

**INDIVIDUALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM IN THE IMPERIAL  
STOA****Panos ELIOPOULOS\*****ABSTRACT**

For the Stoics man is a social being who can be perfected only within the society of other human beings. Individual morality is ipso facto social morality since man cannot be thought of outside the context of the broader human community. Thus the Stoic terminology helps to extend the Greek philosophical vocabulary by innovatively adding the term “cosmopolis” beside the previous term of “polis”. Cosmopolitanism partially stands on the prior idea that the noetic faults or sins that characterize the human being are not only tainted as individual disorders but also as social mishaps for the reason that they are shared by all people. Moreover, these noetic faults, i.e. passions, tend to be multiplied and proliferated through the dynamics which are developed within a society. Thus the “vulgus”, the crowd, is a real catalyst of negative influence for the individual who wishes to acquire wisdom and eudaimonia. This fact creates a significant predicament in the equable coexistence of people. The gnomon for a resolution to this problematic issue is based on the therapy of passions. In the Stoic theory the therapy of passions is one of the most prominent subjects, and while Stoic interpretations may differ in particular details, all the thinkers of the Stoa conclude that passions are to blame for the miseries of the human life. Particularly, the Stoics of Rome define fighting against passions not as insensibility (apatheia) but as an energetic logical procedure that leads to the extinction of false thinking. In order to be able to live harmoniously with the “other”, man has to correct himself and render himself better. Thus, the elementary goal for a perfect society takes the form of individual perfection. The brotherhood of men is grounded on the indubitable Stoic axiom that the human soul is the source of every good; actually of the unique good, which is virtue. The distinctive parameter for creating a community is the sole good (summum bonum), virtue, which is an objective for everyone but also an inherent and ecumenical capacity. Virtue facilitates a profound understanding of life and other people. Through Logos the asymmetric relationship between man and his fellow man can be finally amended.

**Keywords:** individualism, cosmopolitanism, Stoicism, Logos, virtue, good.

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**İMPARATORLUK DÖNEMİ STOA ANLAYIŞINDA BİREYCİLİK  
VE KOZMOPOLİTANİZM****ÖZET**

Stoacılar için insan, yalnızca toplumdaki diğer insanlar arasında mükemmelleşebilen bir varlıktır. İnsan, kendisinden daha geniş bir insan topluluğu bağlamı dışında düşünemeyeceği için, bireysel ahlak tam da bu gerçeklikten ötürü bir sosyal ahlaktır. Bunu ortaya koymakla Stoacı terminoloji, Yunan felsefi söz dağarcığını, daha evvelki “polis” teriminin yanına “cosmopolis”i yenilikçi bir biçimde eklemek suretiyle genişletmeye yardımcı olur. Kozmopolitanizm, insanı karakterize eden noetik kusurları ya da günahları sadece bir bireysel bozulma olarak değil, aynı zamanda bu hatalar bütün insanlar tarafından paylaşıldığı için sosyal bir düşkünlük olarak lekelemekle, kısmen de olsa daha önceki fikre yaslanır. Dahası, bu noetik kusurlar; yani tutkular, toplum içerisinde gelişen dinamikler yoluyla üremeye ve çoğalmaya meyillidirler. Bu yüzden “vulgus”, kalabalık, erdemi ve eudaimonia’yı elde etmek isteyen birey için olumsuz etkiye sahip gerçek bir katalizördür. Bu gerçek, insanların karşılıklı olarak eşit bir ilişki içerisinde bulunmaları konusunda önemli bir açmaz yaratmaktadır. Bu problematik meselenin çözümüne yönelik ölçüt, tutkuların terapisine dayanmaktadır. Stoacı kuramda, Stoik yorum bir dereceye kadar ayrıntılarda farklılaşsa da, tutkuları terapi etmek en belirgin konulardan biridir ve Stoa’nın tüm düşünürleri, tutkuların, insan yaşamının sefaletinin sorumlusu olduğuna hükmetmektedirler. Özellikle Romalı Stoacılar, tutkulara karşı savaşmayı, bir sarsılmazlık (apatheia) değil, yanlış düşünmeyi ortadan kaldıracak hareketli, mantıksal bir prosedür olarak tanımlarlar. “Diğer”leri ile ahenkli bir biçimde yaşamak için insanlar kendilerini düzeltmeli ve olumlu yönde değiştirmelidirler. Böylece mükemmel topluma yönelik temel amaç, bireysel mükemmelleşme biçimini alır. İnsanlığın kardeşliği fikri, insan ruhunun her türlü iyiliğin- ve esasen emsalsiz iyilik olan erdemin-kaynağı olduğuna dair şüphe götürmez Stoacı ön kabulde temellenmiştir. Bir topluluk yaratmanın ayırıcı etkeni, herkes için nesnel ama aynı zamanda kendiliğinden ve evrensel-ruhani bir kapasite olan salt iyilik (summum bonum)’tir, erdemdir. Erdem, yaşamı ve diğer insanları derinden anlamak için bir olanak sunar. Nihayetinde, logos aracılığıyla insanın muhataplarıyla arasındaki asimetric ilişki düzeltilebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bireyselleşme, kozmopolitanizm, Stoacılık, Logos, erdem, iyi.

