STOICISM

"Philosophy does not promise to secure anything external for humans, otherwise it would be admitting something that lies beyond its proper subject matter. For just as wood is the material of the carpenter, bronze that of the statuary, so each individual's own life is the material of the art of living."
- Epictetus

Philosophy = "Art of Living";
Focus on transforming our lives through practice & action

Holding Virtue is key to happiness regardless of circumstance.

A philosopher is like a traveler using a map:
A Stoic must actually *apply* the philosophical doctrines to all life experiences.
To a traveler the maps are but a guide, they must actually travel - the maps do not provide the travel

Health & sickness of the body
Medicine = art for curing the body
Health & sickness of the soul
Philosophy = art devoted to the curing of the soul

1. The Study of doctrines & theory

For education purposes split into 3 areas
- Logical
- Physical
- Ethical

3 elements are interdependent - like the egg shell + egg white + yoke

To the Stoics, knowledge includes mastery and not just "understanding" of information gathered. You may understand the doctrines but you do not have knowledge of philosophy.

2. Transforming our lives through practices & action

The real Stoic must be able to translate those doctrines into behavior....and thusly, BE HAPPY REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES, WHETHER ONE IS IN DANGER, DISGRACED, SICK OR DYING

3 Topoi (areas of Study)
- 1. Desires + Aversiions → Physics? — Individual = Desires want of food vs aversion to poison; Cosmos = Desires events that are only are possible*
- 2. Act + Not Act → Ethics — Impulses & behaviors
- 3. Judgement → Logic — Focus of Epistemology

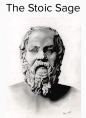
Stoic Fate Theory

Stoics are MATERIALISTS* and the soul is conceived as a type of matter. *see RESOURCES below*

Any discussion of curing the soul of bad emotions, faulty judgements, etc, can be *described as altering the physical disposition of the soul*

How the cylinder rolls = disposition of the soul
The cylinder (soul) gets a "push" from external events

The Stoic Sage



The Stoics follow Socrates in holding a unified, monistic conception of the soul and an intellectualist account of the relationship between knowledge & action.

The Stoic Sage - an individual who has mastered the art of living and so will always act well in all areas of his life. He will be completely free from the diseases of the soul, and his wisdom will be defined simply in terms of having a perfectly healthy soul. "There is no known Stoic sage." It is an ideal.

STOIC LOGIC

Rhetoric and Dialectic.
The central theme of Stoic Logic is the acquisition of knowledge = Epistemology

One needs logic to be able to judge whether an argument is valid or not. Not only arguments but also the truth/falsity of all observations, encounters, etc. Logic is the means by which we know the truth.

Born with innate tendency toward virtue (Seneca calls them "seeds") + Add sensory experiences... = Impressions (information) → Refute inadequate impressions / Postpone Judgement

4 STAGES TO ASSENT
1 Perception of an external event or state of affairs
2 There is an almost involuntary and unconscious value judgement that is made about the content of the perception
3 There is a presentation to the conscious mind of an impression in the form of a proposition composed of both external perceptual data and the unconscious value judgement;
4. There is the act of assent or rejection of the impression.)

Assent to Adequate Impressions = Cognitions (Knowledge Instances) "katalēpsis"

Arrive as Propositions and are PHYSICAL ENTITIES
- Movement of air (spoken) (corporeal)
- Inscriptions (when arrive via writing) (corporeal)
- SAYABLES - Carry Meaning (incorporeal)

We see that impressions form propositions in the mind from which we make our choices or assent. What we now examine are the linguistic contents of these propositions

Incomplete Sayable
Complete Sayable
Assertables

4 CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSERTABLES
1 True
2 False
3 Simple
4. Complex

ASSERTABLES become foundations for syllogistic arguments

Syllogism is defined as a valid and structured argument that is indemonstrable or cannot be broken down further

Stoic Syllogism axiōmata (5 types)

