. About elements
4. About the gods
5. About 'bounding surfaces and space whether filled or empty'.

Division of Physical Doctrine into genres:⁶⁸

- 1. The universe (cosmos)**
2. The elements
3. Causation

Division of (1) the study of the cosmos into two: ⁶⁹

1. Of concern to mathematicians – size and motion of celestial bodies
2. Of concern to physicists – substance of the cosmos (e.g., whether stars made u of form or matter, whether it has a beginning, is indestructible, is governed by providence, is inanimate or animate.)

Division of (2) the study of causation into two: ⁷⁰

1. Concerns medical inquiries: 'the ruling principle of the **soul** and the phenomenon of soul, seeds and the like'. ⁷¹
2. Concerns mathematicians: vision (e.g. explanation of mirrors), origins of clouds, thunder, rainbows, halos, comets.

The Cosmos

(Hicks tends to translate cosmos as world – see n a, p 242)

65 DL VII.140

66 D: VII.135

67 DL VII.132

68 DL VII.132

69 DL VII.132-3

70 DL VII.133

71 DL VII.133. For seeds see also VII.158-9.

'has no empty space within it but is **one united whole**'.⁷²

'is a living being, rational, animate and intelligent'.⁷³ (Chrysippus, *On Providence*, Posidonius).

It is alive in the sense of an animate substance endowed with sensation.⁷⁴

It must be endowed with soul because it contains individual things which have **soul**
It must be animal because to be animal is better than non-animal and nothing is better than the cosmos.

NB Boethius denies the world is alive.

Two principles in the Cosmos:⁷⁵

1. Active: reason inherent in this substance, i.e., God.
2. Passive: matter - substance without quality.

Cosmos is used in three senses:⁷⁶

1. God
2. The 'orderly arrangement of the heavenly bodies'.⁷⁷
3. The 'whole of which these are two parts'.⁷⁸

Also acc to Posidonius, *Celestial Phenomena* :⁷⁹

1. 'a system made up of heaven and earth and the natures in them'
2. 's system constituted by gods and mean, and all things created for their sake'.

Heaven is 'the extreme circumference or ring on which the deity has his seat'.⁸⁰

God:

'for he is everlasting and is the artificer of each several thing throughout the whole extent of matter'.⁸¹

'is one and the same with Reason, Fate, and Zeus; he is also called by many other names'.⁸²

72 DL VII.140. See also 143.

73 DL VII.142

74 DL VII.142

75 DL VII.134

76 DL VII 137-8

77 DL VII 138

78 DL VII 138

79 DL VII138

80 DL VII138

81 DL VII.134

82 DL VII.135

Is 'reason inherent in this substance'⁸³ i.e., in matter.

'the individual being whose quality is derived from the whole of substance'.⁸⁴

'the artificer of this orderly arrangement, who at stated periods of time absorbs into himself the whole of substance and again creates it from himself'.⁸⁵

'The purer part of aether, 'the same which they declare to be pre-eminently God and always to have, as it were in sensible fashion, pervaded all that is in the air, all that is in animals and plants, and also the earth itself, as a **principle of cohesion**'.⁸⁶

'The substance [i.e.matter] of God is declared by Zeno to be the whole world and the heaven'⁸⁷ (Chrysippus *Of the Gods*, Posidonius *Of the Gods*).

The deity, they say, is a living being, immortal, rational, perfect or intelligent in happiness, admitting nothing evil [into him], taking providential care of the world and all that herein is, but he is not of human shape. He is, however, the artificer of the universe and, as it were, the father of all, both in general and in that particular part of him which is all-pervading. And which is called many names according to its various powers. They gave the name Dia because all things are due to him; Zeus in so far as he is the cause of all life the name Athena is given because the ruling part of the divinity extends to the aether; the name Hera marks its extension to the air; he is called Hephaestus since it spreads to the creative fire; Poseidon since it reaches to the sea; Demeter, since it reaches to the earth.⁸⁸

Difference between:

1. Principles: are incorporeal, have no form, are neither created nor destroyed
2. Elements: have form, are destroyed when all things are resolved into fire.

Cosmogony

In the beginning he [God] was by himself; he transformed the whole of substance through air into water, and just as in animal generation the **seed** has a moist vehicle, so in cosmic moisture God, who is the **seminal** reason of the universe, remains behind in the moisture as such an agent, adapting matter to himself with a view to the next stage of creation. Thereupon he created the first of all the four elements, fire, water, air, earth.⁸⁹

The world they hold, comes into being when its substance has first been converted from fire through air into moisture, and then the coarser part of moisture has condensed as earth, while that whose particles are fine has

83 DL VII.134

84 DL VII.137.

85 DL VII.139

86 DL VII.141.

87 DL VII.148

88 DL VII.147

89 DL VII.136

been turned into air, and this process of rarefaction goes on increasing till it generates fire.⁹⁰

The all plants and animals are formed by the mixture of the elements.