In the Stoic theory, from the ancient times till the times of the Imperial Stoa, emphasis is given, primarily, to the role of the individual. However, it should be noted that this emphasis does not exhaust itself on the ethical level nor does it get narrowed down to a level of exhortations. Quite the contrary. The Stoics elaborate a complete and systematic natural and logical philosophy, which include, in one form or the other, almost all aspects of human experience and knowledge, such as ontology, epistemology, anthropology, aesthetics and so on. The Stoa, in its monism and pantheism that presupposes that the universe (as well as all living beings, including the human) is one and is imbued by Logos, is concerned with the relation between the human being and the World. Other beings, other humans, the World, even gods, come together through the inherent ability of man for appropriation, that is of making the environment or the other familiar to oneself. Appropriation in such a depiction sounds as a procedure which will lead, theoretically, from the individual to the community, and then from the community to the Cosmos. Indeed, for Hierocles, (Stobaeus, 4, 671-673) the Stoic philosopher, the idea of appropriation (oikeiosis) could be illustrated in its resemblance with a system of concentric circles, which encompass the human being. The first circle around the human being is the one that encloses himself, his soul and body. The second circle encloses parents, friends and relatives. Outer circles include more and more human beings, till the final circle which encompasses all the rest, the entire human race. The duty of the person is to draw the circles closer to him, bringing each circle closer to the center which is his own being. This description of oikeiosis, requires the understanding of the term per se: “τό οικειοῦσθαι” signifies not only the recognition of what belongs to the specific being, “τό οικεῖον”, but also the continuous effort of the being for self preservation and for the highest potential benefit. Caring for oneself, caring for the others, is part of the oikeiosis, part of the natural and rational order of things, which is also our duty since it is natural and rational. That is primarily what binds human beings in their ontological, metaphysical and political connection. What the Stoics believe is necessary for oikeiosis to work properly is that reason, inside the human being, functions as it should, i.e. is not conquered by passions. (Eliopoulos, 2014, pp. 30-35.)

Hence, in the Stoic teachings, and even though oikeiosis is recognized as a fundamental concept of the doctrine, starting from the point where mental pathology becomes a very important aspect and having diagnosed the fundamental problems that man's integration to the social corpus entails, strong theoretical dilemmas are encountered: how can the Stoic moral theory evolve into a social theory of morality? How can man, without abolishing his interiority and individuality -both indispensable parameters, especially in the Roman Stoa-, be rendered beneficial to others,

since a benefit is a moral action, as it is practically the result of a moral decision? (Cicero, *De Officiis*, II. iii. 10 & III. xxx. 110). How can integrity be achieved between individuality and sociality? And finally, can sociality acquire the features of a more inclusive cosmopolitanism, one that will not be either rejecting or excluding other human beings? The obstacles in this problematic area are manifold. Marcus Aurelius, quite vehemently, makes the following point:

To my own free will the free will of my neighbour is just as indifferent as his poor breath and flesh. For though we are made especially for the sake of one another, still the ruling power of each of us has its own office, for otherwise my neighbour's wickedness would be my harm, which God has not willed in order that my unhappiness may not depend on another<sup>1</sup>.