If p, then q; p; therefore, q.	If p, then q; not q; therefore, not p.	Not p and q; p; therefore not q.	Either p or q; p; therefore, not q	Either p or q; not q; therefore, p
modus ponendo ponens	modus tollendo tollens		modus ponendo tollens	modus tollendo ponens

Stoic Syllogism
Built on assertibles not terms.
https://www.historyoflogic.com/logic-stoics.htm

4 logical terms of Aristotle syllogisms: (built on universal terms not propositions)
1 All
2 Some
3 Is/Are
4. Is/Are Not or "No"

Accumulation of syllogistic arguments = Systematic scientific knowledge of the world

For Stoics knowledge is the true understanding of the systems, framework, and interrelatedness of the accumulation of cognitions. It is close to what we would call today total systematic scientific knowledge. This knowledge is vast and attainable solely to the sage.

STOIC PHYSICS

All questions relating to the physical world
Ontology & empirical sciences (ie. astronomy & meteorology)

The fundamental assertion of Stoic physics is that only bodies exist

Something (ti) *REALITY*
- incorporeals (asomata) ***SUBSISTENCE*** -or sometimes- ***BELONGS***
  - void
  - time — examples of "subsist" = past, future; examples of "belongs" = present (b/c more real than past/future)
  - place
  - sayable (lekta) (see logic)
- corporeals (somata) ***EXISTENCE***
  - bodies → 2 bodies can interact in 3 ways
    - juxtaposition (salt & sugar mixed in a bowl)
    - fusion (ingredients when cooked together) makes a 3rd entity & cannot be separated
    - total blending (wine & water) but can be separated again
  - Principle #1 - PNEUMA, GOD, THE DIVINE, LOGOS (to Poioun) to act - active
  - Principle #2 MATTER (to Paschon) to be acted upon - passive

"existing" is not the highest ontological genus... REALITY is highest

only individual particulars can be real (if it is "not something" it is not part of Stoic ontology such as Plato's Universal Ideas)

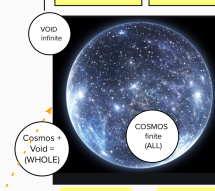
if someone is in Athens, he is not Megara; "man" is in Athens; therefore, "man" is not in Megara

A body must -"to act" -or- "to be acted upon"

THE COSMOS is a material entity that does not have an active principle mixed throughout but rather simply is active itself

Cosmos = a unified mixture of God (pneuma) & matter

The conscious and rational organizing principle of the cosmos is pneuma, which is identified with God & reason

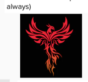


VOID infinite
COSMOS finite (ALL)
Cosmos + Void = (WHOLE)

God (finite) = Nature = Conscious = Pneuma = Causal = predestined + fate = Gaia +

Conflagration - is *only* pneuma = only fire/breath energy during this state before returning to matter + pneuma

Cycle repeats itself *EXACTLY* - as it is perfect (predestined because god chooses the best option always)



the great conflagration (ekpurosis) and eternal recurrence/eternal return of the same.

God, who pervades the entire cosmos, forms the cosmos into a harmonious whole and orders events in a providential manner. Chrysippus argues that fate and providence are the same thing.

Stoic theory of cosmic sympathy is the suggestion that there is a continual interaction between all parts of the cosmos no matter how far apart they may be

Creative fire (God) (pneuma) → air → moisture → thick part → earth; thin part → fire

PNEUMA
3 principle conditions or tensions (tonos) of pneuma

Pneuma - is a force in various degrees of tension & forms the material objects of nature

- Cohesion (hexis) — force that holds stones together
- Nature (phusis) — the principle of life
- Soul (psuchē) — constitutes the life of animals that have power of perception (impressions), movement (impulses) & reproduction
- Rational soul (logikē psuchē) — the conscious life with rational judgement can intervene between receiving impressions and acting upon impulses

Fate
- Simple fated thing — Socrates will die. — internal, thing due to his nature of being mortal
- Conjoined fated thing - complex — Socrates will die this afternoon — various external causes may also contribute to the outcome (in addition to the internal cause of his nature of being mortal)