Cycles of Existence – The Great Year.

'at stated periods of time [God] absorbs into himself the whole of substance and again creates it from himself'.⁹¹

'the world must come to an end, inasmuch as it had a beginning...the world itself is doomed to perish'.⁹² (the reason being deterioration of the elements)

Chrysippus says the soul continues to exist until the general conflagration, Chrysippus says only souls of wise do so,⁹³

Physical structure of the cosmos

Matter defined as 'that out of which anything whatsoever is produced'.⁹⁴

Can be acted upon – i.e., changes and produces other things

Is infinitely divisible

Primary matter is the 'substratum of all things'.⁹⁵

Both matter and substance are divided into two:⁹⁶

1.Universal: 'neither increases nor diminishes' – i.e., not subject to change

2.Particular: increases and diminishes' – i.e., subject to change.

Four elements together constitute 'the unqualified substance or matter'.⁹⁷

Qualities:

1. Fire – hot
2. Water – moist
3. Air - cold
4. Earth - dry

For natural processes, weather, see DL VII.151-4

90 DL VII.142

91 DL VII.139

92 DL VII.141

93 DL VII.157

94 DL VII.150

95 DL VII.150

96 DL VII.150

97 DL VII.137

The elements can be transformed into one another,⁹⁸ or blend with each other.⁹⁹

Vertical structure¹⁰⁰ (the totality of all things includes the infinite void, which is technically outside the finite cosmos and the cosmos)

1. Infinite void.¹⁰¹ (Chrysippus On Void)
1. Fire is the uppermost element, also called aether, contains the sphere of the fixed stars.¹⁰²
2. The spheres of the planets.
3. Air – quality of dryness, cold.
4. Water
5. Earth – at the centre of all things

Everything is bound together by **sympathy** and tension.¹⁰³ (This is why it is impossible for the cosmos to contain empty space)

(NB See this for the Egyptian concept of Hike: 'Basically Hike was founded on the belief that a sympathetic affinity existed between identical sounds and replicate things. It was believed that the name of a living being or an object was not just a simple or practical designation to facilitate the exchange of ideas between persons but that it was the very essence of what was defined, and that the actual pronouncing of a name was to create what was spoken'.(Plumley. J.M., 'The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt' in Blacker, Carmen and Loewe, Michael, *Ancient Cosmologies*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1975, pp 17-41 (p. 38)

Sun is pure fire (Posidonius *Celestial Phenomena*) and is larger than the Earth (Posidonius *Physical Discourse*).

Fiery bodies (stars) receive their nutrients from the sun (?? Passage unclear)

Moon is more like the earth, being closer to it.¹⁰⁴

Moon receives nutrients from fresh water, mixed with air, being close to the earth.¹⁰⁵

Both Earth and stars are spherical

Metaphysical structure of the cosmos:¹⁰⁶

(NB Although really, nothing is not physical)

98 DL VII 141

99 DL VII.151.

100 DL 136-7, 155-6.

101 DL VII.149

102 DL 136-7

103 DL VII.140

104 DL VII.145

105 DL VII.145

106 DL BVII 138-9

Ordered by reason and providence.

'Reason pervades every part of it just as does the **soul** in us'.¹⁰⁷

Reason is like the muscular structure or skeleton of the cosmos, like the sinews and bones, passing through the cosmos as a 'hold' or containing force, or as 'intelligence' through the 'ruling part of the soul.

Reason is therefore not evenly spread throughout the cosmos, but there is more of it in some parts than in others.

'The whole world is a living being, endowed with soul and reason and having aether for its ruling principle'¹⁰⁸ (Antipater of Tyre, *On the Cosmos*, Book 8).

Ruling part of the cosmos

1. aether (i.e. fire)¹⁰⁹ (Antipater of Tyre, *On the Cosmos*, Book 8).
2. Heaven (Posidonius *On the Gods*, Chryssipus *On Providence*)
3. Sun (Cleanthes).
4. 'The purer part of aether, 'the same which they declare to be pre-eminently God and always to have, as it were in sensible fashion, pervaded all that is in the air, all that is in animals and plants, and also the earth itself, as a principle of cohesion'.¹¹⁰ (Chryssipus *On Providence*)

Time.¹¹¹

Is incorporeal.

Is the measure of world's (cosmos' motion)/

Past and future are infinite

Present is finite.