Even worse, the company of people can make life inauthentic and deprived of any real value. As Seneca elaborates this thought in *De Vita Beata*:

So long as we wander aimlessly, having no guide, and following only the noise and discordant cries of those who call us in different directions, life will be consumed in making mistakes- life that is brief even if we should strive day and night for sound wisdom... On most journeys some well recognized road and inquiries made of the inhabitants of the region prevent you from going astray. But on this one all the best beaten and the most frequented paths are the most deceptive. Nothing, therefore, needs to be more emphasized than the warning that we should not, like sheep, follow the lead of the throng in front of us, traveling, thus, the way that all go and not the way that we ought to go... having so many to follow, we live after the rule, not of reason, but of imitation. The result is that people are piled high, one above another, as they rush to destruction... when the people push against

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Marcus Aurelius, *Medidations*, VIII. 56: «Τῷ ἐμῷ προαιρετικῷ τό τοῦ πλησίον προαιρετικόν ἐπίσης ἀδιάφορόν ἐστιν, ὡς καί τό πνευμάτιον αὐτοῦ καί τό σαρκίδιον. Καί γάρ εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα ἀλλήλων ἔνεκεν γεγονάμεν, ὅμως τά ἡγεμονικά ἡμῶν ἕκαστον τήν ἰδίαν κυρίαν ἔχει- ἐπεὶ τοι ἔμελλεν ἡ τοῦ πλησίον κακία ἐμοῦ κακόν εἶναι, ὅπερ οὐκ ἔδοξε τῷ θεῷ, ἵνα μη ἐπ' ἄλλω ἢ τό ἐμέ ἀτυχεῖν».

each other, no one can fall down without drawing along another, and those that are in front cause destruction to those behind... No man can go wrong to his own hurt only, but he will be both the cause and the sponsor of another's wrongdoing. (Seneca, *De Vita Beata*, I. 2-4).

The noetic faults or sins that characterize the human being are not only tainted as individual disorders but also as social mishaps as they are shared by all people. Moreover, they tend to be multiplied and proliferated through the dynamics which are developed within a society. Thus the "vulgus", the crowd, is a catalyst of negative influence for the individual who wishes to acquire wisdom and eudaimonia. This creates a significant predicament in the equitable coexistence of people. The philosopher of Cordoba adapts the earlier Stoic syllogistic formula in proportion to this and proceeds to the following acknowledgements:

a) Man is classified as a social entity thanks to the Stoic conviction that he is incorporated in a broad Cosmopolis where everyone participates on equal terms<sup>2</sup>. This is also the reason why the sage, although he ascertains the fact that humanity experiences a distorted moral condition, a condition that falsifies the right and natural terms of living, still does not abandon humanity but actively cares for it. Reason, nonetheless, must regulate all relations, therefore also those relations which refer to the State. It is similarly Seneca's belief that all people are inhabitants in a universal home and the relationship between them should be characterized by equality (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XXXVIII. 4 & Aubenque, 1965, pp. 82-91).

Thus they are connected as members in an extensive brotherhood, as they co-exist in the all-inclusive frame of a large Cosmopolis, which is imbued by the cosmic law of sympathy (that includes gods with no exception) (Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, I. xv. 2-3, *De tranquillitate animi*, I. 10, *Epist. Mor.*, V. 4).

b) Cosmopolitanism refers to the common nature of men, as it is expressed through the theory of the "animus rectus", the upright soul. The human soul matures but is also shaped by man in a natural way. Maturity offers the natural ability for the perfection of reason whereas a human being can strive for the attainment of virtue. A virtuous person does not discriminate in favour or against social or economic status. Such a person only demarcates according to either the nobility or vulgarity of the human soul. In the latter case, passions lead a human being to the deprivation of his

<sup>2</sup> Stobaeus, *Eclogae*, 2, 26. Cf. Baldry, 1965. Also cf. Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, IV. 3: «ὅτι ὁ κόσμος ὡσανεὶ πόλις».

freedom, literally to the condition of a slave<sup>3</sup>. Only the virtuous are truly free and unaffected by either Fate or other men. The emanation of an “animus rectus” is the “virtus perfecta”, the virtue that corresponds to the eudaimonistic situation. This is principally where the main social perception of Seneca stems from. The idea of cosmopolitanism is a highly progressive idea for those times, even though it is conceived through a clear notion of individuality, i.e. through the construction of the theory of the upright soul. In the particular case, Epictetus buttresses up his argument of cosmopolitanism on the resemblance of men with the gods while Marcus Aurelius bases it on the common possession of logos and the fact that man is by nature made capable of forming a society<sup>4</sup>.