For Stoics fate (heimarmenē) is simply a continuous string of causes, an inescapable order and connection between events

God qua active principle of cosmos orders according to its own best interests and not that of any particular individual or even humans as species

It is after understanding this definition, that Amor Fati makes greater sense

Chryssipus is making the case that human action can make a contribution to the outcomes of events in a deterministic cosmos despite that fact the final outcome is completely determined

STOIC ETHICS

The branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity. (Built upon physics & epistemology)
Virtue

(The beginning, foundation and basis of Stoic ethics is a doctrine founded in physics and the nature of living beings and called oikeiōsis. Oikeiōsis is difficult to translate but is similar in meaning to "orientation" and "appropriation." Further, Chryssipus is quoted as saying that an animal's oikeiōsis is to self-preservation, its nature is to endear itself to itself.)

Naturalistic & physiological theory = any being will choose what is good for self preservation and avoid that which harms self preservation

Oikeiōsis - orientation or appropriation

Stoics ascribe to good values

Stoics ascribe to good and bad values based upon naturalistic and physiological theory of oikeiosis whereas in Platonism, which posits the existence of an absolute, transcendent concept of "the Good," and to which all value ascriptions may be referred

Stoics will commit suicide to preserve our souls (and psuchē logikē)

Things that Exist (Zeno)
- Good Things — Aretē - Virtue or Excellence (the only thing truly good)
  - Reason 1 - As rational beings the only thing that genuinely good for us is that what preserves us as rational beings, which is solely virtue
  - Reason 2 - Externals, such as physical health and financial wealth, cannot be inherently good because they can also be used for bad ends
  - Reason 3 -Most importantly, possession of externals cannot guarantee happiness, but possession of virtue can.
- Bad Things — There is no evil (bad things), only ignorance
- Indifferent Things
  - Preferred indifferents - (adiaphora) — Wealth, health, etc
  - non-preferred indifferents (apoproēgmenon) — Poverty, sickness
  - Indifferent indifferents

Stoics argue that it is perfectly natural want of having better health or more wealth and holds greater value than having less of either. Having greater health leads to the greater potential of self-preservation and the cultivation of virtue/excellence

And though preferred indifferents hold value (axia) they are not "good" in the way that virtue is good

Epictetus categorization of THINGS
- "Up to us"
  - Our own opinions
  - Our desires
  - Our actions
  - The only thing we have complete control of is CHOICE (of our judgments) (prohairesis)
- "Not up to us"
  - Everything that is not up to us — ie our bodies, possessions & reputation

The source of human suffering is to value those things that aren't up to us.

Any focus on what is not up to us likely leads to an emotional event, like frustration and anger. We are consumed by "passion" and enter an unhappy/unharmonious state of being.

4 STAGES TO ASSENT (See LOGIC)
1 Perception of an external event or state of affairs
2 There is an almost involuntary and unconscious value judgement that is made about the content of the perception (first movement. My go-to example is blushing)
3 There is a presentation to the conscious mind of an impression in the form of a proposition composed of both external perceptual data and the unconscious value judgement;
4. There is the act of assent or rejection of the impression.)

Emotions are a product of our judgements/ assentment (and therefore a conscious act)

Therefore, one must examine propositions as they present themselves and interrogate them to discard any value judgment

3 Good Emotions:
- joy (charan) "rational elation"
- caution (eulabeian) "rational avoidance"
- wishing (boulēsin) "rational appetency"

While Stoics appreciate challenges as opportunities to act virtuously, it is sometimes prudent to avoid situations that would imperil virtue.

Appropriate action
- perfect actions (katorthōma) — ex. completely correct actions; in alignment with internal disposition or virtue
- middle appropriate actions (meson kathēkon) — ex: animal searching for food & water; ex: a person takes appropriate and reasonable actions but without conscious choice or virtue

Being virtuous is good for the individual as it drives self-preservation of the soul, and relatedly, drives happiness or also translated as well-being and flourishment. The Stoics claim that wanting to be happy is universally desired and therefore good "for me". Other philosophies from antiquity seem to agree with this position.