Daemons

'Are in sympathy with mankind and watch over human affairs'.¹¹²

Heroes

Are 'The **souls** of the righteous that have survived their bodies'.¹¹³

Bibliography

107 DL VII.138

108 DL VII.139

109 DL VII.139

110 DL VII.141.

111 DL VII.141

112 DL VII.151

113 DL VII.151

Inwood, Brad and L.P. Gerson, *The Stoics Reader*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company 2008.

Stoic Astrologers

Lastly, a typical statement of Platonic-Stoic cosmology from the first century poet and astrologer, Marcus Manilius

Who could know heaven save by heaven's gift and discover God save one who shares himself in the divine? Who could discern and compass in his narrow mind the vastness of this vaulted infinite, the dances of the stars, the blazing dome of heaven...had not nature endowed our minds with divine vision, had turned to herself a kindred intelligence...? Who, unless there came from heaven a power which calls us heavenward to the sacred fellowship of nature?¹¹⁴

Stoic Freedom

Stoicism is often of as denying free will. This denial can only be understood if we move away from the simple, modern free v fate dichotomy, and understand the more nuanced view familiar in classical Greece. Freedom is best defined as acting in line with nature, including one's personality. Stoicism then allows a perpetual paradox: one can be both 'free' and 'fated' at the same time. There are unresolved issues, though. If we assume that external events are determined but that, through leading a virtuous, wise life, we can alter our internal disposition, and hence act differently, can externals be changed? A.A.Long attempted to clarify the problem:

Provided that we accept our role as moral or rational agents, we are not only free to give our lives this or that shape; we are actually required to choose modes of living that suit our inclinations and aptitudes, so long as these are means of acting harmoniously with our full identity, as specified by the four *personae*.¹¹⁵

The four 'personae' are:¹¹⁶

1. Our identity as human beings – qualities derived from being human and shared with other humans – *natura*
2. Our identity as individuals – psychological and physiological

114 Manilius, Marcus, *Astronomica*, trans. G.P.Goold, Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 1977, 2.115-129.

115 Long, A.A., *Stoic Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 166.

116 Long, A.A., *Stoic Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 164-5.

3. Our life circumstances – *fortuna* - including roles, such as jobs, which we adopt as part, and a result of, our individual identity.
4. Individual choice – at its best, the appropriate choices we make through understanding our individual and human identities – our nature.

The impact of Stoicism in western thought cannot be over-estimated. It was carried from the classical world into the medieval mainly in the *The Consolation of Philosophy*, written in pious despair by the fifth century philosopher, Boethius.¹¹⁷ The *Consolation* is said to have been the most widely used text-book of the medieval western curriculum, was translated by the Saxon king, Alfred the Great, the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer and Queen Elizabeth I of England, and was praised by Gibbon, the eighteenth century historian of Rome. And from the eighteenth century Stoicism found its way to the Idealism of Hegel, and from him to Marx, Engels and Lenin. This is Lenin's commentary on the Stoic paradox:

Engels says: "Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the appreciation of necessity. 'Necessity is *blind* only in so far as it is not understood.' Freedom does not consist in the dream of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and to those which govern the bodily and mental existence of men themselves—two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought but not in reality. Freedom of the will therefore means nothing but the capacity to make decisions with knowledge of the subject. Therefore the *freer* a man's judgment is in relation to a definite question, the greater is the *necessity* with which the content of this judgment will be determined. . . . Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity (*Naturnotwendigkeiten*)." (5th Germ. ed., pp. 112–13.)^[8]

V.I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirico-Criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy*, (Chapter Three: The Theory of Knowledge of Dialectical Materialism and of Empirio-Criticism. III), 6. Freedom and Necessity

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/mec/three6.htm>

The Stoic paradox, in which freedom is the acceptance of one's fate, is evident in the quote attributed to Karl Marx: 'Necessity is blind until it becomes conscious. Freedom is the consciousness of necessity'.

Now, whether one can change the future is an unresolved issue which depends on one's reading of Stoicism. The teachings of the founder of Stoicism are lost and what

¹¹⁷ Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. V.E.Watts, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1969

we have of Stoic thought survives from several hundred years after Zeno, is filtered through Aristotle and Plato.

I have discussed the idea that Stoicism can amend fate in my writing. I am influenced by sceptical writings on Stoicism by writers such as Plutarch and Cicero, which point out its internal contradictions. For example, if (a) the gods are good and (b) the gods cause everything then (c) how can the gods cause vice? The conclusion is that human beings cause vice, and therefore that fate is no immutable and unavoidable. However from an internal perspective, inside Stoicism, such an argument may be rejected.

A similar problem exists in modern astrology. For example, the idea of developing one's potential is normally posed as a pro-free-will rejection of 'fated' astrology (as it was by Dane Rudhyar). However, how is one to develop one's potential? Through one's birth chart. If one is born with Libra rising one must develop into a Libra-rising individual in a Libran manner. Where, then is the free will?