Seneca does not proceed to construct a nebulous exhortation for altruism, or “φιλία” (friendship), but advocates people to know their fellow human beings in an active manner, even their slaves, and to show them proper respect as the socialization that goes through the path of virtue neither classifies nor exempts anyone<sup>5</sup>. Knowing people for what they really are (i.e. their intrinsic value and dignity) and valuing them in accordance with their inner nobility and quality is the next step in the Senecan social viewpoint. Since virtue puts an end to every other axiological system, and is asserted as the only axiological constituent, it is entailed that in friendship, that is in the case of selecting people in order to love, teach and serve them, there can be only one precondition, virtue, in other words the essential equal relation that is imposed by virtue. Hence, the person stops seeking for richness, power or beauty in his friends as all these are nothing more than indifferents, according to Stoic orthodoxy, and do not comprise goods whatsoever. (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, LXVI. 24). It is rather the construction of a broader sociality and prominence of the social features of friendship, as friendship should not be limited to one person but to as many as possible. All

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<sup>3</sup> Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XXXI. 11. Cf. Reale, 1985, p. 283: “The Stoics, through their concept of *physis* and *logos*, were also able to extirpate, more than any other philosophy, the ancient myths of blood-based nobility and superiority of race, as well as the chains of slavery... The new concepts of nobility, freedom, and slavery are linked to the notions of *wisdom* and *ignorance*: the sage is the real free-man, the fool is the real slave”. Cf. W. Richter, 1958, pp. 196-218.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Stanton, 1968, p. 191: “Both Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius attempt to defend their cosmopolitan concepts... Epictetus assumes that man is akin to God, while Marcus assumes the common possession of mind and that man is born for κοινωμία”.

<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, Seneca is charged with the customary Roman conservatism by Bradley [In Fitch (ed.), 2008, p. 345], as for the issues which are of concern to them, he does not address the slaves themselves but their masters. In my opinion, this criticism is rather exaggerated as it is quite dubious whether it was feasible for slaves to have widespread access to philosophical books and readings.

in all, friendship always retains its structural distinctiveness, it never stems from the crowd or from the habits of the crowd but it is established in the community of the seekers of wisdom, whose aims and desires are honorable as well as virtuous. To Seneca's mind, friendship follows the norm of nature; that is the ecumenical law of the phenomena which includes their opposites in a counterbalanced antithesis. (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, III. 4). Nature is a guide in the issue of friendship and its observance steers people on the right path.

Cosmopolitanism, as Seneca means it, becomes a dynamic procedure of co-integration to the virtuous condition, at which fear, hope and individual interest cease subsisting. (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, VI. 2). It is the culmination of friendship which is based on mutual trust. The factor that bonds friends and co-defines them is not only the common quest for virtue and eudaimonia, but also the common complexities that emerge from the very foundations of this quest. Nonetheless, usefulness should not determine proximity with people. Usefulness, under this prism, fosters the development of self interest, ruins the human sense of community (*sensus communis*) due to the fact that the one who becomes a friend because of the utility of another person, sometime will stop being his friend for the same exact reason (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XIX. 10-11 & María José Criado del Pozo, 1988, pp. 563-576).

The equation between friends advances up to the degree where what is beneficial for one friend becomes beneficial for the other one too. Under the perspective of wisdom (*sapientia*) or folly (*stultitia*) the concept of friendship is interpreted differently. Folly requires a friend for one's own benefit, in order to use him, while in wisdom a man disposes himself positively to the benefit of the other. (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XLVIII. 4). This syllogistic structure denotes a society of friends [*consortium rerum omnium inter nos facit amicitia*] (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XLVIII. 2), a common involvement in all things without exception, so that there can be no good or bad fortune for one person individually but rather for all, as friends have everything in common (*in commune vivitur*). In this sense, friendship is defined as a constituent of eudaimonia, due to the fact that nobody can live in a eudaimonistic way if he sets his orientation exclusively according to his own affairs and if he converts everything to a thing of usefulness for himself only<sup>6</sup>.