The only way a rational being preserves its rational self is by cultivating its virtue

To the Stoics *happiness* and *virtue* are intimately interrelated and virtue constitutes happiness, the summoum bonum, and is quite different from external benefits.

Therefore, happiness is the end game and derived through having a disposition of virtue

Health and wellness are merely indifferents, preferred indifferents at best

ARETĒ Virtue Excellence ↔ Eudaimonia - Substanative Well-being; Flourishing; Happiness;

Aretē is better than the English word virtue because it is a much wider construct and is not laden with the moral overtones of virtue

Virtue then becomes excellence of "the governing principle of the soul" (Sellars p123)

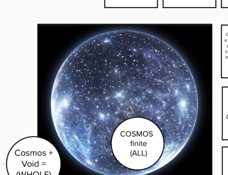
"IT IS NOT MERELY LIVING, BUT LIVING WELL THAT MATTERS*" -SOCRATES
*TO STOICS THIS MEANS LIVING ACCORDING NATURE

SUMMUM BONUM - "for the sake of which everything is done but which is not itself done for the sake of anything else" -Self-evident

3 Aspects to living in harmony with Nature
1. The idea of living harmoniously with oneself, consistently free from internal emotional conflict
2. The idea of living in accordance with one's own nature as a rational being and not passively reacting to external forces
3. Bringing oneself into harmony with Nature as a whole which is organized by the active principle pneuma or God.

Our own nature is but a part of the whole and as such, there will be conflict between living to our own nature and living according to Nature as a whole.)

Becoming COSMOPOLITAN → become a citizen of the cosmos



COSMOS finite (ALL)
Cosmos + Void = (WHOLE)

This is my favorite portion or thought of the chapter. We become cosmopolitan by becoming citizens of the cosmos. We evolve beyond self-preservation. We evolve beyond the need of preserving our family and friends and community. We evolve beyond the need to preserve humankind, to preserving the entire cosmos and Nature as a whole
(Gaia Theory of the Cosmos)

Legend

details	Additional insights or notes
(red star)	Special significance
(?)	Requires further investigation

STOICISM
This mind map of the Stoic system was created by Todd Obenauer in November 2020 and published on The Stoic Registry in June 2022

CHRONOLOGY

BCE (Before Common Era)			CE (Common Era)	
470-399 BCE	Socrates	Socrates, Plato & Aristotle were NOT Stoics	41 CE	Seneca exiled to Corsica by Claudius
428-348 BCE	Plato	"The Academy" was Platonic school of thought	49	Seneca is recalled from exile
385-325 BCE	Aristotle	Peripatetic school of thought is based upon Aristotle	50	
300 BCE			65	
262 BCE			66	Musonius Rufus is banished by Nero
232 BCE			71	
207/205 BCE			95	
155 BCE			96-116	
152 BCE	Antipater succeeds Diogenes as head of Stoa		108	Arrian attends and records Epictetus' lectures
128 BCE	Panaetius becomes head of Stoa		120	Hierocles is active around this time
110 BCE			130	Death of Epictetus
78 BCE	Cicero attends Posidonius lectures in Rhodes		161	Marcus Aurelius becomes Emperor
51 BCE	Death of Posidonius		162-176	
46 BCE	Suicide of Cato the Younger	Cato - "Sage like" - lived his beliefs and virtues and was an example to all	176	Marcus Aurelius found four chairs of philosophy
45 BCE			180	Death of Marcus Aurelius
4/1 BCE	Seneca is born in Cordoba (Southern Spain)		200	

DEFINITIONS

Ontology is the theory of what exists

askesis

Daimon = "the other"; inner soul; conscience

Carpe Arete - Seize Arete; use memento mori to support Arete

RESOURCES & REFERENCES