Seneca's reading of cosmopolitanism describes an unantagonistic but not resigned society. His social theory -the way it enunciates on the

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<sup>6</sup> Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XLVIII. 2. Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus*, I. 65. This is based on the orthodox stoic view about the common possession of everything: «κοινά τὰ τῶν φίλων» (Bühler, MIIM, p. 620), a position upheld by Seneca too.

socialisation of the individual so that the individual is not turned into an “ιδιώτης” (in Platonic terminology, or “μονώτης” in Aristotelian terms, i.e. someone who lives for himself)- points to the direction of a constant and systematic social reference to moral circumstances. Seneca ideologises in favour of a community that defends the mutual humane and generous contribution to one another. To achieve this, the knowledge of moral pathology and the methodical examination of passions is sine qua non within the perimeter of society. Instead of being narrowed, Seneca’s philanthropy and sociality broaden up including everyone and forming an innovative philanthropic ideal, the ideal of the Roman “humanitas”, whose Ciceronian version Seneca deepens significantly. Therefore, the Senecan notion of friendship orientates the Stoic social theory to the parameters of equality and “nobilitas” which can be reached solely by means of an unwavering soul but also it focuses practically on the mutual care between the members of a Cosmopolis.

According to Cicero, who is a great source for the Stoic dogmas, the notion of a State refers to the usage of common goods, sources and abilities in order to fortify the essential link which naturally exists between all human beings. (Cicero, *De Officiis*, I. vii. 22). This bond is not grounded on common benefits as they are, meaning on their extrinsic value as goods, but on the perception of mutual assistance and co-integration of the human beings to the social corpus (Cicero, *De Officiis*, II. iv. 13-15 & Bodson, 1967). The common bond of human beings, that Cicero diagnoses, is originated in the homologation of “ratio” and “oratio”, reason and speech<sup>7</sup>. Taking into consideration the Stoic view of human commitment to a common end which is dictated by Nature and Logos and which is materialized through virtue, Cicero elucidates a political and moral theory which consolidates the human bonds by means of explicit principles and which aims at the development of the self.

Another critical assertion that Cicero makes is with reference to justice and to the passivity of action. According to this consideration, the person who allows something unjust to take place is also unjust, although in a passive way. Passive acceptance of unjust situations renders the citizen an accomplice to decisions and actions of a vast or generalized scale. The individual has to oppose to what he judges as not proper, at whatever is not “utile” or “honestum”. The person who is not engaged in social and political

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<sup>7</sup> Cicero, *De Officiis*, I. xvi. 50. See also Cicero, *De Legibus*, I. Compare the attitude of Aurelius who upholds that since reason is common therefore law has to be common and we all have to be citizens of one common state. See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, IV. 4: «Εἰ τό νοερόν ἡμῖν κοινόν, καί ὁ λόγος, καθ’ ὄν λογικοί ἐσμεν, κοινός· εἰ τοῦτο, καί ὁ προστακτικός τῶν ποιητέων ἢ λόγος κοινός· εἰ τοῦτο, καί ὁ νόμος κοινός· εἰ τοῦτο, πολῖται ἐσμεν· εἰ τοῦτο, πολιτεύματος τινος μετέχομεν».

matters so as to offer benefit to society is actually a social traitor in Cicero's terminology<sup>8</sup>. In this perspective, the Stoic moral doctrine that includes all as citizens in the Cosmopolis requires the participation of everyone in the preservation of the common good which is no other than what is morally good.

All this eventuates in the recognition of a generalized humanitarianism, the Roman "humanitas" which is based on the Greek «φιλανθρωπία» (philanthropy). According to this inclusive canon, the philosopher from Cordoba, Seneca, maintains that there can be no actual discrimination between an aristocrat and an ordinary citizen, between the free and the slave or regarding any other institutional classification. (Alfonso Maestre Sánchez, p. 87). There is no other nobility than that which is dictated by the uprightness of the human soul. In the Roman world the term of "humanitas" is associated in a very insightful way with matters that reflect the social need for individual and political reformation. But this need for reformation does not imply the character of a massive movement as those that we have historically witnessed in later centuries. The aspect that needs to be stressed out is that Stoic philosophers focus their effort on the reformation of man instead of the reformation of man's things, possessions or institutional structures. The "other" in this context has a multiple conceptual significance. Not only is man related with a natural, universal law that pervades and exceeds him but also he is subjected to constant interaction with others where he can thus correct himself either by conforming to the constructive criticism that he receives or by observing the attitudes and behaviors of others and conforming to a certain model of ethical action (Cicero, *De Officiis*, I. xli. 146-147). But these necessarily presuppose a moral society. Such a society is a mirror to the individual and reflects his successful or not successful traits so that he can notice them in an efficient manner.

In accordance with the above, the aspect that Marcus Aurelius emphasizes is the one of the relationship with the self. As he defines it: for one to find his own good, «τό ἀγαθόν ἐκεῖνο τό ἴδιον» (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, III. 6). But this should not be misinterpreted as a subjective good; Epictetus already has attacked that idea by clarifying that one's own interest is not the same as «τό ἴδιον ἀγαθόν». (Epictetus, *Discourses*, II. 22. 15-21). Actually, in the Aurelian thought this is interpreted as a personal good as much as a collective good, but it comprises simultaneously an objective good. In this scheme of self relationship, man opposes to passions and tries to remain equable, in order to preserve justice and philanthropy.

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<sup>8</sup> Cicero, *De Officiis*, I. ix. 29: "deserunt enim vitae societatem, quia nihil conferunt in eam studii, nihil operae, nihil facultatum".

Nonetheless, Marcus points out quite sharply: “in order to be just to others you also have to be independent from them” (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, II. 17). Gradually he leads us to the construction of a philosophical hypothesis wherein consciousness plays the most noteworthy role. Consciousness in its turn cannot be deprived of sensibility and responsibility but Aurelius thinks it expedient that man first should concentrate on himself before he concentrates on others. The inner self is a resort where man is reunited with tranquility and bliss (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, IV. 3). The profound psychological connection with the self does not prevent man from serving the others or the State but, on the contrary, it provides him with the necessary prerequisites so that he can serve justice, peace and truth in harmony with his own individuality and so that he can act according to the natural law. In this way, he is in full accordance with his own destiny as well as with the destiny of the universe (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, III. 16).

Conclusively, it must be taken into consideration that all human appropriate acts should be seen under the prism of morality but morality is not an external aspect to the human being. What is moral is human; and what is human is commonly human, it belongs to all, because morality cannot be thought of outside the prism of the contribution of the perfect person, i.e. of the sage, to the community. The community, on the other hand, is not established on political criteria, as the term is valid today. On the contrary, the distinctive parameter for creating a community is the “summum bonum” (the supreme good), virtue, which is an objective for everyone but also an inherent and ecumenical capacity. Through Logos the asymmetric relationship between man and his fellow man is amended. To this consideration we should incorporate the fact that consistently with the Stoic beliefs there ought to be a non violent promotion of ethical knowledge as the contrary would totally annihilate the good intention of the moral agent, the “voluntas”, which is the indispensable element for some action to be really free (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, XL. 8.)

For the Stoics man is a social being who can be perfected only within the society of other human beings. Individual morality is ipso facto social morality since man cannot be thought of outside the context of the broader human community (Edelstein, 2002, p. 105 & Bett, 2006, pp. 530-548). Thus the Stoic terminology helps to extend the Greek philosophical vocabulary by innovatively adding the term “Cosmopolis” beside the previous term of the “Polis”. The Stoics of Rome define fighting against passions not as insensibility (apatheia) but as an energetic logical procedure that leads to the extinction of false thinking. In order to be able to live harmoniously with the “other”, man has to correct himself and render himself better. The elementary goal for a perfect society becomes individual perfection since the context of the moral duty that concludes to

individualism does not contradict cosmopolitanism. Hopefully, it becomes apparent that this is not an autistic individualism but individualism based on the knowledge of social and psychological phenomenology. The individual must be distinct and self-aware as he comprehends the dynamics of social procedures and he understands that if he abandons himself to them he will be let adrift towards the ignorance of truth. So he has to proceed through himself in order to find the way that will lead him eventually to the others (Seidler, 1994). Subsequently, we have this very functional, seeming paradox: by turning to the self we do not seek the subjective but the objective perception of reality as the self is the center of right reason and right reason is impeccable, flawless. Seneca sees the inner self as the ground where man can re-discover the authenticity of existence, as the source where reason springs, and as the potential of incorruptible guidance for man's connection with nature<sup>9</sup>. After all, physis, logos and arête (nature, reason and virtue) are all facets of one axiom. In living in accordance with them, self possession and self mastery become the most decisive categorical imperative: "imperare sibi maximum imperium est" (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, CXIII. 30. See also Epictetus, *Discourses*, IV. 2. 1). This type of the individual relies on himself but he is not confined within himself. The perfection of his moral autonomy is enriched and not violated by his social contribution, nor is by any means his ability to communicate desertified inside the isolated realm of himself.

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<sup>9</sup> Espada Colino, 1984, p. 111: "La virtus senequista tiene su justificación en la interioridad, donde se perfectiviza la naturaleza del hombre".

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